CLAIMING THE LAND: 
INDIANS, GOLDSEEKERS, AND THE RUSH TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

By

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ABSTRACT

During the Fraser River gold rush of 1858, over 30,000 goldseekers invaded the Aboriginal lands of southern British Columbia, setting off Native-White conflicts similar to the Indian Wars of the American Pacific Northwest. Prior to the establishment of the Colony of British Columbia, 19 November 1858, British sovereignty was marginal and the Fraser gold fields clearly an extension of the American West. The Native world was not defined by the 49th parallel, nor the kind of violence that crossed the international border with the expansion of the California mining frontier. These goldseekers, in prosecuting military-like campaigns, engaged in significant battles with First Nations, broke the back of full-scale Native resistance in both southern British Columbia and eastern Washington State, and brokered Treaties of Peace on foreign soil. The very roots of Native sovereignty, rights and unrest, current in the province today, may be traced to the 1858 gold rush.

This dissertation maintains that British Columbia’s ‘founding’ event has not been explored due to the transboundary nature of the subject. It has little or no presence in Canadian historiography as presently written. The year 1858 represents a period of exceptional flux and population mobility within an ill-defined space. I argue that the key to the Fraser Rush is to be found south of the border: in geographic space (the Pacific Slope) and in place (California mining frontier). It examines the three principal cultures that inhabited the middle ground of the gold fields, those of the Fur Trade (Hudson’s Bay Company and Native), Californian, and British world views. The year 1858 represents a power struggle on the frontier: a struggle of local Indian power, the entrance of an overwhelming outsiders’ power, transplanted locally and directed largely from California, and regional and long-distance British power. It is a clash of two “frontier” creations: that of “California culture” and “fur trade culture” that not only produced violence but the formal inauguration of colonialism, Indian reserves, and ultimately the expansion of Canada to the Pacific Slope.
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My own Cornish ancestors traveled this landscape in 1858 in the pursuit of gold. In the 1870’s, my great-great-great Uncle William was charged with rebuilding the early Hope to Yale road, the remains of which are still visible just below the Teague House porch. As William Teague and my distant uncle were both Cornish goldseekers, I could easily imagine the two having enjoyed the occasional dish of tea within this very house, perhaps recalling the turbulent days of ’58. It was here, too, that the better portion of this dissertation was written. My sole companion during the quiet of the evening was the stern countenance of Sir James Douglas, his portrait hanging on a wall at the foot of the bed, oftentimes admonishing me to get the untold story right.

As a fifth generation British Columbian, Yale has become my ‘spiritual’ home. As a young boy from Vancouver Island, I can remember being immediately drawn to the sublime landscape of the Fraser Canyon during trips made to Ashcroft in the company of my father. My parents, Tom and Joyce, have always had a keen interest in the history of the province, spending many holidays traveling the back roads, and it is to them I owe my greatest thanks. They not only instilled in me an appreciation for the past but have always supported my love for, and academic pursuit of, history. In the same way, my partner in life, Susan, encourages the freedom to explore new pathways: not just the trails of old, but new directions that lead to the riches of the heart.

Finally, though family stories of the gold rush served to fuel my fascination, it was an early reading of Margaret Ormsby’s British Columbia: a History that kindled a sustained interest in the gold colony. It was my good fortune to meet Professor Ormsby on several occasions before her passing in 1996, and it is to her that this dissertation is dedicated.
CHAPTER ONE

'FRASER RIVER FEVER' AND
THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE PACIFIC SLOPE

Gold rushes have become one of the most explored topics in history, usually romanticised as a free-spirited, golden age of opportunity played out on European frontiers. They have thrilled populations, both past and present, regardless of age, profession, social and economic standing, race, religion or creed. Anyone might join and break free from the drudgery in which daily existence held them: indentured labourers and ship-bound sailors, bankrupted merchants and 'liberated' slaves, young men and women who rebelled against fathers, and fathers considered knaves. Abraham Lincoln's future secretary of war, who declared, "A marvellous thing is now going on here... [that] will prove one of the most important events on the Globe," was not the only American to be swept up by the excitement of the Fraser River gold rush.¹ In 1858, Edwin Stanton, then federal agent for land claims settlement in California, merely observed the effects of the massive rush north. But those to whom the call of gold was irresistible -- over thirty thousand migrants -- were to invade the lands along the Fraser and Thompson Rivers in search of the elusive metal that had been the sole mining preserve of the Salishan peoples.
As the mining frontier moved northward from California, through Oregon and Washington, it was the Native discoveries of gold in British Columbia that diverted Euro-American populations north of the forty-ninth parallel precipitating the Fraser River gold rush: "Never, perhaps, was there so large an immigration in so short a space of time into so small a place." Those who could afford passage, at least 23,000 miners, dashed north to Victoria, Port Townsend, or Bellingham Bay via sailing ships and larger steam-powered vessels. At least 8,000 others trod overland from such places as Sacramento, Placerville, or Yreka through northern California to Oregon, along the Columbia and Okanagan rivers of Washington Territory, and across the 49th parallel to the northern fur trade preserve of New Caledonia, the unconstituted territory of Britain. The 'Fraser River Fever' was of such consequence that American President James Buchanan was compelled to take the unprecedented step of appointing an emissary to the region to represent and protect American interests. Contemporary accounts claimed the flood tide of immigration north surpassed thirty thousand to as many as one hundred thousand people.

The effects of such a massive outpouring of population from the American Pacific coast states impacted particularly on the gold rush metropolis of San Francisco. By 1858, the placer mines of California were largely played out leaving many an old 49er

Figure 1. *The Fraser River Thermometer: Great Gold Discoveries of 1858.* Popular Broadsheet distributed to news depots throughout California by Sterett & Butler, San Francisco. BC Archives.
without any serious occupation but to frequent the bars, boarding houses, or back alleys of San Francisco. Capital and labour intensive hydraulic mining had replaced the halcyon days of picks, pans, and shovels, and marginalised the average sourdough, or made him a wage labourer at best. At the very depths of a city wide depression, the golden state's lustre became further tarnished as a huge unemployed class was increasingly desperate for news of a 'New Eldorado.'

Word of the Fraser discovery reached a news hungry press. Early in the spring of 1858, San Francisco presses began publishing rumours about the riches in surface-diggings to be found along a previously unknown river in a supposedly foreign land. The isolated reports grew in size, flavour, and frequency; a handful of old Californians and perhaps a few hundred from Washington, Oregon, and Vancouver Island, who had necessary experience in placer mining, but no capital, were immediately attracted by the emergent ‘New Eldorado’ that was offering renewed hope for a return to the glory days of '49. News of these ‘pioneer’ successes reached others who also were without needed capital to compete in California's mines, and they in turn travelled north. The word was out, and Fraser River quickly became a home for thousands upon thousands of impoverished placer miners. Forty years before the exodus to the Klondike goldfields, crowds of emigrants flooded the docks of San Francisco. A line of steamers to Victoria, Port Townsend, and the instant town of Whatcom were inaugurated, with other lines quickly added. Every
available sailing craft, no matter how run-down, was put into service to accommodate the swelling crowds. With each departure of thousands for the new gold fields, the vacant space left behind in San Francisco was quickly filled by those hopeful goldseekers who were "pulling up stakes," packing up "lock, stock, and barrel," from the interior mining regions of California, ever anxious to be the first on the ground. Soon real estate prices plummeted throughout the State, and labour prices surged ever higher, "and still the emigration went on, each week doubling the number of the week before." The Fraser River Fever became the all-consuming passion among West Coast towns and settlements, so much so that one San Franciscan wryly observed, "We had a revival of religion here, but Fraser river knocked it cold. People care less, apparently, just now, for salvation than gold." Manton Marble in the New York based Knickerbocker Magazine outlined the frenzied pace of change to his Eastern audience when he wrote:

During this brief period, ten steamers, making the round trip between San Francisco and Victoria in ten days, had been plying back and forth at their best speed, taking five hundred passengers and full freights up, with only thirty passengers and no freights down. Clipper-ships, and ships that were not clipper built, in scores, were crowded alike -- the Custom-House sometimes clearing seven in a day. Many of the steamers and vessels went up with men huddled like sheep -- so full that all could not sit or lie down together... Nothing else was discussed in the prints, nothing else talked of on
the street; all the merchants labelled their goods 'for Fraser River:' there were Fraser River clothes and Fraser River Hats, Fraser River shovels and crowbars, Fraser River tents and provisions, Fraser River clocks, watches, and fish-lines, and Fraser River bedsteads, literature, and soda-water. Nothing was saleable except it was labelled 'Fraser River.'

The Fraser Fever reached such intensity that before long just about everyone had an opinion as to the great New Eldorado that was threatening to emerge as a replacement to California as the most important region on the Pacific Slope.

Victoria, Whatcom, Port Townsend and Sehome, to name the most important water ports in the vicinity of the gold fields of Fraser, all felt the impact of this huge emigration. The mad rush for real estate in Victoria created a major land boom that inflated the price of lots by as much as 1000 per cent. Victoria itself was transformed from a quiet fur trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company and "San Francisco in 1849 was reproduced on Vancouver's Island." And just as Washington and Oregon newspaper reports of gold on the Fraser had been faithfully transcribed or discussed in the California dailies, the California press reports were subsequently reproduced in Eastern American, Canadian, British, Australian, and other international papers fuelling successive waves of interest in the New Eldorado of the north. Overland companies organised direct for Fraser River from such points as St. Louis, Philadelphia, Chicago, and St. Paul. Large ocean-going steamers were secured to accommodate Eastern American and Canadian passengers from the ports of Boston and New York to Panama, with connections to San Francisco and Fraser River. And by the summer of 1858, the Fraser Fever had hit places
like Australia, the first Australian miners to make the long Pacific crossing arrived in Victoria in late fall of the year. Just as Melbourne and San Francisco owed their original importance to the discoveries of gold in their interior regions, this too, would soon be the case of Victoria in relation to the new Colony of British Columbia proclaimed at Fort Langley, 19 November 1858.

What's the matter? What a clatter!
All seem Fraser-river mad,
On they're rushing, boldly pushing,
Old and young, both good and bad;

Lawyers, doctors, judges, proctors,
Politicians, stout and thin;
Some law-makers, some law-breakers,
Rogues as well as honest men.
Hurly-burly! What a hurry!
All confusion! 'Tis a sin
To see the sacrifice they're making
For the Frazer river tin.

Poor exchanges, price it ranges
Low, and profits they are small:
But they care not, for they can not
 Crush the Frazer river call.

Ballot-stuffers, steamer-puffers
Bribed with money -- sums untold;
They may stick to it, but they'll rue it,
If the people find they're 'sold.'

Picks and shovels, washing cradles,
Packing saddles, pans and bags --
On they rush by every steamer,
'Packed like pickled pork in kegs.'
Such is a brief portrait of the dramatic and highly publicised accounts of this mass migration -- a signal event in the history of Western North America that gripped the attention of the world. Yet the Fraser River gold rush of 1858 has never been awarded an adequate place in the historiography of either Canada or the United States, the regional historiographies of British Columbia, the American Pacific Northwest or the larger Pacific Slope region, or in Native history or Aboriginal rights issues. It is my contention that these historiographies are all blind to transboundary events, especially the Fraser River gold rush of 1858 where a mass invasion of a foreign mining population happened extremely quickly, only to recede just as fast, taking with it not only the participants in this dramatic event, but much of the historical record that today resides south of the international border. The fact that European diseases effectively wiped-out substantial numbers of Native peoples also contributed to this general loss of memory. Our respective tendencies toward nation-building histories have precluded any serious examination of cross-border comparisons. With this in mind, I would like to briefly examine the main trends found in these historiographies within the Pacific Slope region, before resituating the Fraser River Rush within them -- and certainly before establishing through the work of this dissertation the dramatic and lasting consequences of 1858 to Canada and the United States.
Historian John Walton Caughey wrote in 1938 that “Interrelations of the parts of the coast \ldots suggest the need for a regional view as a setting for any local study.” In reviewing the historical literature found on either side of the forty-ninth parallel, one is immediately struck by the fact that early regional histories of the Pacific Slope of North America had a much broader or ‘hemispheric’ point of view compared to regional histories of later times. On both sides of the Canadian-American border, historians sought to fit their locales into a larger North-South dialogue, especially before the pull of transcontinental railways which effectively redirected attention towards a national East-West focus. Today, we seem to have come full circle with tranboundary history, or the history of ‘border regions,’ again in vogue, perhaps due to current-day political developments that have made North-South linkages of greater consequence in the Western hemisphere. The promotion of ‘Cascadia,’ the transboundary economic trade block comprising Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon, is the most recent expression of this long-standing regional perspective.

It is possible to divide Pacific Slope historiography somewhat tentatively into four main approaches. I refer to these chronological, yet overlapping, themes as: (1) Hemispheric; (2) Frontier Thesis Overturned; (3) Nation-Building History; and (4) Regions within Regions. Both Canadian and American historians have followed similar trends in the writing of regional histories that have often been a function of political developments from earliest times to present. Likewise, the degree to which these histories of two neighbouring countries have focussed on the Fraser River gold rush has been marginal at best.\(^\text{17}\)

In examining works from the early, or what I term, ‘Hemispheric’ period, the most noticeable fact in both Canadian and American writings is the general breadth of coverage that has crossed
international boundaries, unlike transboundary regional histories today. Hubert Howe Bancroft's mammoth thirty-nine volume history of the entire Pacific Coast from Panama to Alaska is typical of this kind of hemispheric point of view. Bancroft, a businessman in San Francisco, "dealt with the principal Pacific ports from British Columbia to Mexico" during the later 1800's when the natural North-South trade lines were still an established fact. In Bancroft's own words, a parochial California view did not make sense. "Gradually and almost imperceptibly had the area of my efforts enlarged," he stated. "From Oregon it was but a step to British Columbia and Alaska; and as I was obliged for California to go to Mexico and Spain, it finally became settled in my mind to make the western half of North America my field, including in it the whole of Mexico and Central America."

The volume History of British Columbia, 1792-1887 in Bancroft's series began the trend in American scholarship of including the Pacific province's development in a total Pacific Slope approach to historical writing. The transboundary themes were readily apparent: 18th-century Spanish, English, and American maritime exploration, early fur trade travels into the Columbia region, the Fraser River gold rush as an extension of Californian mining society, British Columbia demands for proper political representation in the national government (not unlike Washington and Oregon), and the necessity of a transcontinental rail connection with the East -- to name a few. The tendency of American hemispheric scholarship towards "breadth of historical vision" is rightly claimed to be a "common characteristic" of such early literature.

As a successor to Bancroft's work, John Walton Caughey's first book, A History of the Pacific Coast (1938), continued the tradition of placing California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia within a larger Pacific Slope perspective. Eschewing the tendency of early historians of the Pacific Coast towards romanticism and antiquarianism, Caughey attempted to provide a clear picture of not only European achievements on the coast, from Mexico to Alaska, but also the First
Nations presence from the 16th century until the early 20th century. The themes are once again those of Bancroft: maritime exploration, fur trade, gold rushes, and the like. Unlike Bancroft's multi-volume work, Caughey's book offered a regional study within the covers of a single volume.

If we compare these two authors to British Columbia historians of the period, we also find more interest in the North-South perspective than is recorded in modern scholarship, but not to the same degree as concurrent American writings. Walter Sage claimed that, "Canadians have not as a rule regarded their history from the North American point of view, still less from the standpoint of an historian of the Americas who sketches the evolution of the twin continents from the North Pole to Cape Horn." One can only assume that the distinct "British bias" of B.C. scholars, as identified by Sage, in some way tempered the North-South view of the province's early historians. Or, perhaps it is that Americans with their earlier claims of "fifty-four forty or fight" had always a more continental point of view in keeping with the political climate of their foreign policy of Manifest Destiny.

Writing just after the time of Bancroft, Alexander Begg in History of British Columbia (1894) concerned himself with furnishing "a continuous history of this portion of the British Empire." Begg objected to Bancroft's "moralizing" over the supposed iniquities of Governor James Douglas and the Hudson Bay Company's monopoly on Vancouver Island. Yet his own neglect in recording American influence in B.C. within the pages of his general history is readily apparent. Typical of the period, historical writing promoted the achievements of young regions within young nation-states. Yet not all British Columbia historians were to be quite so parochial as Alexander Begg.

In British Columbia and the United States, B.C. historians F.W. Howay, W.N. Sage and H.F. Angus noted at the time of World War II "the absence of a clear sense of the political border" during the period of Anglo-American exploration along the Pacific Slope region. Their North-South
examination was further extended when they concurred that "the omnipresence of the United States was a factor of vital importance. The metropolis of the Pacific Coast was San Francisco; and Victoria, the capital and chief port of British Columbia, was only its northern outpost, the gate way to the rapidly declining goldfields of the Fraser Valley. British Columbia was part of the great hinterland of San Francisco, a hinterland which included Oregon and Washington . . . San Francisco was Victoria's connecting link with the outside world."27 Frederick Howay, as the likely author of this sentiment, was said to have been "as well known in historical circles of the Northwest on the other side of the border as he was in Canada."28 The former judge had a keen interest in B.C. legal history and had researched the application of California mining laws and techniques to the Fraser River Gold rush of 1858. Yet the California connection was never emphasized to the degree which Bancroft and Caughey confirmed the larger Pacific Slope or hemispheric views. One can only assume that in wartime Canadian historians were more interested in championing national ties or Imperial links than in effect boosting American claims to their region. The memories of the Oregon Boundary Settlement (1846), the U.S. purchase of Alaska (1867), and the San Juan Islands decision (1872) could only have signalled a cautionary approach to the writing of early transnational history.

Yet by the late 1940s and early 1950s Canada's position in the world was, perhaps, felt to be a little more secure, and the advancement of the historical American presence not quite so offensive a thing. Willard Ireland's influential article "British Columbia's American Heritage," published in 1948, was considered "in its day a new emphasis."29 Nevertheless, despite Allan Smith's view that provincial historians had "a strong and consistent commitment to the idea that British Columbia could not be understood without taking full account of its relationship to the world around it," B.C.'s earliest historians never developed transboundary themes to the extent of their colleagues to the south.
Ultimately, similar currents developed in both Canadian and American historiography which redirected attention into an East-West point of view. Scholarship on both sides of the border acknowledged the influence of Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis in an attempt to attribute West Coast uniqueness to the extraordinary geography of ocean, mountain and climate. British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California often revelled in their isolation from eastern counterparts, and although earlier historians' geographically determined North-South focus was not sustained, there still remained within each of these regions a feeling of distinctiveness. If the larger transboundary Pacific Slope was no longer a distinct region, at least the individual components parts were still considered as such.

Nevertheless, the publication of Earl Pomeroy's *The Pacific Slope* (1965) framed the American West Coast within a national perspective that had "little in common with the popular view of the region's distinctive characteristics." Viewed by some as "one of the most erudite and thoughtful historians of the American Far West," Pomeroy maintained that "the process of moving across the continent no longer screened and transformed men and institutions as it once had." The *Pacific Slope* did not replace Caughey, but supplemented it by examining more of the post-frontier period. Central to Pomeroy's "reorientation" of Pacific Slope history was his objection to the application of the Turner thesis to this region. By contrast, Pomeroy maintained that California was "in almost every respect an intensification of the American spirit. . . . All this is merely America, 'only more so'." By dispensing with the uniqueness of California, Pomeroy detailed the pivotal role played by eastern capital, politics and culture in the development of the state. In the same way, he stressed a metropolitan-hinterland relationship between San Francisco and the regional centres of Portland, Seattle and Spokane. "Whatever the neighboring states were," claimed Pomeroy, "they were in large part because it (California) served as catalyst, banker, and base of operations."
Unfortunately, British Columbia is nowhere to be seen in this framework. British Columbia is virtually ignored even though much of the centre-periphery model could be equally well applied north of Washington state. Comments by Pomeroy to the effect that "Canadians and Americans -- and their money -- moved easily and almost imperceptibly over the border, seldom distinguished by appearance or accent," suggest room for further comparative research.\(^{36}\)

In the same way that Pomeroy was the acknowledged father of the "federal school," which addressed the role of national government on Pacific Slope development, Margaret Ormsby, in \textit{British Columbia: A History} (1958), sought wider ties to the nation and the empire.\(^{37}\) One can safely assume that Sir John A. Macdonald's National Policy was not only a concerted effort to shape-shift the Canadian economy, but also the North-South orientation indicative of old British Columbia as reflected in much of its early historiography. Pomeroy was adamant that California was perhaps more East than the East, and, similarly, Ormsby often portrayed British Columbia as more British than the British.\(^{38}\) It was not until the coming of the railway that British Columbia was truly incorporated into the Dominion of Canada.\(^{39}\) If Ormsby is correct, then undoubtedly the coming of respective transcontinental railways -- the Canadian Pacific in the north, and the Northern Pacific to the south -- transformed the distinctive character of Pacific Slope societies on both sides of the border. Both Ormsby and Pomeroy were more clearly interested in promoting East-West linkages in a kind of nation-building history, as opposed to earlier works that focussed on the North-South pull. Frontier society was now perceived to be more orderly on the American West Coast due to the predominance of eastern influences, and frontier society in British Columbia was certainly more controlled through shared B.C. and Canadian institutions of British Empire.\(^{40}\)

Ormsby did not really ignore the presence of the American southward pull so much as she checked it at every step with British institutions and British personalities. If Bancroft attacked the
Hudson's Bay Company monopoly and the "autocratic" power of Sir James Douglas, Ormsby instead used the company and the man in positive fashion to counteract the American thrust. In doing so, Ormsby divorced the Pacific province from metropolitan San Francisco and hitched it up to Ottawa and London. Both Ormsby, and particularly Pomeroy, forced succeeding generations of historians to look at the Pacific Slope in new ways.

And yet, later historians were not entirely willing to give up the thesis that Pacific Slope regions are distinctly different from eastern North America. Historians Robert Ficken and Charles LeWarne noted this fact in their recent history of Washington State (1988). These historians concluded that rather than being unique, as Washingtonians have routinely claimed, the state merely reflected its former isolation. For many, it was the micro-regions contained within the large West Coast expanse that were really unique. Of the Pacific Slope generally, Fulmer Mood suggested as early as 1942 that "It is many lands, not one land." Mood gave a brief listing of just a few of the subregions which he offered as incontrovertible proof of such diversity. Offering-up among others the Puget Sound country, the Inland Empire, the Willamette Valley, and San Francisco itself, Mood believed that historians writing in any one of these different subregions "would more or less reflect the special local conditions." Certainly Pomeroy was writing from a Oregon-California position, and Ormsby too, more specifically from an Okanagan Valley perspective. Here again, Ficken and LeWarne were apparently writing from a Western Washington point of view.

What perhaps becomes clear from all of the forgoing discussion is that nobody is quite sure what really constitutes a region proper. In Carlos Schwantes' recent popular study, The Pacific Northwest (1989), "a region is defined by discontinuities that mark its borders and by the geographical, political, economic, social, and cultural bonds that give it a sense of internal unity."
Whereas the works of Bancroft and Caughey were determined largely by geographical considerations, Ormsby by political, and Pomeroy largely economic, Schwantes looked at all facets of his comprehensive definition. This led reviewer John Allen to conclude that "it becomes less and less clear whether the author is producing a historical geography, an economic history, or a political history of the region." Schwantes excluded any worthwhile discussion of British Columbia within his American Pacific Northwest analysis. British Columbia is just as isolated as its southern neighbour: it is a resource-based hinterland with similar coastal geography and a typical export-driven, "boom and bust" economy. If anyone should have been able to see the similarities between Washington and British Columbia, it should be Schwantes, who is one of the few authors to have seriously undertaken such comparative writing. His earlier book, *Radical Heritage: Labour Socialism and Reform in Washington and British Columbia 1885-1917* (1970) is testimony to his expertise in this field.

Schwantes' British Columbia counterpart, Jean Barman, also advanced a more comprehensive analysis of regional history in her recent study *The West Beyond the West* (1996). The title of her work, in itself, alludes to the character of British Columbia as separate and distinct from the rest of Western Canada. She clearly insisted that "No one perspective, be it geographic, economic, political or social, is sufficient to interpret this west beyond the west." Barman, noting the central importance of geography in any regional analysis, claimed that geography, of itself, "has not encouraged a strong sense of identity [in B.C.] as a single province." She concludes, "out of their experiences a British Columbia identity emerges. British Columbians are not bound together by geographic coherence. Nor can they be so, given the province's difficult topography and the differing character of its ten regions. But a cohesive physical entity need not exist for there to be a distinct identity." Presumably, B.C. has had many shared experiences with its neighbours to the south: such
as the themes of maritime exploration, Coast Salish territories and resource exploitation, the joint occupancy of the fur trade, the Fraser River gold rush, Puget Sound-Fraser River fisheries, isolationism, railways; or more contemporary concerns regarding transboundary Aboriginal populations, resource economies, international trade unions, to name only the most obvious. These are questions related to the geographical proximity of the two countries. Like Schwantes, Barman often stops just short of pursuing these larger transboundary links.  

One thing that all historians have had in common is that they all in their own way were writing from the perspective of the present with each new generation revising the work of its predecessor. Bancroft wrote about the Pacific Slope from a hemispheric view because his world operated along natural North-South lines. Begg stressed the imperial connection probably due to the Canadian government's poor record with regard to fulfilment of the Terms of Union by which British Columbia joined Confederation. Ormsby and Pomeroy gave the Pacific Slope a voice in national history once their regions had been fully integrated into respective nation-states.

The dilemma for the current field of transboundary historians is that they are now grappling with two distinct orientations which have been submerged under a 'comprehensive' approach; this is perhaps in itself a reflection of the clouded appearance of current-day global realities. If it is true that historians perceive history through the lens of the present, then the present suggests a re-emergence at the turn of the millennium of both North-South dialogue and larger transboundary regional history in general. National politics is no longer as potent a force, yet Schwantes, Barman, Ficken and LeWarne, are still writing from past perspectives while attempting to recognize the larger transboundary region which is (re)emerging. One suspects that comprehensive approaches applied to the writing of general histories is an attempt to satisfy all local, regional, national and international views, yet at the expense of providing a coherent picture of historical development. Is British
Columbia part of a larger coastal region of North America, Canada, or is it distinctly British Columbia? Probably, all of these influences have been applicable at one time or another, but a reorientation back toward the Pacific Slope region also foretells of new approaches to the historical study of Pacific Coast regionalism.

Laurie Ricou observed that Schwantes' *The Pacific Northwest* best described the need for such an historical expression of this emerging reality. In giving attention to early linkages between both sides of the border, Ricou stated that, “the ‘Oregon Territory’ once included much of present-day British Columbia . . . Although most of Schwantes’ dozen and a half references to Canada and British Columbia are incidental and passing, this history of shared occupation . . . provides a dimension of regional definition which Schwantes might have profitably pursued.” Joel Garreau's *The Nine Nations of North America* represents a minority movement that promotes the idea of a West Coast, ranging from San Francisco to Alaska, within which B.C. is firmly planted. With few exceptions, historians of the Pacific Slope have not responded to the new political, economic and cultural forces which continental free trade has engendered.

Some believe that there is currently "a renaissance in west coast art and literature," yet the move towards any trans-regional recognition has been most slow. Charles Lillard's comment with respect to the triangle formed by Seattle, Victoria, and Vancouver perhaps indicated more clearly why historians have been slow to examine events on both sides of the border. Lillard tellingly remarked that “from a distance, the triangle of Seattle-Victoria-Vancouver might be expected to generate a powerful cultural force, containing as it does four large universities, dozens of publishing houses and art galleries; yet so far this force has lain dormant. The result is regionalism, a regionalism of the worst type for it is totally self-inflicted.” Modern-day historians of the Pacific Slope region are still concerned with traditional approaches that place their region within nation-states or highlight the
exclusive nature of their region.\textsuperscript{56} And, as a general rule, if there is little attention given to cross-border people, places and events in the written histories of these two countries, is it little wonder that the Fraser River gold rush -- and its dramatic consequences and lasting legacies -- should remain virtually a forgotten past.

To date, only one historian has focussed on the pivotal role played by Native peoples in the discovery of Fraser River gold. Writing at the same time as Caughey in 1938, U.S. mining historian T.A. Rickard's "Indian Participation in the Gold Discoveries" is important both for its early and unique recognition of Native discoveries and, for the time in which it was written, the sometimes sympathetic voice it lent to Natives overwhelmed by the immense rush of an intransigent mining population.\textsuperscript{57} So little has been written about the Fraser River gold rush, and the devastating effects it had upon Aboriginal populations of southern British Columbia and Washington State, that one must conclude that Rickard's perceptive work went virtually unnoticed. Since 1938, Rolf Knight has been one of the few to recognize the role of Native labour in the gold fields beyond simple gold panning. Knight stated: "Indian placer miners participated in the Tranquille, Fraser and the Cariboo gold rushes. They rapidly learned the techniques and acquired the equipment which allowed for a more systematic working of claims they continued to hold."\textsuperscript{58} Lack of recognition of many of the important questions addressed by Rickard perhaps tell us more about prevalent stereotypes of Native peoples and the kind of colonial history then written, than about Native participation in a dramatic event.\textsuperscript{59} Even though the sources on Native participation are overwhelmingly the stories of non-Native observers, it is clear that Native peoples not only participated in gold discoveries throughout the northern Pacific Slope region, but actively mined the resource, adopted Euro-American technology when to their benefit, provided guiding and other assistance to parties of miners, and attempted, at
the same time, to forcefully defend their lucrative claims to the land through full-scale resistance.⁶⁰

That Rickard recognized Indian participation does not preclude him from the general critique that the Fraser rush has not been taken seriously. What is immediately apparent in reading Rickard’s "Indian Participation in the Gold Discoveries" is that for all of the author’s immense knowledge of mining technology and gold rushes around the world, British Columbia was not placed in a larger context, of say, the American West, beyond listing successive discoveries of gold along the West Coast that ultimately linked the California gold rush of 1849 to the later strikes on Fraser and Thompson Rivers in 1858. And although Rickard thought that on many matters he was well-suited to make "comparisons between the ideas and methods of living among our two peoples," those of Britain and America, this he clearly did not consider for British Columbia and Western America.⁶¹

If the British Columbia gold rush is placed in a larger transboundary setting of the American West, as it is here, then a number of Rickard’s observations and conclusions need substantial revision.⁶²

This is the aim of my dissertation research which explores the Fraser River gold rush within the larger transboundary setting of the Pacific Slope. It is a comprehensive examination of a hidden landscape of archival sources that remain deposited in collections all along the Pacific Slope region and beyond. The New El Dorado of the Fraser River was, in effect, (re)discovered by sifting through gold rush documents that were found to be an integral part of the gold rush landscape, part of the old miners’ trails. In my own way, I have prospected throughout British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and California, following in the footsteps of these miners. Though, like the prospectors of 1858, I was unable to locate the mother lode, rich archival pay streaks were discovered throughout the transboundary region and many golden nuggets unearthed. I will maintain that the reason that a history of British Columbia’s 'founding' event has never been written -- over one hundred and forty
years later is due to the transboundary nature of the subject. Much of the required archival source material consulted exists in collections in Washington, Oregon, California, or in far off places like Connecticut, which is proof in itself that British Columbia belonged to a larger North-South region during the time of the 1858 gold rush, making a transboundary approach imperative. This is an intensely focussed study upon a single critical year, and as a consequence, I have structured my research findings in such a way as to deal with the many temporal, spatial, cultural and political overlaps that were projected on the Fraser River goldfields. The year of 1858 represents a period of great flux and population mobility within an ill-defined space full of political and economic uncertainty. The key to the Fraser River gold rush is, in large part, I would argue, to be found south of the border: in geographic space (the Pacific Slope) and in place (California mining frontier). In each chapter, the Fraser River corridor, in particular, and British Columbia in general, will be placed within these larger transboundary contexts.

Chapter Two, "Prophetic Patterns: The Search for a New Eldorado," offers both a general discussion of the myths and legends that have driven exploration and the pursuit of gold all over the Western hemisphere and a detailed look at competing claims of discovery in the British Columbia gold fields. Since the time of the early Spanish conquistadors and their destruction of Aboriginal populations such as the Kingdom of El Dorado, Europeans have envisioned vast wealth in *terra incognita* guarded by fierce Native protectors jealous of their golden kingdoms. The discourse of gold discovery and Native-White conflict have gone hand in hand from the very beginning in the Americas right up to the discovery of gold on Fraser River and the creation of the 'New Eldorado,' or British Columbia, and beyond. The Fraser River gold rush is part of a continuum of discovery and conquest since 1492. No one is exactly sure who it was that first discovered gold in mainland British
Columbia, thus precipitating the Fraser River gold rush of 1858. Unlike the California and Klondike gold rushes, no single person provides neat closure to this question, although clearly Indians figure prominently in the process.

In Part II, chapters Three, Four, and Five are organised as a trilogy, of sorts. This section is referred to as "Worlds in Collision," in that it examines the three principal cultures inhabiting the middle ground of the Fraser River gold fields in the first, crucial year of the rush. I treat each separately in order to develop and present individual perspectives of the Fur Trade (Hudson’s Bay Company and Native), Californian, and British world views. The year 1858 represents a power struggle on the frontier: a struggle of local Indian power, the entrance of an overwhelming outsiders’ power, transplanted locally and directed largely from California, and regional and long-distance British power. More particularly it is, in fact, a clash of two ‘frontier’ creations: that of ‘California culture’ and ‘British Columbia fur trade culture’ that not only produced violence but the formal inauguration of colonialism.

It should be stated at the outset that Native peoples cannot be isolated as a separate ‘story’ since they were such integrated players in the fur trade world. Also, gold rush sources from Native peoples themselves have been largely lost to time. Yet, the few solitary sources that remain shine through the chaos of the rush, through the destruction of indigenous populations by infectious disease, and are more than a mere flash-in-the-pan in that they corroborate and build-upon the accounts of non-Native peoples. In my travels along the Fraser, Thompson, Okanagan and Columbia Rivers, I searched for Native memories of this cataclysmic event, but few were to be found. I have smoked, drank, and shared food and good times with members of the Yale First Nation, the Siska Band north of Boston Bar, and the Native people of Spence’s Bridge. There are still potent feelings
that have been passed down over generations, emotions born of the events of 1858, yet the memories on which they are based have become largely intangible, residual, though nevertheless, powerful.

During a gathering of historians and First Nations people at the old St. Paul's Mission, near Fort Colville, Washington, I was given the opportunity to present some of my research findings on the devastating effects of the gold rush on Okanagan peoples. At the conclusion of my remarks, an Okanagan Elder expressed thanks for what I had said and proceeded to tell of a far-distant memory that spoke of White miners on the trail to Fraser River having killed many of his people. Tears began to fill his eyes and soon he cried, the audience fell silent in rapt attention, his pain the testimony of past wrongs. As an academic, how I would have loved to record his heart-felt words, but as a fellow human, the personal tragedies of this family did not require that I intrude upon them further, to document this 'informant' in order to validate his past. Though the vast array of archival sources that I have collected tend to look through the eyes of 'others,' that is, non-Native observers, they nevertheless give a clear understanding of the destructive force of the gold rush to Native peoples, their land and property, and, particularly, their freedom. I think it is safe to say that these three main cultures -- those of the fur trade, Californian and British world views -- that operated in the Fraser and Thompson River corridors and competed for supremacy, each existed in a type of vacuum full of the insular prejudices that were common place in the last century.

The culmination of the "Worlds in Collision" is Chapter Six, "Fortunes Foretold: The Fraser River War." There was a great exclusivity and lack of understanding between the three principal cultures that I have compartmentalised for effect. This chapter brings it all to a head for a full re-examination of the Fraser River War, surely one of the most dramatic instances of Native-White conflict to have occurred in Canada. Although it is certain that in the first crucial year of the gold
rush, Fraser River was an extension of Californian mining society, the dramatic consequences of the Fraser River War plunges the gold fields south of the 49th parallel firmly into the orb of the tumultuous American West and its Indian wars. This conflict on the Fraser in 1858 illustrates better than anything else how British sovereignty was marginal at best, prior to the proclamation of the Crown Colony of British Columbia, 19 November 1858, and in terms of Native sovereignty, the very roots of Native rights and unrest current in the province today may be traced to their origin in the events of the 1858 gold rush.

In Chapter Seven, "Mapping the New Eldorado," I examine how a largely unknown fur trade preserve called New Caledonia is quickly transformed through the images and words of the California mining frontier into an invented place that further encouraged miners south of the international divide to make the arduous journey north to Fraser River. Analysis of some of the first published maps of British Columbia highlight the way in which a foreign mining culture asserted near-sovereign control over unconstituted British territory. Miners described the Fraser River in terms of the language of 1849 — the very glory days of the placer miner returned — and the stretches of river in British territory they literally claimed for themselves were renamed and refashioned into a familiar White, California-like landscape.

The Fraser River gold rush certainly may be portrayed in colourful and romantic images of the mining frontier, an event that led to the founding of a province of Canada, but there are also many dark legacies that we must be reminded of, or in the case of this untold story, informed of, in order to see the events of today — Native road blockades, land claims, and the on-going modern Treaty-making process being the most obvious — in a new and informed light. The Fraser River gold rush was the transboundary event that caused major Native-White conflicts throughout southern British
Columbia and Eastern Washington State. It was the event which broke the back of full scale Native resistance, not only in this province, but also in Washington State. And it was also the event which precipitated the formation of Indian Reserves in two different countries.

In Chapter Eight, "Inventing Canada From West to East," I argue that the Fraser River gold rush also had a significant impact on the future expansion of the Canadian State into a transcontinental nation. It was this rush in 1858 which renewed British, Canadian, and American interest in building transcontinental rail links to the Pacific Ocean. It was this rush that coincided with the explorations of Palliser to find a feasible route to the Pacific. Fraser River gold effectively redirected Canadian and American attention to the thought of opening up the Canadian West. And finally, it was also this rush that played a significant factor in the International Financial Society’s purchase of the HBC in 1863 and the Company’s eventual loss of title in 1870. The mineral wealth of British Columbia, as opposed to furs, attracted British investors to view the Canadian West in a new light.

In the same way that California gold encouraged dreams of transcontinental links and the creation of a Pacific Coast state, the Fraser River rush excited the imagination of British and Canadian interests to prosecute continent-wide links for an all red route and the formation of a Crown colony. The reading of practically any North American newspaper in the year 1858 will highlight the fact that discussion of Palliser’s expedition, transcontinental rails, British North America and Fraser River gold are completely interconnected. If I am (re)inventing Canada from West to East it is simply a larger call to historians to consider Canada from a new angle: The Pacific. I seek to put British Columbia into the national story, and for once, for better or for worse, it is British Columbia that builds a nation from coast to coast.
My conclusion, Chapter Nine, "The River Bears South," is that at bottom, British Columbia in the first year of the rush is not the orderly world of British 'Law & Order' that historians have sought to portray -- it is clearly an extension of the American West. Three competing sovereignties were at play, and only one maintained supremacy. Canadian historiography must recognise that British Columbia does not fit any simple Laurentian thesis, whereby Canada’s gradual westward expansion was based upon the commercial fur trade empire and economic system of the St. Lawrence region. The river systems of the Columbia, Mississippi, and Missouri, provided strong North-South links to British Columbia, the Alberta and Saskatchewan plains, and Manitoba’s Red River Settlement, respectively. One of the goals of Confederation, the National Policy, and the establishment of a transcontinental railway above the 49th parallel, was to reorient these connections.

During the time of the gold rush British Columbia existed within a North-South Pacific Slope world. Also, the peaceful frontier that we have perpetuated as a counter to the violence of the American West is not applicable in this instance. There certainly were winners and losers in this rush beyond the miners who gained or lost fortunes in gold. For Native peoples, the legacy of this rush, although virtually nonexistent in our national historiography, can be found in the myriad of place names and Indian Reserves that are an intertwined remnant of this past. The consequences of the Fraser River gold rush can be found in the conflict over disputed Native lands that continue today. And of course, the Fraser Rush signalled the end of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s monopolistic hegemony to the region, the discovery of gold having brought increased political pressure to revoke their rights on the Pacific Slope.
NOTES

1. “A marvellous thing is now going on here. The mining districts of California are being depopulated by the rush of emigration to the British possessions on Frazers [sic] river. Most disastrous results must follow in California for a season. Nor is it any delusion. There can be no doubt of the richness of the gold fields there. This moreover will prove one of the most important events on the Globe -- to us and to mankind.” Edwin M. Stanton to P.H. Watson, San Francisco, California, 19 June 1858. The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. Hereafter referred to as Beinecke Library. In 1858, Stanton was sent to California by the U.S. Attorney General as special Federal agent for the settlement of land claims. By 1860, Stanton became President James Buchanan's attorney general and later President Abraham Lincoln's minister of war. This post he continued within President Andrew Johnson's cabinet.


4. The *Bulletin* alerted its readership to an alarming and growing despondency that had triggered a general "suicide mania" amongst the miners. *Bulletin*, 9 February 1858, p. 3. An examination of the San Francisco *Weekly Gleaner* broadens this context of despair by having published a "statistics of insanity." Twenty-four individuals suffered from cases of "acute mania." "Statistics of Insanity", *Weekly Gleaner, A Periodical devoted to Religion, Education, Biblical & Jewish Antiquities*, San Francisco, 2 July 1858. The Gleaner's departure from the usual topics it explored was a last attempt to salvage its falling readership. In an editorial for the same issue, "The future of the Gleaner is, in consequence of the all overwhelming Frazer [sic] River commotion, not yet decided" due to the "consequent paralysation of all business."


6. “The new Argonauts took with them all the capital they could command, and behind them left declining property values.” Rodman Paul, *California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1947), 178. For a good synopsis of the Fraser River Fever from which much of the above is based, see Manton M. Marble, "Fraser River" in *Knickerbocker, New-York Monthly Magazine LII:4* (October 1858), 331-340.


8. Marble in *Knickerbocker*, 333-34. Marble's description of all manner of items marketed as 'Fraser River' is extremely accurate. A daily reading of the San Francisco *Bulletin* for the year 1858 confirms the nature of the marketing craze described.
"The new gold mines are a reality, and the number of persons en route for that vicinity has no parallel, either in California or Australia. The excitement consequent on this rapid congregation of human beings daily arriving at the mines is such as was never before witnessed." "Letter from General M.M. McCarver", Bulletin, 9 July 1858, p. 2. Also, Reverend R.C. Lundin Brown, British Columbia: An Essay (New Westminster, B.C.: Royal Engineer Press, 1863), 3, where it is stated: "Never in the history of the migrations of men has been seen a 'rush' so sudden and so vast." For an interesting account of the effects on Victoria, see Alfred Charles Bayley, "Early Life on Vancouver Island." Reminiscences. Bancroft Library. For the effects on Portland, Oregon, see Jean-Nicolas Perlot, Gold Seeker: Adventures of a Belgian Argonaut during the Gold Rush Years Howard R. Lamar, ed. (New Haven & London: Yale University Press), Ch. XXVI "The Fraser River Rush," pp. 359-366. Frank Tarbell, "Life and Trade in Victoria During the Fraser River Excitement," (1878) Reminiscences. Bancroft Library.

10. The original town lot record books for Victoria in 1858 testify to the dramatic increase in real estate speculation. These are deposited at Surveyor General Branch, Department of Lands, Davidson Street, Victoria, B.C.


12. See Richard Thomas Wright, Overlanders: 1858 Gold (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Western Producer, 1985).

13."The Frazer Fever in Melbourne," Bulletin, 28 October 1858, p. 1 noted that as of 4th August "excitement is spreading wide and rapidly among the miners." See also, "First Australian Departure of Fraserites," Bulletin, 23 November 1858, p. 2 & "Later from the British Possessions," Bulletin, 29 November 1858, p. 1 where it notes that the first ship to arrive from Melbourne carrying 50 passengers is the Orestes arriving via Port Townsend on its way to Victoria, 19 November 1858, and apparently an earlier ship was on its way, called Norton, with some 500 passengers.


17. Jean Barman in her recent book, The West Beyond the West, has placed British Columbia within the regional label "Pacific Northwest," yet some authors have objected to the extension of an apparently American derivative to the Pacific province. Charles Lillard, well-known writer of popular B.C. history, asserted that:

'Pacific Northwest' is also misleading. In the United States it is an area including Washington, Oregon, Idaho and western Montana. Quite often, and for no discernable reason, Alaska, northern California and Canada's Yukon Territory are thought to belong to the Pacific Northwest. The term is not used in Canada. Historically, British Columbia's North-west Coast was the northwest coast of Vancouver Island, the Queen Charlotte Islands and the coast north of Alert Bay. North of this area, the Alaskans call their Panhandle Southeastern Alaska.
In other words, the American Pacific Northwest could also be considered the Canadian Pacific Southwest. Lillard noted that the larger geographical term of "West Coast" was just as "confusing." While the West Coast of Canada referred to the coastal region between Vancouver and Prince Rupert, West Coast in Alaska meant those islands lying off the Alaskan Panhandle, whereas the West Coast or Pacific Slope of the contiguous states of continental America extended from the 49th parallel all the way to Mexico. Since California, particularly San Francisco, played an extraordinary role in the American and Canadian regions to the north, especially during the gold rush period, I have decided to use the term Pacific Slope to describe the transboundary region covered in this dissertation: that of British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, & California. See Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), for instance, p. 94. Charles Lillard, "Comment", The Malahat Review LX (October 1981), 5.


34. Ibid.


36. Ibid., 264.


43. Allan Smith notes Ormsby's environmentalist point of view which stressed the province's diversity in internal geography. Smith, "The Writing of British Columbia History," 14-15.


49. Ibid., 4.

50. Ibid., 339.

51. William Seward, U.S. Secretary of State, is recorded by Barman as having said that "the Pacific Northwest's common interests would be best served by Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and British Columbia becoming partners," a controversial contention that goes unexplored. Ibid., 94.

52. "The historical logic that Washington state might have, by virtue of Hudson's Bay Company occupation, become part of Canada may be sustained in the current growth of trans-border regional economic associations based on common interests in Pacific Rim links." *BC Studies* LX (Summer 1991): 80-83.


56. There is some limited recognition of transboundary history & issues beginning to surface in the academic community, yet the number of historians actually working on borderland topics of the 49th parallel is exceeding small. A recent conference, perhaps more preoccupied with the notion of 'Cascadia,' was nevertheless a useful forum that brought attention to a range of such subjects: 'On Brotherly Terms': Canadian-American Relations West of the Rockies. University of Washington, Seattle, 12-14 September 1996.

57. T.A. Rickard, "Indian Participation in the Gold Discoveries," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* II:1 (January 1938), 3-18. Hereafter BCHQ. Until his retirement to Victoria in 1933, Rickard's extensive writings in mining history covered a range of geographical areas: such as the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Australia, but his focus on the Native discoveries of gold in British Columbia was something quite new. Born in Italy to English parents in 1864, Rickard trained in Britain at the Royal School of Mines before travelling to America for his first engineering position. Here he quickly became the State Geologist for Colorado (1895-1901) and later a consulting engineer to the United States Bureau of Mines.

58. By the 1880s period, Knight noted that "Indian prospectors did acquire a considerable practical and intuitive knowledge of geology which was hardly traditional." The source for much of Knight's brief analysis is T.A.

59. The fact that Rickard was a practitioner of 'mining history' as opposed to the dominant genre of 'political history' may also explain why his work had such little impact on the writing of Native history or Western Canadian and American history. A mining engineer by profession, his earlier non-technical works include: Across the San Juan Mountains (1903), The Copper Mines of Lake Superior (1905), Journeys of Observation (1907), The Discovery of Gold in California (1928), A History of American Mining (1932), and Man and Metals: A History of Mining in Relation to the Development of Civilization I-II (1932). After retiring from Berkeley, California to Victoria, B.C. in 1933, he wrote: "The Discovery of Gold in B.C. " Beaver (March 1942), "The Fraser River Gold Rush" Beaver (September, 1942), The Romance of Mining (1944), Autumn Leaves (1948), Historical Backgrounds of British Columbia (1948), and Draft iron, a fortuitous factor in primitive culture (1954). In addition to his article for BCHQ examined here, there are the following: "Gilbert Malcolm Sproat," BCHQ I: 21-3, "The Gold-Rush of '49," XIV: 41-60, "The Klondike Rush," VI: 171-187, "The Sea-Otter in History," XI: 15-13, "The Strait of Anian," V: 161-183, and "The Use of Iron and Copper by the Indians of British Columbia," II: 25-50.


61. This is in part due to an over reliance on official colonial and other primary sources written for a British audience, unlike the substantial numbers of early Fraser River reports from miners who generally communicated with people, places, and the press south of the international border. See "Anglo-American Contrasts," Ch. IV, in T.A. Rickard, Autumn Leaves (Vancouver, B.C.: Wrigley Printing, 1948), 19-34.

62. It is not the intention of the author to recount the full record of Native discoveries. However, it is important to note that in Rickard, "Indian Participation," p. 9 recorded that "the epoch-making discovery of gold in British Columbia, was the direct result of the Colville excitement [Washington territory]. Indians from Thompson River, visiting a woman of their tribe who was married to a French Canadian at Walla Walla, spread the report that gold, like that found at Colville occurred also in their country." Ibid., p. 4. Rickard's source was George M. Dawson, The Mineral Wealth of British Columbia (Montreal: 1889). One Native discovery not noted by Rickard is located in Judge F.W. Howay's private correspondence. It occurred in the Kootenay District in the 1860s. See T.C. Elliot to Howay, 25 September 1912, Box 2:18 Howay-Reid Collection. University of British Columbia Special Collections.

63. A major proponent of the law & order image is Barry Gough. See Barry M. Gough, The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1914 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1974) and "Keeping British Columbia British: The Law-and-Order Question on a Gold Mining Frontier," Huntington Library Quarterly 38:3 (1974-75): 269-280. Previous historians have also asserted this image, such as Alexander Begg, Frederick W. Howay, and Margaret A. Ormsby to name but a few.
When I was at Venice, in April 1596, happily arrived there an old man, about three-score yeares of age, called commonly Juan de Fuca, but named properly Apostolos Valerianos... an ancient Pilot of Shippes.... [T]he Viceroy of Mexico, sent him out againe Anno 1592 for discovery of the same Straits of Anian, and the passage thereof, into the Sea which they called the North Sea... all amongst the coast of Nova Spania, and California, and the Indies, now called North America untill hee came to the Latitude of fortie seven degrees, and that there finding that the Land trended North and North-east, with a broad Inlet of Sea, betweene 47. and 48. degrees Latitude: hee entred thereinto, sayling therein more then twentie dayes... he said, that he went on Land in divers places, and that he saw some people on Land, clad in Beast skins: and that the Land is very fruitful!, and rich of Gold, Silver, Pearle, and other things like Nova Spania.

-- Michael Lok's Account of De Fuca's Voyage (1592)

If one were to set sail from California today, hugging the coast of Oregon, Washington, until rounding Cape Flattery to enter the present-day Strait of Juan De Fuca, one familiar with the history of early Northwest coast explorations would be struck by the presence of a singular pillar of rock near Tatoosh Island that still stands guard at the entrance of the strait. Michael Lok described it in 1596 as, "an exceeding high pinacle, or spired Rocke", a geological wonder that still exists today as De Fuca's Pillar. It is a navigational landmark seen for centuries by sea-going travellers including the tens of thousands who made their way to the gold mines of New Caledonia in 1858. Though the De Fuca legend has been considered myth, its impact as a driving force in later 17th and 18th century maritime exploration and cartographic endeavours is undeniable. And as a story that purported to locate
Gold, Silver, Pearle and other things like Nova Spania controlled by a "savage" indigenous population, this legend was not only prophetic in drawing attention to the possibility of indigenous gold over two and a half centuries in advance of the Fraser River gold rush, but also part of a larger pattern of myth-driven exploration in search of New Eldorados. This pattern of story-telling and legends was also to accompany the Fraser rush and beyond.\(^2\)

In the five hundred years or so since Christopher Columbus' landfall in 1492, the discourse of 'New World' discovery presents a continuous theme of myth, legend, and enticing tales of gold that fuelled the imagination of Europeans and Euro-Americans alike in their quest for fabulous riches guarded by unknown exotic civilizations. Columbus may not have realised at the time, but in his first communication with Native peoples, his determined questioning as to the existence of gold was to set in motion the "pattern for all gold rushes in the New World."\(^3\) Columbus managed to return home with just enough of the golden metal and tantalizing rumours of gold to spark general enthusiasm for further expeditions to the Americas. In particular, the Italian sailor was told of a powerful king who lived distantly to the southwest from the Island of San Salvador who held much of the precious metal.\(^4\) Thus began the legend of El Dorado and a repetitive theme of 'discovery' and exploitation that continued some three hundred and sixty-six years later with the creation of a New El Dorado, or British Columbia in 1858.\(^5\) The process has always been the same: first a tantalising rumour or legend; second, early exploration that revealed hints of golden treasure; and finally, a general, yet temporary, mania that compelled miners of every description to search for a New El Dorado.

These legends of the 15th and 16th centuries propelled ever-hopeful Europeans to expand their horizons throughout the Americas in search of mythical golden fortresses: the land of El Dorado, the gilded man of Cundinamarca; the Seven Cities of Cibola; the Kingdom of the Saguenay; and
California, named for Califia -- Queen of the Amazons.\textsuperscript{6} The Spanish conquistadors Cortés and Pizarro had so effectively plundered the riches of the Aztec and Inca Nations that a general belief grew that the whole of the New World must contain marvellous mineral wealth. Not a single European expedition to locate the mythical Straits of Aníán -- the fabled Northwest Passage to the Orient -- could be recounted without peppering the story with gold, silver, jewels and exotic spices.\textsuperscript{7}

Indeed, Jacques Cartier, during the time of his second voyage to Canada in 1535-36, was convinced that the Native ruler known as Donnacona should accompany him back to France to tell the King of “the infinite quantities of gold, rubies and other rich things” to be discovered in the mysterious land of the Saguaney.\textsuperscript{8} By 1535, Columbus' early reconnaissance and news of a golden kingdom to the south had assumed such larger importance that action was taken by a succession of European expeditions bent on reaping a rich reward. The legend, once having rivalled the Inca and Aztec riches in size, was now to exceed this incredible wealth as explorers searched for ever greater kingdoms to conquer. The story is worth repeating in some detail:

somewhere on a plateau in the high mountains of what is now the Republic of Columbia lived a king whose wealth was even greater than that of the Aztecs or Incas. The king's name was \textit{el hombre dorado}, or El Dorado: the gilded man of Cundinamarca. Once a year El Dorado was the central figure in a ceremony that required the covering of his body with gold dust. To accomplish this, his body was coated with resinous gums. Then it was liberally dusted with gold. When this was done, El Dorado was carried in a litter decorated with disks of gold. The first part of this procession consisted of men whose bodies were painted with red ochre, as this was a mourning ceremony for the wife of an earlier chief who had drowned herself in Lake Guatavita and became the goddess of the lake. To pay tribute to the goddess, all those following the men painted with red ochre were dressed in richly adorned costumes of jaguar skins, bright feather headdresses, and all were decorated with gold and emeralds. Songs and music accompanied the procession; and when it reached the shores of the mountain lake, El Dorado and his nobles got into a canoe and paddled to the center of the lake. There the gilded king threw offerings of gold and emeralds into the icy water. Finally, at the close of the ceremony, El Dorado jumped from the canoe and washed the gold dust from his body.\textsuperscript{9}
It was these tales of fabulous riches that acted as a catalyst for a succession of Spanish, German, and English expeditions in search of Cundinamarca's kingdom, ultimately located on a high plateau in Columbia. The searches invariably led to European atrocities against the indigenous population of South America, which were to become just as legendary. One of the first expeditions in search of the gilded man was under the leadership of Ambrose Alfinger, the German governor of Venezuela. Between the years 1528 and 1531, Alfinger began one of "the bloodiest of all campaigns centering around a New World myth." His savage practices of slaving and "gold extortion" were beyond criminal. In 1531, Alfinger and his troops chained together several hundred South American slaves, each fastened by a metal collar, one to another, in a long burdensome line used for the transport of supplies. Worked to excess, if one of the involuntary porters became exhausted, the head was severed from the body, the prisoner collapsing to the ground, whereupon the dead man's load was distributed to others in the line. Alfinger is said to have penned entire villages into concentration camps and demanded ransom fees from outside family members. Freedom was brief though, as a family might be seized again and again until the last pieces of indigenous gold were exacted. The Alfinger expedition failed to find El Dorado after travelling within fifty miles of the Bogota Plateau, the Chibchas having sent a poisoned arrow through the conquistador's throat in return for the mass suffering and killings he had inflicted upon their people.

Undaunted, European expeditions persisted in their attempts to locate hidden treasure in the vicinity of the Bogota Plateau. With such a driving thirst for treasure not having been quenched by the few glittering artifacts located near the sacred Lake Guatavita, Europeans set to cutting a large channel to drain the gold-concealing waters in an attempt to recover El Dorado's treasure. Little if any was found, yet the truth of the gilded man's fortune lived on as new expeditions were prosecuted into further 'undiscovered' lands, and each subsequent failure was to correspond with the
ardent belief that El Dorado must lay elsewhere.

A succession of sixteenth-century field reconnaissance was further promoted when Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, a survivor of the ill-fated Narváez Expedition, completed his eight year traverse from the Texas coast to the Gulf of California in an attempt to return to Mexico after having been shipwrecked in 1528. The long and arduous journey west brought de Vaca and his handful of companions in contact with a variety of Native American tribes who spoke of gold, emeralds and pearls existing in Native settlements somewhere on the Pacific coast of North America. All of a sudden, European attention was redirected from the south and began pushing northward. Franciscan Marcos de Niza, veteran of the conquest of Peru, confirmed the de Vaca story with tales of Cíbola — "gold, silver, emeralds, and 'cities' beyond a golden pueblo which he claimed to have seen from a distance." This report further fuelled the imaginations of the conquistadores: in 1539-40, Cortés sent three ships under the command of Francisco de Ulloa northward in search of golden cities by the sea, while at the same time Francisco Vásquez de Coronado entered the pueblo-lands of Arizona and New Mexico. These expeditions resulted in no tangible wealth to add to the Spanish Empire's treasury.

By 1541, Francisco de Bolaños was ordered northward to determine if a northwest passage might exist and thus allow foreigners to approach the mythical riches of these as yet unfound Native settlements along the Pacific Ocean. The voyage ended abruptly, turned back by a severe storm. At the same time, Pedro de Alvarado, conquistador of Guatemala and El Salvador, hoped to replicate the successes of Cortés and Pizarro by exploiting similar indigenous wealth. Through his efforts João Rodrigues Cabrilho became the first European to reach Alta California. Though repeated attempts were made, the Spanish never realised their dreams of another Inca or Aztec fortune along
the shores of the Californias, from Mexico to the Strait of Anian, or Costa del Norte de California, the Northwest coast stretching all the way to Alaska. Ironically, even with their occupation of the California landscape at such places as Monterey Bay to the south or Friendly Cove off the West Coast of Vancouver Island to the north, discoveries of gold of the magnitude that would rock the world would only occur some three hundred years later.¹⁹

These myths and legends refused to die. The need for wonder continued to keep the stories alive and ultimately El Dorado, the Seven Cities of Cibola, and California, named for Califia, Queen of the Amazons, neatly blended together into a single tale of fabulous gold found where the Spanish and Mexicans had least expected it. After years of searching for El Dorado, on 24 January 1848, James W. Marshall, a labourer in the employ of Captain John Sutter spied a piece of the elusive metal along the south fork of the American River near present-day Coloma, in the foot hills of the Sierra Nevada range.²⁰ Though the conquistadores of old failed to add California to the long list of lootings that had occurred in Mexico, Central America, and South America, a new type of conquistador in keeping with young America's democratic notions of equality, together with the kind of accessible transportation offered by steamship technology, inflated the invasionary forces to a mass level. Lucius Edelblute, a young miner born in Richmond County, Virginia, recalled that “the gold excitement existed all over the country [sic] and the talk was that indians was eaten gold pankaks [sic] in California.”²¹

California having been ceded to the United States in the aftermath of the Mexican-American War, hundreds of thousands would seek their fortune, where in the year to two previous, only a handful of small invasionary forces of Spanish and Mexican intruders had wandered. The California gold rush which began in 1849 was to exhaust the placer mines of their free gold within an extremely brief, rapacious period of eight to ten years. Like Peru, Columbia, and Mexico before, indigenous
populations were overrun and ultimately overpowered by well-armed Europeans and Euro-Americans who claimed the land. Of the California rush Albert Hurtado wrote: "Miners had slight sympathy for Indian life and little need for their labor. Some newcomers clamoured for wars of extermination and the new state tried to accommodate them." Contemporaries knew of these circumstances. A San Francisco newspaper reported in 1860 that "history has no parallel to the recent atrocities perpetrated in California. Even the record of Spanish butcheries in Mexico and Peru has nothing so diabolical."

Writing about one particular, though not unique, incident in Humboldt County, northern California, the San Francisco Bulletin described the pervasive view of Euro-Americans toward the Indian:

The perpetrators seem to have acted with a deliberate design to exterminate the Indian race. Their butchery was confined to women and children, the men being absent at the time. They were the Digger tribes, known as friendly Indians, the most degraded and defenseless of the race, entirely destitute of the bold and murderous spirit which characterizes other tribes of red men. They were charged with stealing cattle and other property from whites, and with selling firearms and ammunition to the hostile tribes. The attack was made in the night, when they were collected in their little settlements or villages at some sort of merry-making. The men were known to be absent -- they had possibly fled on suspicion of danger. Under these circumstances, bands of white men, armed with hatchets -- small bands but sufficiently numerous for the purpose -- fell on the women and children, and deliberately slaughtered them, one and all. Simultaneous attacks were made on the different rancherias or encampments. Fire-arms were scarcely used, the work being done with hatchets. In one of the settlements an aged and feeble chief collected the women around him, when they were about flying on the approach of the human bloodhounds, assuring them that white men did not kill squaws and that they would be safe. But they all perished together. One of our informants saw twenty-six bodies of women and children collected in one spot by the more humane citizens preparatory to burial. Some of them were infants at the breast, whose skulls had been cleft again and again. The whole number slaughtered in a single night was about two hundred and forty.

With the Native populations massacred and gold-bearing sands depleted, old 49ers, like the conquistadores of old, recommenced their trek northward. Eventually, the California mining frontier prospected its way northward out of northern California into Oregon and Washington, and it was only a matter of time before rumours of gold north of the forty-ninth parallel would be investigated.
Rumours of gold were nothing new for the Northwest Coast of America, particularly for the landscape that would become British Columbia. Certainly the mythical voyage of Juan De Fuca foretold of treasures existing here in the 16th century. By the early 18th century, Natives had also informed HBC trader James Knight of York Factory that mineral riches were to be found in the far Northwest. Then too, in the early 19th century, the itinerant Scottish Botanist David Douglas, after whom the Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) was named, purported to have found gold along Okanagan Lake as earlier as 1833. And with the California rush of 1849, many suspected that gold might be found along the whole Pacific Slope region. Donald Ross of the Hudson's Bay Company was not alone when he openly wondered whether gold might be found outside California. "I confess that I have perused with much wonder & astonishment, not unmixed with incredulity, the various accounts of & from the gold regions of California," wrote Ross. "I said to myself is it possible, that white men, Europeans as well as Natives, should for the space of 300 years... been treading over ground teeming with the precious metals... never having discovered the important fact?... who knows but [gold discoveries] may extend much further north: nor need the idea perhaps be altogether discounted of the possibility or even probability of a continuous connexion between the gold regions of California & those of Siberia...".

Hudson's Bay Company officers at Fort Simpson began to make inquiries of Native peoples as to the existence of gold, showing them examples of gold dust procured for the purpose. Within short order, specimens of gold ore from the Queen Charlottes were traded at Fort Simpson in 1850, some apparently weighing as much as twenty-one ounces. The fur trading company was quick to diversify its interests as Chief Trader John Work undertook field reconnaissance in the vicinity of Englefield Bay where test blasts were conducted with good results. In October 1851, an HBC sponsored expedition under Captain William Mitchell of the ship *Una* was quick to follow but
prevented from further prospecting, and indeed, mining. Chief Trader William McNeil, who accompanied the HBC-backed mining party, reported to James Douglas, Chief Factor of HBC operations along the Pacific Coast and Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island, that Native opposition prevented them from exploiting the new found resource:

I am sorry to inform you that we were obliged to leave off blasting, and quit the place for Fort Simpson, on account of the annoyance we experienced from the natives. They arrived in large numbers, say 30 canoes, and were very much pleased to see us on our first arrival. When they saw us blasting and turning out the gold in such large quantities, they became excited and commenced depredations on us, stealing the tools, and taking at least one-half of the gold that was thrown out by the blast. They would lie concealed until the report was heard, and then make a rush for the gold. Some blows were struck on these occasions. The Indians drew their knives on our men often . . . our force was not strong or large enough to work and fight also. The natives were very jealous of us when they saw that we could obtain gold by blasting; they had no idea that so much could be found below the surface; they said that it was not good that we should take all the gold away; if we did so, that they would not have anything to trade with other vessels should any arrive. In fact, they told us to be off.\(^\text{29}\)

Based on the negative reception he encountered, McNeil advised Douglas that if a second expedition was formed for the purposes of mining, "a force of at least 80 men would be required" with two officers in charge of a land party and a further three to preside over the ship, in addition to the captain.\(^\text{30}\)

Word soon got out and there followed a number of American expeditions to Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands). As before, a familiar pattern of discovery and exploitation was to occur, but with a very different result. The Queen Charlottes gold rush ended almost as abruptly as it had began with Euro-American miners having been forced out of the territory. As elsewhere in British Columbia, Native peoples discovered gold in the Queen Charlottes and traded with the Hudson's Bay Company.\(^\text{31}\) Apparently, the Haida improvised miners' technology in order to procure the metal for trade purposes and for the production of bullets for their arms. "The difference between their modes
of extracting gold and the American mode,” recalled one American miner, was that “the knowledge of blasting was unknown to them, as they built a fire on the rock and when sufficiently heated poured water on it and caused it to break, then pounding it made the required shape as a bullet . . . . The Indians being the stronger party at the first expedition, after the first blast was put in, rushed in with their knives in hand and a scramble took place for the results of the blast and the lion share went to the knives.”

From the very beginning of White encroachment on these Islands, the Haida were extremely protective of their land and resources. The Hudson’s Bay Company perhaps understood this in that they at first preferred to trade for the gold within the secure confines of Fort Simpson on the Mainland coast rather than intrude directly upon their lands. In preparation for a second attempt to work the promising ore mines of Gold (or Mitchell) Harbour, Douglas clearly re-emphasized that "The principal difficulty apprehended in the present expedition is the opposition of the natives, who being averse to the working of the mines will throw every possible obstacle in your way." Douglas’ solution was to extinguish title to the small portion of land about the area of Gold Harbour and "that possession of the mines should be secured without bloodshed." He instructed accordingly:

Among the various plans suggested by our experience of Indian character, there is none that holds out a greater prospect of success than the following, which is briefly as follows: --

The Indians of Gold Harbour having repeatedly, both to Mr. Work and yourself, agreed to surrender the district about Gold Harbour into our hands for the purpose of building a trading post, you will accept the surrender on those terms, in addition to a reasonable amount of compensation by way of purchase-money. That being effected, let a strong breastwork of rough logs be thrown up around the mine, and warn the Indians that they are not to enter the enclosure without leave. Sentinels should be placed in sufficient numbers to enforce obedience and keep the Indians from trespassing. . . . Should any other party be employed on the vein when you reach Gold Harbour, you will require them to remove from the spot, as the place belongs to the Hudson's Bay Company by discovery and prior occupation, as well as by Her Majesty's exclusive license of trade granted to the company.
You may also inform the parties, if Americans, that British ships of war are soon expected, and that they run the risk of being seized and their property confiscated if found on any part of the British coast.\textsuperscript{34}

For Euro-Americans the dramatic consequences of trespassing on Haida Gwaii would be long remembered. Travelling north, late in 1851, the crew of the Sloop \textit{Georgiana} became shipwrecked on the perilous reefs of the Queen Charlottes. The Indians held this gold-seeking party captive and prevented them from undertaking any mining whatsoever. One member of the expedition recalled the destitution and dependency they suffered in captivity. "We were wrecked up there, & captured by the Indians 54 days as prisoners & were ransomed by the [U.S.] Government," he claimed. "We never saw any gold at all, not a color; we never tried to find any. We were close prisoners all the time . . . we were perfectly destitute; had nothing left but what we had on our backs. The Indians finally stripped the wreck & took everything out in a wet condition. What they did not get out they picked up along the beach. After they stripped the vessel they burned her up for her iron bolts."\textsuperscript{35} This mining party was ultimately rescued by a company of American volunteer troops from Steilacoom, Washington Territory, who purchased goods on credit from the Hudson's Bay Company in Victoria for the purpose of "making a bargain with the Indians for [their] liberation."\textsuperscript{36}

By July 1852, Douglas was able to report that the ship \textit{Exact} "had [also] been driven off by the natives from Mitchell's Harbour" and the brig \textit{Damanscove} was similarly "beaten off Queen Charlotte's Island."\textsuperscript{37} Undoubtedly, James Douglas was relieved that these mining parties had met with such a poor reception. Privately, Douglas was concerned that the Americans might attempt a filibustering scheme to annex the Charlottes. As a consequence, the imperial government of Great Britain added to Douglas' domain and annexed Haida Gwaii to the Colony. Henceforth, the fledgling British colonial authority resided within the "Colony of Vancouver Island and Its Dependencies."\textsuperscript{38}
As Historian E.E. Rich concluded, the “Indian opposition had saved the day for the British. . .”.

Douglas, in his official capacity as the new Lieutenant-Governor of the Queen Charlottes, quickly issued a proclamation that declared the rights of the Crown in respect to gold:

Whereas by law all mines of gold, and all gold in its natural place of deposit within the colony of Queen Charlotte's Island, whether on the lands of the Queen or of any of Her Majesty's subjects, belong to the Crown: And whereas information has been received by the Government that gold exists upon and in the soil of the colony, and that certain persons have commenced, or are about to commence, searching and digging for the same for their own use, without leave or other authority from Her Majesty: Now I, James Douglas, esquire, the Governor aforesaid, on behalf of Her Majesty, do hereby publicly notify and declare that all persons who shall take from any lands within the said colony any gold, metal, or ore, without having been duly authorised in that behalf by Her Majesty's Colonial Government, will be prosecuted both criminally and civilly, as the law allows. And I further notify and declare, that such regulations as may be found expedient will be prepared and published, setting forth the terms on which licenses will be issued for this purpose, on the payment of a reasonable fee.

The thwarted Queen Charlotte's gold rush was unique, perhaps, in the history of the Americas to this point, in that an Aboriginal population, for once, was able to successfully halt a rush before it began, though in truth, the gold deposits there did not prove promising. Euro-American expansion was curbed in this instance, but it nevertheless provided James Douglas with a prophetic warning of things to come. The general pattern of events would shortly repeat themselves just six years later; but instead of a rush of a few hundred or so miners, the Fraser River region offered a rich and accessible field that prompted a full-scale invasion of over thirty thousand fortune seekers. Like the Haida, the entire Native population of southern British Columbia and Washington State were prepared to protect their land and resources.

Californian Major William Downie, familiar with Natives and miners on either side of the border, believed the Native peoples of British Columbia to be distinctly different to Californian
Natives in one very important aspect: they were seasoned traders with Europeans and strenuously resisted White encroachment through protection of their ancient claims to the land.

The gold mining of British Columbia proved somewhat different from that of California. In the first place the northern Indian was not as easily handled when the question was 'digging for gold,' as was his more southern brother. The reason for this may probably be found in the different manner, in which the value of gold was presented to him. In California the suave priest would apparently place any value upon the gold. A meal, a piece of cloth, a little tobacco, and if the Indian professed Christianity, the absolution from his sins, would constitute the barter, in which a lump of gold or a quantity of dust represented his side of the bargain. In British Columbia the proposition was very different. The mercantile world had thought fit to establish proper business relations with the Indians. They had traded with them on a commercial basis, and when they discovered that gold was worth anything to the pale-face, they had accepted and received for it, if not an adequate value, at all events, a value which was measured by a business proposition. No wonder, therefore, that these savages objected to the sudden invasion of many thousands of men, who came to take away part of the material, for the finding of which they were, in their own estimation, handsomely rewarded.  

The centuries-old pattern of gold discovery and exploitation was broken by the Haida peoples. Euro-Americans were effectively shut out by a combination of forceful Native resistance and the extension of practical British sovereignty. However, as rumours of gold began to circulate with regard to New Caledonia, Euro-Americans were to become much more attentive to organising along military-like lines before re-entering the foreign lands north of the international divide. And whereas British colonial authority effectively coped with the limited rush to the Queen Charlotte's, it would be quite unprepared for the dramatic consequences that were to be played out just six years later along the Fraser and Thompson River corridors.

In the year to two prior to 1858, stories of gold discoveries in New Caledonia began to circulate in the presses of Washington and Oregon. Initial prospecting by Europeans had struck pay dirt and these ‘first discoveries’ were quickly recorded and the claimant’s posterity assured. In time
many of these pioneer successes were given a life of their own as stories of hitting it rich were told and retold until accepted as fact. Just as tales of gold discovery had fuelled the imagination of previous goldseekers, these first reports were the impetus for the eventual belief that a New El Dorado of the north had been found. No one is certain exactly who it was that first discovered gold in Mainland British Columbia and thus precipitated the Fraser River gold rush of 1858. Consultation of the many diaries, letters, reminiscences, and contemporary newspapers found in archival collections along the Pacific Slope suggest several competing claims of discovery.

Unlike the California gold rush, there is no single person who provides neat closure to this question. At the same time, although James Marshall is widely credited with having precipitated the rush of 1849, whether he was actually the first to discover gold in the Sierra Nevada range is open to question. Past history written from a Euro-American perspective offers little room for alternatives, and yet there is some evidence for the Native peoples of California having mined the resource in advance of the famous rush. Major William Downie, an inveterate gold hunter was convinced of this possibility after having heard that between 1838 and 1846 the Customs House records of Monterey listed "as much as $5,000 in washed gold or gold dust" exported to various parts of the world. He further claimed personal first-hand evidence.42

Setting out from Bullard's Bar in 1851, Downie's own explorations took his mining party to the North Forks of the Yuba River, later called Downieville, yet his 'discovery' of gold that led to the formation of a town was noted in atypical fashion: "For my own part, I merely claim that we were the first white men who took out gold at the Forks, and I firmly believe that the Indians were aware of its presence there long before our arrival."43 Euro-American prospectors who travelled to New Caledonia prior to the 1858 Fraser River gold rush were not quite so gracious in acknowledging the pre-existing claims of their Native hosts. Although early Californian newspapers often reported that
gold was being traded by Native peoples in advance of the rush, of the four main competing claims made by non-Native miners, virtually no mention was ever made of this fact.

One of the most important gold strikes to have occurred on the Fraser was that of the celebrated Hill's Bar. The term 'Bar' was common Californian parlance for a low bank of sand or gravel, usually deposited at the side of a stream by the flow of a river. Though little has been written about the Fraser Rush, White 'discoveries' of gold are some of the very few stories that have gained a place in British Columbia's history, stories of pioneer successes repeatedly told to willing listeners until their temporary importance became permanently mythologised. Usually cited as the most productive bar on the lower Fraser, Hill's Bar earned a place in the history of British Columbia in part from its reputed richness, but perhaps, primarily, due to the longevity of one of its founders. Californian James Moore ended his days in a hospital in Kamloops, B.C., where he had plenty of time to tell those interested about the discovery of Hill's Bar which had occurred on his birthday, 12 March 1858. Having outlived most of his partners, Moore could perhaps conveniently forget that many White miners from Washington and Oregon had preceded his party's arrival, not to mention still earlier Native miners. Nonetheless, Moore and the Hill's Bar discovery has become one of the best known of claims, a claim that is easily dismissed. The fact that the main rush from California did not begin until at least a month after their discovery certainly established Moore's party as among the very first Californians on the ground, but many others began the journey into foreign lands in the year or two prior to 1858.

To understand the chronology of these first discoveries, it is important to place them within the network of pre-existing HBC trails that criss-crossed the 49th parallel and the Fraser River itself,
in addition to the larger context of events south of the border. Just as the brief Queen Charlotte Islands gold rush of 1850-52 had served to draw the California mining frontier's attention north of the border, Washington Territory's limited Fort Colvile gold rush of 1855 on the upper Columbia brought miners within miles of the international divide. Fort Colvile and hence the Colville Indians were named for Eden Colvile, Associate Governor of Rupert's Land.

In the early 1850s, Isaac Stevens, Governor of Washington Territory, had attempted to extinguish Native claims to the lands of Eastern Washington through a vigorous campaign of treaty-making, agreements that were not initially ratified by the U.S. federal government. Before these treaties were concluded, the gold discoveries of Fort Colvile “brought whites swarming across the Cascade Mountains” and the Yakimas Native peoples “rose in violent protest.” As a consequence, when the Fort Colvile Rush began, miners trespassed on Native lands in which title had not been extinguished. Stevens had demanded through official decree that miners and settlers not travel east of the Cascade range, fearing that the U.S. Army could not offer adequate protection, but this was largely ignored by miners bent on entering the newly discovered gold fields.

One such miner was James Houston, described variously as a soldier of fortune, Indian fighter, veteran of the Mexican-American War, and one who had also served under "the notorious filibusterer [William] Walker in the Nicaragua raid." Houston had apparently arrived just south of the 49th parallel at Bellingham Bay during the Fort Colvile gold rush and immediately teamed up with Edward Eldridge, a significant landowner and politician in Whatcom, before starting out east of the Cascades. Apparently, Eldridge soon returned home as settlers had engaged in a war with the Yakima peoples of eastern Washington. By 1855, Pierre Jean Tselkakashin, the principal chief of the Shwayip or Colville Indians, asserted that all miners must not travel through the lands of Kettle Falls as a route to the Pend d'Oreille placer mines. Houston, undaunted, picked up another partner and
continued to push on, finally reaching Fort Colvile where mining began at the junction of the Columbia and Pend d'Oreille Rivers. During the night, Houston and his partner were attacked by the Shwayip, his partner killed. Houston quickly crossed the 49th parallel to seek safe return passage through peaceable British-controlled territory, possibly to Fort Hope.

While on the British side of the line, Houston claimed that Okanagan people had robbed him of his pack horses and consequently was unable to cross the mountains to the Fraser River, instead heading for Fort Kamloops. It is at this point in the story that Jason Allard, son of HBC Trader Ovid Allard, claimed that it was Houston who first discovered gold in mainland British Columbia. "Donald McLean, the officer in charge [of Fort Kamloops], looked upon him at first with suspicion," related Allard. "At last, however, Houston convinced the Factor that he was a prospector, and McLean gave him a hut at the dairy farm in which to live. In the Spring of 1857 Houston started prospecting about the Kamloops district and found gold in Tranquille Creek. He recovered a considerable amount which he sold to McLean who forwarded it to Victoria. Governor Douglas, who was also in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company in the West, sent the gold from Victoria to San Francisco, and it was its arrival there that led to the gold rush of the following years to the Fraser River."

It is this account that led to the subsequent view that the Fraser River gold rush was precipitated by the Hudson's Bay Company exporting their gold directly to the San Francisco mint, and thus inadvertently spreading knowledge of the new discoveries. In examining HBC "Country Correspondence" prior to the 1858 rush, nowhere is there found any evidence to support this view. Undoubtedly, too, Douglas after his experiences with the Queen Charlotte's gold rush would not have wanted to provoke American miners to action in this way. It would seem that all gold collected, whether from James Houston, Native miners, or other non-Native goldseekers was sent directly to
London in keeping with standard HBC practice. Just as the fur returns of the interior posts were annually collected at Fort Langley for shipment to England, so it was with the limited amounts of gold collected prior to 1858. As to Houston's claim of being the first to discover gold on the mainland, there are other competing claims for the year 1857 supported by more substantial evidence.  

As Native-White tensions increased south of the border, conflict became inevitable and a few goldseekers attempted to reach the mines of Colville by travelling via Puget Sound to the Fraser, then crossing on the British side of the 49th parallel using the HBC's Similkameen Trail. This allowed miners, similar to Houston's original plan, to crawl the border in safe territory until dipping down near trail's end into the region of Kettle Falls, Colville District, thereby not breaking the Governor's decree. More importantly, perhaps, was that the presence of HBC employees effectively guaranteed the safety of Americans who were so adamantly disliked by First Nations in the transboundary region. It would seem that some of the first prospectors on Fraser River, therefore, travelled to New Caledonia with the original intention of crossing to the Fort Colvile region, and once inside British territory, began to make explorations that led to gold discoveries. Hudson's Bay Company employee William Yates recalled seeing Charles Adams and Joe Forester, the first Euro-American miners at Fort Hope, before the general rush ensued:

The three men who took the first gold out of the Fraser I remember well [he stated]. They went to Kamloops. They were going then to Kootenay. They came up from Bellingham Bay in 1857 and were going in with the Hudson's Bay train. They were too late coming up to get in with the [Colville] train -- the train had started. Mr. McLean said, 'Well gentlemen I can tell you what to do.' McLean was here with the Fall train -- ten or fifteen horses taking in little stuff, such as medicines. He said, 'you can come in with me to Kamloops and you can winter there and I will pack your grub in from here, what you have with you (they came in canoes) and I will send enough horses to take you in the Spring if you want to go. Well they agreed to go. And during the winter time, it was a very open winter, they thought they would go prospecting and they struck down the river Tranquille and struck the Thompson and mined along. They found gold -- a little all the way down and so on and they came to a bar and called it Fosters Bar, and they settled there... And during that Spring
they made about $2000 on this bar and they came down then by the Fraser... I saw the gold myself. That is where the excitement came from. And they went down to Bellingham Bay to buy supplies intending to come up here and go through the canyon. They found they could go through the canyon by getting Indians... In the three years before the gold excitement on these bars there were millions of dollars under my feet and I never knew it... This was the first gold I ever saw. There was no talk of gold on the Fraser River before these men came down... I was astonished when I saw them coming down the river.\textsuperscript{50}

Charles Adams and party, as possibly the first Euro-Americans to mine for gold along Fraser, are also supported by the reminiscences of Chief Trader Roderick Finlayson. “Gold was first on the Thompson River in crevices of the rocks on the river banks,” recorded Finlayson. “The officer in charge of Kamloops, Mr. McLean, asked for iron spoons to dig out the nuggets. The natives first dug out the nuggets & brought them to Mr. McLean. This occurred in 1857. Mr. McLean sent specimens of the gold down here [Victoria], and he was instructed to give every encouragement to the natives and obtain all he could of the gold. Shortly after this, a Mr. Adams, a miner, washed for gold on the Fraser. He got a small bag of fine dust which he exhibited on Puget Sound & other places. The news spread rapidly to Oregon & California.”\textsuperscript{61} Finlayson made no mention of Houston's presence on Tranquille in Spring of 1857, but if he were there he must have encountered the Adams party who were also exploring in the region.

Perhaps the memories of original Euro-American exploration are further clouded by the difficulty in synchronizing accounts of miners who entered New Caledonia by one of two main approaches: either by land through the Canadian and American Okanagan (Houston), or by sea to Fraser River (Adams). The fact that Adams' prospecting journey is recounted by HBC men of rank, William Yates and Roderick Finlayson, as opposed to the latter-day reminiscences of Jason Allard, son of Ovid Allard, the HBC Trader at Fort Yale, suggests that a little more weight might be attached to the Adams discovery.
Charles Adams did return the following year to Fraser, where his partner, a Hawaiian by the name of Charles McDaniel, subsequently shot him dead in the vicinity of Fort Langley. Governor Douglas asked for extradition of the murderer, but in a letter to Fayette McMullen, Governor of Washington Territory, McDaniel's counsel argued otherwise, so uncertain was the legal jurisdiction in the area.

From all the information I have been able to obtain the transaction above referred to occurred at a point so near the line dividing the Territory of the United States from that of Great Britain as to render doubtful the question of jurisdiction. Whilst the citizens of this Country have quietly acquiesced in the right of the Hudson's Bay Company over the navigation and trade of Fraziers River (having had heretofore no interest in the navigation and trade of that river) yet by no official act of the United States or any of its officers has the sovereignty of the English ever been recognized over the mouth of that River, and it is fair to presume that there will be no such official act on the part of the United States or any of its officers until the line between the two Countries is fairly established by the Commissioners appointed for that purpose and who are now in the discharge of that duty.

Interests have lately arisen and are daily accumulating near the line dividing the two countries of such magnitude as to render any official act bearing directly or indirectly on the question of jurisdiction of the greatest importance. . . . The conflicts that may and in all probability will take place between the citizens of the United States and Great Britain . . . renders it important that we should know what authority the Government of Vancouvers Island has over that portion of the Mainland laying within the British possessions.

The 49th parallel at this point was little more than a paper demarcation between two frontier territories with no reality in physical space. With one of the first claims of gold discovery came also one of the first claims of contested sovereignty by Americans over the lower reaches of the Fraser River.

There is yet another competing claim of discovery that again links Fraser River with the earlier rush of Fort Colvile. A.C. Anderson, variously employed as an HBC fur trader, explorer-map maker, author and customs collector, recalled the connecting link between these two rushes. "Mr. Angus
McDonald," he stated, "whom I had left in charge of Fort Colville . . . wrote down to Fort Vancouver, stating that one of his men, while employed hauling firewood, had, almost undesignedly amused himself by washing out a pannikin of gravel on the beach near Colvile. Some particles of gold appeared -- enough however to excite curiosity and invite further research. Explorers went out, and, at the north of the Pend Oreille River, close by the boundary line, diggings which were immediately productive were discovered. Afterwards explorers went in the direction of Frazer River, chiefly half-breed settlers from the vicinity of Colvile." The view that "half-breed" settlers made initial prospecting trips into New Caledonia is further confirmed in an early article from the San Francisco Bulletin. One of the first pre-rush articles to be written in the California press confirmed gold in the vicinity of the Thompson River. "Wm. Peon and Antoine Plant, two half-breeds, resident of Colville Valley, arrived at the Dalles, lately, with about fifty ounces of gold, which they stated they had procured in the Shuswap country," reported the Bulletin. "They had about as much more dust which they had disposed of to Mr. McDonald, in charge of the Hudson's Bay company, Fort Colville. They represent the Indians as quite hostile to Americans, and would not advise any to venture into the country unless in large parties -- fifty at least -- well armed. The gold they washed principally from the banks of the river, and it was everywhere abundant, where ever there was earth to hold it."

William Peon was actually a Kanaka, or Hawaiian, formerly in the employ of the Northwest Company prior to its merger with the HBC in 1821. He was also supposed to have been married to an Okanagan Native women and it is assumed that through kinship ties that transcended the 49th parallel, Peon was to learn of gold existing north of the border. William Peon's discovery along the Thompson River at its confluence with the Nicomen was further recorded at the time by the Portland Democratic Standard that claimed he mined $500 worth of gold dust which was subsequently shown to the small settlement of French Canadiens and Americans in the Colville Valley. And too, Antoine
Plante may be the Frenchman that A.C. Anderson later referred to as a first discoverer of gold. "In the Spring of 1855 fine gold was discovered at the mouth of the Pend'Oreille River," recalled Anderson, "a little to the North of the boundary line on the Columbia. Some French Canadians, the discoverers (retired servants of the Hudson's Bay Co.), after working out the small spot they had fallen upon, crossed over the following summer to the tributaries of the Fraser, in quest of richer diggings which they at length succeeded in finding near what is now the town of Lytton; but it was not till early in 1857 that confirmation of their discoveries reached Victoria, when the Governor then a Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at once communicated the intelligence to the Home Government."  

Although William Yates based at Fort Hope believed "The Indians did not know anything about gold dust" at this time, there is substantial evidence to the contrary. Historian Captain John Walbran, in a personal communication with a member of the U.S. boundary survey aboard USS Active, was told that in 1857 one particular White miner had traded a "large quantity of gold dust which he had received in trade from the Fraser river Indians." It would seem, therefore, that it was not just the Nlaka'pamux (Thompson Natives) who were engaged in mining, but the Coast Salish, too. U.S. Navy man Charles Holtz also claimed that it was the crew of the Active that spread this news while wintering at San Francisco, "and the rush to the Fraser of 1858 was the result." Yet another claim of who started the Fraser River gold rush! Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the HBC operations north of the border continued its trade connections with San Francisco in the aftermath of the Oregon Boundary Settlement that established the 49th parallel as the international divide. The Otter, an HBC ship that carried early collections of gold dust between Forts Langley and Victoria in 1857, was the same ship used to carry cranberries harvested in New Caledonia for the California market. It is not inconceivable that HBC employees may have informed Californians of
gold discoveries during their sojourns in San Francisco. Similarly, Lafayette McMullen, the acting Governor of Washington Territory, had travelled to Fort Victoria, 30 September 1857, to specifically enquire about the power of “Northern Indians” that continued to assert their presence in Puget Sound. Again, with cross-border lines of communication open, it is certainly not unreasonable to assume that American government officials may have become cognizant of northern gold discoveries at this time.73 By November 1857, Governor Douglas recorded that the ships California, Sea Witch, Ellenta, and Constitution had all visited the British territories, suggesting that no one ship provided the pivotal news of Fraser River gold discoveries.

With regard to the existence of a Native mining population along the Fraser prior to the rush of thousands north, again, the San Francisco Bulletin provides invaluable evidence. The first article on the "Fraser River Gold Mines" to appear amongst it pages noted that "Indian Women are panning out 10-12 dollars a day."74 A few weeks later it was further reported that the HBC had received within a space of just one month "about one hundred and ten pounds of gold dust from the Indians . . . without the aid of anything more than rude articles -- such as pans and willow baskets."75 The amount of gold the Hudson's Bay Company collected directly from Natives continued to grow in size as many Americans believed the HBC, similar to the Spanish priests of California, had purposely kept their earlier discoveries a secret. Californian Thomas Spence, a 49er who had engaged in filibustering in Sonora, Mexico, prior to mining on Fraser, thought the HBC discouraged such reports as "an excitement caused by a rush would have the effect of interfering with their fur trading pursuits."76 New Yorker Frank Tarbell was convinced the HBC "were not pleased with the discovery of gold on the whole . . . I think they would have preferred it in the old fashioned slow manner and retained control of the fur trade. It had the tendency to destroy the fur trade."77 Charles Stevens, writing from
Astoria to his sister in Illinois in May 1858, spoke of the wealth of the Native-HBC trade in gold. “I have heard the Capt. of the steamer Otter,” he wrote, “say that the Indians are washing it out in old tin pans, and baskets, and anything that they can get, and make from two to five dollars for [the] day. They sell to the hudson bay company for little or nothing. It’s said that they have already purchased some hundred and twenty pounds. One of the sailors of the Otter told a story of there [sic] getting a sack of it from an Indian. He brot [sic] it into their store and wanted to sell it, they looked at it and began to laugh at him so that he turned to go off when they called him back, and gave him a blanket for it.”

One of the first in depth articles on the Fraser discoveries inflated the amount of gold the HBC had collected to two hundred pounds: “This was collected entirely by one of the traders from the Indians at Fort Hope, since January 1st, 1858.” In fact, government despatches of the day indicate that, up to the time of the rush, the HBC had slowly acquired approximately six hundred to one thousand ounces of gold.

Though early reports such as these may have inflated early gold production in New Caledonia, with respect to active Native participation in mining and trade these accounts were quite accurate. As to the first discovery of gold in British Columbia, perhaps the highest colonial authority in the land may best put the matter to rest. Governor James Douglas, a couple of years after the frenzied days of the rush, privately penned amongst the pages of his diary that it was not any Euro-American miner that extracted the first gold in New Caledonia, but an unnamed Nlaka'pamux Native on the banks of the Thompson near the Nicomen River. “Gold,” concluded Douglas, “was first found on Thompson's River by an Indian 1/4 of a mile below Niconim [sic]. He is since dead. The Indian was taking a drink out of the river. Having no vessel he was quaffing from the stream when he perceived a shining pebble which he picked up and it proved to be gold. The whole tribe forthwith began to collect the
Douglas’ claim is also supported by Francis Wolff, an American merchant and “Indian fighter” who had established a trading post near Fort Colvile in competition with the Hudson’s Bay Company. Wolff claimed to have received some of the first Fraser River gold at his store. His recollection was such that “The discovery was made by William Peon and a Indian Chief of the Fraser River Indians on a small creek running into the Thompson River about 10 miles above its mouth called the Necoman [sic] Creek.”

It is likely that William Peon’s stories of fabulous wealth on Fraser River helped to create the first phase of the gold rush within the vicinity of Eastern Washington Territory, news that subsequently spread across the Cascade Mountains to Puget Sound, and the Columbia and Willamette Valleys. But also, the fact that this gold discovery was made in the year or more prior to Peon’s presence confirms that members of the Salishan Nations first discovered gold in British Columbia, having actively mined and traded the resource with their fur trading partners of long-standing prior to the massive influx of non-Native gold seekers in 1858. The HBC was quick to diversify its interests and with the assistance of Native traders in the field made immediate preparations to profit from the new trade in gold.
NOTES


4. The search for gold is well-represented among the pages of Columbus' diary: "I was attentive and labored to find out if there was any gold; and I saw that some of them wore a little piece hung in a hole that they have in their noses. And by signs I was able to understand that, going to the south or rounding the island to the south, there was there a king who had large vessels of it and had very much gold. I strove to get them to go there and later saw that they had no intention of going... And so I will go to the southwest to seek gold and precious stones." Oliver Dunn and James E. Kelley, Jr., Translators, The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America 1492-1493 (Norman & London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 71.

5. During the time of the Fraser River gold rush, British Columbia was frequently referred to as the New El Dorado. One particular author enshrined this distinction into the title of his book. See Kinahan Cornwallis, The New El Dorado; or British Columbia (London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1858).

6. For a good overview of these myths and legends, see Gordon Speck, Myths and New World Explorations (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1979).

7. Not only the above Juan de Fuca Legend but others such as the Franklin Expedition to the arctic approaching from the Atlantic. Franklin's home-bound ship from his first expedition mistakenly carried "fools gold."


10. Speck, Myths and New World Explorations, 64-65.

11. Ibid. There is a similar story of Cowichan peoples being enslaved by the Spanish as told by an Nuu-chah-nulth Elder to Anne Cameron, Daughters of Copper Woman (Vancouver, B.C.: Press Gang Publisher, 1981), 83-92, and also reprinted in Daniel P. Marshall, Those Who Fell From the Sky: A History of the Cowichan Peoples (Victoria, B.C.: Cowichan Tribes, 1999), 68-75.

12. Although it was also thought that one of his own troops may have dealt him the fatal shot for his mistreatment of his own men. Ibid.


18. Cook, 4-5.

19. Certainly there had been a small gold rush in Georgia in 1829, in which some five thousand farmer-miners stamped the lands of the Cherokee peoples, but not the lustrous El Dorado of the imagination. See Paula Mitchell Marks, *Precious Dust: The American Gold Rush Era: 1848-1900* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1994): 24-26. Although Marks' book is one of the few recent works to pay any attention to the Fraser River rush, her book is marred by factual error and her blanket acceptance of the "Humbug thesis" is wrong. Also, there is no mention of the Cariboo gold rush, perhaps due to the fact that it was less American-oriented than the Fraser or Yukon rushes.


22. Hurtado continued such that, "for the Californian Indians, the discovery amounted to a disaster. Hundreds of thousands of white miners invaded the last Indian refuges -- the Sierra Nevada foothills and mountains and the northern reaches of the state. . . . Between 1848 and 1860, the Indian population plummeted from about one hundred and fifty thousand to about thirty thousand. See Albert L. Hurtado's Introduction, v-ix, in Robert F. Heizer, *The Destruction of the California Indians* 1974 Reprint (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).


24. Ibid.

25. Upon retirement from the fur trade, Knight led an expedition to Northwestern Hudson's Bay in pursuit of mythical wealth, perhaps the first such search for gold in Western Canada. All members of Knight's exploring party perished. See John Geiger and Owen Beattie, *Dead Silence: the greatest mystery in Arctic discovery* (Toronto: Viking, 1993). My thanks to Professor Arthur J. Ray for the above.

26. Douglas' discovery is noted by Walter C. Grant, "Remarks on Vancouver Island" in *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* (1861): 213. See also, Athelstan George Harvey, *Douglas of the Fir: A Biography of

27. Donald Ross to Peter Skene Ogden (Private), Norway House, 29 July 1849. Donald Ross Papers. Add. Mss. 635, fl.179. BC Archives. My thanks to Dan Clayton for the above.


30. Ibid.


32. Ibid.


34. Ibid., 10.


37. James Douglas to John Kennedy, Chief Trader, 18 March 1852. *Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold at Queen Charlotte's Island* (1853), 10-12. The American Brig *Susan Sturges*, illegally cutting spars in the Queen Charlotte's, was captured by the Haida in the following year.


40. Douglas subsequently proclaimed the following regulations (7 April 1853) for mining of gold in Queen Charlotte's Island (still believing at this time that it was a single Island):

1. From and after the first day of April no person will be permitted to dig, search for, or
remove gold on or from any lands, public or private, without first taking out and paying for a licence in the form annexed.

2. For the present, and pending further proof of the extent and productiveness of the gold deposits, the licence fee has been fixed at 10 s. per month, to be paid in advance; but it is to be understood that the rate is subject to future adjustment as circumstances may render expedient.

3. The licences can be obtained at Victoria, Vancouver's Island, until a commissioner is appointed by his Excellency the Lieutenant-governor to carry those regulations into effect, and who will be authorised to receive the fee payable thereon.

4. Rules adjusting the extent and position of land to be covered by each licence, and for the prevention of confusion, and the interference of one licence with another, will be regulated by the said commissioner.

See "Copy of a Despatch from Governor Douglas to His Grace the Duke of Newcastle" 11 April 1853, Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold in Queen Charlotte's Island (London: 1853): encl. 1-2.

41. Downie, Hunting for Gold, 201-02.

42."It was not an uncommon thing to fall in with Indians, who offered gold for trade, and it seemed reasonable to conclude that if the Indians knew of its presence at that period, they might have known of it long before." Ibid., 27-32, 46.

43. Ibid., 46.

44. Mining historian John Hittel listed "Bar" as a "Californianism," a word that had gained common acceptance during the gold rush. See John S. Hittel, The Resources of California 2nd ed. (San Francisco: A. Roman and Company, 1866), 381.


50. Jason Allard, "Gold Found By James Houston," (n.d.). Howay-Reid Collection Box 21:4. UBC Special Collections. William Walker is one of the most famous of American filibusterers who made repeated attempts at annexing places such as Sonora, Mexico, Honduras, and especially Nicaragua where for a brief time he was elected President in 1856. By 1860, he made a final attempt to cement central America into a single political


52. David H. Chance, *People of the Falls* (Kettle Falls Historical Center, 1986), 101. Note: Fort Colvile and hence the Colville Indians were named for Eden Colvile, Associate HBC Governor of Rupert’s Land. Americans subsequently changed the spelling to Colville, but I have adopted the original spelling.

53. The Native peoples around Fort Colvile have been referred to as Shwayip, Kettle or Colville Indians (or Colville by Americans).

54. Jason Allard, "Gold Found By James Houston." Note: I have used the original spelling ‘Okanagan’ throughout, as opposed to the American spelling ‘Okanogan.’ Exceptions are Okanogan River which flows south of the border while Okanagan Lake is north of the international divide.

55. Ibid.


58. As to the accuracy of Allard's story, it should be noted that in a private communication with F.W. Howay, Allard in declining years wrote: "I am very sorry my memory has failed me -- If only [you] had got a hold of me about ten years ago -- I am sure that I could have done better." Allard to Howay, 29 September 1920. Correspondence In. Howay Collection. UBC Special Collections.

59. It should be noted that Fort Colvile, named for Eden Colvile of the HBC, was not the adjacent U.S. Army fort built some years later and, of course, spelt “Colville.”

60. William Yates, Reminiscences. BC Archives.


62. McDaniel claimed that Adams stole from him and demanded restitution. When McDaniel caught up to him, Adams refused to hand over the $350 dollars owing which, in the end, was extracted from his gold poke that held some $2000 dollars. See "Testimony of William Busey." Witness to the murder of Charles Adams. Fayette McMullen Administration Box 2B-1-1 File: Extradition, Charles McDaniel. Washington State Archives.

63. Ibid. H. Wallace, Counsel for the defence, to Fayette McMullen, Governor of Washington Territory, 11 June 1858, Steilacoom.


65. Ibid.


68. Portland Democratic Standard, 1 July 1858, in Ron Anglin, Forgotten Trails: Historical Sources of the Columbia's Big Bend Country (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1995), 133. Note: Anglin mistakenly identified William Peon as a Fraser River Indian chief.


70. Walbran wrote: "In November of 1857, the Active was engaged with the Plumper in Semiahmoo bay fixing the position of the 49th parallel in connection with the boundary question. While lying here a whiteman named Macauley who had been illicitly supplying intoxicants to the survey camps, was made a prisoner by the Plumper's officers, and the Active conveyed him to Esquimalt. On the way Macauley showed the crew of the Active a large quantity of gold dust which he had received in trade from the Fraser river Indians." John T. Walbran, British Columbia Coast Names 1592-1906: Their Origin and History (1909). Reprinted (Vancouver, B.C.: The Library's Press, 1971), 12. Note: See under the listing for Active Pass. Personal reminiscence to writer by Charles Holtz, late U.S. Navy, who served aboard Active, 1854-1858. For yet another theory of who started the 1858 rush, George Dawson stated that it was the Captain of the Commodore who ignited the rush north when he heard of Fraser River gold while transporting expatriate black Americans to Victoria from San Francisco. Apparently, the steamer captain purchased a specimen of gold and mixed it with gold dust already in his possession. He subsequently plastered posters all around San Francisco announcing the new discovery. See Journals of George M. Dawson: British Columbia, 1875-1878 Vol. I, eds. Douglas Cole and Bradley Lockner (University of British Columbia Press, 1989), 112.

71. Ibid.


73. Douglas to William F. Tolmie, 30 September 1857, Ibid.

74. This information was reproduced from the pages of the Olympia Pioneer (Portland, Oregon) and found as "The Fraser River Gold Mines -- Great Excitement," Bulletin, 19 March 1858, p. 3. For the first real news of Fraser published in San Francisco see "The Frazer River Gold Mines," Bulletin, 3 April 1858, p. 3. For the first actual letter from the mines, "letter from Port Townsend, Puget Sound -- The Fraser River Gold Mines, (26 March)" Bulletin 6 April 1858, p. 3. The first advertisement for a ship to Fraser, "The Ship California -- Jeremiah Nagle" listed under shipping, Bulletin 6 April 1858, p. 4. This predates the listings for the Commodore, perhaps understandable given that Nagle was at times in the employ of the HBC.


76. Thomas Spence is perhaps best known as a road builder whose name is today enshrined at Spences Bridge, B.C. He was supposedly one of the first miners to cross the Douglas Portage and became a 'discoverer' of Cameron Bar: "18 men for three weeks averaged $75 per day to the hand." Arthur Wellesley Vowell & Thomas Spence, "Mining Districts of British Columbia," Reminiscences (1878). Manuscript P-C 28. Bancroft Library.
77. Frank Tarbell, "Life and Trade in Victoria During the Fraser River Excitement", Reminiscences (1878). Manuscript P-C 26. Bancroft Library. Tarbell arrived in Victoria 14 July 1858: "During that month at one time there were 10,000 people there, as you go up Yates Street, that was densely packed with people walking to and fro getting ready to go up the Frazer River; they were building their boats. All those hills about Victoria looked like a white-tented field." See also John Tod, "History of New Caledonia and the Northwest Coast", Reminiscences (1878). Bancroft Library. Tod stated in his interview with Bancroft, "But for the discovery of gold, very likely the country would not be colonized at this day."


82. "In the year 1857 Peon brought some five hundred dollars worth of dust in the Colville Valley of wich [sic] he disposed to F. Wolff and J.T. Demers whom were doing Mercantile business at said place." Wolff subsequently joined the McLoughlin Party of miners in 1858. His reminiscences are to be found in "Ambush at McLaughlin Canyon and other Adventures of Francis Wolff," Okanogan County Heritage 11:3 (June 1964), 9.
CHAPTER THREE

THE FUR TRADE WORLD

As in the existing state of excitement, none but those on the spot are in a position to form a correct judgement on the best course to be pursued to secure the Company’s interests... by the extraordinary wealth as being developed. It is strange to think that for forty years we have been treading the gold under our feet, and that no accident led to its discovery, although many people must have seen traces of it without knowing the treasure that lay on the very surface of the soil.

-- Sir George Simpson, Governor, Hudson’s Bay Company (1858)

Natives, over a broad territory, played a pivotal role in the gold rush that meshed with earlier trade patterns of Native economies and their corresponding economic interaction during the fur trade period. Native Nations in the gold territory and all along the path of the rush also suffered irreparable loss of land and life. On the very eve of the massive rush of goldseekers to New Caledonia, the Interior Salish found that James Douglas, Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company and Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island & Its Dependencies, took immediate action to supply them, as essential Native trading partners of longstanding, with all the means necessary for combined HBC-Native control of the gold trade. Douglas instructed Chief Trader Donald McLean, based at Fort Kamloops, that “the most certain means of retaining the trade in our own hands is to aid and assist the Indians in working the treasures of their own country.” In addition to the effects of the California gold rush of 1849, Douglas had witnessed the Queen Charlottes and Colvile rushes, the consequences of which provided him with precedents for future action to eliminate competition.
The British Columbia gold rush is perhaps unique in Western mining rushes in that much of
the early record of events was recorded by employees of the Hudson’s Bay Company who, previous
to 1858, had participated with the Natives of New Caledonia in an established trade relationship in
which gold extraction was later accommodated. For this we are fortunate, in that Native prospecting
and mining in the Fraser rush is recorded when in other rushes it was not. More particularly, the
“Country Correspondence” of the Hudson’s Bay Company, the unpublished letters sent between
James Douglas in his capacity as Chief Factor and HBC traders in New Caledonia, provide a wealth
of evidence which, to date, has been infrequently examined by academics. More so than the official
communiques of Governor Douglas, reports subsequently published in Britain, it is the local & private
correspondence of the HBC that highlights First Nations “working the treasures of their own
country.”

The Indians of Thompson River were trading gold two years prior to the rush. Writing to
Donald McLean, as early as 10 February 1857, Douglas responded to the Chief Trader's early
reconnaissance of the gold fields and a "specimen of Gold received from the Indians of Thompson's
River" that had been enclosed with the communiqué.

Could you not . . . contrive to collect a large party of Indians, & proceeding to the
Gold Districts make them search and wash for the precious metal, buying it from them
as fast as they collect it. I think this would be a very useful and lucrative way of
spending a few months, and at the same time it would enable you not only to develop
the resources of the country, but also to judge of its productiveness more correctly
than by mere Indian report . . . The Governor and Committee are very anxious to hear
from us, respecting the prospects of the gold districts yet our progress in the way of
discovery is so slow that I can not give them any satisfactory information; pray
therefore make every exertion in your power to test the gold diggings, and I will
supply you with all the necessary means, which you may require, for doing so, and
remember that the object is of so much importance, and may be so productive of gain
to the concern, that no reasonable expense should be spared to accomplish it.
A few months later Douglas would express “something like a feeling of impatience” at McLean having provided no further reports on the gold district: “persevere until you have satisfactorily decided the question; this will take time and will cause trouble and expense, but the object is one of the greatest importance and has the strongest claims upon our attention.” But McLean and his party of Indians were “prevented by the swollen state of the Rivers, from making a thorough search,” though they managed to find half an ounce. The Governor’s son-in-law Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken recalled: “The Governor attached great importance to [those few grains] . . . and thought it meant a great change and a busy time. He spoke of Victoria rising to be a great city -- and of its value, but curiously enough this conversation did not make much impression. . .”. Some few weeks later, Douglas was to again show further gold collected by the Nlaka’pamux, this time “a soda-water bottle half full of scaly gold,” yet Helmcken recorded that the Vancouver Island House of Assembly “took no heed of these discoveries.”

The words of Helmcken, the Speaker of the Colonial Legislature, are telling as to just how far removed the small colonial outpost was from mainland discoveries that would ultimately reshape the coast, particularly above the 49th parallel. The lack of excitement amongst HBC officials at Fort Victoria is indeed puzzling, considering the severe impact that the Californian rush of 1849 had on Fort Vancouver. A.C. Anderson, the superintendent of Colvile District during the time of the California rush claimed that James Douglas, “seemed half incredulous of the report” though within the space of a few short months fully realized the potentially cataclysmic effect that these gold discoveries were to have on HBC operations along the Pacific Slope. Fort Vancouver, on the lower Columbia River, was to become virtually deserted as upwards of one hundred and fifty employees of the fur trade monopoly abandoned their work to join the rush south, their positions apparently being filled temporarily by Native labourers. Though Anderson was able to maintain the loyalty of
his own men who completed their contractual obligations before departing, for many HBC employees
the allure of gold was too great a temptation. "It is almost impossible to realize to the mind the
intense excitement which at the time prevailed," said Anderson. "Gold excitement appeared to be
almost, as it were, a drug in the market and more than one of the French Canadian servants who had
left [Fort] Vancouver under the circumstances mentioned, returned the following Spring with
accumulations varying from $30,000 to 40,000 dol[lar]s." With accumulations of such wealth and
the consequent desertion from forts caused by the California rush, one would think that the fledgling
fur trading population north of the 49th parallel and southern Vancouver Island would have been more
alive to gold discoveries in New Caledonia, but apparently they were not.

It was not until June of 1857 that McLean provided reports that confirmed the truth of Native
accounts of the rich character of the country and an elated Douglas issued immediate instructions:
"I have read with interest your report on the recent gold discoveries, and we must not fail to employ
the loose native population who contribute so little towards the Fur Returns of the Post, in washing
out Gold; a course which offers the best security against the intrusion of foreign diggers." Just as
Douglas had successfully deterred American prospectors from mining in the Queen Charlottes, along
with the determined proprietorial stance of the Haida, the Chief Factor hoped to combine with the
HBC's Native allies on the mainland in an attempt to monopolize the trade in gold -- and keep out
all competitors -- as they had done for centuries in the trade in furs.

To George Blenkinsop, the HBC trader stationed at Fort Colvile, Douglas suggested that
there was no reason "to regret that the mines hold out so alluring a prospect," even though company
servants would likely leave their employ. The prospect of gold might entice HBC employees but the
Chief Factor was confident that "a considerable part of the returns of gold will doubtless fall to our
share, and we may engage temporary labourers as required in seasons of great pressure." Douglas planned on sending to Honolulu for a few Hawaiians to meet such defections. The Chief Factor was so confidant, perhaps, that his monthly letters to company servants in the field became overwhelming concerned with the potential trade in gold to the exclusion of more mundane matters. In a lengthy letter to Donald McLean, 10 September 1857, Douglas' sympathy with regard to the loss of the annual potato crop at Fort Kamloops must have seemed rather trite compared to the voluminous remarks on the subject of gold. The Governor began his letter: "While regretting the loss of your potatoe crop which appearsUnfortunately to have been lost through the overflow of the River, we turn from that event with satisfaction to contemplate the important discovery made by Gold searches in the northern District of Thompson's River." Douglas' suggested preparations included further delivery of mining equipment to Fort Kamloops, such as picks, pans, and shovels, and a pair of gold scales with accompanying weights. Though McLean advised that a permanent fort be established on Thompson River, some twelve miles from its confluence with the Fraser River, Douglas favoured keeping "a trading party continually on foot carrying supplies to the miners for sale." This was the HBC way. A moveable trading post of a few men with 18 or 20 horses loaded with goods "could move about to any point of the country at pleasure, and in a few days pitch their tents or more permanently establish themselves for trade." Douglas rightly viewed the Fraser River as unnavigable through portions of the canyons. Until mining populations consequent upon the richness and location of the gold fields had been fully determined, he was loath to commit company funds for the construction of a permanent post. At the conclusion of the letter, Douglas closed with the incidental words such that "Furs continue to fetch a high price in England, so the more you get this year the better." The gold colony would not be proclaimed for at least another year, yet furs appeared to have been the last thing on the Chief Factor's mind. His main preoccupation was simply "to collect
as much gold dust as possible.”

Even before the gold rush of 1858 commenced, Hudson’s Bay Company operations on the Pacific Slope were being quickly reshaped to accommodate the new order of things. While some HBC servants were ready to bolt from their fur trade employment in the hope of gaining quick and easy wealth, more senior traders saw their field of operations increasingly shifted to the ever-expanding gold fields that promised a greater return than the furs that had previously sustained them. Douglas’ orchestration required that the HBC be on a sound footing to “mine the miners” that were expected to flow into the country from south of the border, and by giving every encouragement to their Native allies, it was hoped that the most profitable gold-bearing grounds could be harvested by First Nations people in advance of the rush of Euro-Americans who were expected to arrive the following year. Interestingly, as late as December of 1857, Douglas laboured under the assumption that the gold fields were located solely in the region of the Thompson River district, the extremely rich diggings along the lower Fraser not having been brought to his attention.

In requesting that George Blenkinsop relocate himself from Fort Colvile to assist Donald McLean in the Thompson River diggings, Douglas stressed the need for thorough organization to meet his accurate prediction of a massive wave of newcomers that would flood the region in 1858. “I have this day sent instructions to Chief Trader McLean to send a requisition for you to join him without delay should he require your services,” stated Douglas, “and I beg that you will give immediate attention to his instructions when received. There will before long [be] a great rush of people into the District of Thompson’s River, and nothing but the most energetic measures will suffice to protect our interests. The [HBC] Board of Management places the utmost reliance on your
zeal and energy and feels assured that their confidence in you is not misplaced.”

Douglas proceeded to sound the warning bell to all of his fur trade associates in the region and, as Chief Factor of HBC Pacific Coast operations, was ready to assert the presumed pre-existing rights of the monopoly to the trade in gold. Douglas authorized Donald McLean “to adopt every means in your power to secure the gold dust trade . . . nothing but the most energetic measures will suffice to protect our interests.” To Angus McDonald he stressed “We must therefore strive to secure the trade in our own hands . . . and to pick up the Gold dust as fast as it is collected.” While Peter Skene Ogden, informed that the company would be “more than ever dependant upon the natives for getting through with the Brigade,” was pressed upon “to meet the evil; and to devise every possible advantage from the discovery of gold.”

During the hectic pace of events that were beginning to take a most formidable shape, Douglas confided to Captain Charles Dodd upon the changed world in which he found himself, his words sounding as if he considered himself caught in a period of great social upheaval. “This has been an eventful season,” reflected Douglas, “a greater number of murders and assassinations have been committed than was ever before known in this part of the world; the British Empire in the east has been shaken to its centre by the mutiny of the Sepoy army. They doubtless will be subdued, but the moral effect will remain. Gold has been discovered in Thompson’s River District and there is a rush of the population from all quarters towards that point; the forerunner of trouble without end to us.” Indeed, HBC Governor George Simpson was of the same opinion and feared that the normal pursuit of fur trade operations in the Columbia Department would be “entirely deranged.” It must have seemed to Douglas that the world he knew had become topsy-turvy. On the very eve of the Fraser River gold rush the peaceable era of the fur trade was about to come to an end, and
coincidentally, Douglas’ reporting of the death of “our friend Dr. [John] McLoughlin,” the man whom Douglas had replaced as chief factor and later known as the ‘Father of Oregon,’ was perhaps, all too symbolic.24

As the Governor of Vancouver Island, Douglas wrote frequent official reports on the state of the emerging goldfields, the primary material used for T.A. Rickard’s essay.25 As the first wave of Euro-American miners from Washington, Oregon, and Vancouver Island began to enter the Native lands of New Caledonia, Douglas warned the British Colonial Office of the potential problems that would undoubtedly unfold. In particular, Douglas in the year prior to the Fraser River rush informed the colonial secretary of Native resistance to the encroachment of Euro-Americans from the south:

A new element of difficulty in exploring the gold country has been interposed through the opposition of the native Indian tribes of Thompson’s River, who had lately taken the high-handed, though probably not unwise course, of expelling all the parties of gold diggers, composed chiefly of persons from the American territories, who had forced an entrance into their country. They have also openly expressed a determination to resist all attempts at working gold in any of the streams flowing into Thompson’s River, both from a desire to monopolize the precious metal for their own benefit, and from a well-founded impression that the shoals of salmon which annually ascend those rivers and furnish the principal food of the inhabitants, will be driven off, and prevented from making their annual migrations from the sea.26

Having endured a particularly lean year in the annual salmon runs, First Nations were cognizant of the fact that placer mining of any sort would disturb the Fraser spawning runs. And too, having begun to enjoy the benefits of the trade in gold, First Nations would see no reason in giving-up the treasures of their land to foreign intruders unwilling to pay for it.

Douglas cautioned Whitehall that in many instances miners were being "obstructed by the natives in all their attempts to search for gold" and that they had "expressed a determination to reserve the gold for their own benefit."27 Though Douglas had hoped to retain the gold trade as the
exclusive domain of the HBC in league with their First Nations trading partners, by this time, Britain was no longer interested in following earlier Eastern Canadian practices of combining with Aboriginal peoples against such American incursions. Whitehall instructed Douglas that it was not the policy of Her Majesty’s government “to exclude Americans and other foreigners from the gold fields. On the contrary,” cautioned the Colonial Secretary, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, “you are distinctly instructed to oppose no obstacle whatever to their resort thither for the purpose of digging in those fields . . . . Under the circumstance of so large an immigration of Americans into English territory, I need hardly impress upon you the importance of caution and delicacy in dealing with those manifold cases of international relationship and feeling which are certain to arise, and which but for the exercise of temper and discretion might easily lead to serious complications between two neighbouring and powerful states.”

Britain exercised caution as they had witnessed the successful annexation of Texas and California, not to mention American filibustering raids in Nicaragua and Sonora, Mexico. Douglas, who had already experienced the loss of the Oregon Territory to the United States, and shortly would witness American incursions that ultimately wrested control of the San Juan Islands from Britain, must have condemned privately Whitehall's hands-off approach. Though the fur trade world was inexorably intertwined with British power and authority, their views did not always coincide, especially on the question of trade: that is, monopoly control and exclusion versus the free entrance of foreign competition.

While Douglas had made a point of instructing chief traders to employ First Nations people in the collection of gold, as the best means of excluding foreign miners from making their own stake in the land, his new instructions were tempered to reflect Britain’s hands-off strategy of open access to all. Donald McLean was subsequently cautioned:
The company having the exclusive right of trading with Indians in the West side of the mountains, no other person can lawfully carry on trade or erect trading establishments within the British Territory, and you may warn them off on any attempt being made to do so, but I would strongly advise you to avoid collisions which may end in serious difficulty and bloodshed. I am aware of the feeling of the Indian population in respect to the Americans; but I think they will find it impossible to carry out their determination of preventing the whites from working in their diggings. Leave them entirely to their own promptings and be careful not to encourage them to resist the influx of gold diggers, or we may become embroiled in serious difficulties; in short, inculcate upon the Indians the duty of being kind to all white men, your words will at least have a restraining effect if they can not altogether prevent evil, at the same time I would take care to inform any white strangers coming into the country that the Indians are dangerous and not to be trusted. 

If Douglas could not exclude foreign miners as he had hoped, at least he could attempt to enforce Hudson’s Bay Company monopoly rights with respect to trade and navigation in the region. The Hudson’s Bay Company Charter granted exclusive rights to the trade with Natives west of the Rocky Mountains and navigation of the Fraser River, and Douglas, for a brief time, argued that this exclusive right also extended to trade with foreign miners. Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken, Speaker of the Vancouver Island colonial assembly, believed otherwise. Also, former governor and Congressional representative, Isaac Stevens of Washington Territory, appealed directly to U.S. Secretary of State, Lewis Cass, protesting Douglas’ “blockade” of the Fraser River to Americans. Subsequently, Douglas’ stance was not supported by the Home government. Yet, of greater dissuasion was the dire warning about Natives who were “dangerous and not to be trusted.” This threat was the only real power left to the Governor who would have to wait until Natives and Whites collided before firmly imprinting British colonial law and order on the Fraser and Thompson River landscape.

At the close of 1857, Douglas was greatly encouraged that 209 ounces of gold had been procured in a little over two months through the efforts of “natives [who] are daily becoming more
alive to the advantages of the traffic.”34 The optimism of Governor Simpson had also increased and he began to urge HBC men such as Dugald McTavish “to take every advantage possible of the discovery for the Company’s benefit.”35 Trade goods at HBC posts soon expanded to take placer mining into account. Simpson warned Douglas that “unless the Company can take advantage of the market that will be opened . . . . Californian and Oregon merchants, seeing the field open, may step in.”36 To his associates Allan, Lowe & Company, based in San Francisco, Douglas requested that “we want the description of picks, washing pans, and shovels which are most approved of by the miners in the gold diggings of California.”37 Douglas asked for descriptions as the HBC would manufacture their own mining implements at Fort Langley for distribution and sale.38 Under the direction of William Tod, the moveable trading or ‘flying posts’ inaugurated by Douglas continued “running constantly among the diggings with a full supply of Goods and they pick up the gold almost as fast as it is found.”39 Douglas undoubtedly hoped to get the jump on all non-Native goldseekers who were beginning to show up in increasing numbers. In the Chief Factor’s view, this was Native gold and by virtue of the monopoly trading rights with First Nations, HBC gold as well. Writing to Dugald McTavish, 18 December 1857, Douglas conveyed an impression of who should rightfully benefit from the new found riches. “The extent of the diggings is yet unknown,” he stated, “but we have strong reason to believe that Fraser’s River will prove a second Sacramento. May that opinion prove correct and lay the foundation of future wealth to those who so well deserve it.”40

As there were no newspapers in existence in the Colony of Vancouver Island or New Caledonia, Douglas next took the unprecedented step of publishing the rights of Britain to the new gold fields in American papers around Puget Sound. In his capacity as Governor of Vancouver Island, Douglas asserted jurisdiction over the mines in advance of any legal authority from Britain,
though in keeping with the precedents established by the Queen Charlottes rush. Writing to Dugald McTavish, Douglas instructed him to insert the text into a variety of Washington and Oregon publications.

I have issued a proclamation of which you will herewith receive a copy declaring the rights of the Crown in respect to all Gold found in its natural place of deposit, and forbidding the removal of the same, by any persons not duly authorised on the part of this Government. This Proclamation is the forerunner of a series of measures, having for object the prevention of crime, and the protection of life and property in the Gold Country. I beg that you will cause the proclamation and License regulations to be inserted in the Oregon Weekly & Journals, for information of the Public. It is also proper to state that the Couteau Indians are decidedly dangerous and that they have forcibly expelled all the whites who have attempted to work Gold in their country.

The HBC expanded its need for Native allies beyond the collection of gold and realized they provided the only real force at their disposal against the encroachment of American gold seekers. If Douglas was officially prevented from expelling foreign miners from New Caledonia, then perhaps, privately, he hoped that First Nations would undertake the task for him, or at the very least, the Governor’s published threat of potential expulsion from Native lands might more subtly do the trick. Douglas, in promoting the idea of fiercely territorial Indians occupying the gold fields, hoped foreign goldseekers would be dissuaded from setting out. However, HBC Governor George Simpson was against such a plan. “I think you will find it impossible to enable the Indians to carry out their determination of preventing whites working those diggings,” he wrote to Douglas, 16 September 1857, “and should we encourage them to resist the influx of gold diggers, we may become embroiled in serious difficulties.” Simpson’s main concern was that any perception of the HBC assuming an unfriendly attitude towards non-Native goldseekers might “incur public censure for checking colonization.” Bad press was the last thing the HBC needed in 1857, especially on the issue of colonization. Simpson’s caution was written shortly after the publication of a Select Committee
Report of the British House of Commons that investigated HBC affairs prior to the expiration of their crown grant in 1859. The substance of the Report suggested that once settlement became feasible the HBC must relinquish their rights.\textsuperscript{44} The main opposition that had formed against the Company had centred on the prevalent view that fur trade pursuits were inimical to the advancement of settlement. As historian E.E. Rich stated, “here was a territory in which the fur trade must yield to settlement, according to the principles of the 1857 Report. . .”.\textsuperscript{45} Clearly, Simpson was not desirous of providing their opposition with any further examples of non-support for colonization that would thwart the HBC’s bid to have their grant and licenses renewed.\textsuperscript{46} Though the HBC’s hold on the Red River Settlement had already provoked a greater number of complaints of having checked colonization, Simpson confessed privately to Douglas that “the loss of Red River and Vancouver’s Island colonies, so far from being a source of regret” would actually be “a positive relief from a very troublesome burden.”\textsuperscript{47}

Simpson was also of the opinion that Douglas’ publication of the gold discoveries in American newspapers “might induce adventurers to go thither rather than keep them off.”\textsuperscript{48} The HBC governor was correct. Douglas’ initial strategy backfired as it played to the racist notions common amongst Californian miners whose past gold seeking experiences had conflated Indian fighting with the finding of placer gold. Gold fields and hostile Indian territory had become synonymous, and so Douglas’ published threat had the opposite effect in that it drew Indian fighters north of the border rather than ward them off as expected. Nevertheless, even if Douglas had not published his \textit{Proclamations} south of the border, the eventual rush of goldseekers would still have occurred. One wonders, though, whether the portrayal of Native peoples as “decidedly dangerous” and “not to be trusted” may have accentuated the defensive posturing of goldseekers to the point of precipitating a greater degree of Native-White violence. If this were true, then the initial use of Indian allies for protecting the gold
fields revises, radically, our image of Douglas as a temperate peace-maker who had worked to quell a potentially explosive predicament.

Even so, if massive numbers of Euro-Americans did invade the landscape, Governor Simpson hoped the HBC would still profit. “The gold discoveries,” he declared, “will no doubt revolutionize all our existing arrangements . . . [but] I trust we may derive from them some valid advantages to compensate for the trouble and inconvenience they will occasion.” Douglas assured Alexander Grant Dallas, Director of the Hudson’s Bay Company, that trading to take advantage of the new resource was “in full operation and will pick up the gold as fast as the miners collect it.”

As winter set in Douglas and servants of the HBC braced themselves for the new year, knowing full well that miners would make every opportunity of prospecting in New Caledonia before the spring thaw began and the consequent rise in the rivers that would flood the gold bearing bars. With his publication of the Proclamation in papers south of the border, mere rumours of gold were to give way to the idea that the official pronouncement had confirmed the fact. Captain A.L. Hyde of the U.S. revenue cutter Jefferson Davis returned from Washington territory to California and confirmed the reports of extensive gold deposits as “substantially true.” Captain Connor of the steamer Seabird elaborated further such that “the Hudson’s Bay Company had shipped two hundred pounds weight of gold dust to London” which was collected entirely “from the Indians at Fort Hope, since January 1st, 1858.”

Increasingly, new reports of Native gold discoveries were to make their way into the newsprint agenda of the local American press, and more often than not, Native gold pokes became increasingly jammed with greater and greater amounts of the precious dust, while the HBC were to carry larger and larger amounts to Britain. It is almost needless to say that speculation ran rampant,
and gold reports, though mostly true, were somewhat suspect. If the HBC could secure within one month “about one hundred and ten pounds of gold dust from the Indians . . . . without the aid of anything more than rude articles -- such as pans and willow baskets,” then it was assumed that White miners would be able to make a killing. In early May of 1858, S. Garfield, the Receiver of public monies for Washington Territory, was quoted as saying that as early as 1856 a Native was about to show one of their citizens diggings at the foot of Mount Baker to see “pel chickomin” or yellow iron, “but the Indians there were hostile, and he did not go.” Garfield claimed that the same Native had recently been to the new mines on Fraser River, thus suggesting that Native mining in New Caledonia was not limited to the First Nations who resided there. Indeed, an article printed in the Puget Sound Herald, 3 May 1858, further suggests that news of Native gold mining success must have spread throughout the region amongst First Nations. The paper reported that, “An Indian belonging to the Spokane country, comes as passenger on the Seabird. He is direct from Fraser River, where he has been mining during the past winter; he reports that for six days in succession, he dug one hundred dollars worth of gold dust each day -- many days $30 or $40, -- and that at no time, did he make less than $5 per day.” Throughout June, Native reports to HBC traders further confirmed the existence of gold within New Caledonia and beyond. Captain Charles Stuart of the HBC reported that gold had been discovered in the Cowichan Valley of southeastern Vancouver Island based upon Native testimony, while Captain William Brotchie, whom Douglas appointed harbour master for Vancouver Island in 1858, claimed that a Native had collected some £20 worth of gold dust in the vicinity of Howe Sound. The quantity of gold dust collected by the Hudson’s Bay Company to this point exceeded £10,000 in value.

The newspapers during the first months of spring were replete with reports of Native success in mining along the Thompson and Fraser River corridors to the point that certain pundits were
undoubtedly concerned that "a considerable quantity of the products of the mines has already been disbursed in the settlements," such that almost every Native encountered along the Fraser River "had his buckskin purse with one to six inches of dust therein." The special correspondent for the San Francisco Bulletin was to echo these words when he reported from Fort Hope to his Californian audience that "I saw plenty of Indians at the Fort, and constantly arriving, who had all their bags of gold -- about four to ten or twelve ounces each." The reporter was also quick to point out that they were all heavily armed and "very profuse in their expressions of dislike for 'los Yankees." For this Californian, the great numbers of First Nations people actively employed in the digging of gold was unprecedented, and the close relationship they had with the Hudson’s Bay Company was just a little too nefarious for his liking. Near Sailor Diggings above Fort Yale he observed that:

Every canoe load of Indians we met shewed us their bags of dust; and Mr. Walker [Chief Trader at Fort Hope] informed me that he knew of Indians getting $100 in twelve hours, from the bars, when the river was very low. . . . In about two months, there will be such a harvest reaped here as perhaps California never saw. . . . The Indians are on the bars in great numbers, and interfere very much with the miners, but in a short time there will be men enough here to protect themselves. From a friend of mine who heard it, I learn that Mr. Yale, the chief in charge of Fort Langley, told some Indians that the Americans had no business here, and advised them to combine together and drive them away. They will find it a difficult job, however. Certain it is though, that they are not disposed to either encourage or lend any help to us.

A Mr. McDowell of Dungeness, Puget Sound, wrote “There are more Indians . . . on Fraser River than in all Oregon and Washington Territories, and they have all been furnished with arms by the Hudson’s Bay Company.” The American goldseekers began to realize that the fur traders were in league with First Nations and that the monopoly, “which blots the respected British flag by placing on it ‘H.B.Co.’” meaning “Humbug Company,” was in quiet collusion. Alexander Allan, a Californian miner who arrived in Victoria in 1860, and later editor of the Cariboo Sentinel, supported this view when he recalled that Native hostility was such that they “were unwilling that the whites
should occupy the territory having been informed by the employees of the H.B.Co. that they should be overrun by Boston men who would take from them their territory, destroy their game, and take away their fishing grounds. The H.B.Co. had for their object to keep out all other whites from that country.”

Amicable relations between the HBC and First Nations stood in bold relief when compared to American-Native Indian dealings within the Pacific Northwest. During the United States Indian Wars of the mid 1850s, Chief Trader Roderick Finlayson noted that many American citizens were forced to masquerade as HBC servants so that they might pass safely through Native-controlled lands, though the Indians were not fooled by this for long. “[T]he Indians knew the dress & through this means allowed them to pass without interfering with them,” Finlayson recalled. “A Colvile brigade of 200 horses with furs &c was coming to the [Puget] Sound Country. The people in charge were not molested in the least although seen by the hostile Indians, while the sight of an American was shot down at once. And it began to be thought that the Company servants were in league with the redskins. Various efforts were made to put an end to the slaughter. One device succeeded pretty well, it was that of adopting the clothing of the H.B.Co.s men -- the blue capot & the red belt... In time, however, the natives discovered the fact & continued the war.” Substantial numbers of Native miners equipped with HBC weaponry, and a determined stance that the gold and country was theirs alone, had the effect of putting Euro-American goldseekers on a defensive footing, especially so considering that they were also apparently in lands claimed by Britain.

In the initial months of the gold rush, White miners acted with caution as the threat of militant Natives might at any moment drive them away. Franklin Matthias, a miner from Washington Territory, writing on the Fraser River some 30 miles above its confluence with the Thompson River, spoke of the uneasy relations that were quickly unfolding for White miners who dared with impunity
to venture beyond the accessible diggings within the vicinity of forts Langley, Hope and Yale. "[T]he Indians went into a camp about a mile above us, and forcibly took the provisions and arms from a party of four men, and cut two of the party severely with their knives in the row," claimed Matthias. "They came into our camp the same day and insisted that we should trade with them or leave the country. All the white men that were scattered along the river, in that section, collected together, and as the bar there was not large enough for all to work on, all hands moved down here... We design at present to remain here until we can get one hundred men together, when we will move up above the Falls and do just about as we please without regard to the Indians... but there will be h_ll to pay after a while."

Matthias’ words were ultimately prophetic. During the months of May and June, First Nations began to blockade the upper reaches of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, and possibly even the Harrison, in an attempt to keep foreign miners out.

While American newspapers continued to print reports of fabulous wealth being made by miners at such places as Hill’s Bar, just south of Fort Yale, the desire to find the mother lode up river was a continual inducement that at all times was being thwarted by the Native population. Euro-Americans read report after report of eye-witness accounts of Native peoples always having an abundance of gold, and it became assumed that the richest of diggings were those being kept secret by their Native protectors. And so, the golden kingdom increasingly grew in the imagination of those wanting their own abundance of treasure. Blockades would become synonymous with hidden wealth to be exploited. As the special correspondent of the San Francisco Bulletin was to report in mid-June of the year, "There are no men now working on Thompson river [13 June], the Indians there not permitting any one to go up.” The warning then having been made, the correspondent offered the compelling words so attractive to the miner’s heart: “The gold on Thompson river is known to be coarser than that on Frazer above the Forks.” Coarser gold could only mean the possible existence
of the mother lode.

In another article under “Strange Flying Reports on Frazer,” miners were again expelled from up-river diggings some hundred miles above the Forks “where the gold was lying as thick as pebbles on the bottom of the stream, and they could have dipped it up in a tin cup, had not the Indians objected.”

Some of the first dry diggings along the arid bench lands were being initially prospected, too, but “the miners dared not extend their searches far from the stream, where the bulk of the whites congregated” owing to the presence of “a large number of Indians, not of the most friendly disposition. . .” Undoubtedly, First Nations were actively protecting their most favoured gold washing grounds from foreign intrusion, yet one also suspects that the greater the resistance offered the more incredible the reports became of presumed or imagined Native wealth. Again, reporting of the gold-bearing grounds above the Forks: “The Indians exhibited pieces to them as large as pigeon eggs, and signified to them by signs, that during the diurnal revolution of the sun, they could take out a double handful of it. They are very numerous and insolent, making their appearance suddenly in great force, when least expected.” Nevertheless, non-Native goldseekers continued to push farther up the Fraser and Thompson Rivers in their quest for gold so that by late June of 1858, the very height of the gold rush, open full-scale resistance was like a fuse waiting to be lit.

Increasing numbers of Whites on the lower Fraser also began to weigh heavily on Native populations in that region. George Wilbur, who “found gold everywhere” in the vicinity of Sailor Diggings, witnessed the beginnings of conflict on Hill’s Bar where Natives had been accustomed to mine prior to the rush. Non-Native goldseekers would later report “that Hill’s Bar has been worked before” the presence of White miners as “some Indian tools were found in it.” As the population of White miners increased on the celebrated bar, Wilbur noted the new tensions that quickly arose.
"The Indians were very troublesome. They would seize the dirt dug by the whites and wash out the gold. They would even take the tools from the miners. The whites were afraid to resist as they would have been overwhelmed by numbers. In five minutes time, five hundred Indians could be gathered at Hill's Bar."\(^73\) By the time Governor Douglas made his first reconnaissance of the lower gold fields, tensions had escalated at Hill's Bar and bloodshed was about to be committed except for the Chief Factor's timely appearance. "On the arrival of our party at 'Hill's Bar,'" wrote Douglas, "the white miners were in a state of great alarm on account of a serious affray which had just occurred with the native Indians, who mustered under arms in a tumultuous manner, and threatened to make a clean sweep of the whole body of miners assembled there. The quarrel arose out of a series of provocations on both sides, and from the jealousy of the savages, who naturally felt annoyed at the large quantities of gold taken from their country by the white miners."\(^74\)

Just prior to this affray Lieutenant-Colonel Steptoe and U.S. Army soldiers were defeated by twelve hundred of the Spokane, Palouse, Coeur d'Alene, and the Yakima, in Washington Territory, and Douglas concluded that it would require "the nicest tact to avoid a disastrous Indian War" from spreading into First Nations' lands north of the 49th parallel. Douglas' concerns were understandable given the evidence of Native resistance to White encroachment and social control during the 'Indian Wars' that occurred in Washington and Oregon Territories, let alone the frequent reports of Native-White conflict prevalent throughout New Caledonia. The forty-ninth parallel did not define the Native world, nor the similar kinds of resistance offered to goldseekers who crossed the international divide.\(^75\)

With Douglas' entrance into the lower Fraser goldfields, British authority was proclaimed to Euro-American goldseekers who had been operating much the same way they had done in California.
Yet Douglas' initial contact with this extension of the Californian mining frontier was limited to ‘flying the flag’ and the establishment of basic rules and regulations in what was still unconstituted British territory. This perhaps had the desired effect for the moment, but Douglas would not return for almost three months, at which time he attempted to broker a peace between two mutually exclusive worlds that ultimately were to clash in all-out war.

As evidence of early Native gold mining, the first published map of British Columbia confirmed "Indian diggings" to a number of sites in the territory of the Secwepemc (Figure 9). Later

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**Figure 9.** “Indian Diggins” are clearly displayed in the vicinity of Kamloops (Fort Thompson) on Alfred Waddington’s 1858 map of the gold fields. This was the first map of British Columbia to be published. BC Archives.
California-produced maps erased their presence altogether. A common stereotype encouraged by Rickard, and advanced by a host of succeeding historians, is that Aboriginal peoples were either unwilling or unable to fully participate in developments outside their traditional roles as hunters and gathers. Never mind that it was Native Indian peoples who were largely responsible for piloting miners' boats and canoes through the treacherous waters of Fraser River, who actively bartered their lucrative salmon resource to the newcomers, or allowed non-Native miners to travel on an established network of Indian trails that clung ingeniously to precipitous canyon walls. There was a Sto:lo Native known to goldseekers in 1858 as 'Captain John' who piloted boats between Hope to Yale, and according to his own reminiscences, given in Chinook and translated in 1898, he amassed some $2000 from his labours — certainly much more than many of the White miners who came to Fraser River. Jason Allard, son of HBC Chief Trader Ovid Allard, recalled when the Native pilot was first taken aboard the American Steamer *Surprise*, anchored off Fort Langley in June 1858. "The pilot was an Indian named Speel-Set," recalled Allard. "He went aboard the *Surprise* barefooted and wearing only a blanket. When he returned he came as 'Captain' John dressed in a pilot cloth suit, white hat and calf skin boots, the proudest Indian in the country. Moreover the sum of $160 was paid through Mr. Yale for the pilot’s services — eight twenty dollar gold pieces. The boats thereafter ran to Hope more or less regularly."

One of the most fascinating tales of Native control at this time came from the former chief of the San Francisco police force who travelled to the Fraser River in July of 1858. Captain B. C. Donellan gave a personal narrative of his trip, upon returning to San Francisco, in which he recalled the "pact" extended by Natives opposite the head of Sailor’s Diggings to a place that Donellan’s party later named Washington Bar.
There was at this point a rancheria or village of Indians, who lived principally upon the salmon caught in the river; and it was reported that these Indians would allow no miners to stop or congregate in their neighborhood. . . . The Indians, for a while, were surly; but in a short time an amicable understanding was entered into, by which the miners agreed to faithfully pay for everything they obtained from the Indians, and not to disturb them in their fisheries. These fisheries were carried on with scoop or dip nets in the early mornings, and in the evenings from about 4 o’clock till dark . . . It was for fear that the miners would work in the water and disturb their fisheries that the Indians looked with disfavor upon their approach; but upon the agreement that during fishing hours the miners would keep away from the river, everything was arranged to the satisfaction of both parties -- and the pact was kept.  

Native peoples along the Fraser River corridor not only advanced their material well-being as effective entrepreneurs, but in many instances, adopted or improvised miners' technology and demanded tolls from miners travelling through their territory. With respect to Native adaptation of technology, Douglas is quoted as stating that Natives were "almost destitute of tools for moving the soil, and of washing implements for separating the gold from the earthly matrix, and have therefore to pick it out with knives, or to use their fingers for that purpose." This was certainly the case before the HBC began importing and later manufacturing mining implements for their use. Nevertheless, by the time of the rush, a correspondent to the San Francisco *Bulletin* outlined the innovative way in which Native peoples improvised mining technology to keep in the game. The essential building material of the Salishan culture is, of course, cedar. Just as masks, paddles, canoes, and long houses were artfully and efficiently constructed from the cedar tree, so were the early gold pans and sluice boxes used to mine the sand and gravel bars found adjacent to the fishing grounds they inhabited. The *Bulletin* reported that, “a host of Indians are at work along the banks with wooden boxes or bowls about twelve inches square, and some with a rude imitation of a sluice, dug out of cedar, about two by five feet, which they place at about an angle of ten degrees. They put earth into it and then throw water upon it, collecting the gold which remains in the bottom and
panning out in the usual way with their wooden bowls.\textsuperscript{85} Natives saw successful displays of Euro-American pans and sluice boxes and quickly adapted and utilised this technology.

In the same way, the very idea of selling licenses to miners, as instituted by colonial authorities, was viewed by some as the inspiration behind Native taxation of a blanket or shirt before goldseekers were permitted to travel farther up the Fraser River. A miner reported that Natives "are following the example of the Hudson's Bay Company and levying 'blackmail' upon the miners in the shape of clothing."\textsuperscript{86} At the same time, charging tolls was a common First Nations practice in many parts of Canada and the United States rooted in pre-contact traditions, and therefore, not unique to the Fraser rush or a mimicking of HBC practices.\textsuperscript{87}

Until at least May 1858, once huge numbers of Euro-Americans occupied the Fraser River corridor, Native peoples represented the majority of miners in the new gold fields. Time and again it is recorded that Native miners, both men and women, outnumbered non-Native miners on each of the well-paying bars they had tentatively shared. For instance, as of 24 May 1858, Douglas recorded that at Hill's Bar "80 Indians and 30 white men" were at work.\textsuperscript{88} Later accounts estimated as many as 500 Native miners at this well-known site (Figure 10).\textsuperscript{89} John Ledell, a goldseeker from Washington Territory, observed in June of the same year that "the Indians [were] very industriously employed, and all along the river, from Fort Hope up, engaged in washing out the ore."\textsuperscript{90}
A new Western historian has stated that "No industry had a greater impact on Western history than did mining."91 Certainly this was the case for Natives who in discovering gold thrust New Caledonia into the destructive orb of the California mining frontier. As we shall see, in the contest over land and gold the Native peoples who lived along the Fraser and Thompson Rivers were finally overwhelmed by sheer numbers of miners and weaponry, their monopoly control of gold forfeited, and their claim to the land marginalised as the events of 1858 precipitated the formation of Indian reserves. To say that Natives participated in the gold discoveries, as Rickard claimed, is to suggest that they were marginal players in an event not of their own making.92 As shown here, Natives controlled gold mining long before the first approach of Euro-American miners. And when the gold rush finally commenced, they actively resisted encroachment on their established trade. Though the Native peoples of New Caledonia held in check early American incursion into their territory, the eventual ascension of numbers that climaxed into a full-scale rush were to overwhelm Indian opposition.

From a fur trade perspective, too, the Fraser River gold rush was history repeating itself. Just as the Oregon Trail had conveyed significant numbers of Americans to the southern half of Old Oregon, forcing the HBC to consolidate its interests north of the political divide, the Fraser rush threatened to transplant an even greater population above the 49th parallel, spelling the complete and final demise of the Company's monopoly powers from the Pacific Slope region. As we shall see, with the expansion of the California mining frontier into New Caledonia, competition, whether for furs, trade, or gold had arrived en masse. And though HBC employees and allies, both Native and non-Native, might realize short term profit, the Corporation saw increasing risk.
NOTES


4. Douglas to McLean, 10 February 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.

5. Douglas to McLean, 7 April and 1 May 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.

6. Douglas to William Fraser Tolmie, 26 May 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.


8. Ibid.


10. Ibid.

11. Douglas to McLean, 24 June 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.

12. Douglas to Blenkinsop, Fort Colvile, 8 July 1857, Fort Victoria, CO. Douglas later wrote: "There will no doubt . . . be trouble with the servants and I will send to Honolulu for a few Sandwich Islanders to meet defections." Douglas to McLean, 26 December 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.

13. Douglas continued: "The discovery appears no longer a shadow but a sober reality. The quantity you have traded proves that fact beyond a question, and we must now prepare to turn that great discovery to advantage." Douglas to McLean, 10 September 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.


17. Douglas to Dugald McTavish, 23 December 1857, Fort Victoria, CO. Douglas stated, "Should the gold country touch upon any accessible point of Fraser's River, it will be of immense advantage to us as supplies might then be taken up by water communication."

18. Ibid.

20. Douglas to Angus McDonald, 21 September 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.

21. Douglas to Peter Skene Ogden, 21 September 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.

22. Douglas to Captain Charles Dodd, 22 September 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.

23. Simpson to Douglas, 1 May 1857. Correspondence Out, 1856-58. HBCA.

24. Douglas to Duncan Finlayson, 25 September 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.


27. Ibid, 8-10.

28. Lytton to Douglas, 1 July 1858, in *Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold*, 17.


30. Douglas to McLean, 23 November 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.

31. "The Speaker suggested that this License referred to trade with Indians only; and not to white men, but his Excellency suggested that there were no white men at the time in the country; but further he had received advices from the Home Government which left no doubt that the Hudson's Bay Co. did possess the exclusive right of navigation and trade." Minutes of the First House of Assembly of Vancouver Island, 18 June 1858, in *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, 1851-1871*, Vol. II. Edited by James E. Hendrickson (Victoria: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1980), 41-43.

32. Isaac Stevens to Lewis Cass, 18 May 1858. Series A.13. Correspondence Between the HBC and HM British Government – Loose Papers, 1683-1902. HBCA. Also, see Legation of the United States in London, 12 June 1858, in which Stevens' protest was placed before Lord Malmesbury, Foreign Minister. Ibid.

33. Rickard was not the source of the myth that claimed Douglas brought immediate law and order to the goldfields, but he certainly lent credence to it. Until the fall of 1858, particularly once the Crown Colony was proclaimed 19 November 1858, Douglas as Governor of the adjacent Colony of Vancouver Island was prevented from taking the kind of forceful measures required to keep the peace.

34. Douglas to Dugald McTavish, 18 December 1857 and 30 December 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.

35. Simpson to McTavish, 1 May 1857. Correspondence Out. HBCA.
36. Simpson to Douglas, 17 February 1858. Correspondence Out. HBCA.


38. “Two sample Pick axes are also forwarded, the small one being for rock, and the other for digging earth; and I beg that you will get a hundred made of the same kind, and sent on with the pans to Fort Hope; they require to be steeled and carefully tempered.” Douglas to James Murray Yale, 26 December 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Douglas to Dugald McTavish, 30 December 1857, Fort Victoria, CO. Douglas later wrote, “I herewith beg to transmit for publication in the Washington Journals a copy of the provisional Regulations under which licenses for digging Gold may be obtained. You will observe that the License Fee has been raised to Twenty-one Shillings per month payable in advance, but in all other respects the Regulations as originally issued have not been altered.” Douglas to McTavish, 6 January 1858, Fort Victoria, CO.

42. Simpson to Douglas, 16 September 1857. George Simpson Correspondence Books. Correspondence Outward, 1856-58. HBCA.

43. Ibid.


46. Ibid., 772-73.

47. Simpson to Douglas, 16 September 1857. Correspondence Out, 1856-58. HBCA.

48. Simpson to Douglas, 16 March 1858. Correspondence Out, 1856-58. HBCA.

49. Ibid.

50. Douglas to Alexander Grant Dallas, 30 November 1857, Fort Victoria, CO. Dallas would later become son-in-law to James Douglas.


55. Ibid.


58. Ibid.


60. Ibid.


62. "Letter from Victoria, Vancouver Island," *Bulletin*, 7 May 1858, p. 3. Also, Natives were reported as "very hostile, and the Hudson’s Bay Company very much averse to Americans" entering the country. "The Fraser River fever at Stockton," *Bulletin*, 21 May 1858, p. 3.

63. Alexander Allan had mined in California for six years prior to his arrival in Victoria where he was the agent for the California Steamship Company. He later became the editor of the *Cariboo Sentinel*. See Alexander Allan, "Cariboo and the Mines of British Columbia" (1878). Reminiscences. Bancroft Library.


65. Finlayson continued: "In the war might be witnessed the difference of administration between the H.B.Co. people & the American settlers. The former were kept under strict discipline, while the latter were in no [way] restricted in their intercourse with the natives.... The capot originated in Canada among the French settlers, & the red belt was likewise of French Canadien design.... In alluding to the Indian war the H.Bay officers made efforts to stop the Indians carrying on the strife with the American. They replied that they would not cease, as they had been badly treated by the settlers & they were retaliating only.... The policy of the H.B.Co. was a standing one — one order was to hunt up murderers at any cost & hence is due a good deal the good feeling between the Indians & the H.B.Co.'s employees. See Roderick Finlayson, "The History of Vancouver Island and the Northwest Coast" (1878). Reminiscences. Bancroft Library. See also Robin Fisher, "Indian Warfare and Two Frontiers: A Comparison of British Columbia and Washington Territory during the Early Years of Settlement," *Pacific Historical Review* L (1981):31-51.

66. The animosity between First Nations and Americans was to continue for many years after the Fraser River gold rush. Charles Wilson of the Boundary Commission reported of the San Juan Island dispute: "Nor did the painful contrast between the friendly attitude of the Indians of Old Oregon towards the Hudson's Bay Company and the British commissioners and their hostility towards the Americans help official relations between the British and their opposite numbers." See George F.G. Stanley, Ed. *Mapping the Frontier: Charles Wilson's Diary of the Survey of the 49th Parallel, 1858-1862* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1970).

68. White miners were doing exceedingly well on the lower Fraser at this time. For instance, a Mr. Furness made $750 in gold dust in four weeks while at Hill's Bar. Hill himself averaged $50 a day. For this and the above quote see, "Travel on Fraser River and the Sound," Bulletin, 19 June 1858, pp. 2-3.


72. Evidence of early Native mining at Hill's Bar was reported by the miners themselves. "[A]s the river has gone down, the discovery is reported to have been made that Hill's Bar has been worked before. Some Indian tools were found in it." See "Letter from Victoria, V.I.," Bulletin, 1 October 1858, p. 2.

73. "Statement of a returned Miner from Frazer River" (George B. Wilbur), Bulletin, 5 June 1858, p. 2. Wilbur left his partners Albert Wood and William White to hold his claim.


76. The term "Indian diggings" was applied directly to the map along the Thompson River district. See "A Correct Map of the Northern Coal and Gold Regions comprehensing Frazer River," by Alfred Waddington. San Francisco, May 1858. BC Archives.

77. For instance, See "Sketch of Frazer River and the Gold Mines," Bulletin, 1858. BC Archives. On this map Native village sites at the mouth of the Fraser have been reduced to triangular symbols not unlike warning beacons to the wary. It perhaps cautioned the Euro-American miner that he would have to run the gauntlet before gaining entrance to the gold fields above.

78. Early histories such as Margaret A. Ormsby's classic British Columbia: A History (1958), do not mention aboriginal mining, whatsoever. At best, later authors recognised the Native presence in the gold fields simply by highlighting Native-White conflict that had occurred. For instance, E.E. Rich, Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870. Vol. III: 1821-1870 (Glasgow: The University Press, 1960). Robin Fisher substantially rectified matters by focussing on Native dispossession of land as the key issue that led to Native-White conflict in 1858, yet there is little discussion of Native mining. Robin Fisher, Contact & Conflict (1977) prev. cit. As noted earlier, Rolf Knight is the single exception in having expressed the idea that Aboriginal miners "learned the techniques and acquired the equipment which allowed for a more systematic working of claims...". Indians at Work, 133.


81. "Life on the Fraser: Personal Narrative of a Miner -- Adventures in the Snow" (Captain B.C. Donellan), *Bulletin*, 30 December 1858, p. 3.

82. Douglas also noted from informants that Natives were actively prosecuting the gold trade when he stated, "the auriferous character of the country is becoming daily more extensively developed, through the exertions of the native Indian tribes, who, having tasted the sweets of gold finding, are devoting much of their time and attention to that pursuit." See Douglas to Rt. Hon. Henry LaBouchere, 29 December 1857, in *Correspondence relative to the Discovery of Gold*, 8.

83. Roderick Finlayson noted that in 1857 the HBC Factor at Kamloops (McLean) requested "iron spoons to dig out the nuggets" be sent from Victoria for Natives on Thompson River. Finlayson, "The History of Vancouver Island and the Northwest Coast," Reminiscences. Bancroft Library.

84. For the central importance of cedar to Salishan culture see, Hilary Stewart’s introduction in *Cedar* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984).


86. "The position of American Traders in Victoria and Fraser River," *Bulletin*, 21 June 1858, p. 2. American newspapers further cautioned that at points near Sailor's Diggings above Yale, Natives were considered "a little troublesome; imposing a tax of a blanket or a shirt on each miner who worked on the ground the Indians claimed." *Puget Sound Herald*, 4 June 1858.


‘No danger had ought to intimidate a man in the pursuit of Gold,’ has become a common maxim and every day truth. An old Methodist minister once said in a sermon preached away down in the good old State of Maine about the time gold fever first broke out, that the Yankee would go farther after Gold than any other nation on Earth, and in illustration of his point he said, ‘If the Gates of Hell were hinged with Gold a Yankee would go there and take them,’ which I believe to be perfectly true, for they have been proving the truth of the doctrine since California was discovered to abound in precious metals.

— James Beith, A Miner from Humboldt County (1857)

In spring of 1858, while the waters of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers remained extremely low due to the prevailing cool temperatures of the season, limited numbers of miners, both Native and non-Native, from New Caledonia, Eastern Washington, Puget Sound and the Gulf of Georgia region continued to prospect and fill their gold pokes with magnificent amounts of precious yellow dust in advance of the tens of thousands who would ultimately join them from California. Certainly, rumours of gold on the Fraser were beginning to be heard in the far distant Sierra Nevada foothills, not surprising considering earlier, limited gold excitements that had already occurred in the American Pacific Northwest and the Queen Charlotte Islands. Yet it was not until press reports in the papers of Oregon and Washington began to be reprinted in California dailies that real interest began to take form and the disheveled, moribund mining population of California galvanized its energies and eagerly looked north for a New El Dorado. By the time of the Fraser River rush, San Francisco alone
claimed to have more newspapers than London, England, and as a consequence, along with the wire service and the mobility of goldseekers enhanced by steamboats, news of gold discoveries traveled fast.

The first news of Fraser River gold to be printed amongst the pages of the *Alta California* was a press report from the Olympia *Pioneer*, 6 March 1858, subsequently appearing in the San Francisco *Bulletin*, 19 March 1858, in which it was reported that the Steamer *Panama* (Figure 11) had arrived the previous day from Portland, Oregon, with local northern newspapers. Though it was declared that the Oregon journals contained “no news of interest or importance” to Californian readers, the Olympia *Pioneer* of Washington Territory did cause people to sit up and take notice. Its most tantalizing headline proclaimed: “THE FRAZER RIVER GOLD MINES — GREAT EXCITEMENT.” There was excitement, indeed, as this first press report claimed that Native Indian women were panning out $10 to $12 dollars worth of gold a day. To the paternal world of White California, news of Native women accruing such wealth must have encouraged the notion that gold on Fraser River was easily obtainable. By 3 April 1858, the *Bulletin* further gleaned information of the emerging gold fields when the Steamer *Columbia* brought additional papers from Puget Sound written in similar enthusiastic tones. Soon letters began to be written to the California press from miners who had seen the country first hand. Dr. William Fraser Tolmie, just one of the HBC traders who, it was suggested, could “be relied upon,” was quoted as saying that “the mines are extensive and will pay.” In short order advertisements were placed offering to take adventurers
to the unknown land.\textsuperscript{6}

Two steamers were immediately advertised for Fraser River via Victoria, Vancouver Island and Port Townsend, Washington Territory. The \textit{Commodore} and \textit{Columbia} made immediate preparations to sail in later April carrying hundreds of gold seekers to add to the already "feverish state of excitement existing around the [Puget] Sound."\textsuperscript{7} As further reports, private letters and samples of gold dust, were unveiled to an incredulous California, many felt that the incredible delirium was reminiscent, if not exceeding, that of the old glory days of '49, so missed by thousands of old sourdoughs who had been left behind in the wake of capital and labour intensive mining developments. The pattern of discovery was similar to all gold rushes in that continued excitement was dependent upon sustained news of gold actually coming out of the region and being displayed. The excitement building on these first reports was immense. The San Francisco \textit{Bulletin} was to immediately despatch a special correspondent to the emerging gold mines, and follow the story of frantic crowds that formed at the docks to be the first on the ground. "The wharves were filled with miners and other persons, eager to see and hear all that could be seen and heard about the new mines," he observed. "A number of old Californian miners were to be seen, threading their way
among the crowds, with pick axes, shovels and high pans slung over their shoulders, and the fires of anticipation brightly lighted in their eyes. Here and there groups earnestly discussed the topography of the Fraser river country. Now and then some bearded old miner with horny hands, could be seen drawing out of his pocket a well-thumbed map, and exhibiting and expounding the new placers to his less enlightened or more modest comrades. Just as hundreds had abandoned their homes, farms, friends, and businesses around Puget Sound to make their way to the “British possessions,” so too, did Californians follow suit as “The desire to become rich suddenly . . . [had] spread like an epidemic throughout the state.”

Within the week, larger steamers such as the Constitution and Panama also advertised their services for the North having witnessed the substantial commotion in San Francisco. Like many Californians, George Washington Raenhart, “the well known Temperance lecturer from the mountains,” was alarmed by the huge exodus that appeared ready to take place and thus imperil the livelihood of the Golden State. Suspicions immediately arose that the nefarious monopoly known as the California Steamship Company might be promoting the New El Dorado in an attempt to profit from the transport of freight and passengers. In his lyrics written to the tune of the “Sons of the Emerald Isle,” Raenhart was to warn:

*The new gold mines are all the rage.*
*And passage people do engage —*
*The fever now none can assuage —*
*SUCH things me greatly do enrage;*
*For, by the ruins of Thermopylae!*
*It is a ruse of ‘the Monopoly!’*

...To Puget Sound, they say, they're bound,
But in the ocean will be found,
Your fifty-dollars gone — you, too —
And all will say your fate you knew.
Down in the deep will be the vessels of
*The cursed and the cursed Monopoly.*
No one was to pay much heed to Raenhart’s lack of enthusiasm. Wild suspense continued to build about the “New Yellow Fever” as “knots of old experienced miners, verdant new-comers, excited youths, wild spectators, with a sprinkling of ‘Micawbers’ and bummers, were seen. . . . discussing the chances of accumulating a ‘pile’ by a few months of hard toil.”

Nor was the general panic limited to the gold-mining centre of San Francisco. The Interior gold camps of California, hundreds of them dotted along the Sacramento, Yuba, and Feather Rivers, were also on the march by the middle of May. “In the stage, from Murphy’s to Stockton, little else was talked about yesterday,” exclaimed an excited goldseeker. “And every time the persons inside (several of whom were old miners) passed acquaintances on the way, they were saluted with, ‘Halloa, John, (or Tom), on your way to Frazer River?’ The general impression, when a man was seen to be traveling was, that he must be on the route to the new mines.” At Oroville, Marysville, and Sacramento, ten thousand miners were disclosed as preparing to leave. The San Francisco Newsletter believed that at least fifty thousand would join the rush within ninety days time. “These figures are not written at random,” the Newsletter claimed, “but from positive information obtained from the interior of the northern, central and southern sections of this State.”

Californians were not only pouring into the new mines, but staying, while the few that did return apparently had “a good deal of gold to exhibit” which was likened to “oil upon the fire already lighted.” The credibility of the Fraser gold fields rose another notch in California. The result was instantaneous. The Fraser River gold fields were a reality and according to newspapers of the day they “created a much more general and violent excitement” than had ever been experienced in the Eastern States during the days of ‘49. “Excitement of this kind is infectious,” wrote the Bulletin’s editor, and “A person who does not run out and listen to the talk on the streets, in the bar-rooms, in business stores. . . . can have no idea of the alarming state of the Frazer river excitement at the
present moment in San Francisco.”

Certainly the San Francisco business community was to understand the “alarming” state of things and made the most of it. Whisky, wine, beer, pork, picks, pans, shovels, gold scales, boots, books, packs, maps, medicines and miracle cures were all re-packaged for especial use on Fraser River (see Figure 13). Charts were immediately offered for sale of varying quality, accuracy and technical detail.17 A.C. Anderson’s *Handbook and Map to the Gold Fields* (1858) would sell the unprecedented number of 3,000 copies in the space of three days (see Figure 14).18 Warm woolens refashioned for Fraser River’s northern climate became the selling card of many a clothier: “We have a large stock of heavy and coarse Coats, Pea-jackets, Pants, Shirts, Socks, &c, just suitable for . . . miners visiting those mines.”19 The Quincy Hall Clothing House (Figure 16) proclaimed in large bold type that it was closing out its immense stock: “GOT THE GOLD FEVER AND BOUND FOR FRAZER RIVER!” Grocery stores warned of the scarcity of provisions and suggested that Fraser River bound miners stock-up with supplies before departing.20 Merchants such as Thomas Hibben were even more determined to capture the full extent of the new trade. Hibben quickly dissolved his partnership in the “Noisy Carriers’ Book & Stationary Company” to relocate to Victoria.21
Wells, Fargo and Company22 also established an express headquarters in Victoria while “Nichols & Co.’s Express for Frazer River” would be just one of several smaller mail carriers to notify Californians of their intended move north (Figure 15).23 Even the San Francisco Bulletin would print a timely run of “The Bulletin For The North,” which had as a special feature an extensive, very useful listing of Chinook Jargon with equivalent translations in both English and French.24

Clearly, there was money to be made in ‘mining the miners,’ an important consideration to remember when reviewing the oftentimes exaggerated claims of gold discovery found in San Francisco newspapers. Though the interior reaches of California were particularly hard hit by the sudden outflow of mining populations, San Francisco, for a time, profited from the mania. As the main point of departure for the new gold fields, San Francisco and its business community had substantial motivation to fuel the Fraser River Fever, and thus benefit through increased merchandising and transportation of goldseekers. The existence of gold in New Caledonia was undeniable, and certainly the impetus for the rush, but the general hysteria that permeated every aspect of newspaper coverage was as great an inducement in enticing adventurers to
go north by the tens of thousands. California was "knocked endways" by this outrageous gold excitement. Friends and family once considered lost were now presumed to have headed for Fraser River. "On further inquiries about Richard Bullis, the man who mysteriously disappeared on last Friday," the Bulletin snitched, "we learn that there are reports that he was suddenly taken with the Frazer river fever. . . . As nothing whatever has been learned of him direct, and as he was not exempt from the new contagion, it is probable that young Bullis is now rowing up towards Fort Hope." Indeed, Fraser River had captured the imagination of California gold rush society. The San Francisco Newsletter peppered its pages with the tantalizing stories of the new diggings: of William Price, "a boy who went fortune hunting," and told of three men who had taken $1800 in the short space of a month; or at Kerrison's Bar where Saint Marie and Charles Hanna got four ounces in just half a day's work with a rocker; Hill's Bar, where men anxiously awaited quicksilver in order to accumulate $10 to $12 dollars a day, though predictions by old timers suggested the possibility of $50 to $100 to the hand (see Figure 17); and Captain Daniels' eyewitness account of a lone Frenchman having made the extraordinary pile of $10,000 in five quick weeks. The editor of the Bulletin declared: "What a tremendous effect will the news now going home have upon the people at the East and in Europe! Talk about $10, $20 and $50 per day to men who work for these sums a whole month or a year — why, if people get wild here [California], they will run mad there."

Every walk of life in San Francisco appeared to be leaving: "The Frazer Infection in the Police

Figure 17. Hill's Bar was considered the richest mining site on the lower Fraser River.
Department" sent officers Berham, Hanford, Quackenbush, Guyton, Riley, Dennison, Parks, Bovee, and Captain Donellan, flying north with the greatest of haste, while the "Dwindling of the Fire Department from Frazer Fever" was blamed on two hundred members of the force having bolted. James Moore, a member of No. 8 Fire Company (the 'Pacific'), as noted in a previous chapter, was one of the first Californians up the Fraser River, having contributed to the infamous Hill's Bar strike. "Give my regards to all of '8's' fellows," he wrote to a friend, having also sent a sample of Hill's Bar gold from the $10 to $32 a day he had averaged while there. Even the notorious Edward McGowan, narrowly escaping the long arm of Californian law, was said to have made "his stealthy exit" on the Sierra Nevada to the foreign gold mines.

There is absolutely no way to accurately determine just how many Californians flooded the Fraser and Thompson River corridors in 1858, but suffice to say, that it was well in excess of the thirty to thirty-five thousand people given as the usual conservative estimate. With no colonial government established in New Caledonia, records of the myriad number of miners who chose to travel through the inland corridors of the Pacific Coast have undoubtedly been underestimated. Certainly we have been left records from the infamous and literate few, but what of the untold thousands of 'unknown miners,' whether Whites, Indians, Africans, Chinese, or Latinos whose trails were for gold and not left in paper. For some Californians, it was not even the allure of mineral wealth as much as the sense of joining a rare human adventure by goldseekers who had grown accustomed to excitement. Though newspapers undoubtedly fueled the rush in an attempt to sell advertising through increased circulation, at the end of the day, they pleaded a case for waiting two to three months before abandoning Californian. With the arrival of the huge steamer Republic, carrying further favorable reports of British gold, it seemed that it was too late to halt the exodus. The routes that these northern-bound miners chose to take became critical, for they carried both news
of the goldfields into areas along the path of travel and goldseekers into Native worlds, trampling them along the way.

Once having decided to “chase the butterfly,” miners next had to find the means by which to get there. Certainly those who were already camped in the mining communities of Northern California could realistically consider traveling overland through the Pacific Coast Interior, especially so, those residents from Oregon and Washington visiting California and familiar with a succession of pre-existing trails that led directly to HBC forts in New Caledonia. The Californian world of placer mining had been preceded by fur trading operations, the Hudson’s Bay Company having established a base in Yerba Buena (San Francisco) in 1841, long before California was ceded to the United States by Mexico.35 Thus, Pacific Coast trails were well-established prior to the gold rushes. One such miner who decided to travel the overland routes to New Caledonia was John Callbreath, a well-known 49'er from Monticello, Sullivan County, New York.36

In a letter, written to his mother in New York from Bridge River north of Lillooet, Callbreath recorded his departure with four companions, 5 July 1858, undoubtedly following the old Applegate Trail into southern Oregon. While overlanders might escape the costs and potential calamities of ocean-going travel, the inland routes of communication were through Natives’ territory, so were fraught with perceived danger from First Nations peoples, though Callbreath, at this point, saw “no fear as yet from the Indians.” For many American goldseekers, fighting Indians and finding placer gold became conflated, as shown in the language and stories of newspapers of the period, and in the fact of militia formations that followed HBC trails hopping between fur trade forts and posts. Callbreath’s small company of miners felt it best to proceed to the “secure” American stronghold of
Fort Walla Walla before continuing their journey north and "lay by until a sufficient number would come up to form a company to travel through the Indian country."  

Branching off in the direction of the Umatilla River, Callbreath recorded how his small company, unfamiliar with the local topography of the Pacific Northwest, "took a wrong road" that cost them an additional 80 miles distance, though the Californian did not much mind his mistake, at first. Obviously sensing no Indian threat, it afforded the opportunity to explore the sublime landscape they were encountering for the first time. "It is indeed a lovely country," he wrote, "the valley land rich and level, and the hills low and covered with a perfect carpet of most luxuriant grass. It is as yet unsettled, but cannot remain so long, unless Uncle Sam makes an Indian reservation of it."  

Callbreath’s party continued in the wrong direction knowing that they would sooner or later reach the HBC’s old Fort Walla Walla. Here, the tension would have mounted as they waited about five days “to make up a company, elect a captain, and organize for a hostile country.” As they prepared to cross the Snake River they realized they were breaching a dividing line established by First Nations, into lands considered off-limits to White intrusion, particularly Americans, as opposed to HBC employees who were still accepted guests. Their newly formed formidable contingent consisted of “over 200 men, well armed, and about 500 animals (mules & horses).”  

Upon nearing the entrance to the Grand Coulee, they met several Native people, “professedly friendly,” who advised them to continue travelling the Columbia River route as no spring water would be found at the head of the Canyon, the nearest being an additional 30 miles distance. The company, though having suffered no threats, nevertheless were by now too suspicious of Indians to take the advice. Callbreath related that, “the greater portion of their warriors were now out fighting our troops under Col. Wright and Major Garnett. So we concluded to make the long journey without water in the night.... which brought us to the head of the Grand Coulee.... The spring, however,
instead of being dry, was full, and a fine bold stream running from it. We immediately camped and set a double guard to watch the camp and animals. The lying Indian had undoubtedly some motive in what they had told us, and we were resolved to give them no advantage.” This experience served to fuel the Californians’ suspicions about threats from Natives while passing through Indian country.

Next morning, the large company travelled an additional 125 miles through the “singular ravine... and resembling very nearly the ‘Palisades’ of the Hudson” before descending to the Columbia River once more, about 275 miles from the Dalles. Here they swam their animals, and hired canoes for transporting their cargoes “from the Indians whom fear made friends of.” The Natives were apparently all old men, “their young warriors being out fighting Uncle Sam’s boys, and getting... the sweetest thrashing they ever had.” The Elders were nevertheless good enough to tell these goldseekers that they had struck the Columbia about 30 miles too high, having missed the trail once more, and the preferred crossing point at Fort Okanagan, an additional “sixty miles traveled for nothing.” This time the company of men believed the warning. As they proceeded back down the river, they searched for a trail to the Okanogan River. Here, they hired Native guides once more to pilot them across the Okanogan, in anticipation of embarking upon the HBC trail that would lead them past Soap Lake to McLaughlin’s Canyon. En route, Callbreath’s party encountered U.S. troops under the command of Major Garnett, returning to the Dalles with Native prisoners of war. For these American miners, the U.S. Army had fulfilled its mandate of protecting the frontier and, in their minds, the path had effectively been cleared of armed Native resistance.

While members of the Okanagan Nation had ambushed David McLouglin and his party of about 180 men, at what would become known as “McLoughlin’s Canyon” near present-day Tenasket, Callbreath’s party was able to leave the Okanogan River and freely pass the natural defensive corridor
with no opposition. The HBC employees had always traversed the canyon with their annual brigades, yet with the entrance of thousands of goldseekers into the Aboriginal landscape and Native territory of the Plateau peoples of Eastern Washington, the corridor, like the Snake River, was viewed by Natives as one more line that was not to be crossed. Callbreath’s party entered the infamous canyon, undoubtedly giving anxious stares to the high stone cliffs, wondering whether they, too, might be attacked at any moment. Casting their eyes to the circuitous path of the canyon floor, the evidence of Okanagan resistance was still clearly visible, the hastily prepared graves of three Fraser River-bound goldseekers a mute testimony to the battle that had occurred. “This canyon is probably one of the best natural fortified passes in the world,” recalled Callbreath, “completely walled in on each side by a perpendicular granite ledge. Once in the mouth, and you imagine yourself treading some Giants hall, two hundred feet high, with the blue skies for its canopy. . . We were not molested in passing this place. The red devils were amusing themselves with the troops, and had not time to pay us their addresses. They had sent word to the Dalles that no company of white men should pass that canyon, and had it not been for the troops drawing them away, I presume they would have kept their word.”

Continuing north, the party advanced beyond the 49th parallel, the new political divide as yet unmarked, and considering themselves in safe British territory — having “passed the most dreaded Indian country” — they held a formal meeting in which some members concluded that they no longer needed to travel in large numbers for defensive purposes. The meeting “resulted in a formal breaking up of the company, with the usual amount of loud talking, swearing, and disputing” with miners like Callbreath convinced that smaller companies would be able to travel with much more ease, speed, and efficiency. Callbreath’s company continued their journey north towards Fort Kamloops, having passed General Joel Palmer’s wagon train seen floating to the head of Okanagan Lake using rafts to
escape the more rugged portions of the country. The thousands of acres of wild prairie were so lush and abundant that in certain instances their mules seemed to almost disappear within a sea of grass. Apparently, a party of miners who had traversed this place one month previously had lost one of their mules. Callbreath had heard that one of the goldseekers was subsequently killed by Natives when he had separated from the main company while in search of the wayward animal. The rumour suggested that the fur trade world north of the 49th parallel was not quite the "safe British territory" that American miners had expected.

Figure 18. A portion of John Callbreath's route from Kamloops via Thompson's River and Hat Creek. From Lieutenant R.C. Mayne's 1858 Reconnaissance work published as Sketch of Part of British Columbia (War Office, 1859). Surveyor-General's Vault. Victoria.

While passing a small party of twenty men and a woman who were also Fraser River bound, they encountered some Indian people who gave them news of the mines "of a very vague and indefinite character [sic]" which, nevertheless, "caused quite an excitement." They had finally reached the British stronghold of Fort Kamloops (Figure 18) where they met Donald McLean's mix-blood son in charge of the HBC Fort during his absence. Here, Callbreath began to differentiate among the various Native roles and characters present in the British fur trade economy. The goldseeker related:
[A] half breed Indian had charge of the premises at the time, who seemed to lord it over the few Indians that were lounging around with much gusto. I have no doubt but he considered himself qualified in rank and birth to kiss the great toe of Her Majesty's left foot. . . . the price of goods in their store was enormous. Directly opposite the store, and in the fork of the north and south forks [of Thompson River], was a good sized one story [sic] adobe building occupied [sic] by the Chief of the Kamloops Indians, who has quite a farm under cultivation, the principle article of production being potatoes and peas. He had several hundred head of cattle and about 50 horses . . . . the Chief was an old man, and one of great authority amongst his own and the adjoining tribes. He had been christianized and (in a manner) civilized by Catholic missionaries, and exhibited a deal of good sense & good breeding. He is a devout Catholic, never eats without asking a blessing, or suffered a stranger to go away hungry. I could not help contrasting his rude kindness with the haughty, disgusting halfbred across the river.

Callbreath took advantage of the Chief's kindness, purchasing Lady Finger potatoes and several buckets of the richest milk he ever saw. "It was a rare treat," he enthused. As the small company departed Fort Kamloops they made their way down the Thompson River, comparing it in size to the San Joaquin of California, trading amongst Native peoples as they went for fresh salmon in exchange for bread, blankets, old clothes and what Callbreath referred to as "trinkets." Callbreath claimed that these Natives "all had gold, some of them in considerable quantities." From the Thompson they next

Figure 19. John Callbreath's route from Hat Creek via Marble Canyon to The Fountain. From Lieut. R.C. Mayne's 1858 Reconnaissance published as Sketch of Part of British Columbia (War Office, 1859).
followed the course “of a good sized mill creek called River aux Chapeaux” or today’s Hat Creek, then through Marble Canyon, following the Pavilion River to its mouth on Fraser River and eventually to The Fountain (Figure 19). Callbreath estimated that he and his companions had spent about 87 days traveling to the gold fields of New Caledonia, a total of some fifteen hundred and fifty miles, not reaching the Fraser River until 1 October 1858. By this time, winter was setting in and the sand and gravel bars quickly froze leaving John Callbreath a long and cold winter in which to compose his twenty-four page hand-written account. Spending the winter amongst a community of cabin-dwellers at Bridge River, providing safety “from Indians whome [sic] fear only restrains from open hostilities,” Callbreath waited for the recommencement of mining in spring. “We are all Gentlemen of leisure for the present,” he lamented, “our greatest talents being strained to find the easiest and best methods of killing time.”

Sleep is the principle business. Whoever can stand the most of it drives the [heaviest] trade. As for my own part, I presume I drive the poorest trade of anyone on the flat. The body will not rest unless the mind rests also, and my mind is never at ease when I am separated from all the loved ones of this earth. We get no news up here. . . I have not heard from my wife since I parted with her on the fifth day of July last, which weighs upon my mind and tortures my hours. . . . sometimes I get desperate, and vow to leave the Godforsaken region, but the thought of losing a good claim, for which I traveled over 1500 miles, deters me from the step, and I again fall back on hope and console myself with thoughts of happier days to come.

In contrast to groups like Callbreath’s, that utilized Interior Pacific Coast routes to the Fraser River gold fields, the majority took to the sea and thus allowing the Californian world to burst on the scene without much warning or preparation on all sides. The experience of overlanders like John Callbreath, taking wrong turns and lengthy periods of time to reach New Caledonia, compounded with the ever present fear of Indian attacks, undoubtedly contributed to the decision of most
Ill Californians to take an ‘easier,’ safer, and above all speedier form of travel to the New El Dorado. To do so, however, meant being able to pay passage fees that were often beyond the limited means of impoverished placer miners. For those in close proximity to San Francisco, and especially those who could afford passage on one of the large, sturdy steamers, a sea voyage north was the natural choice. A letter in the San Francisco Bulletin by one ship-bound Californian, sailing on the Republic off Beechy Head, Strait of Juan De Fuca, wrote of the chaotic scene experienced by fellow Argonauts. “I have heard of a crowded steamer,” he stated, “but never realized it till this trip. We have 670 passengers on board, when one-third of the number would crowd the vessel. . . Claims were secured on the decks outside of the state room doors by depositing blankets on the spot; and tying carpet bags to the side, and some serious arguments have arisen when claims have been ‘jumped.’”

With the large ocean-going steamers packed beyond capacity, many miners looked elsewhere for transport up the Pacific Coast, and risked taking alternative, cheaper vessels in keeping with their limited means.

Warren Sadler was one such Californian goldseeker who joined new companions John Norton and Robert Swain who were of “the same turn of mind.” His journal charts the turbulent trip north taken by he and his party which turned out to be much more dangerous than Callbreath’s. Sadler had “considerable talk” with the two prospectors on the intimate details of the new mines, the weather to be contended with, and of course, the kind and extent of gold to be discovered. Wanting to avoid land travel as much as possible, the three wandered around the wharves of San Francisco until happening upon an old British “tub” that was supposed to be leaving for Victoria. Though Sadler wrote that the captain “was full of superstition and whims,” they nevertheless boarded the sailing ship
and set out to sea. The first three days were spent getting as far away from the coast as possible, and the general impression of the ship being a dilapidated tub seemed confirmed. Finally, a roaring gale began to blow that repeatedly lashed out at the ship, frequently inundating it and all who sailed her. This certainly was not what these prospectors had bargained for. Sadler recalled: “The storm [was] still increasing and finally carried away and swept the deck clear of every-thing. Galley, stove and all went overboard. . . . Although the body of the ship stood the gale she was striped of nearly all sail. Then we drift[ed] about eleven days, making no headway and no fire to do cooking. So all hands were obliged to live on wormy hard-bread and raw salt beef and pork with a little water.” The drenched prospectors remained at sea twenty-three days at the mercy of the wind, waves, and tides before finally spotting a whaler which they anxiously signaled for help. Obliging their call for assistance, the whaler bore down on them and soon was laid along side the beleaguered crew, offering them canvas for sails, barrels of water, “two hogsheads of sea-bread,” and, at their request, passage to Victoria (see Figure 20).

The second whaler plowed briskly through the ocean and the following morning, yet another whaler came into sight, the three Californians transferred again, and this time under the understanding

Figure 20. “Map of Frazer’s River and the Gold-Producing Districts in North America.” Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper (New York: 1858).
that they would run their chances of falling in with another ship or steamer before the Connecticut-based vessel headed south. Keeping a look-out at the mast head, a small sailing craft, called the *Sarah Marshal*, appeared somewhere off the coast of Vancouver Island. A signal was quickly hoisted and the Californians transferred to their fourth ship of the voyage north after a further thirteen days at sea. Sadler, Norton and Swain must have been eternally grateful for their good fortune. Captain Oliver’s little sailing ship “could fly through the water like a bird in the air,” and soon after five days more sea-travel “the wild Californians were once more sat on shore, well and hearty, with cheerful hearts, and full of wild ideas, ready to face all privations and hardships which wandering miners are continually exposed to, [and] which we could plainly see before us.”\textsuperscript{44} The three prospectors were to accumulate “a trifle over three thousand dollars each” while away in the mines of New Caledonia, but ultimately “thought it a poor country for wandering miners to rove about in” and quickly returned — this time by way of land — back to California. How many Californian goldseekers ended their lives in a watery grave along the Pacific Slope, desperate to reach the Fraser River diggings, can only be imagined.

Once in Victoria, too, Californians still had to contend with the crossing of the Strait of Georgia, usually making Miners Bay in Active Pass their mid-point encampment. Charles Bayley, who built the first hotel in Victoria, noted the considerable loss of life among goldseekers scrambling to get to the Fraser mines via the Gulf of Georgia. “The scene was beyond description,” he stated, “Imagine hundreds of tents pitched everywhere, and boats being built without being pitched.”\textsuperscript{45} Dr. John S. Helmcken was of a similar view when he imagined that “the boats were built exactly of the shape of coffins.”\textsuperscript{46}

The influx to the Fraser River diggings in 1858, particularly between HBC forts Hope and
Yale, was in three main directions.\textsuperscript{47} As we have seen, there were thousands, like John Callbreath and his company of 200, who travelled from California by way of Interior Pacific Coast land routes following a succession of rivers; while the majority such as Warren Sadler, sailed up the coast from San Francisco, usually stopping at Victoria before traveling east to the Fraser. The third main route, not without its own difficulties, was via Puget Sound and the gold rush town of Whatcom.\textsuperscript{48}

Steamers and sailing ships conveyed thousands of goldseekers to Victoria in British territory, or Port Townsend or Whatcom on Bellingham Bay, in American territory, but once having arrived in the Gulf of Georgia region, the new arrivals were required to find transport up the Fraser River to the lower gold fields. For American miners, the choice was often that of landing at either British or American ports of call, and for many American miners and merchants, the thought of establishing an outfitting center on British soil was anathema. In promoting Bellingham Bay, A. H. Jayne pleaded with his fellow countrymen, “Don’t let the American people build up a town at Victoria for the British Crown; but rather improve our own soil.”\textsuperscript{49} Business competition for the premier outfitting centre was a feature of gold rushes. Besides, the British Navy had been instructed by Governor Douglas to stop all goldseekers from continuing to the gold diggings until they had purchased a mining license that effectively acknowledged British sovereignty in advance of the international boundary being marked upon the ground.

With the 49th parallel running so close to the mouth of the Fraser River, Whatcom promoted itself as a viable seaport in which to compete with Victoria for the trade in gold rush traffic. Local Washington Territory citizens quickly began promoting their head of operations as the most suitable location for U.S. citizens to land. While other small camp-like “cities” were attempted at such places as Sehome and Point Roberts, Whatcom was to become the principle American center for embarking to the mines, it even having produced a short lived newspaper called \textit{The Northern Light}. The traffic
in goldseekers from Puget Sound, citizens of the Pacific Northwest and certain Californians fearing to tread the First Nations’ lands of Eastern Washington, also headed for Whatcom.

Whatcom offered two further choices of travel, again, by sea or land, though the key selling card of the location was an overland trail from American territory to the gold fields that essentially circumvented British gunboats that were based at the mouth of the Fraser. Two American-backed attempts were made to push a short-cut from Bellingham Bay to the Fraser River, the first attempt begun in April having encountered extreme difficulties, including the fact that it emerged some thirty miles below Fort Hope. Miners anxious to make their way to either Hope or Yale still required water transportation from that point, and so were really no further ahead than when they had started. But they had definitely entered a Native territory, in addition to a British-controlled world. When they finally arrived at Hope after paying for canoe passage from local Natives, they were reported as having “neither provisions or blankets, and their clothing all torn to shreds.”

The initial trail was to proceed from the head of the Noosack River via Sumas Lake, a course that the Puget Sound Herald finally admitted was “about as practicable as a railroad to the moon.” A miner by the name of George Wilber, writing to the Bulletin, 9 June 1858, echoed the Herald’s dismissal of the route, making it clear that Natives called the shots. “The Indians play all sorts of tricks on the whites,” warned Wilber. “They agreed to take one party of four across the [Sumas] lake and to Frazer river, for $5 per day -- but landed the whites on an island, where they left them to get away as best they could. They had to pay other Indians to take them off — when they returned to Bellingham Bay in disgust. . .”

Needless to say, this first attempt to circumvent British authority, and the hopes of building up an American outfitting port to rival Victoria, were dashed. In addition, Douglas met the threat of having the crown-controlled resources of the country diverted south of the border by licensing the
American steamers, *Surprise, Sea Bird, Umatilla, Maria, Enterprise*, and other ships to carrying
goldseekers direct from Victoria, making the connecting link from California easy and assured. This proved a death knell for Whatcom’s attempts to offer a viable route to the lower Fraser. Yet, to keep in the game and forestall becoming a ghost town, Whatcom was joined by citizens from other Puget Sound communities in raising funds for a much more ambitious trail to the Thompson River. If Douglas’ licensing of shallow stern and side wheelers made the cut-off trail to the lower Fraser south of Hope completely impracticable, then Whatcom’s hopes were to be restored by proposing a trail that would effectively by-pass the Fraser’s impassable canyons and lead miners to the Upper Diggings of the River.

Captain W.W. DeLacy was subsequently hired to find the necessary route. DeLacy, previously employed by the U.S. Government as an engineer on the Mullan Road from the Missouri River to Walla Walla, had locally surveyed the Yakima-Steilacoom Trail and a later trail from Steilacoom to Whatcom, via Seattle. Never did it enter American mainstream consciousness that another Nation’s sovereignty would be violated by projecting a trail into and through a foreign country for the express purpose of siphoning the trade in gold and merchandise away from New Caledonia and the Colony of Vancouver Island. There again, from the California-Pacific Northwest perspective, Fort Colvile, via the HBC’s Similkameen Trail, had been capturing the wealth for Britain of Eastern Washington for many years since the *Oregon Boundary Settlement* of 1846.

The second Whatcom Trail was to penetrate the Cascades to the east of Fort Hope by following the headwaters of the Skagit River. From there DeLacy, using A.C. Anderson’s map of the region, hoped to connect with the HBC Brigade Trail to Thompson River. While the trail was being surveyed and constructed, impatient prospectors took to makeshift rafts and canoes risking the intemperate sea and the possible unfriendly reception by Royal Marines stationed aboard HMS
Satellite.\textsuperscript{56} One such party of miners were that of Urban East Hicks, his brother Thomas Benton Hicks,\textsuperscript{57} John Forbes and Gallatin Hartsock, all residents of Washington Territory.

Urban East Hicks, born in Boone County, Missouri, was an employee of the \textit{Pioneer & Democrat} newspaper of Olympia, having apparently learned the printing trade from fellow Missourian Richard Clemens, or Mark Twain. Both he, and his brother Thomas Benton, named for the Missouri senator who had been a proponent of American ‘Manifest Destiny,’ had been Indian fighters in the wars with Pacific Northwest Natives in 1855-56, members of the First and Second Regiments of the Washington Territorial Volunteers.\textsuperscript{58}

Setting out in spring of 1858, the foursome purchased a “Chinook canoe,” loaded with mining tools and provisions, and sailed from Puget Sound towards Whatcom. Urban Hicks waxed poetically of the trip. “Our canoe was a splendid specimen of Indian architecture,” he recalled, “decorated with a long prow like a swan’s neck, the edges of the prow studded with small marine shells, having the appearance of beads, and gaily painted vermilion on the inside... Four well made light maple paddles and a large canvas sail constituted our propelling machinery, which, with a favorable wind and good muscles, buoyed with hopes of shining dust lying just beyond, only awaiting our arrival in long purses, fairly skimmed us over the bright shining waves of the sea.”\textsuperscript{59} Skirting along the eastern shore of Puget Sound, Hicks and party first landed at Steilacoom and Seattle before taking the canoe pass east of Whidbey Island. Heading for Whatcom, they reached their destination, 1 June 1858, and joined some two thousand other goldseekers camped in tents and log huts about the tidal flats in the vicinity of the abandoned operations of the Bellingham Bay Coal Company. “A roaring, rollicking, rough and tumble scene met the eye on all sides,” claimed Hicks, “but little was doing toward permanent improvement, as all seemed bent in getting out of there as quick as possible for the mines.”\textsuperscript{60} Apparently, some returned miners at Whatcom were “badly busted,” having ill-prepared for
the trip north, but Hicks and company, like all others, paid little attention to their woeful stories. “I verily believe,” he stated, “that had we met the last white man . . . on his return and had told us not to go, we would have gone on, for we had started for the mines and we intended to ‘get there,’ sink or swim, bust or no bust.”

Setting out once more, they edged along the shore of the bay until reaching Noosack before entering the Gulf of Georgia. Their first night out from Whatcom they encamped on a sand spit near the mouth of the Noosack River, unaware of the tides that nearly swamped them. “While we were wading and floundering through the treacherous sands, in pitchy darkness, with a roaring surf in our rear and a howling wind in our faces,” claimed Hicks, “a party of belated stragglers, like ourselves, . . . on a kind of raft made of drift logs and old sawmill slabs, stuck fast in the sinking sands and, surrounded by the howling phosphorescent waves, struck up the old familiar song, ‘Aint you mighty glad you got out of Whatcom, Got out of Whatcom, got out of Whatcom, Aint you mighty glad you got out of Whatcom, Down in Bellingham Bay?’” The small party were indeed glad to be out of Whatcom, but probably quite as glad to have escaped capsizing in their sturdy canoe, unlike the make-shift rafts hastily constructed by so many others. From here they crossed to Point Roberts and “paid more or less tribute to old Neptune while keeping a steady stroke” for some twenty miles. Point Roberts was the last United States point of departure before entering into British territory. As a consequence, it became the stopping ground for many Americans, many of whom waited for favorable tides and winds before attempting to outrun the British Navy anchored within the south arm of the Fraser River.

One such fortune seeker encamped here, “dressed in a miner’s blue shirt . . . armed with a Bowie knife and pistol,” was the western writer Bret Harte. It has been stated that his most realistic accounts of race relations in the gold fields were with regard to First Nations people, and in that
regard, Fraser River most certainly would have provided some of the most dramatic examples.62

Camping on the east side of Point Roberts near a small stream, Hicks and Company were glad
to rest for the night, but as morning broke, their canoe and provisions were once again in peril from

the receding tides that had taken them by surprise. Two of the men slept aboard the craft, but awoke
to a brisk wind that threatened to dash them against rocks previously submerged. They yelled to
Hicks and Hartsock, still sleeping ashore, and the two raced waist-deep through the water, desperate
to haul themselves aboard, finally paddling with all their might to escape the rocks. Within moments
they had pulled themselves farther out into “waves like haycocks” which the canoe was unable to
ride, the sea cresting over the prow and threatening to sink them. Paddling ever more strenuously,
the four made for Point Roberts proper, landing just in time, saving their canoe, provisions and

Figure 21. “Noon on the Fraser” from Kinahan Cornwallis’ The New El Dorado; Or, British Columbia (1858).
drenched bodies from disaster.

Hicks and Company, warned in advance that British authorities were demanding “a mining tax from all Americans,” had been told the exact location of the British gunboats by returned miners to Puget Sound. Like other Americans, the universally applied miner’s license instituted by Douglas was not generally accepted, and Hicks “resolved to dodge the tax if possible.” Timing was crucial to their plan to evade the British authorities and they waited until evening before entering the Fraser. “Chance favored us with a brisk breeze upstream,” recalled Hicks, “when about opposite the gunboat we were hailed and ordered to come ashore, to which we paid no attention. A loud threat, accompanied by the rattling of chains and rumbling of [the] gun carriage on deck, informed us that if we did not stop we would be fired upon. We told them to shoot and be _____ if they wanted to, that we had good American powder and ball, and it was a game that two could play at. The commander ordered a ship’s boat lowered, manned with a crew of sailors to overhaul us, but we laughed at them. They pushed out lively after us, but our craft soon left them far behind, and we escaped [sic].”

The following day the emboldened Americans passed Fort Langley “and saw no more tax gatherers until long afterward.” Hicks, like most of his compatriots did not accept the argument that the miner’s license had been instituted to raise a revenue for the maintenance of a colonial policing force that would ultimately offer them protection. Hicks held the commonly accepted American notion “that had it not been for Yankee enterprise” the mines would never have been discovered; that the discovery had increased the trade, wealth, and profile of Victoria; and that Americans required no police protection or interference being abundantly capable of taking care of themselves. “We did not propose to pay tax for the maintenance of a few British marines at Victoria,” claimed Hicks, “It was a shame, if not robbery, to compel the poor miner to pay a license to mine before he had
discovered whether there was anything to mine.” At this time in history, any European presence within the Western hemisphere was objectionable to the popular American notions of ‘Manifest Destiny’ and the ‘Monroe Doctrine.’ The presence of monopoly powers like the Hudson’s Bay Company was held in disdain and any attempt to exact taxes in the form of mining licenses utterly repugnant to free booting Americans accustomed to operating without regard to externally imposed rules, regulations, and the limits of foreign law.

Having outrun the British authorities, the party continued up the river and encountered a large wooden platform, some ten to twelve feet high, built on a low island in the middle of the river in which Native peoples slept in order to get above the immense swarms of mosquitos that infested the land. “I have seen mosquitos on the Mississippi bottoms,” Hicks declared, “but nothing to compare with the swarms we encountered on Fraser river.” With every stroke of the paddle, the men would brush their neck and face in desperate fashion, blood apparently trickling down, their faces swollen from the constant bites. At night they camped beside a large drift which they set aflame, wrapping themselves in blankets from head to foot, and immersing themselves in the smoke for a few hours sleep.

Typical of most goldseekers’ travel throughout the American Pacific Northwest and New Caledonia, White miners held Indians in disdain, yet nevertheless prized for their superior ability in navigating the swift and dangerous currents of the Columbia, Okanogan, Thompson and, of course, Fraser rivers. When Hicks and Company encountered their first Native village they immediately hired a chief’s son to pilot their canoe, “his knowledge of the currents and eddies we could not do without.” Taking five days to go up the river they arrived in Yale to discover some five thousand
miners camped below the entrance to the lower canyon waiting for the water to fall (see Figure 22). The height of the rush north in June had occurred at the most unpropitious moment while the Fraser was in full-flood, thus submerging the most auriferous sand and gravel bars that had paid so well in early spring.

While water levels of Californian rivers might fall during the drought-stricken months of summer, miners experienced the opposite effect in Fraser River country where the immense annual snow melt had begun. Any attempt to proceed further at this time was considered futile, while all the best mining ground between forts Yale and Hope had been completely staked out. Consequently, after some consultation between themselves and members of the mining community at Yale, the four dropped back down the river to join friends from Washington territory encamped at Puget Sound Bar. Hicks was quickly elected the “Alcade” or claims recorder for the bar and soon became the agent for Billy Ballou’s Express. The pay for these two functions gave him enough to live on while waiting along with thousands of others for the flooded state of the river to subside.

Figure 22. “Sketch of Part of British Columbia” by Lieutenant R.C. Mayne, R.N. of HMS Plumper. War Office 1839. Surveyor-General’s Office. Victoria.
Meanwhile, the second Whatcom Trail had finally been located by Captain DeLacy after months of difficulty in finding a suitable route. Whatcom's future seemed secure once more, that is until enthusiastic miners attempted using the new route, and found to their horror that it was almost as impracticable as the first. The Victoria Gazette reported of one party, "They were eight weeks on the trip — intensely disgusted — out of provisions, having consumed them on the trip. ... and pronounced the route an 'infernal swindle.'"

For miners like Callbreath, Sadler, and Hicks, the dangers encountered in traveling to a foreign country were of secondary consideration compared to the amazing allure of gold, especially in light of their experience as Indian fighters. The prospect of finding a golden treasure was the surest way of transforming one's life and all risks of travel did little to dissuade the tens of thousands who flocked to the New El Dorado.

When we think of gold rushes, the primary motive for joining the excitement is usually assumed to be the attractive allure of gold. Yet, in the case of the Fraser River rush there were other unique...
considerations that played an equal, or for some a significantly greater, role in the decision-making of those who flocked north — that of racial and ethnic discrimination — or in many instances, persecution. The most extreme examples of discrimination were those multitudinous crimes committed against the Californian Native peoples. White Californians, most particularly Americans, had little or no respect for Native lands, sovereignty and culture. It is supposed that between 1848, marking the discovery of gold in California, and 1870 about 50,000 California Indians died as a result of disease, starvation, and “simple and direct homicide.”65 Apparently, many Californians “thought about as much of shooting an Indian as of killing a rattlesnake.” In Tehama County, in May of 1858 (the name given to one of Fraser River’s many bars, see Appendix E), miners in typical ‘democratic’ style had resolved “to root out the whole red race.”66

At the time of the Fraser River rush to the northern British possessions, most Californians viewed Indian peoples as doomed to extinction, that it was only a matter of years before they were to all have disappeared. In Grass Valley is was stated that “A very short time will see the last of the poor Indian, for they are dying off, and in four or five years scarcely any will be left.”67 In the Rogue River country of southern Oregon, where an “Indian outbreak” had occurred, troops were demanded to suppress them. Indians “who will not go on the Reservations,” it was threatened, “should be killed or driven out of the country.”68 This militant mind set directed towards First Nations was racial prejudice, indeed genocide, carried not only to an extreme, but ultimately to the Fraser River itself. Yet, racial animosities were not confined to Native peoples. For those minority newcomers who had the option to escape, many chose to join the rush north to a British landscape considered more liberal and hospitable when it came to accepting people of varying race and ethnicity.69 Even Europeans were subject to the institution of a foreign miners tax of $4 dollars per month, leveled in a haphazard, non-universal fashion depending on how American interests were affected. William Lane Booker, the
British Consul at San Francisco, informed Governor James Douglas that during the initial months of the rush north about two-thirds of the emigrants passing through the Golden Gates were English and French. Of the English, most were Cornish or Welsh miners who had previously worked in either the Lake Superior Copper Mines or the lead mines of Wisconsin. They are generally [a] well behaved, hardworking people," claimed Booker, "and a valuable acquisition to a new Colony." Undoubtedly, many British peoples felt more at home mining under the British flag than in the United States. Though the California world had contained elements of the British world, soon many of these subjects preferred to consolidate their presence north of the border.

The French, "imbued with the most violent Republican ideas," were former military men whom "the French Government was anxious to see emigrate" and encouraged to leave through a state-backed lottery which had raised funds to defray their travel expenses to California. The lottery had been organized by the Paris police department, known as the Société des Lingot d'Or, and offered 224 prizes, the largest being a solid gold ingot. The French government, in the aftermath of the 1848 Revolution, hoped to raise sufficient funds from the proceeds of the lottery to ship upwards of "5,000 suspected radicals or undesirables." The European sentiment was expressed best by a German named David Adler when he stated, "I would rather live in 'British California' than submit to the puny (effete) efforts of your California Legislature. In B.C. there is protection not taxation."

At the same time, there were not only industrious White miners who flocked to the new gold fields but a greater portion of San Francisco's White "criminal classes." The Vigilance Committee of San Francisco had recently executed a number of law-breakers that apparently caused "a stampede for the interior and southern portions of the State," and ultimately, the unorganized territory of the Fraser River. "[T]hese desperadoes have concluded that California has become too warm for them," the Bulletin judged, "and they have determined to shift their quarters to the new gold regions North,
where the people are not so united... Our advise is, for the miners to organize themselves into armed companies, keep up a strict volunteer police, and administer justice, whenever required, in a manner that will deter these villains from committing crime... the murderer should be hanged as high as Haman, and his body left to dangle, as a warning to his companions in guilt."

In the case of Carlatta Garvor, a young San Francisco woman arrested for prostitution, it was reported that she had not made her scheduled appearance in court having left “with others of her ilk to the Fraser river country.”

Tom Todd, writing from Fort Yale, 18 August 1858, was to acknowledge their arrival in a letter to his friend in Placer County. In addition to the sight of whiskey, gambling, and the “bloody noses & cut heads” that were a daily occurrence among the “grog shops” of Yale, Todd also noted the presence of some “fast women” from California.

Chinese and Latin Americans were particularly hard hit by the institution of a foreign miners head tax, in addition to being routinely driven from their mining claims. Historian Rodman Paul maintained that “it caused many Latin Americans to quit California forever.” And by 1858, White California miners in Mariposa had ordered Chinese immigrants to leave their community within forty-eight hours of their ultimatum. Of the Chinese, in particular, the Bulletin reported that three of the leading “aristocratic” businessmen had left on the Panama for the Fraser Mines to prospect the country and make further preparations for those who would follow, the newspaper suggesting “that nearly the entire Chinese population... will leave for the British possessions.”

In a contract between HopKee and Company and James Douglas’ favoured San Francisco trading house, Allan, Lowe and Company, an agreement was made, 24 June 1858, to transport three hundred Chinese and fifty tons of freight to Victoria for the amount of $3500 dollars. Passengers were to be provided with cooking space, water closets, firewood, and two-tiered bunks measuring two feet in width and six feet in length for a sea-voyage of some twenty-five days.
Perhaps the most dramatic example of a disaffected community leaving California were the Afro-American peoples of San Francisco. As early as 1790, a Spanish census recorded that 18% of the Californian population was of Black descent. Prior to the discovery of gold in 1848, many Black peoples enjoyed key positions as major land and business owners, politicians, and as prominent members of California's social elite. Historians estimate that by 1852, an additional two thousand free Blacks made their way to the California gold fields. From the beginning of the California rush, political, social, and economic equality continued to fall with the rising influx of tens of thousands of White Americans. At the 1849 constitutional convention held in Monterey, where Californians discussed their admittance to the American Republic, delegates spent greater time on the question of excluding further Black immigration than on any other issue. Soon after, a host of restrictions were to follow: Blacks could no longer vote, serve in the militia, or give testimony in a court of law. Though the Afro-American population of California have been considered “one of the most culturally advanced and probably the richest Black community in the country,” resentment continued to be leveled against them from the mining districts of California after 1849. California was officially an anti-slavery state, but the local House of Representatives passed a further law in 1858 that demanded of Black citizens that they carry registration papers at all times.

Just as news of the gold diggings on Fraser River were beginning to reach California, the Black people of San Francisco called a meeting, 14 April 1858, to discuss “the propriety of emigrating from the State to Vancouver’s Island, in the British possessions, or to Sonora, Mexico, in view of founding a permanent home for themselves on the Pacific.” The San Francisco Bulletin alerted its readership to the impending exodus. “When the coloured people get their ‘poet,’” it warned, “he will no doubt sing of these scenes which are passing around us almost unheeded, and the day when coloured people fled persecution in California may yet be celebrated in story.”
advance delegation was sent to Victoria in which an audience was happily granted by the Governor of Vancouver Island, James Douglas, who assured them that Black peoples would be accorded all the rights and privileges customary to British subjects. Douglas' own experience as a 'mulatto' in Oregon, along with so many other HBC families of mixed-blood, would certainly have made him cognizant of the kind of discrimination that was being practiced in California. Oregon had effectively disenfranchised the sons of HBC mixed-marriages when the provisional government had passed into law a prohibition against those with Indian parentage, undoubtedly a considerable incentive for HBC employees to ultimately move north of the boundary.  

Upon the Black delegation's return to San Francisco, resolutions were immediately adopted in which a pledge of allegiance was made to the British crown and faith placed in James Douglas' words of hope. "We are fully convinced that the continued aim of the spirit and policy of our mother country, is to oppress, degrade, and outrage us," they charged, "We have, therefore, determined to seek an asylum in the land of strangers, from the oppression, prejudice and relentless persecution that have pursued us for more than two centuries in this our mother country. Therefore, a delegation having been sent to Vancouver's Island, a place which had unfolded to us in our darkest hour, the prospect of a bright future; to this place of British possession, the delegation . . . have fulfilled and rendered the most flattering accounts. . .".  

Soon hundreds of Black Californians departed for freedom and the possibility of mining in gold fields where racial discrimination appeared not to be an official enactment of the colonial government. White Americans looked upon the British extended hand of welcome with the greatest of suspicion. To F.F. Davis it simply confirmed their general opinion of the nefarious policies of the Hudson's Bay Company and the British Empire. "The Company do not want to see a white man arrive at Vancouver Island — least of all, the smart, enterprising Yankee," claimed Davis. "This may account, in some degree, for the patronage which
Gov. Douglas is said to have so largely extended towards the coloured people who lately left this city.94

With so many excluded peoples leaving for Fraser River, whether Mormons, Latinos, Asians, but especially Blacks, White Americans increasingly resented the Hudson’s Bay Company who appeared to be welcoming all newcomers regardless of race, religion or creed. “I am glad that Her Majesty’s Government . . . generously grants, within the Colony of Vancouver’s Island, a refuge for political exiles,” wrote Douglas, “provided they yield obedience to the Laws, and avoid public scandals, and lead quiet and honest lives.”95 Certainly the attraction of the Colony of Vancouver Island and the Fraser River diggings was gold, but for those outside full American citizenship, the British possessions represented much more than the potential for economic gain. The New El Dorado also represented gains in political and social well-being.

To many Americans, British ways were seen as conservative and stodgy compared to the Yankee ingenuity exemplified by the United States, regardless of the fact that the HBC was usually the first to take advantage of new trade opportunities.96 At Victoria, Californian merchants accustomed to setting up shop and literally squatting at any point they considered convenient and profitable were prevented from doing so. One enterprising individual had established a make-shift butcher’s shop out of canvas directly in front of Fort Victoria and soon others joined-in, staking out their claims to the land along present-day Wharf Street; in certain instances even building houses. HBC officials took quick action and posted a notice on the gates of the Fort that warned the squatters to be off by noon the next day. All were to move away from the Fort in short order.97 Apparently, the HBC even went so far as to plow up government lands in Victoria, sheriff notices demanding relocation having failed, thus forcing squatters to move outside the immediate town limits for level
New Yorker Frank Tarbell, the Washington Territorial Treasurer, recalled, “all those hills about Victoria looked like a white-tented field.”99 “We opine that the Hudson Bay Company will have a fine time in monopolizing this trade,” claimed the Puget Sound Herald, “a few Yankees have gone in that direction, and, unless they have become extremely dull witted, we think they will have a hand in the ‘swopping.’”100 At bottom, American defensiveness with regard to the presumed rights of the HBC highlights one of the fundamental differences between the two political cultures of the United States and Britain abroad during the mid-19th century; that of resource exploitation and the control of land, or put more succinctly, crown privilege versus individual right.101

By mid-June 1858, the Fraser River Fever was considered “unprecedented” in terms of the size of mass migrations and the deleterious effects that particularly impacted the economies of California and the northern Pacific Slope as a whole. In Puget Sound, workers were leaving the lumber mills in droves and the Bellingham Bay Coal Company was forced to suspend its operations when employees deserted en masse. “We are crazy with the gold fever,” said one letter writer from Olympia, “Everybody that can get away is off to Frazer’s river after gold. Mills and mines, ships and shops, roads and ranches, all continue to swell the number of the sturdy miners.”102 Jean-Nicholas Perlot, a Belgian miner who had left California in 1857 to try his luck in the Fort Colvile mines, resisted the temptations of Fraser River, having begun a thriving market garden and nursery business in Portland. While Perlot watched in suspense he recorded the negative impact of the Fraser Fever on Oregon. “I thought, for a moment, that all Portland was going to emigrate,” he stated, “so many stores were closed in the city, so many farms, in the surrounding area, were abandoned! At the same time, great activity reigned on the wharves; they were loading provisions of all kinds to feed all the people who were flowing into Victoria. . . . But what was going to become of Portland? Would it
be repopulated?"103

South of Oregon, the San Andreas Independent added its voice to a host of other Californian newspapers that witnessed the severe population decline of the State and in a desperate attempt to halt the tide of emigration, stories began to be circulated that the Fraser River rush was a complete humbug. "'Gone to Fraser,' was the short but significant notice on the sluice box. 'Gone to Crazy river and Bedlam Bay,' was the inscription we put on the cabin door," stated one departing miner.105 The Independent reported that a small company of goldseekers at Camp Seco, Calaveras County, having washed out $3,500 dollars in two short weeks from their diggings, had nevertheless left in anticipation of making greater gains in New Caledonia. "This excitement exceeds the Gold Bluff, Gold Lake, and Kern River humbugs; or even the foolishness of Crusaders, the Great South Sea Bubbleists, and the silk-manialsts [sic], when every New England maid and matron was led to believe that silk dresses could be produced on morus multicoulis trees. . . .We believe the Frazer river stories are humbug. . . ."106

For every letter received that attempted to discount the richness of the new mines, there were just as many from successful miners that assured of their existence.107 For those Californians who had transplanted their businesses to Victoria, the cry of humbug was viewed as a gross exaggeration indicative of the State's increasingly depressed circumstances. One such merchant, Alfred Penderill Waddington, took it upon himself to mount a substantial attack on the San Francisco media in defence of the new northern gold fields. Waddington's book, The Fraser mines vindicated; or, The history of four months (1858), attempted to assuage any doubt among Californians as to the extent of gold deposits to be found. Undoubtedly, Waddington hoped to earn significant proceeds from the sale of the book in addition to defending the richness of the mines. His work has earned the distinction of being the first non-government book printed in the Colony of Vancouver Island.108
California’s economy was severely impacted by the huge outpouring of miners leaving the State. Throughout California, particularly at the height of the rush in June, there was general commotion, panic and despair, as businesses closed, partnerships dissolved, while an increasing number of ships and express companies positioned themselves to profit from the great outpouring of population. The contracting firm Cheney, Binney, Houston & Naglee, builders of the Sacramento Valley Railroad, complained of the increasing difficulty in finding White labourers due to the Fraser River excitement. The country trade of California’s mining communities was particularly hard hit with customers, indeed debtors, leaving en masse, small businesses shutting their doors for good, the Fraser rush having “a most disastrous influence upon the interior.”

Indicative of the economy’s worsening condition, John Aldersey, an accountant based in San Francisco, advertised his services “to parties about leaving for the new Mines and settlements, in the arrangement of accounts, collection of rents, winding up partnership accounts, and selling out businesses.”

A new northern San Francisco was seen to be forming that spelt the demise of the Interior gold camps, while San Francisco found some solace in seeing its continued role as a supply center for the new northern mines. “We hear the departure of our old pioneers for the new gold region with anything but pleasure,” lamented the Bulletin, “and would do anything in our power . . . to persuade them to remain.” Between the months of April through June, exports to Vancouver Island climbed to $173,066 dollars. In 1857 total exports to Vancouver Island had only been $29,448 dollars, but in the single month of August 1858, exports reached $808,954 dollars, representing a marked shift from the self-sufficient days of the HBC’s fur trade north of the border. From August to December 1858, A.C. Anderson, the Customs Collector at Fort Victoria, recorded the arrival of 53 British ships compared to 137 foreign vessels, and though British freight consisted of 822 tons of cargo, this number was eclipsed by a concomitant amount of 21,555 tons of foreign
goods and merchandise. Furthermore, the combined crews of foreign water-craft had climbed to about three times the number of British-employed sailors.\textsuperscript{116}

Soon the British pound sterling was replaced by the United States dollar as the medium for all business transactions in Victoria.\textsuperscript{117} “Although among foreigners and under the British government,” one American was to write, “this place will supercede all others on this coast.”\textsuperscript{118} Californian Henry S. Fitch happily described the transplanted mining population that was transforming Fort Victoria. “I rather like the appearance of things,” he said, “great many white folks here, and a great many more Indians. Whites look hungry — Indians appear docile — ‘Gold is king’ and hearts are metallic.”\textsuperscript{119} While Californians had previously “chased the butterfly,” or raced “to see the Elephant,” they now rushed “to see the Lion at the North.”\textsuperscript{120} Miners and merchants continued to flood into the Fraser and Thompson River corridors via the sea and land routes described. This fragment of Californian society, with its racial animosities, mining rules and regulations, gambling, merchandising, and customs of camp-life, was quickly transplanted — if imperfectly and not without opposition -- north of the international divide in the intersection of British and Native territory.

\textbf{Figure 24.} Portion of R.C. Mayne’s “Reconnaissance Sketch of the Fraser River” (1858) locating (left to right) Santa Clara, American, Puget Sound, Victoria, Texas and Posey Bars.
Typical of the time, Captain George Wesley Beam, encamped at Puget Sound's Bar (Figure 24), expressed the delight of many Americans when he recorded the rumour current throughout the gold fields that the U.S. Boundary Commission "had discovered that the forty ninth Parallel runs north of Fraziers [sic] River and gave part of the river to the United States." Beam was sure that Fort Langley would soon be found inside American territory. Just as Mexico, in retrospect, undoubtedly regretted their secession of California to the U.S. prior to the gold discovery of 1849, many in the United States were convinced that Britain had kept the riches of New Caledonia a secret until the 1846 Treaty was finally concluded. Rumours of the Fraser running further south than expected were perhaps more the wishful imaginings of a country who had once trumpeted the political battle cry of 54°40' or fight only to find out a few short years later that they had forfeited a 'New Eldorado.'

The Puget Sound newspaper, the Pioneer & Democrat, like many pro-United States writings of the period, supported the commonly-held, jingoistic views of the American population north of the border.

Soon our banner will be streaming,
Soon the eagle will be screaming,
And the lion -- see it cowers,
Hurrah, boys, the river's ours.

American miners seemed ready to dominate the Fraser and Thompson River corridors with impunity. In the absence of any clear British authority the New El Dorado represented just one more field of golden dreams to miners bent upon harvesting a rich reward. In anticipation of returning home with their golden 'piles' the gathering throngs, to the tune of Oh Susannah, would sing:
I'll scrape the mountains clean, my boys,
I'll drain the rivers dry,
A pocket full of rocks bring home,
So brother don't you cry,
O' California, That's the land for me,
I'm bound for San Francisco
with a wash bowl on my knee.  

Immediately goldseekers set about organizing themselves according to camp-style government typical of the California gold fields. The American notion of “popular sovereignty,” whereby the “people” were the ultimate and only legitimate basis for government, making their own “extralegal” rules, was a concept well-steeped in the political conscience of the 19th century California world. Elisha Crosby, a lawyer and delegate to California’s constitutional convention of 1849, spoke of popular sovereignty such that “Every man carried his code of laws on his hip and administered it according to his pleasure.” The worst forms of this individualistic, free-wheeling thought gave rise to ‘mob rule’ and vigilance committees that dispensed justice according to the popular will of the moment, and not according to established law.

At Fort Yale Bar the notions of frontier democracy were put into action “to manage matters in California style, despite the regulations of the [British] government.” A miners’ meeting was called to order and a variety of resolutions proposed and voted upon for adoption.

Resolved, That this place shall be known by the name of Fort Yale Bar, with boundaries as follows: Commencing at the head of the Island below Fort Yale, and extending up the river to a certain big rock [Lady Franklin’s] at the mouth of the first cañon above Fort Yale, and from the centre of the river to high water mark on its west side.

Resolved, That all mining claims within the boundaries of this bar shall consist of twenty-five feet front, extending backward from the channel of the river to high water mark.

Resolved, That no person shall be allowed to hold more than one mining claim within the boundaries of this bar, at any time.
Resolved, That the owner of every mining claim shall work upon, or cause to be worked upon his claim, one good and ample day’s labor, within the period of five days, or forfeit his right to said claim; provided said claim be in workable condition, and the owner is not prevented by sickness or public business.

Resolved, That a recorder shall be elected by the miners whose duty it shall be to record all claims and keep such record open to the inspection of the public. Said recorder shall receive a fee of fifty cents for each claim recorded by him.

The foreign mining population, in the absence of any real British authority, began establishing its own boundaries, renaming the landscape for the language of the California gold fields, prescribing the size of individual mining claims, and generally confirming the rights to the lands and resources of Fraser River according to the Doctrine of Prior Appropriation. Hill’s, Texas, Santa Clara, American, and New York Bars, to name but a few, plotted out claims twenty-five feet wide, from mid-channel to high water mark, regardless of Governor Douglas’ regulations that stipulated smaller claim sizes of twenty feet square. Douglas’ gold mining licenses were non-transferable, yet mining claims were routinely flipped for profit or lost during a round of cards. Douglas also demanded that miners “maintain a due and proper observance of Sundays,” while Californian rules were simply concerned that miners labour at least one day in every five. In certain instances miners were to abide with the Sunday prohibition. Captain George Wesley Beam was to record in his diary, “The day past off as other Sundays do. Firing off guns and trading of all kinds.”

While Douglas prepared to institute the office of gold commissioner whose duty it would be to keep records of all mining claims, Californians elected their own “Alcades” for the task of maintaining records and solving mining disputes. Perhaps one of the most prominent examples of California mining law having been transplanted to New Caledonia was the presence of innumerable water companies that built elaborate ditches and flumes, in many instances several miles long, for the purpose of selling the resource to miners washing the ground with sluice boxes along the river’s
shore. The idea that the thousands of miners who flooded the Fraser and Thompson River districts as being individual miners with limited means, perhaps forming into small companies for mutual aid and profit, is not quite accurate. In fact, Californians established at least twenty-one separate, capital and labour intensive water concerns in 1858, in most cases limited joint-stock companies many of which had moved to the Fraser for quick profit. The names given them are telling in themselves: The Pioneer Ditch Company, the Ohio Ditch Company, the Fort Yale Bar Ditch Company, or the Santa Clara & American Water Company. In California, such mining companies were owned and operated by miners who had a deeply ingrained distrust of ventures controlled by outside capital. It has been suggested that their formation was in part due to “miners [who] deeply feared and resented monopoly when it did not serve the common good, and they regarded business corporations as inherently elitist, undemocratic, and monopolistic.”

In eastern portions of Canada and the United States common law supported the rule of ‘Riparian Rights’; that is, that holders of rights to land in which a stream passed by or through were also confirmed to have certain water rights, rights that were inherently connected to the title of the land. Until the time of the Californian gold rush of 1849-50, the common-law riparian system was, for the most part, universal. But in the arid gold diggings of the Sierra Nevada range, water was all important for the prosecution of mining claims, and soon ‘appropriative rights’ replaced the riparian system. In much the same way in which prospectors staked their claims to gold-bearing grounds according to a right of ‘discovery,’ water companies were also to stake claims to the water of lakes, streams and rivers. The Doctrine of Prior Appropriation, simply put, was that “the right to water did not depend on the ownership of riparian land but was gained by the person who first put water to beneficial use.”
In the case of the Fraser River, these organized water companies set about transforming the landscape by cutting massive ditches miles long across hillsides, diverting streams and draining lakes for the purpose of selling water to miners. At no time had permission been granted by representatives of the colonial government in Victoria or the Hudson's Bay Company for these extraordinarily ambitious projects that had simply made claim to the resource. To the Californian bent on reaping a rich harvest, the bureaucracy and fee structure that Governor Douglas later imposed on these water conveyances was seen as just one more example of stodgy, conservative practices that thwarted their accustomed, unbridled profit making. Everything in New Caledonia was 'taxable': the ships that carried Californians to Fraser River, the canoes that transported them to forts Hope and Yale, the goods and merchandise they carried for later sale, and, of course, the licensing of 'grog shops' in addition to the privilege of mining the ground and selling water. The assertion of crown control to the resources of New Caledonia was a further and marked difference to the experience of miners who had adventured in the wide open gold fields of the Sierra Nevadas.

Nevertheless, goldseekers continued to run the gauntlet, taking their chances in travelling without licenses. If they could make it past the Royal Navy-controlled portions of the lower Fraser, they then considered themselves largely free from British rule in waters solely navigable by canoe or other small craft. Until Douglas' first trip to the gold diggings in June, the British world for all intents stopped at the southern end of the Fraser Canyon at Fort Yale. During the visit he continued to push for the exclusion of all non-HBC navigation of the Fraser River and personally enforced his Proclamation on unsuspecting miners who had previously gone up the river undetected. The special correspondent of the Bulletin recorded the Governor's determined stance.

Some forty canoes arrived while I was at Fort Langley, averaging six persons each. But few of them had obtained clearances at Victoria, and, on the Governor's return from up river, he gave notice that he should hereafter stop all canoes from ascending
or entering the river, as the time stated in his Proclamation had expired already some time. He, however, gave clearances to all them there — some one hundred in number. . . Since then no canoes have been allowed to pass Fort Langley, not having cleared at Victoria; and since my arrival here I learn that the Satellite, now anchored in Esquimalt Harbor, will return to her anchorage off the mouth of the River, and prevent any vessels whatever from entering the river, without having cleared Victoria. The canoes are all numbered and registered, and any found not so, will be seized and forfeited.\(^{139}\)

American interests in the region were outraged by Douglas' heavy-handed policies. Isaac Stevens, the former Governor of Washington Territory, appealed directly to the U.S Secretary of State, Lewis Cass, and argued that Douglas' "Blockade" was unjust in that the 1846 Boundary Treaty had confirmed HBC rights to navigation of the Columbia River.\(^{140}\) Special Agent John Nugent, President Buchanan's appointee charged with undertaking a serious field reconnaissance of the Fraser gold fields, outlined the full nature of the Royal Navy's blockade. Each and every boat encountered was apparently hailed and ordered along side. "If the passengers were so unfortunate as not to have means to pay [the] mining license, head-money, and sufferance tax," he stated, "their watches, pistols, knives, or other personal effects, bags of flour, beans and coffee, hams, and other provisions were retained, and I have been assured that the deck of the brig was covered with those articles. . . . In addition to the taxes above enumerated, a duty of ten percent ad valorem was imposed on all goods imported into the Frazer river country."\(^{141}\)

Apparently many American ships, willing to pay the licensing fees imposed by Douglas in exchange for the privilege of carrying licensed miners from Victoria to Fort Hope, next ran afoul of American authorities at Port Townsend. The steamer Surprise, carrying some 500 passengers, had stopped at the American port on its way to Fraser, apparently having failed to adhere to U.S. law and pay the government requisitions of the port. "She is liable to being seized for not adhering to Government laws," wrote one resident of Port Townsend, "the Custom House officer told me he will
chase her and bring her to with a 12-pounder very soon." U.S. authorities had begun to flex their muscle, too, in asserting their own territorial interests to the American waters of Puget Sound in response to Douglas’ exclusionary policies. “She has not gone by again,” he continued, “and the sloop of war Jefferson Davis is watching for her, and the officer can by law seize her if he likes.”

This was obviously seen as a game that two could play.

These restrictions on business and transportation served as a lightning rod amongst Californian miners accustomed to unfettered capitalism. And while the Royal Navy was busy defending British sovereignty at the mouth of the river, First Nations had begun their own blockade of miners in the upper portions of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers beyond Fort Yale. Certainly Americans, through sheer force of numbers, asserted near sovereign control of the river particularly between forts Hope and Yale, but were to find themselves increasingly checked by the Royal Navy to the south and the Nlaka’pamux to the north.

First Nations, of course, were also concerned about defending their sovereignty to the region, in addition to the harmful effects of placer mining to the local environment. Not only were their sacred lakes and streams being drained, the landscape carved with ditches, and the destructive nature of placer mining harming the spawning grounds of their ancient fisheries, but the racist views and violent practices found south of the 49th parallel were beginning to impact with single-purposed determination with the advance of greater and greater numbers of White miners. The three principal sovereignties of the Fraser River — the fur trade (HBC and Native), Californian, and British worlds — had managed to co-exist for the first few months of the rush, though each deeply suspicious of the other. Yet, by the height of the rush, with tens of thousands of White miners present in the goldfields and rumours of more to come, the fragile balancing act that had once informed these very different,
partially integrated worlds, was about to be shattered. Though Douglas made a second trip to Fort Yale in September 1858 to assert British power, the slim colonial resources at his disposal were more than apparent to the Californian mining population that occupied the region. H.M. Snyder, a regular correspondent to the *Bulletin*, reported of the visit that, “all was peace whilst he was here, but as soon as he was gone, the evil-minded commenced to do just as they pleased. He has no officers here to execute the laws; at least what few he has do not amount to anything. They cannot give protection to the miners. They have a crown commissioner here, and a few policemen; but they do not amount to anything.” Though there was an increasing British presence holding the key to the mouth of the Fraser, burgeoning numbers of goldseekers expanded into the unregulated regions of the Upper Country, looking for the mother lode — and for First Nations — appropriating the lands and resources of New Caledonia which were, as yet, largely ungoverned by Victoria.

With the continued rising tide of Californian goldseekers and weaponry to New Caledonia, British colonial and military resources were incredibly dwarfed, and Governor Douglas was left in the unenviable position of monitoring the gold rush at a considerable distance in Victoria. The British world of the Pacific Slope that he represented was essentially powerless. Though British imperialism might effectively control the seas, the Californian mining frontier was determined to occupy forcefully the interior reaches of the Fraser and Thompson River corridors, the results of which were to ultimately fulfill the Governor’s most dire predications of Native-White conflict, predictions that were largely unheeded in Britain until it was too late to act.
NOTES

1. James Beith, 18 December 1857, pp. 21-22. Letter Book, 1854-1867, 70/116/C, Bancroft Library. Beith was originally a Scotsman turned loyal American who joined the Fraser River rush. He later ran as a U.S. Congressional candidate in Humboldt County, California, in the elections of 1867.

2. First press report of gold on Fraser River appeared in Olympia Pioneer, 6 March 1858. Reprinted in the Alta California, 19 March 1858.


6. The first letter written to the Bulletin with regard to the Fraser gold fields is “Letter from Port Townsend, Puget Sound: The Fraser River Gold Mines,” Bulletin, 6 April 1858, p. 3. The first advertisement under the shipping columns of the paper was placed by Jeremiah Nagle, of HBC employ, sailing the ship California, headed for Vancouver Island, Bulletin, 6 April 1858, p. 4.

7. “From Washington territory: The Frazer and Thompson River Gold Mines,” Bulletin, 19 April 1858, p. 1. First Steamers headed for Fraser were the Commodore, Bulletin, 15 April 1858, p. 4, which was to leave 20th April, and the Columbia that would not stop at Victoria, but via Port Townsend. Bulletin, 17 April 1858, p. 4.


10. The Constitution and Panama are noted in Bulletin, 21 April 1858, p. 2.


13. “John Blundel, a former resident of Union town, in El Dorado County, has just returned . . . his statement has caused a general stampede . . .”. See “Union Gone In!,” Bulletin, 12 June 1858, p. 2.


15. “A Summary of Events from 20th May to 5th of June, 1858,” The San Francisco Newsletter, No. 47.


27. The San Francisco Newsletter, 20 May to 5 June 1858, No. 47, p. 2.


29. Officer James S. Bovee was supposedly intent on killing Ned McGowan and it is interesting that these two individuals both left for Fraser at approximately the same time. Bovee left to pursue McGowan after he had failed to kill or incarcerate him in San Francisco. “The Case of Officer Bovee,” Bulletin, 30 June 1858, p. 3.

30. Captain Donellan of the San Francisco Police Force attempted mining at Washington Bar, Fraser River, before being appointed policeman by Governor James Douglas.


32. “Letter from Hill's Bar, Fraser River,” Bulletin, 8 July 1858, p. 3. Moore wrote: “The Indians have been very troublesome. They steal everything they can get hold of. On one occasion we all had to turn out with firearms to keep them down.”


34. The California newspapers are full of anecdotal stories with regard to Fraser River at this time. The Mountain Democrat of Placerville told one such story. “Two old friends met in Placerville on 22nd June, and after passing the usual salutations, one of them inquired where is John? ‘Gone to Frazer.’ ‘And Charley?’ ‘Gone too.’ ‘And idle Tom?’ ‘Even he’s gone!’ ‘The h' ll he has’ was the excited exclamation of the old man. ‘Well; as everybody is going I believe I’ll go too,’ said he, as he walked off.” See “The Frazer Fever in


37. The information contained throughout this section is based on a letter written by Callbreath to his mother from Bridge River, B.C., 21 January 1859.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. The Fountain, or La Fountaine, is a large bench land beyond the Great Falls of Fraser River north of Lillooet. Named by a French Canadian fur trapper, it referred to a natural fountain-like spring that emanated from the ground in this region, the water feeding today’s Fountain Creek that runs through the local Indian reserve of the same name.


43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Bayley, “Early Life on Vancouver Island,” Bancroft Library.

46. Helmcken continued: “No one can have any just or correct idea of the number who perished — they were never heard of more and of course in the main were unknown to other miners — these in turn scattering through the country only had their attention, time and industry occupied by the excitement and madness of looking for gold.” Smith, *The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken*, 155.


50. As recorded in Reid, “The Whatcom Trails to the Fraser River Mines in 1858,” p. 204.

51. Ibid.


55. Jeffcott, Noosack Tales, 64-68.


59. Urban East Hicks, “Mining in the Fifties: The Fraser River Boom Graphically Described by One Who Was There” (1893). Unpub. manuscript. Copy from personal collection of Anita Nixon. Lytton, B.C. My special thanks to Anita for the great hospitality and opportunity to talk about her great grandfather Thomas Benton Hicks. Though her great great Uncle Urban returned to Washington, Thomas remained and apparently married one of Chief Spintlum’s daughters.

60. Ibid. The forgoing is based on Urban East Hicks’ account.


62. Margaret Duckett, “Bret Harte and the Indians of Northern California,” Huntington Library Quarterly, XVII:1 (1954-55), 59. In 1860, Harte was dismissed from the Northern California having objected editorially “to the contemporary California sport of murdering Indians.” Selected Stories of Bret Harte: Stirring Tales of the California Gold Rush (New York: Pyramid Books, 1961), 7. Though I had researched at the Bancroft Library on many occasions, I discovered after my last trip to California that Berkeley had Bret Harte’s 1858 diary amongst their vast western collections. I later met Eleanor Swent, Editor/Interviewer of the Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, at a meeting of the American Mining History Association. Eleanor very kindly consented to my request to examine the 1858 diary upon her return to Berkeley, but unfortunately, no references to the Fraser rush were found. The diary ended abruptly with Harte’s presumed departure having been taken with the Fraser River Fever.

63. Hicks further related: “We were lucky in getting this son of a chief for a helmsman, as he was well known by all the Indians on the river, and his presence saved us from molestation and annoyance. . . My brother Tom and I had fought Indians before, and we could all talk the jargon or chinook language pretty well; hence we knew how to deal with them and they generally let us alone as soon as they made our acquaintance.” Urban East Hicks’ Account.
64. Victoria Gazette, 1 September 1858, p. 3.


69. Even the Mormons viewed Vancouver Island favorably with the hope of emigrating and thus escape the U.S. Army that had surrounded Salt Lake City in 1857-58.

70. William Lane Booker, British Consul, San Francisco to Governor James Douglas, 11 June 1858. F166. CC. BC Archives.

71. Author’s note: My own Cornish ancestors were to take this circuitous route from Cornwall via Lake Superior and Wisconsin before traveling to the California and Fraser River gold rushes.


75. “Such organization of miners will also afford protection against the bold savages which inhabit the north.” “The ‘Hounds’ Going North,” Bulletin, 118 June 1858, p. 2.

76. “Gone to Frazer,” Bulletin, 28 July 1858, p. 3.

77. Tom G. Todd to Charles M. Dewey, Fort Yale, 18 August 1858. Wells Fargo Archives. San Francisco. My thanks to Robert Chandler, Chief Archivist, for the above.


79. Paul, California Gold, 111.


84. As but one example, William Leidsdorff, born in St. Croix, Virgin Islands, owned a thirty-five thousand acre estate which, as an early supporter of union with the U.S., was called the Rio Del Rancho Americana. Appointed as a U.S. sub-consular agent to Mexican California he has been considered the first black diplomat in United States history. Ibid., 117-119.

85. Ibid., 122.


88. Ibid, 81. All of the aforementioned material is to be found in Katz's, *Black America*.


91. My thanks to Alan Grove for this most important and little known point.


93. One of the few works on this subject is F.W. Howay’s “The Negro Immigration to Vancouver Island in 1858, *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* III (1939): 101-113.


95. Douglas to Labouchere, 6 April 1858. No. 14. CO 305/9

96. The British Consul to California, James Alexander Forbes, was one of many who recognized the ability of the HBC to take advantage of new opportunities. Writing in 1839, Forbes stated, "The North-American traders, who are always the first to take advantage of new and remote markets, also turned their attention to California." See Chapter 7, "New Markets for New Exports," in Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 175-76.


101. Frank Tarbell held the generally accepted view of Americans when he stated, "the Hudson Bay Company were not pleased with the discovery of gold . . . It had a tendency to destroy the fur trade." Tarbell, "Life & Trade in Victoria During the Fraser River Excitement." Bancroft Library. Thomas Spence also accepted the view that the existence of gold had been known for some years, "The reports however, it is alleged, [were] discouraged as it was thought that an excitement caused by a rush from the outside world would have the effect of interfering with their fur trading pursuits." Vowell and Spence, "Mining Districts of British Columbia." Bancroft Library.

102. Reported in the Daily Alta California, 4 April 1858 and found in Gertrude Olive Yerxa, "Gold Rushes Outside California as treated in the California Newspapers, 1858-1860." M.A. Thesis (University of California, Berkeley, 1931), p. 3.


104. For a partial examination of the Fraser River rush in Californian newspapers of the period see, Yerxa, "Gold Rushes Outside of California," M.A. Thesis (1931).

105. Reprinted from the San Andreas Independent in "Other Letters from Victoria," Bulletin, 15 July 1858, p. 2. Speaking of Calaveras County alone, the paper claimed that one third of the entire population had either abandoned or were preparing to leave for the new diggings.


107. A goldseeker from Weaverville, Trinity County, wanted the California public to know that he had just transported eight dissatisfied people from Fort Hope down the Fraser who cursed the mines, "swearing that the whole country was a humbug," but that they had never attempted a day's labour while there — "They left the diggings entirely untied." Letters disputing the Fraser River Humbug, from Charles Brown, Isaac D. Jones and J.P. Russell, in "Later from Bellingham Bay and Victoria," Bulletin, 15 July 1858, p. 3.


112. "Got the Gold Fever and Bound for Frazer River," Bulletin, 21 June 1858, p. 1. This issue in particular is absolutely chocked full of stories, letters, editorials and advertisements that are all about Fraser River.


114. "Exports from California to V.I. during second quarter of 1858," (20 April to 26 June 1858) Bulletin, 30 June 1858, p. 3. Includes list of ships, cargoes, and values.

115. As reported in the San Francisco Prices Current and found in Ormsby, British Columbia: A History, 141.
116. No. of British vessels, 53, with 822 tons of cargo and 445 sailors compared to 137 foreign vessels carrying 21,555 tons of freight and 1257 sailors. Duties collected for this period amounted to $15,924.66. See A.C. Anderson, “Return of duties collected at Victoria on account of British Columbia from 28 August to 3 December 1858.” File 14. Colonial Correspondence. BC Archives.

117. “Late from Northern Waters,” Bulletin, 6 July 1858, p. 3.


121. Of the rumour, "It done me so much good that I could not contain myself." Beam Diary, 13 August 1858. University of Washington Library Archives.

122. By 1857-58, the slogan, “fifty-four forty or fight,” was a part of the American political lexicon. It refers to the earlier boundary established between Spain and Russia, today’s southern boundary of the Alaskan Panhandle at the Portland Canal, or 54°40' latitude. With Spain’s retreat from the NW Coast, the United States inherited Spain’s prior rights of discovery and, at times, advanced claims to the entire portion of Old Oregon.


124. D.A. Shaw, Eldorado, or California as seen by a Pioneer, 1850-1900 (Los Angeles: B.R. Baumgardt, 1900), 19.


129. Ibid.

130. British Columbia. Gold Commissioner (Yale). “Manual of Record and Land Register, Hope & Yale, 1858-1866.” GR 252 Box 12:1. BC Archives. The first gold commissioner on Fraser in 1858 was Richard Hicks. His original leather-bound record book was borrowed from the Provincial Library by Judge F.W. Howay and never returned. It is now part of the Howay-Reid collection at the University of British Columbia.
See Howay, *The Early History of the Fraser River Mines* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1926) and Richard Hicks, “Mining Claims Record Book” (1858-59), Howay Collection Box 21:1. Special Collections, UBC.

131. For examples of the flipping of claims see, Urban Hicks, “Mining in the Fifties” (1893).

132. Beam Diary, Sunday, 15 August 1858, Puget Sound Bar.

133. Richard Hicks, “List of Water Companies on Fraser River between Fort Hope & Fort Yale” (1858), BC (Colony) Lands & Works Department. GR 1770 Box 1:1. BC Archives.


136. Ibid., 166.

137. Ibid., 171.

138. “The quantity of water was not limited by the rights of downstream users, but only by the amount required for the purpose of the appropriator. In times of shortage, water was allocated according to seniority. . . . first appropriators were permitted to receive their total entitlement before a junior appropriator could take any water at all.” David R. Percy, “Water Law of the Canadian West: Influences from the Western States,” *Law for the Elephant, Law for the Beaver: Essays in the Legal History of the North American West*, Eds. John McLaren, Hamar Foster and Chet Orloff (Pasadena, California: The Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society, 1992), 278.

139. The correspondent continued, “The Satellite’s launch will be stationed at the outlet of the [Chilliwack] Lake, on the river, twenty miles above Fort Langley, where the trail from Bellingham Bay reaches the river, and will effectively prevent any from ‘dodging the question’ by that way.” See “Travel on Frazer River and the Sound: News of the Gold Mines — Indians,” *Bulletin*, 21 June 1858, p. 1.

140. Isaac Stevens to Lewis Cass, 18 May 1858. Correspondence Between the HBC and HM British Government — Loose Papers, 1863-1902. Hudson’s Bay Company Archives.


143. Ibid.

144. “Governor Douglas has paid us a visit, but I do not think it amounted to much.” H.M. Snyder, “Letter from Frazer River,” *Bulletin*, 4 October 1858, p. 3.
CHAPTER FIVE
THE BRITISH WORLD

Governor [Douglas] had suggested the system of granting digging licenses. . . But this proclamation has proved virtually a dead letter, for, in point of fact, the Governor had no legal power to issue the proclamation, or cause it to be respected, he having no commission as Governor on the mainland; his sole power has been the moral power of his energy, talents, and extraordinary influence over the natives. Indeed, the manner in which he has preserved peace between the white man and the natives is highly to his honour. . . .This is not like other colonies which have gone forth from these islands; and of which something is known of the character of the colonists. . . As yet the rush of the adventurers is not for land but gold, not for a permanent settlement but for a speculative excursion. And, therefore, here the immediate object is to establish temporary law and order amidst a motley inundation of immigrant diggers, of whose antecedents we are wholly ignorant, and of whom perhaps few, if any, have any intention to become resident colonists and British subjects.

-- Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's Speech, Government of New Caledonia Bill, British House of Commons, 8 July 1858.1

With the commencement of the California gold rush of 1849, the British government had taken quick action to forestall the possibility of American territorial expansion north of the 49th parallel by creating the Colony of Vancouver Island in the same year.2 Likewise, with the onset of the Fraser River gold rush, Royal Assent was given, 2 August 1858, to the creation of the new Crown Colony of British Columbia.3 The British Empire, begun in 1583 when Sir Humphrey Gilbert claimed Newfoundland as Britain’s first off-shore colony, anchored the Island, and then the Mainland, more securely to the imperial realm than at any time previous since the days of Vancouver’s voyage in 1792. In the 17th century, further imperial possessions had been established in numerous Carribean
islands, in North America, Honduras, West Africa and India. In the 18th century, British authority was further extended in Canada and India, in addition to Ceylon, the Cape of Good Hope and Australia. And by the 19th century, New Zealand, Fiji, North Borneo and portions of Malaya were also acquired, with further expansion throughout Africa.4

Vancouver Island, as the least populated and most far-flung of colonies in the British Empire, served as a beachhead against further U.S. territorial ambitions, aided by the formidable presence of the Hudson’s Bay Company at Fort Victoria and the Royal Navy’s Northern Pacific base at Esquimalt. Though the crown grant of Vancouver Island to the HBC stipulated that the monopoly was responsible, primarily, for promoting agricultural settlement, the fledgling colonial government was also required to protect Native peoples in addition to the trading economy that depended upon them. By comparison, in British Columbia the protection of Native peoples was of paramount concern. “[T]he most pressing and immediate care in this new colony,” argued Lytton, “will be to preserve peace between the natives and the foreigners at the gold diggings. . .”.5 Indeed, Henry Labouchere, Lytton’s predecessor as Secretary of State for the Colonies, warned that “there was one circumstance which constituted the main danger of disorder, and that was the strong aversion which the Indians entertained towards the Americans.”6 The MP for Sheffield, John Arthur Roebuck, was more to the point, advancing the general anti-Californian view, such that “the whole ragamuffin population of the whole universe went there.”7 As a consequence, the establishment of British Columbia was unique in terms of other colonial possessions in that it had begun life with a population considered “quite as bad, if not worse” than California’s.8 “This colony was not like Australia or New Zealand,” warned the Duke Of Newcastle, “as remote from great Powers as from England -- it was near to great Powers, but remote from us.”9

The close proximity of the United States and the “great danger” of Native-White conflict
spreading across the border urged upon Lytton the necessity of giving “all the power they could to
the only authority at present in the colony -- the Governor.”

The establishment of the Crown Colony of British Columbia did not follow any preconceived model of colonial settlement, such as
the Wakefield System imposed on Vancouver Island, but was a hastily fashioned attempt to provide
“temporary law and order” and the assertion of British sovereignty as quickly as possible. The
goldseeking community that the British government sought to reign-in was “so miscellaneous,
perhaps so transitory, and in a form of society so crude” that the New Caledonia Bill, as it was
originally called, was assigned a limit of four years’ duration while James Douglas’ appointment was
provisional until a clearer picture had been gained of the foreign population whose sympathies were
“decidedly anti-British.” For certain members of Parliament, the events of 1858 were so sudden that
they openly wondered why the former Secretary of State for the Colonies, Henry Labouchere, had
not informed them of the discovery of gold when its existence had been known some two years
earlier.

As we have seen, the first reports of California gold to reach Vancouver Island were met with
a certain degree of disbelief. Vancouver Island colonists were initially immune to the contagious
nature of gold seeking. In fact, it was not until June of 1858, the very height of the Fraser River rush,
that members of the Vancouver Island House of Assembly considered the possibility of annexing the
Mainland gold fields. Californians, by contrast, were quick to act. Dr. J.S. Helmcken intimated
that prior to the Fraser River excitement there were two such American “spies” that travelled to Fort
Victoria for the purpose of gleaning information about the existence of gold north of the border.
One was a young man who arrived upon the Island stage as a self-proclaimed actor, and after “one
or two exhibitions of his histrionic powers” left for the lime-light of brighter stages. It is, indeed,
difficult to imagine that a professional actor might journey north to a fur trade preserve, at this time, for the sole purpose of gathering an audience.

In a similar instance, Helmcken recalled that an American sea captain came to Victoria for a lengthy visit in which he spent much time ingratiating himself with the local population. The captain dined with officers of the HBC, held evening soirees aboard his ship, and performed songs at night for the amusement of his new found friends. All of this continued for some time until finally, one day, the American lamented, "I can stand this no longer -- where is the gold about here? -- I have come purposely on this account." Helmcken stated, "we were all not a little astonished and told him plainly we knew nothing about gold mines or mountains of gold, but he did not believe, and considered we and the Hudson’s Bay Co. were keeping it a secret!" As increasing numbers of goldseekers made their presence known in Vancouver Island and New Caledonia, James Douglas, as both Governor of the Island Colony, but more particularly as Chief Factor of the HBC, used the one power he had at his disposal to assert some semblance of British sovereignty in the region. In advance of any legal authority from Britain, a proclamation was quickly issued that asserted the HBC’s right to the exclusive trade and navigation of the country west of the Rocky Mountains.

PROCLAMATION

By his Excellency JAMES DOUGLAS, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Vancouver’s Island and Dependencies, and Vice Admiral of the same, &c, &c, &c.

Whereas it is commonly reported that certain boats and other vessels have entered Fraser’s River for trade; and whereas there is reason to apprehend that other persons are preparing and fitting out boats and vessels for the same purpose:

Now, therefore, I have issued this my Proclamation, warning all persons that such acts are contrary to law, and infringements upon the rights of the Hudson’s Bay Company, who are legally entitled to the trade with Indians in the British Possessions on the north-west coast of America, to the exclusion of all other persons, whether British or Foreign. And also, that fourteen days from the date of this
Proclamation, all ships, boats, and vessels, together with the goods laden on board, found in Fraser's River, or in any of the bays, rivers, or creeks of the said British Possessions on the north-west coast of America, not having a license from the Hudson's Bay Company, and a sufferance from the proper officer of the Customs at Victoria, shall be liable to forfeiture, and will be seized and condemned according to law. Given under my hand and seal, at Government House, Victoria, this eight day of May in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and fifty-eight, and in the twenty-first year of Her Majesty's reign.

(signed) JAMES DOUGLAS, Governor

By His Excellency's Command,

Richard Golledege, Secretary.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

The special correspondent of the San Francisco Bulletin, writing from Fort Langley, 25 May 1858, recorded the commotion amongst the goldseeking population at Fort Hope when Douglas' Proclamation, banning all non-HBC trade, was tacked onto the gates of the Fort. "This clapped a stopper on ten out of eleven persons who were hurrying off to the Sound and San Francisco, for the purpose of bringing in goods," he stated. "Their visions of fortune and 'piles' were dissolved like snow in warm water; and the long faces on the beach, suggested to one not knowing the cause, the idea of their having heard of the demise of some near relative or dear friend."

HBC employees, dimly viewed as "so many Rip Van Winkles," were a controlling presence unknown in the gold fields of California, and Americans, in particular, were not accustom to having their plans for profit thwarted.

At Victoria, newly arrived goldseekers were not only required to purchase a mining license, but Douglas also attempted to exact licenses for each and every canoe that would travel up the Fraser River. For a fee of $6 dollars, canoe-paddling miners were granted the privilege of carrying a year's provisions, no whiskey, and absolutely nothing for the Indian trade. Monsieur Dubroca, a San Francisco merchant, upon hearing such news from his associate in the north was instructed, "The
Hudson's Bay Company has everything in its own hands. If you have shipped goods to me, and the vessel has not sailed, take them out." For the moment at least, it appeared that Victoria was to be the one and only town to control the mines and harvest the wealth in trade and gold.

In January of 1858, Douglas set the price of a mining license at 21 shillings ($5 dollars) per month, these licenses only obtainable at Victoria so that all mining traffic would be forced to travel via the Colony of Vancouver Island (see Figure 25). Roderick Finlayson, appointed the Customs House Officer in Victoria, issued licenses to Californian miners that “had to be exhibited on board the [HMS] Satellite before parties were allowed to proceed up the river to hunt for gold.”

Douglas attempted to enforce HBC exclusive rights to trade and navigation of the Fraser by a select interpretation of the Company’s Charter, an interpretation that was subsequently overruled by the home government. The HBC Charter had given the company an exclusive trade with First Nations, but by Douglas’ reading this also meant a monopoly in trade with White peoples, too. In the Governor’s attempt to control the anticipated influx of tens of thousand of goldseekers, he construed that since the country west of the Rockies had only been inhabited by Natives when the Charter was granted, then there was an implicit recognition of monopoly rights in trade with all subsequent newcomers to the region. From the Californian perspective, Douglas, as both the Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island and the
Chief Factor of the HBC, had gone well beyond the exclusive rights conveyed in the crown-granted Charter. "Some people here contend, that taking Gov. Douglas' own proclamation as a true exposition of the nature of the charter, it is evident that he has exceeded his authority in taking the step he has," stated the *Bulletin*. "The real *intention* of the [British] government was to give said company the exclusive enjoyment of the Indian fur trade. Let it enjoy this privilege — but not interfere with the regular commerce springing up between the white emigrants and their home; or foreign countries."²⁴

Regardless of the wild excitement engendered by the precedents of the California and Australia, or Queen Charlottes and Fort Colvile rushes, few high-ranking HBC officers paid much attention to the gathering storm-clouds that would soon flood the British world north of the international divide with miners in pursuit of gold. In fact, even once the rush had begun in April of 1858, Douglas' knowledge of the New Caledonia diggings was largely imperfect and based mainly on a handful of early reconnaissance reports and samples of gold dust sent to Fort

**Figure 26.** Prior to the founding of British Columbia, James Douglas was the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island & Its Dependencies, Vice-Admiral of the Royal Navy stationed at Esquimalt, and Spokesman for the 'Great White Mother.' By November 1858 he would also become Governor of B.C.
Victoria, usually by Chief Trader Donald McLean. It is of little wonder, then, that the British Parliament was not informed of earlier gold discoveries since these initial reports had not confirmed the extent of the gold fields. Douglas' official despatch to London, 6 April 1858, established this fact. It conveyed a basic overview of the gold fields just prior to the massive rush from the south, and of greater interest, his earliest views with regard to their future development (see Appendix A).

Copies of Douglas' detailed despatch concerning the gold rush were immediately sent to the Foreign Office, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Royal Geological Society. Lord Carnarvon, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, believed that "difficulties arising out of such circumstances as these grow rapidly." The disregard with which American miners disobeyed Douglas' Proclamation, specifically licensing, "was of course to be expected [stated Carnarvon]... there being no force on the spot & no semblance of British Government." Carnarvon, viewing events from the other side of the world, was satisfied to "let things take their course as regards the licenses & gold digging, but to prevent... any proceeding inconsistent with the assertion of British dominion in the territory." Herman Merivale, the Colonial Office's Permanent Under-Secretary, agreed with Carnarvon and viewed Douglas' report as portraying "a dangerous state of things, wh. it is clear cannot last." The potential for international conflict was quickly perceived in Douglas' stance that the country should be closed to foreign intrusion. "It certainly looks on the whole like a plan for keeping the gold for the HB Co's people as far as possible," warned Merivale, to which Carnarvon noted, "I am afraid so."

Arthur Blackwood, the Senior Clerk in the North American Department, was less preoccupied with the potential international crises that might erupt between Britain and America over gold. Blackwood's opinion of the Douglas Despatch was with regard to the pre-existing rights of First Nations: "the natives, whose country we choose to take possession of, have a good right to dig for
gold; & I suppose it will be difficult to make them understand the right of the crown to minerals in a Country which they regard as their own.”27 Though some Treaties had been concluded with Native peoples in Vancouver Island, prior to the Fraser River gold rush, no comparable agreements were enacted in mainland British Columbia. British policy by 1858 shifted from formal recognition of pre-existing title to more general pledges of support and sustenance for the tribes.28

The Fraser rush looked very different from Victoria than it did in San Francisco. As it commenced, the American steamer *Commodore* arrived from California, 25 April 1858, with 450 passengers who were described to Douglas as being “the worst of the population from San Francisco; the very dregs, in fact, of society.”29 From the beginning of the immense rush north, Douglas as Chief Factor and Governor was concerned about throwing the country open to “indiscriminate immigration” in which an anti-British element would preponderate; in particular, Americans, who were “strongly attached to their own country and peculiar institutions.”30 “[T]he aspect and suggests a doubt as to the policy of permitting the free entrance of foreigners into British territory for residence,” argued Douglas. “It is easy, in fact, to foresee the dangerous consequences that may grow out of the unrestricted immigration of foreigners into the interior of Fraser’s River. If the majority, of the immigrants, be American, there will always be a hankering in their minds after annexation to the United States, and with the aid of their countrymen in Oregon and California, at hand, they will never cordially submit to British rule, nor possess the loyal feelings of British subjects.”31 Though the Colonial Office -- like the Californians -- suspected Douglas of advocating closure to foreigners as an attempt to monopolize the trade in gold, these governing officials could not have possibly realized what the loss of southern Oregon to “indiscriminate immigration” had meant for HBC families forced to leave their homes as a result of the *Oregon Boundary Settlement* of 1846.
Douglas was certainly aware of the “alarming aspect” posed by a potential mass migration, the Fraser River rush threatening to make the pioneers of the Oregon Trail seem as if they had joined a modest Sunday picnic. Yet even while advocating the closure of Fraser River, the Governor felt that

Figure 27. Alfred Waddington’s Map of the Fraser River Gold Fields (1858). This first published map of British Columbia was produced by J.J. Le Count, San Francisco.
events had already been set in motion. White goldseekers, Douglas felt, would simply push an entrance through the Columbia River district of Eastern Washington (see Figure 27), "and the valuable trade of the country, in that case, be driven from its natural course, into a foreign channel, and entirely lost to this country."32 "On all sides the Americans are striving to force a passage into the gold district, through their own Territories," warned Douglas, "attempts being at once made to open roads from Bellingham Bay, from Nisqually and by way of the Columbia River. I am now convinced that it is utterly impossible, through any means within our power, to close the gold districts against the entrance of foreigners, as long as gold is found in abundance, in which case the country will soon be over-run, and occupied by a large white population, whether it be agreeable to our wishes or not..."33 To this end, the Californians’ direct violation of Customs laws when they crossed the border with passengers and goods, "especially Spirits, Arms, Ammunition, and other prohibited and noxious Articles," carried both economic and symbolic importance.34

Douglas, taking immediate steps in advance of any authority from Britain to halt what he deemed "lawless practices," issued his Proclamation banning the importation of non-HBC goods backed by a requisition made upon the Royal Navy for an effective force to up-hold his declaration. Nevertheless, though Douglas was given the assistance of the Royal Navy to control matters in the Gulf of Georgia region, and particularly the mouth of the Fraser River, the inland reaches of the lower Fraser were, for the most part, lacking any effective British presence to enforce fledgling colonial rule. The HMS Satellite, a screw corvette of 21 guns under the command of Captain James C. Prevost, was joined by the Plumper, attached to the Anglo-American Boundary Commission, though Prevost soon considered additional help essential, "especially since the boundary question threatened to lead to war."35 American stern wheelers were frequently overhauled and miners forced to buy licenses. Though the HBC's ship Otter was used to patrol the waterways between Victoria and the
Fraser River for ships carrying non-licensed miners in transit, as we have seen, once the exact location of the *Satellite* or *Plumper* was known, goldseekers often slipped through adjacent passages undetected. Prevost recommended stationing a smaller vessel in the North Arm of the Fraser and a battery of guns located in the south bank of the river to halt further evasions from those attempting to outrun British authority. By mid-August the armed schooner *Recovery* was anchored off Fort Langley, but Douglas was to plead for even more warships to meet the continued influx of thousands.

Each of Douglas' actions was calculated to assert the rights of the crown in the region, protect the interests of the HBC, and “legalize the entrance of gold miners into Fraser’s River,” all of which was a prelude to similar actions taken by the RCMP in the Klondike rush some forty years later. New Caledonia was for the British, in Douglas’ view, and by both licensing and channelling miners through the British-controlled entrance of Fraser River, all trade and commerce would naturally fall to the Colony of Vancouver Island which would procure its supplies directly from Britain. In all of Douglas’ actions, two main tasks were to inform his policies: the assertion of British sovereignty in the region in addition to halting the flow of wealth from crossing the border. With no British steamships available along the Pacific coast, Douglas also hoped to control the profit from the transportation demands of the gold rush by engaging the services of the U.S. Pacific Mail Steamship Company (PMSC) to carry passengers to the gold fields. The PMSC was to be officially-sanctioned and enjoy monopoly privilege to the exclusion of all other passenger carriers. The Governor reported to Britain:

1st That they should place Steamers on the navigable route between this place [Victoria] and the Fall’s of Fraser River, 130 miles distant from its discharge into the Gulf of Georgia, for the transport of Goods and Passengers to that point.
2nd That they should carry the Hudson’s Bay Company’s Goods into Fraser’s River, and no other.

3rd That they carry no passengers except such as have taken out and paid for a Gold Mining License and Permit from the Government of Vancouver’s Island.

4th That they pay to the Hudson’s Bay Company, as compensation to them, at the rate of two dollars head money for each passenger carried into Fraser’s River.37

Douglas’ actions were subsequently disallowed by Britain as too extreme, Lytton seeing no evidence of HBC rights having been violated by the free traffic of goldseekers. With the fall of Lord Palmerston’s government in February 1858, British public opinion had turned increasingly against monopoly privilege of crown-chartered companies, such as the HBC and the East India Company, in favour of policies based on the principles of free trade. Lytton, a member of Lord Derby’s new cabinet, along with Lords Malmesbury (Foreign Secretary) and Benjamin Disraeli (Chancellor), joined a ministry deeply suspicious of the HBC’s commitment to furthering colonization in both Vancouver Island and the Red River Settlement. It was no coincidence that this Ministry, which lasted about a year (1858-59), had worked to abrogate the rights of the East India Company with its “New India Bill.” In fact, the India (No. 3) Bill was debated in Parliament on the same day that Lytton introduced first reading of the New Caledonia Bill.38 In this way, they sought to transfer the government of that country to the crown in light of the huge Indian uprising, the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857.39 In the Red River Settlement, opposition from Métis peoples to the HBC’s grant of exclusive trade had also begun, culminating in the Sayer Trial of 1849. Pierre Sayer and three other Métis were accused of illicit traffick in furs with local Natives, the foursome having maintained that HBC monopoly rights were invalid.40 Though found guilty, Sayer went unpunished which, in effect, was to condone independent trading in the region. As Historian E.E. Rich concluded, “The result of the trial was that trade was free at Red River settlement.”41
These political developments in far distant India and Red River, in addition to the rise of free trade as an imperial ethos, fuelled the British government’s determination to limit the HBC’s monopolistic rule west of the Rockies. Nevertheless, with communications between Vancouver Island and Britain taking months, Governor Douglas did not receive the disallowance for some time, and as a consequence, head money was taken from miners travelling aboard government-sanctioned ships, and in certain instances, goods were confiscated. When Douglas made his first visit to the Fraser River diggings in June, he reported that his revenue officers were busy “in the seizure of several lots of contraband goods, and taking sixteen unlicensed canoes into custody.” This first trip to inspect the gold fields awakened Douglas to the extent and richness of the mineral deposits. At Hill’s Bar he recorded that miners were making as much as $50 per day. “The miners generally assert,” claimed Douglas, “that Fraser’s River is richer than any ‘three rivers’ in California. . . one continued bed of Gold of incalculable value and extent.” With the wealth of the gold fields personally confirmed, he realized that it would be impossible to arrest the influx of goldseekers, and thus advocated “that the whole country be immediately thrown open to settlement.” This accommodation was possible, he proposed, by compensating the HBC for loss of rights through an annual payment from public revenues thus generated. Douglas was so sure that the country was about to be inundated by a “lawless” American mining population that he urged upon the Colonial Office immediate action.

To imperial authorities he wrote that his timely

![Figure 28. Governor James Douglas happened upon Hill’s Bar just an outbreak of Native-White violence was about to occur.](image-url)
arrival at Hill’s Bar (see Figure 28) averted a serious fight between non-Native and Native miners, the latter “who mustered under arms, in a tumultuous manner, and threatened to make a clean sweep of the whole body of [White] miners assembled there.” He claimed that Native peoples were “annoyed with the large quantities of gold taken from their country by the white miners.” Apparently too, he lectured both parties about their conduct, giving the leader of the Native contingent a position in the Government service to assist in settling future disputes, while addressing foreign miners with a greater “plainness of speech.” James Douglas emphasized the prerogatives of the crown and asserted the British presence wholeheartedly when he spoke to the White mining population, a stance he later abandoned with the rising tide of the Californian mining frontier. “I refused to grant them any rights of occupation to the soil,” he asserted, “and told them distinctly that Her Majesty’s Government ignored their very existence in that part of the country, which was not open for the purpose of settlement, and that they were permitted to remain there merely on sufferance; that no abuses would be tolerated, and that the Laws would protect the rights of the Indian, no less than those of the white man.”

Douglas then attempted to quickly fashion some semblance of colonial rule with the appointment of Richard Hicks, a Cornish miner, as a revenue officer for the Fort Yale district and George Perrier, also a British subject, as Justice of the peace for the district of Hill’s Bar. The Governor directed that Native people could seek redress of any complaints they might have in future by applying directly to Perrier. In addition, he claimed to have appointed “Indian Magistrates” responsible for bringing members of their own tribes to account, though no mention is ever made of these members of the colonial service in subsequent reports. Yet, even with these early attempts at establishing civil authority “on the spot,” Douglas predicted that “without the exercise of unceasing vigilance on the part of the Government, Indian troubles will sooner or later occur.”
Douglas’ early attempts at instituting civil administration of the gold fields was essentially concluded with the appointment of these few officials, the Governor preferring to wait for the greatly swollen state of the Fraser River to subside before the establishment of gold commissioners and customs collectors. Though Douglas’ rationale for postponing the appointment of local officials was simply an attempt to allow miners a period of grace in license payment, while waiting for the river to drop, this delay may have been the single greatest mistake committed by his fledging administration in that the lack of any formidable British presence beyond Fort Langley, near the mouth of the Fraser, served to fulfill his dire prediction that Indian troubles would sooner or later occur. The “unceasing vigilance” on the part of the government recommended by Douglas was virtually impossible when left in the hands of two White officials appointed ad hoc from amongst the mining population with no prior experience in the management of Native-White relations.

By the time the first gold commissioner for the region was appointed, Californian ways had become well established and changes demanded by British law were difficult to implement. Richard Hicks, Douglas’ assistant crown commissioner attempted almost single-handedly to imprint British rule on the lower Fraser, a virtually impossible task when confronted by thousands of well-armed and organized miners that had been operating for months without serious intervention. In the case of Hill’s Bar, Hicks made a concerted effort to establish the high water mark of the Fraser River which was to be used as the boundary line separating river claims from bank diggings. Hicks reported his lamentable state of authority to Douglas. “Mr. [Ovid] Allard, myself, and two of the oldest Indians on the river proceeded to the spot; the Indians ought to know best the bounds of the river,” claimed Hicks. “It took us a day to go over the ground; it was no interest to the Indians to deceive us, and I am sure they performed their duty manfully, altho’ the miners swore and insulted them, to the disgrace of white men — as they call themselves. The fact is that there are a set of men on the river
who are doing their utmost to treat the Authority with contempt, and establish the same system as in California. . . . It is not at all likely Your Excellency will sanction men holding a larger claim than is allowed by Law, if they do they will run back into Canada in time."

Hicks was also given the unenviable task of reigning in the many organised water companies examined in the previous chapter. These large-scale projects transformed the landscape with massive ditches that scarred the hillsides, diverting streams and draining lakes, for the purpose of selling water to miners. At no time had permission been granted for these ambitious works. As a consequence, Douglas was once again asserting crown control over individual interests well after many of these companies had established themselves according to the usual Californian practice. Henry Crease, the Colony of Vancouver Island’s Attorney-General, was quickly called to the task of drafting “Regulations in granting Ditch Privileges” that were to supercede these Californian home-grown rules. Companies were henceforth required to consult with the crown commissioner as to the size and capacity of water conveyances and the source from which it was to be taken. The rent charged for water was to be regulated by the government and companies were to become responsible for insuring that only licensed miners were sold the resource. Additionally, it was proposed that companies be further mandated to collect mining license fees as a way to guarantee collection. While the office of gold commissioner was directly responsible for this function, Hicks’ attempts at collection had proved difficult amongst a mining population that was loath to pay them. And yet, the interests of individual miners were also protected by setting a standard cost of $5 dollars per day for each sluice furnished. It was further stipulated that *bona fide* licensed miners could not be refused water on application and payment of regular fees."
Between 19 May and 19 June 1858, the Port of Victoria received 19 steamships, 14 decked boats, and 9 sailing vessels, having carried 6133 passengers to the British possessions and thickly populated Native territories. And yet, as discussed in the previous chapter, not all had chosen to make Victoria their stopping point before embarking for Fraser River as the Port of San Francisco alone had recorded that some 10,573 passengers had left California for the northern gold fields, many undoubtedly landing at Port Townsend or Whatcom in Washington territory. From these figures, in addition to the influx of miners direct from Oregon and Washington, Douglas safely concluded that Fraser River had gained a population increase of 10,000 people in the space of six short weeks. In many instances, however, ships sailing from San Francisco had been filled well beyond capacity, the true number of passengers rarely reported. Even so, during this short interval colonial officials sold only 2525 mining licences.

As the White mining population increased, prospectors left the now crowded original diggings to push farther up the Fraser River in search of the mother lode. While Hill’s, Texas, American, and other bars had dominated the news with rich takings of upwards of $50 a day, the Upper diggings beyond Lytton were also showing promise of rivalling those of the lower Fraser. At Mormon Bar, about six miles above the junction of Thompson River, White miners had claimed to have taken $830 dollars of gold dust in eight days with just one rocker box, a mining device somewhat resembling a child’s cradle in both shape and size. At The Fountain, rockers were averaging between $37 and $55 per day from the dry diggings located amongst the arid bench lands of the region. In response, Douglas next employed O.T. Travaillot as revenue officer for the District of Fort Dallas. Certainly Douglas was not operating under any false illusion when he appointed a single individual to uphold British sovereignty in the new region. “The Law,” he stated, “must however be imperfectly executed until there be a military Force placed at my disposal.”
With only the Royal Navy enforcing revenue laws at the mouth of the Fraser, Douglas was forced to continue his practice of appointing colonial officials from the existing mining population and his request for military support beyond the sea-coast was not immediately forthcoming. Though the British government approved Douglas’ appointments, provisionally, he was reminded that in Britain itself, the military was not resorted to when Custom laws had been contravened. Furthermore, Douglas’ pleas for military assistance initially fell upon deaf ears, members of the Colonial Office having advised that a civil force would have to be raised from the existing population of the colony.\textsuperscript{58} The application of this policy had its antecedent in the HBC’s Red River Settlement where British troops had been withdrawn as of 1848 and half-heartedly replaced with a locally raised force.\textsuperscript{59} The circumstances in New Caledonia though were largely different in that a formal colony had yet to be established, and the vast majority of immigrants were not British subjects. Herman Merivale, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, could not agree with the practicalities of this recommendation. “I do not think there is much use in telling Gov. Douglas that the force to protect the customs revenue must be raised in the colony. The thing cannot at present be done,” Merivale asserted. “If the diggings succeed, useful men will not stay on the coast to look after customs. . . The best rough expedient for the moment seems to be giving the \textit{Satellite} & \textit{Plumper’s} marines an extra allowance. I wish there were more of them.”\textsuperscript{60}

Captain James Prevost, commanding HMS \textit{Satellite}, was of a similar opinion, “considering that these temptations have arisen under their very eyes, and the Gold appears to exist everywhere around them. . . it is more than can be expected from human nature that a body of young and active men will remain quiet and contented upon the same remuneration that they received before all these discoveries were made. . .”\textsuperscript{61} Lord Carnarvon agreed with Merivale and Prevost, and, as a consequence, British marines were henceforth given a pay increase so that they would not be tempted
to jump ship and join the rush for gold. Miners Henry Hyde and Charles Rivers were quick to learn
the harsh result of enticing marines away from military service. During “a frolic” in Victoria, Hyde
and Rivers apparently urged sailors to desert their warship, and as a result both were imprisoned for
a six month jail term, the two men having been “led away by foreign influences.” The Satellite had
a force of 260 men and by the end of August some 20 sailors had deserted.

Lytton began to press the Admiralty upon the “imperative necessity” of keeping at least two
warships of sufficient force at Vancouver Island at all times. “It will be a source of lasting regret to
their Lordships,” stressed Lytton, “& it will cause a great & severe Parliamentary censure . . . if any
inactivation or lukewarmness in the protection of so valuable a part of H.M. Dominions . . . should
produce there evils which might so probably ensue & of which their Lordships were so carefully
warned.” The Admiralty ceded to Lytton’s pressure with HMS Calypso next on the scene. Soon
the flagship HMS Ganges, 84 guns, sailed into Esquimalt harbour under the command of Rear-
Admiral Baynes with others to follow. HMS Tribune was ordered to the Northwest Coast “with as
many supernumerary Marines as she can carry.” The corvettes Pylades, 21 guns, and Amethyst, 26
guns, were also to be sent from the Far East as Baynes adopted the urgent tones of the Colonial
Office, such that “no part of his station was more important than B.C.”

Lytton was perhaps more concerned about Douglas’ provisional appointments than whether
the employment of Royal Marines to safe guard customs revenue might set an awkward precedent.
Lytton was of the opinion that “it is of great importance to the general social welfare & dignity of the
Col[ony] that some gentlemen should be encouraged to come from England, not as mere adventurers,
but professionally engaged--perhaps Stipendiary Magistrates or Gold Comm[ission]rs.” One
wonders whether the later dismissal of revenue officers Richard Hicks and O.T. Travillot for
unprofessional conduct may have coincided, just a little too neatly, with the arrival of “gentlemen
from England," such as Chartres Brew and Peter O'Reilly, both of whom received appointments as
gold commissioners. There is no evidence to suggest that either Hicks or Travaillot had any
indication that their positions had been considered provisional.

Though Admiral Baynes could initially furnish no other support beyond the *Satellite* and
*Plumper* for patrolling the mouth of the Fraser River, it was the interior reaches of New Caledonia
that required a military presence. Upon Douglas' second trip to Fort Yale later in the season, he
found the situation peaceful, but as we have seen, the Californian miners were likely play acting for
Douglas' benefit. As far as they were concerned, there were few colonial officials in the region, and
certainly no force to back them up. Writing to Winfield Ebey of the number of British subjects along
Fraser River, Captain George Wesley Beam, formerly of the Washington Territorial Volunteers,
mockingly claimed, "They are small potatoes up here and few in a hill." It is of little wonder, then,
that Douglas' message delivered at Fort Yale, to the "citizens of that great republic which like the
mustard seed has grown into a mighty tree . . . that offshoot of England of which England is still
proud," spoke more of ingratiating oneself to a foreign army of occupation than any attempt to arrest
the illegal practices of miners. Douglas appears to have been a past master of reading his audience
and refashioning his message while in a precarious position of weakness. In a private letter to
Herman Merivale, Douglas was more forthright in his views of the mining population he had deigned
to address. "[W]hen I landed at Fort Yale in my late journey to Fraser's River," he admitted, "it
struck me that I had never before seen a crowd of more ruffianly looking men, than were assembled
on that occasion. About 3000 were present, and to add to the horror of the scene, many of them
were drunk; things however, wore a better appearance next day, and after saying a few kind words
to them, they were profuse in acclamations, and did, at my command, give three cheers for the Queen,
but evidently with a bad grace. There is a strong American feeling among them, and they will require
constant watching, until the English element preponderates in the Country." 

Douglas, in his official communiques to London, did little to mention that British sovereignty had been undermined by a foreign population that took the law into its own hands. One of the primary reasons Douglas was ultimately selected as governor of the Mainland Colony of British Columbia was due to the British government’s perception of the extraordinary success of HBC Indian policy as contrasted to the oftentimes genocidal history of the American territories. “Indeed, the manner in which he has preserved peace between the white man and the natives is highly to his honour,” Lytton affirmed to the British Parliament. Though the HBC monopoly was losing favour in London’s political circles (their Charter being revoked the following year), at the very least, their presence in the Fraser River gold fields was viewed favourably as a counter balance to the massive numbers of intransigent White goldseekers. In fact, upon reading Douglas’ extensive report of his trip to Fraser River in September 1858, Lytton privately penned that the Governor’s proceedings showed “the ability and power of organization wh[ich] he possesses.” Lytton further expressed his “satisfaction & approval of all that he has done” and wondered whether a copy of Douglas’ despatch might not be sent to Queen Victoria since it was such a generally favourable progress report. Favourable reports though, as we shall see, were to become Douglas’ *forte* as select views of events in the gold fields were to be increasingly expressed in the most positive of terms. That James Douglas would also be appointed the Governor of the Crown Colony of British Columbia, in addition to being Governor of Vancouver Island and Chief Factor of the HBC, is further indicative of this period of flux in which one man, locally, could hold all the key positions of power. The year 1858 was indeed a time of great transition.

The porosity of the boundary between American and British territories was helpful to the
Californian miners but made assertions of authority difficult for the British. From the very outset of the rush, Douglas contended with foreign goldseekers pushing their way into New Caledonia from a variety of unrestricted routes. The popular Whatcom Trail from Bellingham Bay, the Columbia-Okanagan Route taken by John Callbreath and his company, the Similkameen Trail, even the stealthy entrance of miners dodging Royal Navy gunboats via the mouth of the Fraser River all contributed to Douglas' decision to look for an all-British Route to the Upper diggings. This route served two main purposes in that it would not cross the border into American territory while at the same time effectively bypassing the hazardous reaches of the Fraser Canyon, largely impassable while the river was in spring flood. Douglas was determined to cripple Victoria's competition by redirecting all Puget Sound-Gulf of Georgia goldseekers to a new route firmly located above the 49th parallel, and thus halt the syphoning of trade and gold south of the border via these transboundary routes. The HBC was highly experienced in trail building and familiar with a number of undeveloped routes that had been located during previous years of fur trade explorations.

Douglas' communique to the Colonial Office in July of the year outlined his ambition for a trail that would use a chain of lakes and portages from Harrison River to present-day Lillooet (Figure 29). A large contingent of miners would build

Figure 29. The Harrison-Lillooet Route built by miners in 1858 utilized a series of lakes and portages in order to bypass the Fraser Canyon to the Upper Diggings. From R.C. Mayne's map.
the route in advance of the arrival of the Royal Engineers. Once again, expediency and circumstance forced Douglas to use the large and existing pool of local talent to further his immediate colonial designs in advance of professional civil servants, policeman and engineers that were eventually sent from England. Many factors contributed to the British decision, at this point in the rush, to build a route of communication along Harrison, Lillooet, Anderson and Seton Lakes to Cayoush, or present-day Lillooet. HBC Trader Dugald MacTavish, viewing events from south of the border at Fort Colvile, warned of the consequences of American attempts to reroute mining traffic south. Writing, 20 May 1858, MacTavish stated, “The Americans are making strenuous efforts to open a communication to the Thompsons River country from this Territory. Some miners have gone up there from here by the Columbia and Okanagan, whilst a number of others are now busily occupied making a road from Bellingham Bay by the Chil-whe-ack [Chilliwack] river and lake across the Cascade mountains to the Shi-milk-a-meen Valley — which I need not say is an operation of some magnitude — and if successful will render parties going to the mines by the Western route entirely independent of Fraser’s River.” For the incoming goldseekers, most of the best auriferous lands below Fort Yale had been claimed by those fortunate enough to be the first upon the ground. A large tentative population amounting to thousands had waited patiently for months, waiting for the river to drop, so that they might prospect new and possibly richer unclaimed lands to the north. With such a large under-employed pool of labourers thwarted from mining, due to the unique geography of the Fraser Canyon that prevented its ascent in summer, miners joined Douglas in a contractual arrangement to build a new route that as goldseekers they would be the first to profit from. No less than five hundred men volunteered their services to blaze an effective trail, the possibilities of which were first advocated by A.C. Anderson for the fur trade in 1847.

Unlike the precarious HBC brigade trail that followed the Douglas Portage from Yale to
Spuzzum, then climbing the eastern canyon wall to Chapman's Bar until dropping down the Anderson River to Boston Bar and then to Lytton, the Harrison Route utilized a number of lakes and short portages that it was hoped would greatly facilitate in the transportation and monitoring of miners and supplies. The first leg of the trip was by water. A stern wheel steam vessel was able to leave the Fraser River and navigate into Harrison Lake via its river and reach the top end of the lake to Port Douglas, named at the time in honour of the Governor (Figure 30). From here miners commenced cutting an overland trail through the forest along the Lillooet River, past the hot springs known as St Agnes' Well, until reaching Lillooet Lake where water transport was recommenced.

The organization of the Corps was divided into twenty separate companies each consisting of twenty-five men. Each company had its own captain who reported to the commander of the corps, who, in turn, issued orders to a commissary for weekly food rations. This was no ad hoc mob of labourers. Douglas accepted the free labour of the volunteer companies in exchange for food and supplies, and special rights of passage to the upper gold fields. The Governor reported to the
Colonial Office that the arrangement eliminated the financial burden that such public works projects would normally impose: "They moreover proffered their services, on terms, so peculiar in themselves and so advantageous for the country, that it would have been unwise of me to decline them," Douglas enthused. "Each man, for example, in being enrolled into the corps, paid into our hands the sum of 25 dollars, as security for good conduct. They receive no remuneration in the form of pay, the Government having merely to supply them with food while employed on the road, and to transport them free of expense, to the commencement of the road on Harrison's Lake; where the money deposit of 25 dollars is to be repaid to them in provisions, at Victoria prices, when the road is finished; the cost of the work will therefore not be heavy, nor exceed our means of repayment out of the revenues of the Gold District."  

Port Pemberton was established at the top of Lillooet Lake where a further trail was constructed to Port Anderson on the Lake of the same name (Figure 31). Once again, water transport recommenced along the full extent of Anderson Lake until reaching Seton Portage, providing an extremely short overland trek to Seton Lake. Prior to the establishment of crown-granted contracts for companies to engage in developing water transportation, Native peoples often
carried miners across the lakes in exchange for goods such as food, blankets or shirts. Charles Gardiner, a young goldseeker from Prince Edward Island, recalled the anxious times both he and his party had in one such crossing. At Anderson Lake the company were permitted to pitch their tents "after a great many military evolutions" by Natives peoples armed with muskets, knives, bows and arrows, their faces "painted with a red and black substance, always used by them when going to war. . .". At Seton Portage, Gardiner's party hired Natives to pack across the short land bridge before setting out across the lake in an Indian canoe (Figure 32). During the crossing, the guides apparently made an unexpected departure from their intended course, beaching the canoe at an Indian village, where one of about fifty assembled Natives quickly snatched the goldseekers most prized possession, the camp kettle. "I jumped out and gave chase," exclaimed Gardiner, "but only a short distance until two guns were cocked and levelled at my head. . . In a few moments the old Chief came down with the kettle in his hand, which we had to buy back. My partner taking the hankerchief from his neck, gave it to the old Chief, who gave it then in our presence, to the villain who took the kettle. The Chief then asked for some mucamue (food). We told him we had none, when he again took the
kettle, which we had to purchase this second time with flour.”

Evidently, after a great deal of trouble, the mining party was allowed to leave and Gardiner felt he and his friends “had got out of a pretty bad scrape.”

It has been said that at Seton Portage miners would later construct a small wooden rail line in which to transport their supplies. The wheeled carts used to carry their cargo were pushed by hand across the short span to the next water body to be traversed.

From Seton Lake it was but a short trip down to Cayoush, or present-day Lillooet, to the rich mining grounds of the Upper diggings (Figure 33). Douglas believed that this route would form “the commercial highway into the Interior Districts.”

Lord Carnarvon was most impressed with the initiative taken by Douglas. He thought that it was time Douglas received a little praise “for great capacity under trying circumstances. Approval especially when discriminately [sic] given is not only just in his case but is good policy.” Carnarvon did not pen these words until 12 October 1858, by which time Douglas’ “cheering accounts of the progress of the [road] party” had come to an end. Though the little that has been written of the Harrison-Lillooet Route largely celebrates the signal achievement of James Douglas’ foresight and initiative, the five hundred miners who laboured for months in constructing the trail were less than pleased with the colonial government that had defaulted on its contractual obligations.

The captains of the twenty companies formed to prosecute the trail prepared a series of
petitions that outlined grievances against the colonial government for its lack of support for the initiative. It should be noted that petitioning the colonial government, prior to 1858, was virtually non-existent until the arrival of thousands of democratically-inclined Californians accustomed to asserting their rights in this way. In one such petition, Captain W.A. Dozier of company no. 14 was selected by the corps to present their complaints personally to the Governor and explain “the very unpleasant and embarrassing position” that the companies found themselves. It would seem that one half of the men employed on the trail had remained in Port Douglas “in a comparative state of idleness” due to the fact that colonial authorities had provided insufficient mule transport to carry provisions to miners further up the line. “To subsist merely -- with or without work is a question of trifling importance to the men,” the petitioners declared. “They engaged to build the trail in order that they might reach the upper Frazer river, there to reap the reward of their industry -- for their own future enjoyment and the welfare of their families, and they are not willing to abandon the object for which they enlisted. We understand that the Spirit of the Contract contemplated that mules would be place on the road to facilitate its speedy completion . . . The Commissary General advises us that from the time of our first arrival at Port Douglas he has in every letter that he has written -- urged the necessity as herein sett [sic] forth.” The miners complained that 250 mules were required to enable the 500 goldseekers to pack provisions to the Fraser River, yet no mules had been forthcoming.

One of the key reasons that so many miners agreed to provide unpaid labour was the goal of reaching the Upper diggings once the Fraser’s spring melt had ended, but before the advent of winter conditions. Government authorities had stressed that the whole undertaking could be completed within six weeks from the month of August in which they began. And yet some ten weeks later, in mid-October, miners were still working on the trail with winter rapidly approaching and the threat of mining operations being postponed until the new year. In a gold rush, timing was everything. The
petitioners demanded:

that every means should be used in the power of the Government to forward Provisions and stores to subsist the men at such points along the way as should be found necessary to forward and complete the work within the time specified. ... the conditions embodied in the contract have not been faithfully carried out on the part of the Government inasmuch as your petitioners in order to obtain subsistence have been compelled to direct their labor from the natural channel and deploy it by packing Provisions and materials necessary to carry on the work, placing them in the position of Beasts of Burden, whereby some have lost their lives and others ... Rendered totally unfit for further service, besides delaying the completion of the work .... Your Petitioners have no hesitation in stating to your Excellency that had the Provisions been forwarded as contemplated in the contract ... the entire work on the Trail would have been completed in Fifteen working Days, thereby giving your petitioners ample opportunity before the closing of the season to prospect and locate themselves on Fraser River, which your Excellency must be fully aware was the only reason that would have induced them to embark in the present enterprise. 87

Miners thus having completed the route after ten arduous weeks were left at the top end of the trail on Fraser River, “suffering untold hardships” for want of basic necessities such as clothing, boots and shoes, and in many instances food and provisions. Horse-beef Bar (see Appendix E) was the name given to one of the gold camps located below Lillooet, and indicative of the near-starvation conditions of trail-building goldseekers who had sacrificed their few pack animals for food.

These men were forced to return along the trail of their own making to Harrison Lake, in a destitute state, and upon reaching Port Douglas heard news that a colonial emissary had suspended all further work on the trail under the authority of James Douglas. 88 Charles B. Young, who left just a few days before their arrival, had posted a notice of closure in a conspicuous place in Port Douglas that was considered “in violation of every principle of Honour and Justice.” 89 Miners upon completing the trail were to have been given free transportation from Port Douglas to Cayoush (Lillooet), in addition to their cargos purchased at Victoria prices from the $25 dollars each had deposited with the government. Instead, colonial authorities were to offer a one-time payment of $10 dollars for all
the transportation costs they might encounter on the new trail, an inadequate subsidy certainly not
commensurate with ten weeks of hard labour and the consequent delay in prospecting and staking
of claims in the Upper diggings. This was certainly one aspect of the construction of the Harrison-
Lillooet Route that Douglas never reported to British authorities.

With the route largely complete, many California and Pacific Northwest goldseekers did not
support the British inspired trail as the principle commercial road into the interior of New Caledonia.
Though it was certainly easier of travel than the arduous Fraser Canyon corridor, it nevertheless
required miners to repeatedly pack, unpack and re-pack their provisions at each and every water port
and portage. The additional costs to transport passengers and freight were large in comparison to
the interior Columbia-Okanogan Route favoured by miners such as Joel Palmer, the former
Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon Territory. Palmer was one of the first Americans to
establish a feasible route for the transport of cattle through Eastern Washington via the Columbia and
Okanogan Rivers to the Fraser gold fields.

Writing in January 1860, Palmer outlined the cost to miners to freight their goods along the
Harrison-Lillooet Trail in such a way as to seriously hamper its promotion. From Victoria to the
Mainland the cost of transportation varied from $3 to $5 dollars a ton, “as the spirit of opposition
may run.” Palmer continued, such that: “to Port Douglas, twenty-five dollars per ton, thence by pack
train, across the first portage, eight cents per pound, thence across Lilliwit [sic] lake, in open boats,
ten dollars per ton, thence by pack train across the second portage five cents per ton, thence over
Anderson lake in open boats, ten dollars per ton, thence to Seton lake by wagons, fifteen dollars per
ton, thence over the lake in open boats, ten dollars per ton, thence by pack train to Kay-ooshe Flat,
twenty dollars per ton, making a total from Victoria to Kay-ooshe Flat of seventeen and three-quarter
cents per pound." Douglas hoped that the all-British route would guarantee the wealth of the Upper diggings for Victoria and the Colony of Vancouver Island, yet the transportation costs to be incurred deterred many American goldseekers from abandoning their favoured routes of communication. The Interior land routes that crossed the international divide might be long in distance and costly in time, but at least the miner shelled-out less money to get there and was required to unpack his freight on fewer occasions, such as crossing the Columbia and Okanogan Rivers. Such trails as these were immortalized in the later Klondike gold rush as a "poor man's" route.

Douglas ultimately sent out Chartres Brew, one of his officers, to the Okanagan to enforce customs law in an attempt to impede the flow of wealth being drained from New Caledonia via that path. The imposition of duties on the Okanagan Trail north of the 49th parallel was a similar move to Douglas' response which effectively shut-down the Whatcom Trail by stationing British gunboats in the south arm of the Fraser River. Palmer complained that in the two trips he made to Fraser River he was levied a total of $245 dollars for licenses, taxes, and customs duties. Palmer begrudgingly admitted that with colonial customs duties levied to such an extent, that the Columbia-Okanagan and Harrison-Lillooet Routes were "on an equal footing." It seemed that Douglas' policies for halting the flow of trade south of the border and away from Vancouver Island had finally taken effective shape.

Just as mining licenses and customs duties asserted British sovereignty, the limited enactment and prosecution of British law was increasingly felt throughout the interior reaches of New Caledonia. As they had in California, goldseekers engaged in gambling throughout the gold fields of Fraser River and this often led to violent confrontation between miners. "Two or three thousand dollars were known to change hands in a night," claimed Thomas Spence, the 49'er who travelled to Fraser River in May 1858. A.C Anderson recalled that "there were many doubtful characters among them:
gamblers, thieves, and swindlers, flocking around in the hope of making rich spoil among the industrious and unsuspicious." As we have seen, it is debatable whether miners were prepared to support British law and order during the initial year of the rush. Yet the very first criminal trial conducted on the Fraser -- centering on a gambling dispute -- is a case worth examining here as it was to coincide with the establishment of the Supreme Court of British Columbia. In this instance, colonial authorities were to orchestrate a showcase trial that asserted the power of British-made law over contrary notions of Californian "justice" that had taken root alongside the customs, rules and regulations of typical California camp governance.

Until the Crown Colony of British Columbia was established, 19 November 1858, Douglas' legal jurisdiction over New Caledonia was certainly ill-defined. Prior to the Oregon Boundary Settlement of 1846, which established the 49th parallel as the international divide, all homicide cases that occurred in Old Oregon were, in theory, to be referred to the courts of Canada West. This, of course, did not apply to instances of murder by Native peoples, the HBC usually having adopted a policy of immediate retribution in the territories under their jurisdiction. Yet as early as 1845, Old Oregon, the region extending from the present-day California-Oregon border to the Alaskan Panhandle, had seen so many American overlanders settle in the Columbia and Willamette Valleys, that a provisional government was created that superceded Canadian legal jurisdiction. The HBC, under John McLoughlin and James Douglas, ultimately supported the new government as a British-American compact between HBC interests and those of the transplanted American community. With HBC acceptance of local self-government, the application of joint British-American made law reached all the way into New Caledonia and Vancouver Island, a legal jurisdiction that appears not to have been superceded until the formation of the Colony of Vancouver Island in 1849, and the Crown Colony of British Columbia in 1858. Though the Oregon Boundary Settlement of 1846
later established a political and geographical divide, there appears to have been no subsequent legal apparatus to supplant that of the British-American coalition north of the border. By the time of the Fraser River gold rush, this gray area in legal jurisdiction meant that many cases of international homicide went largely untried, or at best, brought to justice in the Colony of Vancouver Island that technically had no jurisdiction over the affairs of New Caledonia. Here, then, is the legal context for the telling actions taken by colonial authorities during the first criminal trial to be conducted by Chief Justice Matthew Baillie Begbie, subsequent to his arrival in New Caledonia.

Apparently, in the fall of 1858, Matthias Niel, a goldseeker from Amador County, California, and seven other companions travelled down the Fraser River stopping off at a saloon established at the Forks of Fraser and Thompson Rivers, or present-day Lytton. All eight miners, including Niel, began drinking liquor in the afternoon and well into the evening. Gambling having commenced about the Rondo table, Niel and several others amused themselves with the excitement of bets being placed. One gambler, William Hartwell, offered up a $20 dollar piece to the table and soon objected to the amount of change he was due from the game keeper. With liquid courage, assembled miners began to offer opinions and take sides, Niel asserting that Hartwell owed the game keeper an additional dollar.

Hartwell was incensed by the accusation, calling Niel "a damned old liar." In the ensuing heated disagreement Hartwell grabbed a revolver and shot at Niel. The Californian did not waste any time in defending himself, and promptly pulled his own gun, Hartwell falling to the ground on the third shot. One of O.T. Travaillot’s appointed constables stepped into the affray. Niel was subsequently committed and evidence collected, only to be discharged moments later. As Historian Richard Maxwell Brown has shown, in Californian law, shooting a man in self-defence was accepted
practice, there being "No duty to retreat," which is to say that in British or eastern American law, one was normally required to seek every available means of escape before resorting to armed-defence. As a consequence, Niel had acted according to the established rules of Californian mining society. Hartwell had shot first and so Niel was free to continue his journey down the Fraser River, though upon reaching Fort Yale, British notions of justice committed him once more.

Niel was no longer in the safe confines of a typical California-like saloon, of course, but had entered the mining grounds of the lower Fraser were the British presence was increasingly being exerted. Near Sumas, Niel escaped from Charles Emerson, a deputy officer in the employ of the colonial service, only to be recaptured and transported to Victoria aboard the brig HMS Recovery. Assistant Crown Commissioner, Richard Hicks, anxiously reported to Douglas that "Efforts are being made by the Gamblers who infest the Country to obtain his discharge" and that "it will be proved that a more cool and deliberate murder seldom occurs." Hicks, a British subject, held very different views with regard to armed-defence than those of the Californian mining population, and rightly assumed that the Governor would "not uphold the right of any man to sacrifice the life of his fellow creature over a gaming and drinking table." Hicks was correct in his assumption. Matthias Niel was imprisoned in Victoria pending trial.

The problem for Douglas, of course, was three-fold: the Colony of Vancouver Island had no legal jurisdiction in New Caledonia, which was HBC territory. The practice of trying homicide cases in Canada was nominal at best, especially after the establishment of the Oregon Provisional Government. And, henceforth, though criminal cases were to be decided locally, the Mainland had no legal civil authority, no executive, no courts of law, and certainly no government beyond the handful of provisional appointments made by Douglas in advance of the crown colony being proclaimed. The murder of William Hartwell had occurred in the month prior to the founding of the
Crown Colony of British Columbia at Fort Langley, when James Douglas was sworn to the office of Governor by Matthew Baillie Begbie, who in turn was sworn by Douglas as the Chief Justice of British Columbia. Though Begbie assumed his legal authority over the Mainland as of that moment, Matthias Niel waited almost four more months before his trial commenced.

The time and place of the trial are worthy of note. The case of *Regina v. Niel* was set for mid-March 1859 which coincided with the resumption of mining in the spring, while Begbie choose to preside at Fort Langley, and later conduct sentencing at New Westminster, the new Mainland capital. As a consequence, both the prisoner and Chief Justice were transported from Victoria aboard the *Governor Douglas* to British Columbia. This was to be Begbie's first criminal trial and also a public showcase for British law and order. The Chief Justice, in concert with colonial authority, required a strong British presence and an equally severe penalty to be meted-out for all to see. Begbie pointed out "the different degrees of homicide as distinguished by the law, and laying down distinctly that every case of homicide, not being in the execution of the commands of lawful authority, nor purely accidental, nor being in the last desperate extremity of self-defence after every means and escape had been cut off, must be felonious [sic] and manslaughter, and that in every case homicide would be presumed to be wilful murder."

Begbie was cognizant of the fact that the jury selected was composed mainly of Americans, and as a precautionary measure, equipped himself with an American legal text to bolster his arguments. What he had not anticipated though, is that the jury was unable to arrive at a verdict since many believed that Niel, having shot in self-defence, was innocent. Had not William Hartwell fired the first shot, and thus Niel under no obligation to retreat but rather to act in self defence? This was the custom of California and for many jurors a legal principle they whole-heartedly accepted. Begbie, on the other hand, wanted the prisoner to be given a four year term for manslaughter, and obtain a
conviction to coincide with the rush of miners returning to their claims in 1859.

Never mind that the legal arguments made by Crown Solicitor George Pearkes had fallen on deaf ears, yet easily having topped Defence Attorney Henry Crease’s “able and feeling address” in which no witnesses were called. With the grand jury unable to come to a decision, Begbie took the unprecedented step of “going into the jury-room to urge the jurors to make up their minds.”\(^\text{110}\) As one legal historian has suggested, “The scene is an astonishing one: the newly-appointed English judge reading an American textbook to a roomful of American miners, admonishing them by emphasizing passages descriptive of the more heinous crimes and concomitant punishment which they might suffer if they did not behave themselves.”\(^\text{111}\)

Begbie and the executive authority of the new colony got what they wanted -- a “solid” conviction based on British law and a convenient example made of Matthias Niel -- the Californian having been held prisoner for close to five months, while colonial authorities waited for the formal inauguration of the Supreme Court of British Columbia and the renewed rush of goldseekers to witness the event. The court decision had made its mark south of the 49\(^{\text{th}}\) parallel, too, via the San Francisco \textit{Bulletin}.\(^\text{112}\) “Dear Children,” wrote a despondent Niel to his family in California, “After a long delay I have taken this opportunity to inform you of my troubles.”\(^\text{113}\) Niel proceeded to replay the events that had led to drinking, gambling and gun battle. Niel felt wronged when he told his children that, “I had no show for life or Justice, my witnesses had left the country and I had no witnesses in either of the trials. I want some of my friends in California to get up a petition and get my friends to sign it and send it to the Governor. [T]he jury and most of the court will sign and a large amount of people of British Columbia.”\(^\text{114}\) The citizens of Eldorado and Amador Counties were quick to action. Miners, medical doctors, merchants, engineers, attorneys, and even
a county court judge signed petitions requesting the pardon of Matthias Niel. Upwards of 500 names were collected.\textsuperscript{115} And just as the Californian had rightly foretold, the people of British Columbia also supported his appeal, the \textit{British Colonist} expressing the hope that the petition would be numerously-signed.\textsuperscript{116}

In all, over 100 signatures were collected in Fort Victoria from such notables as Dr. William Fraser Tolmie, Roderick Finlayson, and Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken, all of whom were intimately known to the Governor. But of greater consequence were the names of Henry Crease, still retained as Counsel for the prisoner, and more importantly, perhaps, that of George Pearkes, the late Crown Solicitor who had attempted to prosecute Niel in advance of the Chief Justice’s pro-active participation in the trial. The petition that Crease had prepared read in part: “That the ends of Justice have been sufficiently subserved by the example which was set on Frazer River in this \textit{the first trial} of the kind in B. Columbia of the fearless assertion of the Supremacy of English Law.”\textsuperscript{117} The petitioners concluded that during Niel’s time in jail he had shown exemplary behaviour even though having “undergone much hard labour not included in his sentence.” Yet the Chief Justice remained unrepentant. In a London \textit{Times} article, 15 March 1860, Begbie was reported to have said:

It is a legitimate subject of no small congratulations that any country as wild and almost pathless (certainly roadless) as this, with a population that is generally pointed at as the refuse of California -- with a magistracy weak in numbers, weaker in their great inexperience, from the judge downwards, everyone of them new to judicial and magisterial business -- with a police never 20 in number, and never more than four or five in one place -- the population all armed, and all engaged in the most exciting and demoralizing pursuit (namely, gold hunting) -- there should have been in the whole of the present (now last) year not one murder, not one attempted murder, not one duel, and but one assault with a deadly weapon at all in the whole of British Columbia. . . it has been thoroughly impressed on our whole population that the cowardly and ruffianly outrages perpetrated to so lamentable an extent elsewhere . . . will here consign the offenders without the hope of mercy to the gallows, or a life-long imprisonment.\textsuperscript{118}
Nevertheless, James Douglas’ unhesitating sternness weakened and ultimately deferred to increased public pressure. He overturned the sentence that the Chief Justice had extracted from a sympathetic jury.

More than the protection of life and property, the Niel Case had been used by colonial authorities for the fearless assertion of the Supremacy of English Law amongst a foreign mining population that had ignored the fledgling sovereignty of New Caledonia during the formative year of 1858. Douglas was undoubtedly pleased with Begbie’s initiative. He was, indeed, just “the man for a new country,” the Chief Justice’s “unorthodox behaviour” a welcome addition to further the assertion of British sovereignty in the region. Begbie would eventually gain the dubious reputation of the hanging judge.

The establishment of British law, customs, duties, licensing, and a new route of communication to the upper gold fields entirely through British territory, were all enacted prior to the founding of the new Mainland colony on 19 November 1858. After that date, full legal authority was extended to New Caledonia and Douglas’, prior enactments confirmed. The decision to inaugurate regular government west of the Rockies was transmitted to the Governor by Lytton, and the colony’s name -- British Columbia -- chosen personally by Queen Victoria. It was gold that made the Colony of British Columbia. Gold extracted by tens of thousands of foreign miners. And though British civil administration was formally established at the close of the year 1858, the precarious nature of British colonialism, managing the affairs of a foreign mining population in contest with indigenous peoples for land and resources, made for an uneasy governance based solely on compromise more than strict law and order. Further to this, Douglas was subsequently instructed that the arrival of the Royal Engineer Corp was for “scientific and practical purposes, and not solely
for military objects.” The land-based military force that Douglas had so longed for was not to be employed in keeping the goldseeking population in check. Lytton ordered that “as little display as possible should . . . be made of it,” otherwise, “its mere appearance, if prominently obtruded might serve to irritate rather than appease the mixed population which will be collected in British Columbia. It should be remembered that your real strength lies in the conviction of the Emmigrants [sic] that their interests are identical with those of the Government which should be carried on in harmony with, and by means of the people of the Country.”

This was imperial policy. Though the crown colony offered no responsible government, Lytton’s instructions, in the main, demanded that Douglas represent the views of foreign miners, views that were diametrically opposed to those of First Nations’ people. The trappings of colonialism were to give the appearance of British power, but in reality this authority was contingent upon the support of non-British subjects often at the expense of Native peoples. The practical result of this imperial hands-off approach to the expansion of mining concerns in the interior reaches of the Fraser and Thompson River systems meant that Whites and Natives would be brought to all-out warfare.
NOTES


5. Lytton, House of Commons, 8 July 1858. *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: Third Series* CLI, 1104.

6. Labouchere, 8 July 1858. Ibid., 1107-08.

7. Roebuck, 19 July 1858. Ibid., 1766.

8. Ibid., 1767.


10. Lytton, House of Commons, 19 July 1858. Ibid., 1767. Lytton, noting that the Governor of the Cape Colony had also been appointed the Governor of the Crown Colony of Kaffraria, used this as precedent for James Douglas holding two separate governorships for both Vancouver Island and British Columbia. Ibid., 1104.


12. Lytton, 8 July 1858. *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: Third Series* CLI, 1101-02. Carnarvon stated that the Douglas appointment was provisional. Carnarvon, House of Lords, 26 July 1858. Ibid., 2099.

13. Ibid., 1117.


16. Ibid.


19. Ibid.


26. Merivale and Carnarvon's notes appended to the above despatch that had been circulated in the Colonial Office. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. I have reviewed all colonial despatches for the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia (remembering that much of the early B.C. correspondence is found under V.I. prior to the establishment of the Mainland Colony) between the years 1858-1860, and have found no explicit instructions from the Colonial Office that Treaty-making be undertaken in New Caledonia, later British Columbia.

29. Douglas to Labouchere, 8 May 1858. No. 19. CO 60/1.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.


34. Ibid. Apparently ammunition and arms, except from the United Kingdom or other British possession, were prohibited by An Act to Regulate the Trade of British Possessions Abroad, 4 August 1845, 8 & 9 Victoria, c. 93. As noted by Herman Merivale, Permanent Undersecretary of State, Colonial Office.


36. Ibid., 20-22.

37. Ibid.

38. The India (No. 3) Bill, 8 July 1858. Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: Third Series CLI, 1084-95.


41. Ibid., 791.

42. Douglas’ arrangements with the U.S. Pacific Mail Steam Ship Company were never carried into effect, and in any event, subsequently vetoed by Lord Lytton. Douglas to Lytton, 30 September 1858. No. 41. CO 60/1.

43. Douglas to Stanley, 10 June 1858. No. 24. CO 60/1.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid. Douglas recommended that “the land be surveyed and sold at a fixed rate not to exceed twenty shillings an acre.”

46. Douglas stated “the country will be filled with lawless crowds, the public lands unlawfully occupied by squatters of every description, and the authority of Government will ultimately be set at naught... the case is urgent and calls for rapid and decisive measures in the outset, for in the course of a few months there may be one hundred thousand people in the country.” Ibid.


48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. “When Fraser’s River, now greatly swollen, subsides and the miners get fairly to work, I propose to appoint a Commissioner and Local Collectors for those dues, as soon as fit and proper persons to fill those offices can be found.” Douglas to Stanley, 19 June 1858. No. 28. CO 305/9.


52. “Proposed Regulations in granting Ditch Privileges,” GR 1770 Box 1:2. BC Archives.

53. Douglas to Stanley, 1 July 1858. No. 29. CO 60/1.

54. Ibid. 2221 licenses were sold at Victoria and an additional 304 licenses by Captain Prevost aboard HMS Satellite for a total of 2525 licenses. A sum of $12,625 was thus collected.

55. For a technical description of the rocker box or cradle, see John S. Hittel, *The Resources of California* (San Francisco: A. Roman and Company, 1866), 258-59.

56. Douglas to Stanley, 1 July 1858. No. 29. CO 60/1.

57. Ibid. Note: William Henry Bevis was also appointed a revenue officer for Fort Langley.
58. Douglas to Stanley, 26 July 1858. No. 31. CO 305/9. These recommendations and approvals were recorded by Arthur Blackwood to Herman Merivale and appended to Douglas’ Despatch.


60. Douglas to Stanley, 26 July 1858. No. 31. CO 305/9. Opinion of Herman Merivale, 15 September 1858. Also agreed to by Lord Carnarvon, 15 September 1858.


62. Request for Pardon for Inciting Sailors to Desert. 4 August 1858. CC. B1354/1343. BC Archives.


64. Lytton’s note appended to Douglas Despatch, 27 August 1858. No. 35. CO 60/1.

65. Baynes, having been criticized for his initial lack of prompt action, claimed that even more warships should be on hand during the renewed migrations of miners in 1859. The above quotations are taken from Barry Gough’s use of Admiralty records as found in Gough, “‘Turbulent Frontiers’ and British Expansion,” pp. 23-27.

66. James Douglas appointed three people to office in June 1858 prior to obtaining full authority from Britain. These were Richard Hicks, Revenue Officer and Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands at Yale; George Perrier, Justice of the Peace at Hill’s Bar; and O. T. Travaillot, Revenue Officer and Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands at Lytton. Douglas was officially appointed Governor of British Columbia, 2 September 1858, though he was not formally sworn to office until the inauguration of the Crown Colony at Fort Langley, 19 November 1858. In September he also appointed Robert T. Smith as Justice of the Peace and Revenue Officer for Fort Hope. See Howay, *The Early History of the Fraser River Mines*, x.

67. Douglas to Stanley, 26 July 1858. No. 31. CO 305/9. Lytton also urged caution that HBC employees could be considered for appointments in the colonial service, but not to give “any appearance of undue favour or clubiness [sic] to the Servants of that Company. . . . it should be understood it is still more desirable that some appointments should be made from England.”


69. "Address of His Excellency the Governor to the Inhabitants at Fort Yale," 12 September 1858. CC. BC Archives. The words Douglas chose are particularly curious considering his well-known disdain for Americans after the loss of southern Oregon. I think, therefore, they can only be interpreted in the above way.

70. Private, Douglas to Merivale, 29 October 1858, CO 60/1, p. 329. Public Record Office, London. Hereafter cited as PRO.


72. Private note penned on despatch received from Governor James Douglas. See Douglas to Lytton, 12 October 1858, No. 3, CO 60/1, PRO.
73. First reference to the Harrison-Lillooet route is found in Douglas to Stanley, 25 July 1858. No. 32. CO 305/9.

74. Dugald MacTavish to W.G. Smith, Fort Vancouver, 20 May 1858. Correspondence Out. Nos. 165-66. HBCA.

75. Douglas to Stanley, 19 August 1858. No. 34. CO 60/1.

76. Ibid.

77. For a record of one miner who worked on the Harrison-Lillooet Trail, see Otis Parsons (28 June to September 1858), Diary. E/B/P25. BC Archives.

78. Douglas to Stanley, 19 August 1858. No. 34. CO 60/1.

79. British & American interests were to jockey for the transport of miners on Seton Lake. See “Right of Ferry in Lake Seton,” Petition No. 119, 9 December 1858. CC. B-1354, F 1342. BC Archives.


81. Some have claimed that this undertaking can be considered the first “rail line” to have been built in Western Canada. Edwards, Short Portage To Lillooet, 126.

82. Douglas to Stanley, 19 August 1858. No. 34. CO 60/1.

83. Ibid. Lord Carnarvon’s response was appended to Douglas’ Despatch, 12 October 1858.

84. There are literally hundreds of petitions to be found in the colonial correspondence of British Columbia preserved at the BC Archives. The few pre-1858 examples are usually from British subjects prefaced as “Her Majesty’s Humble Memorialists,” while Californians, more often than not, began their petitions with, “We the People” or “Citizens” of Yale. A significant historical resource yet to be explored, petitions — with names appended — cover a range of subjects from pleas for protection from Native peoples to demands for roads, bridges, or gold escorts, etc.

85. To His Excellency Governor Douglas. Re. Mules required to assist in building the Harrison River Trail, 8 September 1858, Fort of Lake Lillooet. Petition No. 95. CC. BC Archives.

86. Ibid.


88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. Apparently, “The Harrison River & Lillooet Lake Company” had also sold their “London Patent Life Boat” to the corps for transportation purposes and never received full payment. See Petition forwarded by Robert Dextor, 29 December 1858. CC. BC Archives.


93. My thanks to Professor Dianne Newell for this information.

94. Specifically, Palmer outlined the following duties such that:

There is a duty of one dollar per head on livestock of every description; one dollar and fifty cents on each gallon of spirituous liquors; twelve cents per pound upon tobacco; salt is free, all other merchandise or produce bears a duty of ten percent on the value at the port of entry. .

In addition to these duties as above, the deputy collector of customs, stationed at Fort Thompson, or Cam-a-loops, was last year instructed to collect, and did collect from parties coming that route, an amount, in addition to the regular duties, sufficient to defray the expenses incident to such service, including his salary. This mode of assessment gave good grounds to apprehend extortion, for there being no specific amounts designated, and the agent being ignorant of the number of animals, or the amount of value of merchandise likely to come that way, parties were compelled to submit to whatever sum, in the shape of such additional duties or tax, the avarice or cupidity of the agent might see fit to demand. Ibid.

95. Palmer noted that “In the collection of these duties and taxes, no discrimination is made between British subjects and American citizens, or in favour of English manufactures over American, or other foreign goods, the collection of revenue seems to be the only object in view.” Ibid.


100. The two senior fur-trade officials wrote:

viewing the organization as a compact of certain parties, British and American subjects residing in Oregon, to afford each other the protection in person and property, to maintain the peace of the community, and prevent the commission of crime -- a protection which all parties in this country feel they particularly stand in need of, as neither the British or American governments appear at liberty to extend the jurisdiction of their laws to this part of America;

and moreover, seeing that this compact does not interfere with our duties and allegiance to our respective governments, not with any rights of trade now enjoyed by the Hudson’s Bay
Company, consent to become parties to the articles of the compact, provided we are called upon only to pay taxes on our sale to settlers.

McLoughlin was asked by one of the framers of the Provisional Government whether “the gentlemen belonging to the company over which you preside will become parties to the articles of the compact, by the payment of taxes and in other respects complying with the laws of the Provisional Government?” See H.H. Bancroft, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Volume XXIX, History of Oregon, Vol. 1, 1834-1848 (San Francisco: The History Company, 1886), 495. My thanks to Alan Grove for the above. Clearly, the HBC’s involvement in the Provisional Government has not been sufficiently examined by academics. Alan Grove, Ch. 4, “The Oregon Provisional Government” in “Trespassers Upon the Soil,” M.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of Victoria. Forthcoming.


102. Thomas Cantrell’s Saloon apparently featured Monte and Rhondo tables, billiards, and a bar.

103. The above story is based on “Niel’s Case,” 26 October 1858, from notes taken by Henry Pering Pelley Crease. Legal Papers (1858-1862). Add. Mss. 54. Box 1-2. BC Archives.

104. Ibid.


106. Richard Hicks to Douglas, Fort Yale, 12 November 1858. CC. BC Archives.

107. Ibid.


111. Ibid.


113. Matthias Niel to Children in Amador County, California, 17 March 1859. CC. BC Archives. Note: The court reports refer to Niel, while many newspapers list Neil, while the accused signed his letter Matthias Nail. Nevertheless, I have chosen to use the most prevalent spelling of Niel, consistent with the court records and the notes of his own lawyer.

114. Ibid.
115. “To the Honourable James Douglas, Governor of British Columbia and Vancouver’s Island.” Six separate petitions from California bearing some 500 names. CC. BC Archives.


117. The petition also read, “That after patient deliberation of hours, after the trial was over, and through the greater part of the night -- the Jurors came more than once to the Court stating they could not agree upon a verdict -- Many of them being convinced that the homicide was justifiable & done in self-defence.” See “To His Excellency James Douglas... The humble Petition of the undersigned Inhabitants of Victoria, Vancouver Island.” Petition from over 100 subjects. CC. BC Archives.


120. Lytton to Douglas, 31 July 1858. CO 410/1.

121. Ibid.
... we ware [sic] on our march by sunrise. This day we made pease [sic] with 4 different Chiefs and camped within seven miles of the Thompson River. Here we was met by Spintlum. The war chief of all the tribes for some distance up & down Frazer [sic] River... Here I proceded [sic] at once to hold our grand counsil which consisted of Eleven Chiefs and a very large number of other indians that had gathered from above and below. We stated to them that this time we came for pease, but if we had to come againe, that we would not come by hundreds, but by thousands and drive them from the river forever. They ware much supprised [sic] and frightened to see so many men with guns & revolvers. For marching along in single file they looked to be three times the number their [sic] was. ... I feel well satisfied that the Treaty was the best that could be made under the circumstances, and think it will be held sacred by the Indians.

-- H.M. Snyder, Captain of the Pike Guards (1858)

In 1858 the Native lands along the southern section of the Fraser River corridor below the 51st parallel were, in effect, invaded by large companies of foreign miners organised into armies of conquest that had effectively triggered Indian Wars in Washington and Oregon, and by extension the Fraser River War of British Columbia. Much of the cultural mentality that informed the genocidal attitudes of the California mining frontier was baggage carried north with the requisite pick, pan and shovel. In contrast, Indian-White interaction in the fur trade was comparatively peaceful, and therefore, had not prepared the Indian nations of New Caledonia for outright war. As stated previously, for many U.S. Western goldseekers, fighting Indians and finding gold became conflated. Terms like 'Redskins,' 'Injuns,' or 'Diggers,' labels commonly used in White Californian parlance,
were immediately applied to Native peoples in New Caledonia, or any Native Nation that resisted the advance of the Californian mining frontier. Mining, the single greatest disruptor of Native lands in the American West, created a frontier defined and segregated by race, a frontier that did not recognize the British-American border and which effectively shaped the Fraser River landscape in its own image. And it was this sudden invasion that broke the back of Indian control over access and use of their territories and resources, shaped this Aboriginal landscape into a series of foreign ethnically-defined mining enclaves, and precipitated the formation of Indian reserves even before the British proclaimed the Crown Colony of British Columbia in the fall of 1858.

This chapter, in placing the Fraser River gold rush of 1858 into a larger transboundary perspective of the Pacific Slope, seeks to establish the predominant influence of the American West on Aboriginal peoples in the Fraser River corridor prior to the full exertion of British colonial power. It will also maintain that California mining culture, in transcending the 49th parallel into the British and fur trade worlds and Native territories of New Caledonia, ultimately appropriated ‘Indian country’ during this signal event. During the transformative year of 1858, there was literally no parallel marked out on the ground to separate British Columbia from Washington -- the 49th parallel was of little consequence at this time as many Americans hoped that the U.S. Boundary Commission would establish the gold fields south of the international divide. Until such time as the boundary was physically located and diplomatically confirmed, many American goldseekers organised and operated in the goldfields to the point of asserting near-sovereign control. And within Canadian historiography, too, it is usually assumed that there is no parallel in Canada to the kinds of Native-White violence that occurred in the American mining West. This chapter explores a most notable and neglected exception.
In many ways, the Fraser River gold rush was history repeating itself. As we have seen, the invasion of Aboriginal lands in the Americas by transplanted Europeans occurred continuously from 1492 to the present. Of course, Aboriginal resistance to such invasions is not unique to the Americas as one may look to just about any gold rush activity in the world and discover similar examples of Native-White conflict having occurred over contests for limited lands and resources. Within the Pacific Northwest, the ‘Indian Wars’ of Washington and Oregon provide ample evidence of Native resistance to White encroachment and social control. The Fort Colvile gold rush of 1855, as a single example, provided British colonial administrators invaluable evidence of the kind of racism and racial war that quickly penetrated the new British-American divide. This rush was a prophetic warning of things to come to the Fraser gold fields just three years later. Goldseekers in Washington Territory, in pushing through the Native lands of the Yakima, set off a series of conflicts supposedly unique to history south of the international border. Jonathan Kerns recorded the disregard with which his company of miners treated a Native elder encountered on the trail to the new diggings. Kerns wrote that the "old Chief told us his men would mim-loose us if we went on, but we told him to come on if he wanted all of his tillicums killed and we passed on." Kerns then recorded two weeks later their surprise that war had been declared on them despite the Chief's forewarning. Their mining prospects having declined "faster than lightning ever went down a stump," these miners next made as their object "to thrash the red devils a little." In military-like fashion they proceeded back to Portland, taking up their line of march along the Palouse River in the territory of the Spokane. Once again, Kerns felt surprised that “the Indians would not let them over and commenced trying to lead off some of their horses, but the men drew their revolvers and guns and give [sic] them to understand that they would kill some of them... They knew we would soon clean them out if they commenced."
California, Oregon, and Washington were not the only American states aflame with instances of extreme violence being levelled against Indian peoples. Billy Ballou, a well-known pioneer express man in both California and British Columbia, and veteran of the Mexican-American War, engaged in similar conflict near the forks of the Owyhee River in Idaho. Ballou recalled, "We had hand grenades, & one thing and another . . . We killed everything that looked like an Indian, dog, or anything else; young ones, by George -- shot them all. Col. Moore said 'kill them all, little as well as big; knits make lice.'" Similar accounts in letters, diaries, government records, and newspapers are replete with instances of White aggression toward the indigenous peoples of the American Pacific Northwest. And just as the Native Indian world was not defined by the Oregon Boundary Settlement of 1846, neither was armed conflict that inevitably marched north.

By direct land communication with the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, large numbers of goldseekers, particularly from the Pacific Northwest and Northern California, collected into larger groupings for mutual protection and armed incursion of Eastern Washington and British Columbia. If miners starting out consisted only of five or ten men they simply waited at points along the Hudson's Bay Company brigade trail for further goldseekers to augment their forces. As company membership increased significantly -- perhaps fifty, one hundred, or even exceeding two hundred and fifty in number -- miners organised themselves in the same manner that settler-soldier armies had formed in Washington and Oregon in the Indian Wars prior to 1858. Instilled with popular notions of American frontier democracy and provisional camp government, miners elected their leaders to military office and ordinary mining companies more closely resembled armies of invasion.

With the defeat of Lieutenant Colonel E.J. Steptoe and the U.S. Army by twelve hundred of the Spokane, Palouse, Coeur d'Alene, Yakima, and other Indian tribes during May 1858, much of
Eastern Washington was considered off-limits to civilians. Companies of goldseekers, however, held a very different view. Although Steptoe "flying before the Indians" demanded that miners "not go beyond where the Government could give them protection. This they would not consent to do, but pushed on." Perhaps the best known company to have infiltrated the lands of Eastern Washington, Fraser River bound, were those that mustered at Oregon City under the immediate command of David McLoughlin. Richard Willoughby, an Indian fighter from Missouri and later a 'Texas Cowboy' in the punitive raids into Mexico, recalled the military-like precision with which the McLoughlin Party proceeded in their campaign against the wishes of Lt. Col. Steptoe:

The miners fully realized the dangerous undertaking it was to force their passage through numerous warlike Indians and therefore remained for some time at Walla Walla [Washington] awaiting the arrival of other parties so as to organize a larger body for mutual protection. They then organized their party into different companies, commencing with the first letter of the alphabet, etc. In the march they generally took their position in advance according to the letter. If 'A' was at the head to-day, they would be in the rear to-morrow, and so on throughout the whole party. They elected a Captain whose supreme command and decision in all matters was final. . . . Probably there was never a party on the Pacific Coast better qualified for Indian warfare then this, the majority of the men having had long years of experience in this venturesome life and who had served the United States Government in the war with Mexico.

Judge Robert Frost of Olympia, Washington, emphasizing that it was "as fresh to me as if it occurred only last year" wrote of his membership in the McLoughlin company and the skirmishes that happened en route to Fraser, including the significant ambush of their party by Chief Tenasket of the Okanagan Indians at what was later to become known as McLoughlin's Canyon. Proceeding along the east side of the Okanogan River, utilising the old Hudson's Bay Company Brigade trail, the company departed from the natural course of the river due to a large bluff that compelled them to enter the "bloody canyon." Frost maintained that "the object of the Indians was to get us all in the Canyon, & had they succeeded, very few if any, would have gotten out alive." As it was, six men
were killed and the party of about 150 miners were driven back and forced to cross the Okanogan before continuing north. By the time the party crossed the 49th parallel, further skirmishes occurred, but this largely American force finally concluded a peace agreement at present-day Penticton, B.C. And as we have seen, John Callbreath, a New Yorker who had sailed around Cape Horn to San Francisco in 1849, also took this overland route to Fraser in 1858. Following a similar procedure, his small company of five men waited on the trail to augment their numbers, elect a captain, "and organise for a hostile country." Their party of two hundred and fifty miners, and five hundred mules and horses, marched up the Columbia River, through the Grand Coulee, and ultimately into McLoughlin's Canyon before crossing the border towards Fort Kamloops. By this time, Eastern Washington was aflame with Native-White violence as U.S. Army troops sought retribution for Steptoe's defeat. Once the company crossed the international boundary, Callbreath wrote, "We now considered ourselves past the most dreaded Indian country." Yet other companies record that conflict continued on the British side of the line.

H.F. Reinhart, a young German emigrant who grew up in New York and Illinois, travelled in 1851 to California in search of gold. In 1858, he joined Major Mortimer Robertson's party of about two hundred and fifty miners preparing at The Dalles for Fraser River. Reinhart wrote that Robertson "said if he could make up a company of 300 men with plenty of arms, ammunition, horses and mules and provisions, he would take us to Fraser River if we had to fight the Indians every day." Major Robertson's prognostication was not far off the mark. The "Yakima Expedition" to the northern mines organized into companies 'A' through 'F' each with its own captain, 1st and 2nd lieutenants, while Robertson as commander had an adjutant and surgeon as staff officers. Of the Indian people, "most of my men seem eager for a fight with them," claimed Robertson, "and I am disposed to think their desire will be gratified before one week has elapsed." Open hostility and
general skirmishes with Native peoples are recorded throughout Reinhart's extensive recounting of the trip north: "The old Californian miners and Indian-fighters were the worst," Reinhart lamented, as they believed "they could travel in small parties and clean out all the Indians in the land...".\(^{31}\)

Once inside British territory, tensions were certainly no better. At Okanagan Lake these goldseekers helped themselves to large stores of nuts and berries cached in a local Indian village. After helping themselves to all they wanted, "the balance they just emptied into the lake, destroying them so that the Indians should not have them for provisions for winter."\(^{32}\) Having lost some members of their company to Native-White aggression south of the border, the advance party decided to make a further and more horrific show of force. While the main body of miners broke camp and continued north, 25 members of the advance guard held back, concealed within a gulch, and waited for members of the Okanagan Nation to arrive. "As soon as the Indians saw the whites," stated Reinhart, "they were so frightened that some turned back and ran towards their boat, some fell down on their knees and begged for [them] not to shoot, as they had no arms at all, and they threw up their hands and arms to show that they had nothing. But the whites all commenced to fire and shoot at them, and ran out to the lake after those getting in their canoes, and kept on shooting till the few that got in the [canoes] got out of reach of the guns and rifles. ... It was a brutal affair, but the perpetrators of the outrage thought they were heroes, and were victors in some well-fought battle."\(^{33}\)

The Okanagan sought revenge for the unwarranted killings and followed the mining party to Kamloops.\(^{34}\) Reinhart believed that they also attempted to enlist the Nlaka'pamux or Thompson River Indians "to help them kill us all."\(^{35}\) William Nixon, writing to his father from Victoria, 14 July 1858, stated "I have heard a great many reports here in relation to the Indians killing off the white men, who are going overland by way of the Dalles. There was one party of seventy-five who got within a few days travel of the Thompson river, and the Indians made an attack on them and chased them four
days." George Wesley Beam, formerly Captain of the Northern Rangers, Washington Territorial Volunteers, and participant in the Indian Wars of 1856, heard rumours of these conflicts and the eventual response made by some of his fellow countrymen. Writing from Puget Sound Bar on Fraser River, Beam recorded amongst the daily entries of his diary, "The Oregonians have got to Thompson River and they clear out the Indians where ever the[y] come across them." And to his friend Winfield Scott Ebey, brother of the well-known customs collector, he further elaborated: "Indian report says that they kill all siwashes that they see."

While overland parties effectively extended Native-White violence from Washington and Oregon into British Territory, maritime routes of communication through Victoria, Port Townsend, and Bellingham Bay expanded aggression even more directly to the Fraser itself. Due to the multiplicity of sea and land-based routes taken by goldseekers, Indian-White conflict was to become widespread. First Nations that inhabited the Fraser gold fields were, from the very beginning, a river-oriented people whose culture, trade, transportation and food -- particularly the salmon -- all depended on the Fraser River itself. Once British fur traders arrived they too saw the critical importance of the Fraser for their own transportation needs and the abundant salmon resource which became the HBC’s first non-fur export from New Caledonia. And so, with miners arriving en masse from every conceivable angle, gold mining and salmon fishing were to become incompatible. Conflict on the Fraser River was inevitable once gold (and the environmental consequences of placer mining) began to rival the salmon (fishing and processing) on these same contested grounds.

As overland companies reached Kamloops they heard their first direct news of the diggings from goldseekers who had travelled up the River from Puget Sound and the Gulf of Georgia. Not only did they receive credible, first-hand accounts of the ‘New Eldorado,’ but also that Indians in the
Fraser Canyon were resisting White encroachment. Richard Willoughby "learned from them of the Indian War on the Fraser River which had taken place at the same time as they had their troubles on the Columbia." Likewise, Reinhart in reaching The Fountain near Lillooet (and later at Boston Bar), recorded: "There had been an Indian War lower down Fraser River and the Indians had cut off the heads of many miners, 'Bostons,' or Americans, until ... the miners just quit work and organized into companies and went out to fight and kill all the Indians they could find, and found several camps of them, and just killed everything, men, women and children, so that the Indians were at last very glad to make terms of peace and promise not to molest miners any more." And apparently, White goldseekers were not the only ones to receive news of these conflicts north of the border as the Yreka Union reported that Native lines of communication were also carrying word of these events.

The northern California newspaper gave great credence to the early Native reports of war from so far away. "[W]e learn that To-lo, Indian Chief of the Scott Valley tribe, arrived in Yreka on 1st September from the Modoc country, with the intelligence -- received from the De Shutes -- that a fight had taken place somewhere in the vicinity of Thompson river, between the Indians and whites, in which a large number of the former were killed," recorded the newspaper. "Tolo did not learn whether the whites were regulars or volunteers, but said the Indians were surrounded and fired upon from all sides. Very few of the whites if any were killed. We place considerable reliance upon the information thus received from To-lo, as he brought in the same manner intelligence of Col. Steptoe's defeat several days in advance of information gained of the occurrence from any other source. We will no doubt shortly hear of the fight." The distant sounds of conflict that Chief To-lo heard were that of the Fraser River War; conflict intimately tied to events in the Canadian and American Okanagan and the wider Indian Wars of Washington and Oregon.
The San Francisco Bulletin, in one of its many articles on the Native population of the northern 'British possessions,' noted that Indian runners from Washington Territory were in direct communication with Natives along the Fraser in an attempt to warn them of what was happening in their lands and to encourage them to drive the miners out. The regular correspondent for the paper attributed this information directly to James Douglas, Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island, who had met with a deputation of miners which he received "very coolly, and informed them... that the Americans in arming themselves and going out against the Indians were guilty of treason." The field reporter further recorded Douglas' warnings such that, "the Indians of Washington Territory have sent couriers all through the Fraser river territory, calling on the Indians to unite and drive out the whites. In consequence, the Indians heretofore hunting for the Hudson's Bay Company have applied for early and increased supplies of ammunition, which was refused them, on account of the known object for which the request was made." Marie Brent, the great granddaughter of N'kwala, Chief of the Okanagan during the gold excitement, recalled the early attempts to unite against their common foe. "During the Fraser River trouble between the Thompsons [Nlaka'pamux] and the whites in 1858 and 1859," she stated, "he advocated peace, although preparing for war had the affair not been settled. The Thompsons were against the miners and settlers. Although he was begged by the Spokanes and Thompsons to join them in war against the whites, he refused to allow his people to join them."

Natives in the Fraser and Thompson River corridors had considerable justification for organising resistance to the incursion of Whites as they entered via boats, canoes, steamers, or any suitable water craft that might carry them. At the very beginning of the gold rush, Californians made their presence known by their treatment of the Stó:lō peoples similar to earlier practices in the Sierra Nevada. In an editorial written by Thomas King of the San Francisco Bulletin, 20 May 1858, these...
similar exterminationist practices were condemned "as one likely to produce serious disturbances."
The editor related an early incident on the lower Fraser where a Californian miner had shot an Indian
for not offering use of his canoe at what he considered a fair rate of exchange. The editor's
summation was perhaps prophetic when he advised accordingly: "One or two such acts of brutality
on the part of reckless and abandoned white men, will raise such a burning hatred and spirit of
revenge in the breast of the Indians, as will cause indiscriminate massacre of hundreds of innocent
whites . . .". 52

The coincidence of Native-White conflict on both sides of the 49th parallel became almost
self-fulfilling as American newspapers elevated the military-like prowess of the Salishan peoples and
warned goldseekers that battle was imminent. Of the Fraser River Native peoples, in particular, the
Bulletin had issued its harsh warning that "Powerful tribes of Indians own that country and will be
jealous of its despoliation. They are unlike the Diggers of California, in comparison being athletes --
robust, hardy, brave and warlike, well armed, and by no means a common foe. Man to man, in more
than one conflict hereafter, Americans will find them hard to whip. It is reasonable to calculate that
in these battles -- which will inevitably come -- and by the usual casualties of an adventure to such
a rugged country, death will overtake at least one out of every five persons who go there during the
first twelve months." 53 With the defeat of Lieutenant-Colonel Steptoe it was imagined that "The
hostile feeling against our people will probably extend to the Indians in the British possessions, who,
by all accounts, are opposed to 'los Yankees' working in the Fraser River mines." 54 Indeed, Governor
Douglas believed that it would require "the nicest tact to avoid a disastrous Indian War." 55 Franklin
Matthias, just one of many goldseekers who was halted from proceeding up the Fraser, made the
standard response of waiting until their numbers increased significantly "when we will move up above
the Falls and do just about as we please without regard to the Indians . . . . but there will be $h_{ll}$ to
pay after a while. By early June, during the height of the rush north, the editor of the *Bulletin* advised that miners must "prepare for a war with the savages. They will have to work with a shovel in one hand and a rifle in the other."

Until significant numbers of Euro-Americans claimed the banks of the Fraser, a sort of unspoken *detente* existed between Whites and Natives. Lucius Edelblute, an experienced gold miner and one who had been involved in conflict with Native peoples in California and near Pyramid Lake, Nevada, took a cautionary approach in his travels along Thompson River. Travelling with a small group of miners from Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Virginia and Illinois, Edelblute and friends masqueraded as British subjects to escape death. Just as they were about to help themselves to some local salmon, a large contingent of Natives surrounded them and demanded that the fish be put back in the river. With the use of a Chinook jargon dictionary, these men interpreted Native demands such that: "the cheaf sed them fish was thar liven and we had no rite to take them and for us to pout them back. we dun so at once. the indien ast us if we was boston men or not. we told him that we was king gorge men and we was sent out to see thare cuntry and we wodent du any harm . . . the brit amarican indins dident like the amaricans a toll . . ." Through their alliances with the HBC, Salishan peoples had grown accustomed to receiving payment for all resources traded in their country. They were also concerned about the damage that placer mining would have on their fishery. And of equal consequence was the fact that they were the controlling agents in the collection of gold prior to the 1858 rush. As noted in the previous chapter, Governor Douglas had warned that the Nlaka'pamux were actively protecting their lucrative gold trade having "taken the high-handed, though probably not unwise course, of expelling all parties of gold diggers . . . who had forced an entrance into their country.” Douglas, though viewing events from the Colony of Vancouver Island, nevertheless,
predicted "that serious affrays may take place between the natives and the motley adventurers who . . . may probably attempt to over power the opposition of the natives by force of arms. . .".\textsuperscript{61}

By April 1858, Douglas warned London again that Natives, particularly the Nlaka'pamux, "expressed a determination to reserve the gold for their own benefit" and that "affrays and collisions with the whites will surely follow the accession of numbers."\textsuperscript{62} As tensions between Natives and non-Natives increased over the limited resources and lands of the Fraser, H.M. Snyder, a regular correspondent to the San Francisco \textit{Bulletin}, was one of the first to report the outbreak of violence near the Big Canyon. "We have just been attacked by a party of Indians," announced Snyder. "Their chief led them. They all come with their guns and knives in their hands, and wished us to leave immediately. But as soon as we got our pistols and knives ready, they began to quiet down. . . .The band have driven every miner from this bar who attempted to locate on it."\textsuperscript{63} While miners, like Snyder, nevertheless continued to remain on the gold-producing bars of the Fraser in opposition to mounting Native pressure, elsewhere First Nations were in all out war against the combined militaries of the U.S. Army and miners' militias that sought to ram-rod a feasible route to the Fraser Mines through the Pacific Coast interior.

As many as one thousand well-armed miners were reported waiting at the Dalles for an appropriate moment to enter into the lands of Eastern Washington, Fraser River bound.\textsuperscript{64} At the same time, it was also reported that First Nations from Northern California were heading to the Columbia River in support of First Nations in Washington Territory who opposed the trespass of Fraser River goldseekers. "[T]he Indians in the neighborhood of Yreka, Pitt river, and other localities in that direction," claimed the \textit{Pioneer & Democrat}, "have all left for the Columbia river, by way of Klamath lake, east of the Cascades, for the purpose of joining with the Yakimas, to prevent miners from passing through the Indian country, towards the northern gold region by way of the Columbia
It was further reported in the *Portland Standard* that an expressman by the name of Tom Hughes was sent to Thompson River to provide an advance field reconnaissance for miners. Travelling without difficulty to the Okanagan, Hughes was subsequently met by a party of Natives who ordered him to return. "[H]e was told he would not be allowed to go to Thompson river. He proceeded on to Colville and when on the opposite bank of the Columbia, not more than a mile and a half from the fort, the Indians stripped him of his arms, and took from him his horses and every article of value he had about his person, and threatened to kill him. . . .[Hughes] reports all the tribes north as hostile to the advance of U.S. troops into their country, and says that they threaten to fight them as soon as they cross the Snake river, and if they get routed by the troops, then they will burn the grass and flee to the mountains, and fight the troops there if pursued, until the last man of them is killed."66

One must necessarily question many of these press reports. Certainly, there is evidence that newspaper journalists had fuelled or even created 'Indian Wars' at varying times and in differing regions of the American West.67 The motives associated with inventing such scares were numerous and most often contrived for personal gain. The threat of war might advance the political career of a governor while merchants could profit by supplying the needs of an enlarged military presence. Likewise, rumours of war with Native peoples could promote newspaper circulation, stall immigration, or at the very least, give volunteer militias the excuse to prospect for gold in Indian-controlled lands. Nevertheless, comparable rumours associated with the Fraser River gold rush appear to have been resolved quickly while the motives for starting them seem less clear. Certainly, the extension of the California mining frontier did not operate in a vacuum north of the 49th parallel. The presence of the HBC and Royal Navy, in addition to the deployment of British civil authority, though marginal, provided a perspective on Native-White violence not found in the American West,
a point of view which tended to confirm or deny the reports of Native-White violence in prompt fashion. With the possible exception of fuelling increased newspaper circulation or checking the tide of emigration from California, reports of Native-White violence, in this instance, seem largely confirmed by non-newspaper sources.

By mid-August, American Brigadier General N.S. Clarke, in command of the Department of the Pacific, ordered Colonel Wright and his men to the region to counter the Native threat. Meanwhile, John Owen, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Colville, claimed that First Nations had obtained “all the powder and ball they want from the Hudson’s Bay Company at their new post called Fort 49 [Fort Sheppard] . . . in the British possessions.” Within the American consciousness there was always the suspicion that the HBC was in quiet agreement with the opposition of Indian nations. As First Nations prepared to battle once more with the American military in Washington Territory, Natives along Fraser River also began to make more concerted efforts to thwart any further entrance of White miners into their country. The Nlaka’pamux, aware of the extreme events transpiring against the First Nations south of the border, began to mount greater and greater opposition to the presence of White goldseekers in protection of their land and resources. Speaking of miners’ camps beyond the Forks of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, the special correspondent for the *Bulletin* offered a lengthy synopsis of reasons for such Native opposition.

Indians, of whom there were great numbers, would walk into tents and with their paint on, muskets cocked, take all that they desired. One party of Indians came down to French Bar, four miles above the Forks, and on approaching him, one of them demanded tobacco ‘quick!’ -- and in the same manner the whole party of miners were treated. The Indians told him that the whites were afraid of them, and they were going to kill them all in a short time. They said the ‘Bostons’ and their steamboats had stopped the Salmon, and their were going to make friends with the Indians below at Fort Yale, and then make war with the whites. In corroboration of this, I will mention, that I know, that on the day yesterday, there was a large Indian council at
Spuzzen [Spuzzum], 12 miles above here, at which there were a number of 'Fork' Indians, who have hitherto been at enmity with the Indians down here, and something in relation to the whites was concocted amongst them. Indians have been noticed removing their provisions away from fishing stations above here. . . On last Monday, 9th August, two Frenchmen, who were on their way up from here, while walking along the trail, were fired at, and both shot. One died instantly; the other received the ball through his hand, which at the time was across his breast, and it (the ball) went clear through his body. . . . the Indians have evinced a growing disposition to provoke a collision with the whites. 71

The Victoria Gazette concurred with its own report that “some two thousand Indians fifteen miles above Fort Yale are assembled, evidently for no friendly purpose.” 72 The deaths of two French miners at the height of foreign occupation of the Fraser River corridor was akin to a match lighting the tinder-dry lands of the river corridors. 73 A fuse was thus lit, and the canyons set ablaze. With non-Native goldseekers numbering in the tens of thousands, punitive action was taken by companies of White miners who organised for the express purpose of making war with the Aboriginal peoples along Fraser and Thompson Rivers.

The tentative detente was shattered as First Nations began to expel miners from their territories in advance of the concerted military-like campaign of goldseekers to clear the path of resistance through the Fraser River corridor. One such case was that of Edward Stout. The 49' er from Eldorado County, California, had left San Francisco in 1858 with a party of twenty-six miners headed for Fraser River. After prospecting at Fort Yale Bar, Emory Bar, and New York Bar for about two weeks, they decided to climb the river in search of the source of the fine flour gold that was found throughout the bars and bench lands of the lower Fraser. Travelling over the Douglas Portage that skirted around the lower canyon to Spuzzum, Stout’s party of miners took A.C. Anderson’s 1848 Brigade Trail that ascended the mountains of the Big Canyon to Boston Bar. They next hiked further north to the Forks of the Thompson and Fraser Rivers, before testing the auriferous
grounds near the confluence of the Nicomen and Thompson Rivers, the approximate location where Governor James Douglas had suggested that gold was first discovered by a Nlaka’pamux Native. They set up their base-camp in mid-June at Thompson’s Siding, near the spectacular Nicoamen Falls where, apparently, a Nlaka’pamux prophet is said to have foresaw the coming of the Whiteman. Though the party had located gold in paying quantities, the Thompson was in flood, thus submerging the most profitable mining areas. Like every other goldseeker along the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, they would have to wait patiently for water levels to recede as hot summer temperatures continued to thaw the surrounding snow-crested mountains above.

While waiting, Stout recollected, a Native women approached their camp one morning with the alarming news that a number of White miners had been “massacred” farther down the river “and warned us to get out of the country as they were coming after us.” The goldseekers quickly gathered their provisions and headed back down the Thompson River towards China Bar. “We had to fight our way through and we burned every rancherie and every salmon box that we could get a hold off,” claimed Stout. “They shot at us when ever they got a chance and we did the same. They did their best to cut us off and we had a very hard trip as we had to keep clear of the river as much as possible. I was shot in the arm and breast and a number of our men were killed and wounded. On the way down we came across an Indian who stood on a rock and waved defiance at us. He was shot by one of our men. . . . I do not know just how many white men were killed during these fights, but there were thirty six at least. The first notice which came of the trouble was one morning when nine dead bodies drifted down the river past Yale. The heads were severed and the bodies horribly mutilated.”

The truce among Natives and Whites was further shattered as miners’ militias practised a scorched-earth policy typical of the kind of exterminationist campaigns waged against Natives south
of the international border. As Historian Richard Maxwell Brown succinctly expressed, "The vigilante tradition, in the classic sense, refers to organized, extralegal movements, the members of which take the law into their own hands." American miners, by practising Lynch Law, vigilantism, and forming militia's north of the border, had, in this instance, not only taken the law into their own hands, but had done so in a foreign land. As Jason Allard, son of Chief Trader Ovid Allard in charge of Fort Yale at the time, put it: "Agitations were started to clean up the Indians . . . The irregular troops started for vengeance, in military formation, the stars and stripes at their head." As miners evacuated the Upper River country and returned to Yale for safety, the Victoria Gazette reported the first in a series of armed companies that were bent on making war. Captain Charles Rouse, an old

Figure 34. Sketch Map of Spuzzum showing Native village and garden sites. Drawn and surveyed by Turnbull, Royal Engineers, 1861. Surveyor-General's Vault. Victoria.
Texas Ranger, with the assistance of his volunteer soldiers "route the Indians [near Spuzzum], who took refuge in the mountains; they then burnt three of their rancheries, destroying all of their provisions, which consisted of salmon and dried berries. The miners found quite a number of packages of powder and lead in the different camps. There have been, in all, five of their rancheries burnt; three above the Big Canon, and two below." 80 Rouse returned to Yale, just twelve miles below the scene of action, "having in custody an Indian Chief [Kowpelst81]. . . and the crowd were for lynching the Indian first and inquiring what he had done afterward." 82 While White miners claimed that they had killed nine Natives including a Chief during the conflict, it was later confirmed "from the Indians themselves" that in fact thirty-one Natives and an additional five Chiefs had been massacred. 83 The general excitement among White miners grew to crisis level as all-out war appeared to be imminent. 84 Tom Todd, writing from Fort Yale, 18 August 1858, to his friend Charlie Dewey of Placer County, California, expressed the shared fear of all.

It was reported yesterday that the Indians was coming down in thousands from Fraser & Thompson, they did come down as far as the Big Canon killing all they met so consequently we had to bury our provisions and come to this place. There now is not one white man above the Big Canon which is 20 miles above this place, there was about 100 men left here this morning armed & equipped [sic] to fight the Indians, also a host left yesterday, killing 15 Indians & wounding several whites. At the time of the affray, there was several men and one woman jumped into a canoe and started down the river, in the excitement they upset the canoe and all was drowned. There is scarcely a day passes but some person looses [sic] their lives & boats. The boys say that the Indians was so bad above that they would come right into the tents and gratify a call of nature in one corner and then take one corner of your blanket or towell and wipe their posterior, But I swear by all the Saints in Christendom if one does such a trick in my ranch he is a dead Injun and no Tom-foolery. . . . I think I shall go along if we can raise arms, guns and ammunition is very scarce -- I do not think it much honor to be shot by an Indian, But if stern necessity says so, I am ready. 85
Before news reached Yale of Rouse’s campaign of reprisal, a mass meeting of several thousand miners was held to organise against the Indian peoples. Captain George Wesley Beam, writing from Puget Sound Bar, 18 August 1858, recorded in his diary that “Some of the White men are frightened to death. They think there [sic] day has come and they are not ready to go.”

Just three days later Beam further penned in his diary that “at Union Bar they got five men out of the River that was shot by the Indians. They had their heads cut off.” Though the prominent ethnographer for this area, James Teit, believed that “beheading was not much practised by the Thompson Indians” he nevertheless noted that “they occasionally resorted to both [scalping], and would bring home for display the head of some distinguished enemy slain, after which it was thrown into the river.”

Certain reminiscences have tended to sensationalise the number of White goldseekers who were found decapitated, but, at the same time, there is considerable evidence among contemporary letters, diaries and newspaper accounts that numbers of such instances occurred. This point is only worth making in so much that the academic community has tended to discount these reports. The evidence accumulated here suggests otherwise. Suffice it to say, as English miner Radcliffe Quine wrote of the conflict to his brother, they “declared war against [sic] the whites but we some put and [sic] end to it, but many Hundred lives lost.”
The San Francisco *Bulletin*’s special correspondent, in one of his lengthiest articles written on the Fraser River Mines, announced, as if reporting the fulfilment of the *Bulletin*’s own prophesy, that an Indian war had finally broken out in the northern British possessions. Writing from Fort Yale, 16 August 1858, he outlined the dramatic events as they were unfolding (see Appendix B). “The War has commenced at last,” he stated, “the Indians will find to their cost that the ‘Bostons,’ if slow to be aroused, will prove terrible to them when they do act.” 

White miners were being driven from the upper reaches of the Fraser and Thompson diggings, beaten back to Spuzzum where they briefly congregated, hurriedly burying their canoes filled with provisions, before scrambling over the Douglas Portage to the safe haven of Fort Yale. With the arrival of so many hapless miners beating a retreat to forts Hope and Yale, public meetings were called that served to incite the miners to further arm and organize against Native peoples. Locally, retribution was immediate with non-Natives immediately disarming at gunpoint the Native village next to Fort Yale, appropriating the weapons for their own use in the war. Yet it was beyond Fort Yale where considerable numbers of Indians were killed at points all along the Fraser and Thompson Rivers.

Rumours began to fly that significant numbers of goldseekers were being killed by First Nations, especially with the increasing paranoia over the potential threat of massive numbers of Natives about to sweep down upon the lower Fraser. During the later part of August, Beam recorded the false rumours of forty-three White miners having been killed on the upper Fraser and an additional one hundred and fifty murdered by Natives on Harrison River. Neither of these two reports proved true, but the general panic that ensued caused Euro-Americans to obtain, by force, all the arms and ammunition available from the Hudson’s Bay Company at forts Yale and Hope. Typical of miners’ camp-style government, a meeting was called at Fort Hope, 21 August 1858, to
vote on resolutions and frame an address to Governor Douglas "on the alarming character of the gathering of Indian difficulties."\textsuperscript{94} A committee of six from among the mining population of Fort Yale had been sent down to Fort Hope "representing the necessity for succor [sic] and ammunition, forthwith" as the excitement among the miners was described as intense "and the determination fixed to exterminate the red man."\textsuperscript{95}

S.W. Daggett presided with J.W. McKenzie acting as secretary, and the suspicions of assembled miners again looked for scapegoats to help explain the concerted Native action to expel them from First Nations' territory. If it was not whiskey or the Chinese, then once again the Hudson's Bay Company was suspect as White miners gave voice to assumed conspiracies. J.L. Morton, the agent for Kent & Smith's Express in Fort Hope, accused: "Should the authorities [HBC] be found in anyway conniving at the bloody deeds of the savages, this will result not only in the sacking and burning of all their stockades and storehouses, but stripping this territory of every Vestige of British rule. I trust, however, that these suspicions are groundless. . .".\textsuperscript{96} At the suggestion

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure36.jpg}
\caption{Fort Hope & District. From "Copy of Reconnaissance Sketch of the Fraser River between Fort Hope and Fort Yale" by R.C. Mayne, Commander, Royal Navy, September 1858. Surveyor-General's Vault, Victoria, B.C.}
\end{figure}
of the secretary, J.W. McKenzie, a committee of four were selected by the meeting and deputed to wait upon the "commandant" of Fort Hope. They were to urge upon him the necessities of the case, and to determine the amount of arms and ammunition the HBC held which the miners might access. The committee was to deliver its assessment in exactly one hour. With J.D. Galbraith as the deputation's chairman, a report was subsequently given to miners anxiously awaiting the result.

1. They had ascertained that the intention of the officers of the fort was to cooperate cordially in the defense of the whites.

2. There were at Fort Hope at this time, but 25 guns, 125 pounds of powder and 175 pounds of lead.

3. They recommended the immediate forwarding of said ammunition by the Fort Yale Committee to Fort Yale, and the retention of the muskets for the defense of Fort Hope.

4. They recommended that a deputation of two of the citizens of Fort Hope be sent to the commandant at Fort Langley, instantly, with a certified copy of the proceedings of this meeting, and introductory letters from the chief officers at Fort Hope, to solicit such aid in the premises as may be at the bestowal of the officers in command at Fort Langley.

On the motion of S.W. Daggett the report was received and adopted and the two members of the Fort Langley deputation selected. The chairman next instructed all assembled "that at the ringing of the bell it was expected that every adult male would report himself at the Fort, with his arms, that he be enrolled and his arms inspected and a military organization effected for the defense of the place." A collection was then made amongst the miners to help defray expenses before the meeting was officially adjourned. An urgent communication was also sent to Governor Douglas by Daggett, 21 August 1858, on behalf of the miners and residents of Fort Hope.

Dear Sir: -- at a meeting of the immigrants and miners held previous to the departure of the steamer Umatilla from Fort Hope, I was selected to apprize your Excellency of the deplorable condition of affairs existing above this point, arising from the hostile
attitude assumed by the Indians in this territory towards the white population.

The fact is patent to all impartial observers, that a spirit of conciliation and fairness have characterized, on the part of the whites, hitherto, their deportment towards the Indians. Whether, from the prestige given to the red man by inaccurate representations made by newspaper correspondents, of their numerical strength and superiority over the more southern aborigines, and the general distribution among them of firearms, the whites have been more forbearing and lenient than was to be expected; or whether a too firm reliance has been placed upon the local authorities, it is not our province to determine; but, certain is it, the forbearance of the miner has been carried to a degree which has ceased to be a virtue, and the Indian, in his insolence and outrages, has progressed steadily from bad to worse, until isolated bodies of prospectors have been murdered and robbed by them, and the indignation and vengeance of the whiteman have burst forth in a fearful retribution.

Decapitated, denuded corpses of unfortunate adventurers are daily picked up on the river, while reports have reached us of the progress of retaliatory measures on the part of whites, involving indiscriminate slaughter of every age and sex.

The brief moments allotted to me will not allow of details. It has been deemed advisable by the residents of Fort Hope to apprise your Excellency of the existing state of affairs, that your Excellency may inaugurate and enforce such a series of measures as will check the further effusion of blood, and restore tranquillity and order to this territory.  

Captain George Wesley Beam, writing up-river at Puget Sound Bar, confirmed the results of the Fort Hope meeting and the vigilante behaviour of the goldseeking community. "The miners have went to Forts Yale and Hope," he wrote, "and made them give all of the arms and ammunition they had. Mr. Walker of Hope did not want to do it but they shoved him one side and told the gentleman they would look for themselves. The miners have sent Governor Douglass [sic] some strong talk about there protection from the Indians but the Governor cant do any thing he has not the Power." Subsequently, in the case of Fort Hope, White miners decided to store all their weaponry inside the outpost in the event that Natives descended the river that far. Beam jotted amongst the pages of his diary, "The men there think it Best to put their arms and ammunition in the Fort so if the Indians kill all they can't get them. They stand guard all the time." Certainly, in one sense, we can be thankful for miners having been so organized in that the paper trail of these events are nowhere to be found in the official records of either the colonies of Vancouver Island or British Columbia. The Californian
miner's penchant for the rules, regulations, and written records of camp government -- especially the great tendency to publish them in newspapers for all to see -- has left us with a decidedly different view of events when compared to the gaping silence of the colonial government's record.

By late August of 1858, the whole United States Pacific Northwest and southern British Columbia were on a war footing. Brigadier General Clarke, in charge of American Pacific Slope military operations, landed additional troops for engagement with Indian nations in Washington Territory, the total command reportedly amounting to upwards of fifteen hundred men. At the urging of Isaac Stevens, former governor of Washington and territorial delegate to Congress, the U.S. War Department transferred a regiment from Utah and made preparations for sending an additional four hundred recruits from New York. A special correspondent for the Bulletin, writing 27 August 1858, happened to be travelling with four hundred reinforcements being shipped up the coast from California “to subdue sundry hostile Indian tribes.” The Natives were “very desperate,” he said, “forseeing, as they do, certain expulsion from their hunting-grounds at an early day, if they permit the whiteman to push eastward of the Cascades in search of gold. . .”.  

By this time, practically all of California’s U.S. Army troop’s had been shifted to the Pacific Northwest. A final massive battle inundated Native peoples in the Columbia Plateau region with professional soldiers and weaponry, and all provoked by Fraser River bound goldseekers. In early September the Portland Standard reported that Okanagan Natives south of the 49th parallel had “retreated to the British Possessions or the Blackfeet country.” Though the Okanagan peoples had retreated to safe ground, the Coeur d’Alene, Spokane, and Yakima, in addition to members of the Palouse, Walla Walla, and Cayuse Tribes, stood firm to defend their lands at the “Battle of Four
Lakes” in what has been called the final phase of the Yakima War. Colonel George Wright, commanding the 9th Infantry and equipped with howitzers, inflicted upon the Tribes a “secure defeat.” The number of warriors killed was reported to be at least seventeen men that included one chief, but other opinions suggested substantially greater numbers of deaths at the hands of the U.S. Army.

While newspapers continued to report the existence of considerable quantities of gold along the Fraser River, these articles were to become more frequently mixed with news of Colonel Wright’s military success at “carrying devastation and ruin wherever he went.” In one engagement, after Wright’s soldiers had defeated the Natives in the Cour d’Alene Country, he instructed his men to round up eight or nine hundred horses and assorted livestock belonging to First Nations which were subsequently destroyed. Wright’s campaign of destruction was also to include the torching of their grain fields and winter provisions so that they would be “reduced to the last stage of starvation and suffering.” Though it was reported that Native peoples were attempting, at this point, to broker a peace, Colonel Wright refused any and all terms and demanded their unconditional surrender. With First Nations of Eastern Washington having been totally overwhelmed by sheer numbers of White soldiers and weaponry, Brigadier General Clark realized there would be no need for General William Harney’s contingent to be sent out from New York. The U.S. military concluded that they had effected a wholesale defeat of their enemies. Peace treaties were subsequently enforced upon First Nations that would have as their primary directive that all White men, whether trappers, settlers, or gold miners, should thereafter pass through the Native lands of Eastern Washington unmolested. The interior route to the Fraser River Mines was thus cleared of all “impediments” and White miners, henceforth, were insured complete and unfettered access to routes of communication east of the Cascade Mountains.
In anticipation of victory, Oregon resident General Joel Palmer had already begun travelling to Fraser River with a train of no less than twelve wagons filled with supplies. Regardless of the fact that Isaac Stevens had urged miners to wait for more “definite and peaceable” conditions, Palmer, the former Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs, pushed through to Fort Okanogan two days in advance of the U.S. Army, such that “the worthy pioneer . . . [had] opened a wagon road from the great valley of the Columbia to the northern gold fields.” Though the reporter was not aware that Palmer resorted to floating his wagons on rafts down Okanagan Lake, he nevertheless encouraged his readership that this was “an event of no small moment be assured; and one which should be held in mind by all those who think of going to that region . . .”. 

While the Regular troops of the U.S. Army were engaged in Eastern Washington, volunteer miners’ militias were also busy clearing the path of all resistance. As previously noted, within the general vicinity of Yale, all Natives were apparently disarmed by White miners and required to suffer a variety of abuses. Ovid Allard, the HBC Trader in charge of Fort Yale, wrote to Douglas “that the Miners have abused the Indians in many instances particularly at what is called New York Bar by insulting there [sic] women after they had voluntarily given up there [sic] arms. I understand that the same thing has also occurred at 'Quayome.' From what I can learn I have reason to believe that some 15 or 20 Indians have lost there lives and three or four whites. Also as many wounded during the excitement and many are leaving for Victoria and other places.” The Victoria Gazette reported from Yale,"Canoes arrived from New York, Hill's and Texas Bars loaded with armed men, who mostly joined in some of the companies formed here, and served to keep alive the excitement." In all, at least five companies were to ascend the river in August 1858, each with differing views on how to reopen the Upper diggings. Some were for exterminating all Native peoples encountered, while others offered to broker a peace settlement supported by a large demonstration of armed force. One
such company was the Pike Guards commanded by Captain H.M. Snyder, regular correspondent to
the San Francisco Bulletin.

With the newspaper's correspondent as "Commander of the Company," the Bulletin was able
to provide its readership with detailed field reports of Snyder's campaign laced with a certain degree
of bravado typical of 19th century Californian press.

This morning [18 August], at sunrise, three companies, armed with rifles and shot­
guns, left for the upper canōns, and as far as Thompson river. One was under the
command of Henry Snyder, who is well known in San Francisco [a regular
correspondent of the Bulletin]. They carried a white flag, on which was inscribed,
'PIKE GUARDS.' One of the others was a company of french men, who have
already shown themselves countrymen of Chasseur de Vincennes and the Zouaves,
in their activity and agility in pursuing the Indians in their caōns. One party of eleven
men last week went off by themselves, and succeeded in instilling a wholesome dread
in the minds of the Indians. I have just learned that the name of one of the two French
men shot, a few days ago, is John Le Croise, who died instantly. The other was Pierre
Sargosse, who has been brought down here to-day.... The Justice of the Peace from
Hill's Bar came up this morning, and took charge of the Indian chief 'Suseechus,'
removing him to Hill's Bar. It was with some difficulty, however, that he
accomplished it, as the miners were inclined to try him summarily here.... This
morning [19 August], news arrived that some more Indians had been shot, above the
rancheria [Spuzzum], by the men who went up from here.120

William Yates, the HBC Trader that assisted Ovid Allard during the gold excitement, remembered
the tumultuous scene that developed when a Native was hauled into Fort Yale by White miners bent
on interrogating their prisoner. Since Ovid Allard and William Yates were the only Whites familiar
with some of the Native languages spoken, miners often brought their victims to the Company's Fort
and demanded an immediate character assessment. One afternoon, perhaps the day that Copals
[Kowpelst] (See Appendix B) or 'Suseechus' was brought in, a party of about fifty goldseekers
could be seen in the distance headed for the Company's store. Yates recalled the tumultuous scene:
"The miners said 'You are a Hudson's Bay man?' I said yes. 'What kind of an Indian is this -- what
kind of an Indian is this,' they yelled. I said I did not know -- he was good as far as I knew. A party
from the outside called me a liar and they dragged me and the Indian off from the Hudson's Bay store into the crowd. . . I went to Hill's Bar that night and stopped all night with Judge Perry [Perrier]. The Judge took me over so as to stop the trouble. Allard claimed that the Indian prisoner "was pretty near Hung by the miners through Excitement & Liquor." Stories such as this illustrate the extremely precarious position that employees of the Hudson's Bay Company were often placed between warring Whites and Natives.

During the mass meeting in Yale in the month of August, preparations were made for the ultimate contest over the land and resources of Fraser and Thompson Rivers. In a lengthy letter to Governor James Douglas, Captain Snyder told of his ten day military-like campaign which concluded a number of treaties of peace with Native chiefs from above Yale to the Forks of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers at present-day Lytton. On 16 August 1858, "a company was formed to procede [sic] at once up the river," penned Snyder. "And by a unanimous vote I was elected their Captain. . . When I stated the object I had in view, and the manner in which I intended to procede, which was to take an interpreter and make pease [sic] with the Indians by peasible [sic] means if we could, and by force if we must, on those terms I would consent to be their commander and on no others. On taking the vote an unanimous consent was given. We then elected our other officers and took up our line of march for the river below Saylor's Bar." The language of democratically elected officers and mustering under arms is reminiscent of the settler-soldiers that organised in Washington and Oregon to fight in the Indian Wars of the 1850s. For placing the future Colony of British Columbia in the context of the transboundary West, this unexplored document is both remarkable and exceptional in that a foreign mining population had effectively taken matters into its own hands in the absence of constituted British colonial authority. As the Pike Guards marched along the Fraser, they
were subsequently joined by a large company of French miners who shared Snyder's view that peace treaties would expend less time and resources than all-out war. The main object, of course, was merely to clear the path of resistance so that miners could continue extracting gold. Of the other companies encountered along the way though, one, known as the "Whatcom Guards," called for a campaign of wholesale extermination. Snyder related to Douglas:

We proceeded [sic] to the Indian Rancherie [Spuzzum] above some five miles further up. There we found two other companies and quite a large number of miners that had been driven from their claims above. We camped here for the night and held a council [sic] of war with some sixty Indians, and peace [sic] was made with them at this place. I had a consultation with the 2 captains [Graham & Martin Gallagher125] that we found at this place as their views were different from mine and the Austrain [French] Company. They wished to proceed and kill every man, woman & child they saw that had Indian blood in them. To such an arrangement I could not consent to. My heart revolted at the idea of killing a helpless woman, or an innocent child was too horrible to think of. They requested me to state my views to the crowd which consisted of six to seven hundred. I consented to do so and after I was through, and on taking the vote, I found that they were almost unanimous in supporting my course.126

Snyder’s interpreter was none other than HBC Trader William Yates who accompanied the Pike Guards as far as Chapman’s Bar near present-day Alexandra Bridge. Apparently, the miners had written to James Murray Yale at Fort Langley asking whether Ovid Allard might accompany the militias. Since Allard was getting on in age, it was suggested that Yates go instead. Allard informed Douglas, “a party of armed men requested me to send Yates with them. I thought it would be as well for him to go with them & try to stop as many murder[s] and robery [sic] by this said party as possible.”127

Yates’ account of the campaign appears to approximate Snyder’s own report in the press and to Governor Douglas. Yates noted that about one hundred and fifty men accompanied them “with a white flag to give to each of the Indian Chiefs along the river, as a guarantee not to bother the
Yates does not say whether the white flag was generally interpreted by the goldseekers as a truce with Indians, or as it has been historically viewed in the American West, as surrender. As for the Nlaka'pamux, Ethnologist Andrea Laforet has suggested that the colour white would not have symbolized peace for them, but death -- "specifically ghosts, the spirit world, dead people, skeletons, bones, and sickness coming from the dead." And considering what would unfold in the post gold rush world of British Columbia, the omen of sickness and death proved more correct than the symbolism of a peace, truce or surrender.

As Snyder’s men approached Spuzzum from Yale, their forces were estimated to have reached two hundred and fifty men. Yates’ account gives significantly more attention to the disagreement that occurred between Captains Snyder and Graham while at Spuzzum, than do the few other remaining accounts. In Yates’ words:

Cap[tain] Snyder learned then that an opposition party had gone by the old trail [Douglas Portage] over the mountain and they were going to go to the lodges to kill the indians and wipe them out, as they went through. He then rushed me ahead of the parties with 25 men to the Indian village [Spuzzum] where Captain Graham was with a party of about 50. They were going to attack the Indians. We told Captain Graham that we were sent from Captain Sneider [sic] to tell him that there was to be no attack made on the indians. We told him to hold on until Captain Sneider and his men came up and then talk to him. He said that he would but that he was going through to wipe the indians out if he could. The head of our party told him that he was not doing the right thing -- that he had better wait until Captain Sneider came up and that they would then have an understanding about the matter. Before they got through talking Captain Sneider had come up. It was nearly dusk then. Cap[tain] Sneider got Captain Graham calmed down and told him to wait and not to be so rash as he was endangering the lives of white men by doing so. They stacked their arms there and lay down for the night.

Apparently, the next morning, Captains Graham and Snyder had a further consultation with each other in which it was agreed that Graham and the Whatcom Guards would remain behind and
continue forth only in the event that Snyder’s companies ran into trouble while passing through the Big Canyon.

Snyder then commenced with the original peace plan endorsed by the mass meeting held at Fort Yale. The miner-cum-commander instructed that two canoes be taken a further two miles up the river in advance of his men who would make their crossing to the other side of the Fraser in the vicinity of current-day Alexandra Bridge. Little did Snyder realize at the time, but while the Pike Guards and the French Company under the leadership of John Centras made their way to the canoe crossing, Graham and his men were surreptitiously crossing Spuzzum Creek, near its confluence with the Fraser, and proceeding up the opposite side of the canyon. Just as Snyder and men were about to make their canoe crossings they were alarmed to see that Graham’s party had broken their promise, and were advancing further up the river. Though Snyder called to them to halt, the war party paid no heed and continued to advance. William Yates was again pressed into service to chase after the Whatcom Guards.131 Snyder attempted to reason with Graham once more and “againe solicited him to joine us, but he would not.” As a last resort, Snyder threatened that if Graham persisted in his plan of extermination and not remain put as agreed, Snyder and the Pike Guards would head back to Yale. Graham finally did agree, once again, to allow Snyder the opportunity of brokering a peace settlement with Native peoples and would wait until the Pike Guards had reached the head of the Big Canon: “And if I could make pease [sic] with the indians & send a white flag through the canion [sic], that he would return to this place [Fort Yale] on those conditions and understanding.”132

With Graham and company remaining on the west side of the Fraser, Snyder, Centras and their companies finally took up their line of march on the east side of the river so as to take advantage of the HBC’s brigade trail that climbed the mountain, near present-day Alexandra Lodge, and
bypassed the canyon until descending the Anderson River to Boston Bar. William Yates claimed that Snyder's party continued to watch Graham's movements from their side of the river, but as the day was coming to an end, the Whatcom Guards made camp "on a large shelving rock" opposite the vicinity of Chapman's Bar, being careful to place guards at either end for protection while the majority of the men slept.

During the course of the night, apparently there erupted pandemonium amongst Graham's volunteer troops. Yates, whose own small party had remained to watch the Whatcom Guards at some little distance, recalled the frantic scene. "Some of Captain Graham's men rushed right through where our men were lying," said Yates, "and some of them were around us and said that the indians had been shooting at them . . . we found two dead bodies in the morning. We thought it was not indians but that it was their own party that got in a panic some way and started shooting in the night. Some of the men were drowned in the river and some were shot and killed or wounded by dragoon pistols and five shooters -- not indian guns at all." Though Yates did not realize it at the time, both Captain Graham and his 1st Lieutenant Shaw were the ones shot dead. And though the little that has been written on this mysterious episode has tended to accept the idea that Graham's own men were the cause of the deaths that night, there is yet another, and I believe, more compelling explanation for the deaths of the Whatcom Guards' two highest ranking officers. Captain Snyder's own words to James Douglas suggest that there was good reason why Native peoples might assassinate these individuals beyond the quite obvious reasons already recounted here.

After Snyder had climbed the canyon to the next Native settlement, another treaty of peace was established with three Chiefs and symbolic white flags issued: "they appeared to rejoice to think that pease [sic] was to be restored." Of course, Snyder had also stated that a white flag would be sent to Graham if the Yale-endorsed peace plan was succeeding. Snyder related to Douglas how his
men were received by the intransigent Graham upon seeing the white flag of peace. Graham apparently had “order[ed] his men to take the white flag that I had sent to him and throw it away, which was done,” outlined Snyder. “One of my men went and picked it up and slept on it the balance of the night. They then layed down, my men some two or three rods from the rest. He says, if Grayham had any guard posted that they must of been a sleep. About twelve o’clock they ware [sic] aroused from their sleep by the firing of some guns. Grayham was shot through the back at the first [fire] and died some two hours afterwards. He thinks that the Indians had watched him, if it was Indians, and had scene the treatment he gave the white flag. His firs[t] Lieutenant was also killed in the first firing. Had he done as he promised to do he would now be alive.”

The fact that a Chief’s son from China Bar had accompanied Snyder’s men down river to deliver the message of peace lends even greater credence to the idea that the Nlaka’pamux would not have been pleased to see Graham’s response -- they most certainly would have seen how he reacted. Snyder’s credibility and success in confirming treaties of peace was aided immeasurably by Natives’ having their own emissaries accompany him from village to village. As Andrea Laforet has suggested, “The demonstrated support of the chiefs whom he had met was of critical importance to his success in each new locality.” In such a case, even with Native peoples having removed themselves to the safer precincts of the mountains, continued reconnaissance of the movement of goldseekers would have continued throughout.

As Snyder continued his campaign up the river he achieved further peace agreements with the assistance of Chiefs who accompanied him on his mission. By 21 August 1858, Snyder confirmed peace with four more Chiefs before coming within seven miles of the Thompson River. It was here that he first met Spintlum, “the war chief of all the tribes for some distance up & down Frazer River.” The Nlaka’pamux at the Forks, or present-day Lytton, had heard that the miners’ militias were
travelling up the river and sent a runner after Spintlum who had been some seventy-five miles up the Thompson. He came down quickly to meet them and Snyder continued his practice of peace-making in his presence. “Then the War Chief made a speech to the Indians that had collected together,” continued Snyder. “He is a very cool calculating man and spoke to them for at least half hour... Here I proceeded at once to hold our grand council which consisted of Eleven Chiefs and a very large number of other Indians that had gathered from above and below. We stated to them that this time we came for peace, but if we had to come again, that we would not come by hundreds, but by thousands and drive them from the river forever. They were much surprised & frightened to see so many men with guns & revolvers. For marching along in single file they looked to be three times the number there was.”

It is difficult to say, of course, whether this bravado was intended solely for Governor James Douglas, or whether Snyder actually had the audacity to state it to eleven Nlaka’pamux Chiefs in the very centre of their home land. One thing is for certain though, the Nlaka’pamux would have been well aware of the circumstances in which First Nations found themselves south of the border. If Snyder threatened the possibility of thousands more to drive them from the river forever, it certainly would not have appeared as an idle threat considering that upwards of fifteen hundred United States Army troops were waging a full-scale assault against the First Nations in that region.

Spintlum certainly had much to reflect upon. Ethnographer James Teit perhaps captured the great dilemma these people faced when he recorded, some forty years later, the different stances of individual Chiefs for and against war.

Hundreds of warriors from all parts of the upper Thompson country had assembled at Lytton with the intention of blocking the progress of the whites beyond that point [he stated], and, if possible, of driving them back down the river. The Okanagan had sent word, promising aid, and it was expected that the Shuswap would also render help. In fact the Bonaparte, Savona, and Kamloops bands had initiated their desire
to assist if war was declared. For a number of days there was much excitement at Lytton, and many fiery speeches were made. CuxcuxesqEt, the Lytton war-chief, a large, active man of great courage, talked incessantly for war. He put on his headdress of eagle feathers, and, painted, decked and armed for battle, advised the people to drive out the whites. At the end of his speeches he would dance as in a war dance, or imitate the grisly bear, his chief guardian spirit. Cunamitsa, the Spences Bridge chief, and several other leading men, were also in favor of war. CexpentEm [Spintlum], with his great powers of oratory, talked continually for peace, and showed strongly its advantages. The people were thus divided as to the best course to pursue, and finally most of them favoured CexpentEms proposals.\(^{138}\)

Snyder may not have realized it, but it almost seems that the Nlaka'pamux had already decided for peace amongst themselves prior to the Commander of the company's ultimatum. Snyder, Centras and their volunteer militias had reached the Forks where the Fraser and Thompson Rivers meet, further treaties of peace were established with a final total of twenty-seven different Chiefs,\(^{139}\)

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*Figure 37.* Military Campaign Routes taken by Militias from Yale to Lytton, Fraser River War, 1858.
"a letter stating their proceedings" given to each, and white flags to show other possibly more hostile companies of goldseekers. Incidentally, Snyder was also pleased to have received "some beautiful specimums of gold" from various Chiefs he met while climbing the river towards Lytton.

From Fort Hope, 23 August 1858, the Bulletin's correspondent reported that a letter had been received from Snyder to S.W. Daggett via Ballou's Express that peace had been restored and miners could once more return to their abandoned claims between the lower canyon and Foster's Bar above Lytton. Snyder asked of the White mining population "circumspection and forbearance towards the Indians" and expressed "his conviction that the desire of the Indian is sincere for peace." Snyder's white flags of peace were subsequently to be seen flying at all the Indian villages that had been visited by the Pike Guards.

Travelling behind Snyder at a distance of about two days, the correspondent for the San Francisco Bulletin reported some of the devastating consequences with which Native peoples had met during the war:

On the way up, I passed two Indian ranches [villages], which had been burned to the ground by the whites, one of them a large one... Turning off the main trail, I found several deserted Indian lodges, with baskets, balls of twine for salmon nets, wooden pans for washing gold, etc., scattered around. The miners all seem determined to keep the Indians off the river, and as the Indians' sole resource here is salmon, they must come to terms, if they cannot succeed in driving the whites from the river... As I passed through the burned Indian ranches, some dozen Indian dogs set up howling, which sounded most dismally in the woods. I saw the bodies of some four or five dead Indians at two of the ranches. Two of them had been dead for some time; and I was fully aware of the fact long before I came to the bodies. There they were in a stoney gulch, with a gray blanket spread over them, in the place they had fallen. Being alone, I was by no means in safety, and involuntarily quickened my steps, as I trampled over the burnt remains of their houses... In almost every camp I visited, I heard, as a daily occurrence, of men having been seen floating down the river, dead. It is almost an impossibility to ascertain their names, as but few that are picked up are recognized.
Snyder estimated that during the course of his campaign he had "entered into treaty" with at least two thousand Native peoples.145

Mary Williams, an Nlaka’pamux Elder, was to later tell a story passed down from previous generations that appears to approximate the extraordinary meeting of the Pike Guards with the Thompson peoples at Lytton. From the Nlaka’pamux perspective, “They arrived with one of their headmen, and told the Lytton people to gather at the place where the Canadian National Railways station is now situated. That was where they were all to be shot,” Williams remembered. “Every one of the White men had loaded rifles, ready to shoot the people of Lytton.” The Native Elder then recalled that Spintllum entered the fray to halt any further bloodshed. “Chief Sexpinlhemx spoke up, asking, ‘What are you going to do?’ The Whites said that all the old people were going to be killed off -- only the young woman were to be kept. ‘Stop right there!’ commanded Chief Sexpinlhemx. ‘End that talk right there! I am going to give you some land!’ Chief Sexpinlhemx stood up and stretched out his arms to the sundown and the sunrise, saying, ‘This side will be yours and this side will be my people’s. You are not to kill anyone...This is what Chief Sexpinlhemx said. The White people agreed. They put down all their guns and shook hands with the Indian people and went back to where they came from, back to Yale.”146

In the immediate aftermath of the ten day march, Snyder explained his ‘conciliatory’ approach to ending violence in the Canyons. “The Indians held possession of the Big or Upper Canon,” he claimed, “and if war was made on them, they had it in their power to prevent all canoes from ascending the river, as well as preventing any men from going over the trail.... True, they could be driven out -- but it would take time and money to effect it. The mining season was just commencing, and the object to be gained now was, to enable men to go up the river as soon as possible.”147 In
reading Captain Snyder's words, it would appear that 'road blocks,' whether of rivers, trails, or the modern highways of today, have been an established fact in Canada's western most province since 1858. During the 1990s, road blockades have occurred at such places as Gustafson Lake, Douglas Lake, Apex Developments near Penticton, and more recently by the Cheam First Nation near Chilliwack, to name but a few, and continue to be militant expressions of Native determination to protect their land and sovereignty. Clearly, the roots of British Columbia's current impasse in resolving Native land claims can be found in the events of the Fraser River gold rush of 1858.

If one travels to Lytton today, there you may find, hidden from general view, a large stone monument in the form of a Christian crucifix, erected in 1927 to the memory of an exceptional man named Chief Spintlum. Attached to its base are the following cryptic words that provide mute testimony to the extraordinary role that this Native played during the gold rush, words that are given greater meaning for us today when placed in their proper context of the Fraser River War. It reads: "When the White Men first discovered British Columbia the Indians were using the land and this caused bloodshed. David Spintlum did not want this loss of life and succeeded in stopping the war. He saw Queen Victoria who was visiting Canada and reported to her what he had done. Her Majesty was glad to hear this and said, 'There shall be no more war in Canada.' She presented him with a flag and a hunting knife and told him he should be Chief for ever. David Spintlum made his posts at Spuzzum, at Lillooet, at Stathshone and at Sheheouos, and these four posts are the limits of the Thompson Tribal Territory." These words, in part, undoubtedly refer to the meeting held between Spintlum and Governor Douglas.

In the immediate aftermath of the Fraser River War, Douglas, along with the Crown Solicitor George Pearkes, thirty-five non-commissioned officers from both HMS Satellite and Her Majesty's
Boundary Commission, and other government officials, sailed for Fort Hope, 30 August 1858, “for the purpose of making treaties of peace with the Indians.” Douglas was spurred to travel specifically to Fort Hope in acknowledgement of the urgent pleas of miners with regard to large numbers of goldseekers having been killed, especially the communique written by S.W. Daggett and endorsed by a mass meeting. Arriving on the evening of 3 September via the Umatilla, Douglas entered amongst the pages of his diary an extremely brief synopsis of the terrible conflict that had just occurred: “It appears from the reports of miners who have lately returned from the upper country that the Indians are thievish and without being positively hostile plunder the miners in the most shameless manner. Drew up a proclamation prohibiting the sale or gift of intoxicating drinks to Indians, to be published immediately, and also a plan for the administration of justice; and otherwise establishing order & government in Fraser’s river.”

The Fraser River War had just occurred. It was widely reported throughout the press of the Pacific Northwest and California. HBC servants such as Ovid Allard and William Yates were involved and supplied reports to the Governor. Captain J.C. Prevost of the Royal Navy filed a lengthy description with Rear Admiral Robert Baynes. White miners such as George Wesley Beam, Thomas Spence, Billy Ballou, H.F. Reinhart and many others had recorded the conflict in diaries, letters, and reminiscences. Miners’ meetings had been called to vote on defence plans and approve communications to the Governor. And, of course, James Douglas himself had cautioned the imperial government of Great Britain that an all-out war would likely occur. So how was it that the Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island could simply whitewash events in this way. Just how could this same man, as Chief Factor of the HBC, suggest for a moment that alcohol was the primary reason for the terrible conflict of the preceding weeks?
James Douglas made this trip to the Fraser to restore order. Writing to Lytton, 9 September 1858, Douglas confirmed “that the powerful native Indian Tribes who inhabit the gold regions should be conciliated and placed under proper restraint.” As evidence of this he met with Chief Spintulum in Hope the very next day, 5 September, and “made him a present and gave him a charge concerning the treatment of miners visiting his country.” Douglas also wrote in his private journal that the great Chief of the Forks was “reported to be a treacherous Indian, but it is prudent to pursue a conciliatory policy at present.” Douglas would placate Spintulum and undoubtedly told him what he wanted to hear. As James Teit recorded, “With the arrival of Governor Douglas and the making of explanations or promises on his side, most of the [Nlaka’pamux] people favored peace; and finally, CexpentlEm [Spintulum], on behalf of his people, allowed the whites to enter his country.” What these promises were has been lost to history, Douglas never having explained his “conciliatory policy.” Nevertheless, considering that the Fraser River War, from the Native perspective, was an all-out defence of First Nations land and resources, it would not be too presumptuous to assume that Douglas had promised to secure the traditional lands of the Nlaka’pamux as represented by the four posts spoken of and etched in stone on the Spintulum Memorial in present-day Lytton. Prior to the conflict, Douglas had always spoken in terms of Native land and gold, that their resistance to foreign intrusion was a defence of their rights, and presumably this view was still held by Douglas, but the practicalities of the moment forced him not to publicly acknowledge his prior opinions.

Writing to Lytton, 12 October 1858, Douglas stated that he had listened to all the complaints of the local Native population at Fort Hope who were “much incensed against the miners.” While there, he also received visits from other Chiefs of the Nlaka’pamux besides Spintulum to whom he “communicated the wishes of Her Majesty’s Government... and gave them much useful advice for their guidance in the altered state of the country.” Later at Fort Yale, Douglas claimed he also
listened to the complaints of Natives who were there assembled, “and made no secret of their dislike to their white visitors.” He noted to Lytton that, “they had made complaints of maltreatment, and in all cases where redress was possible, it was granted without delay; one small party of those natives laid claim to a particular part of the river, which they wished to be reserved for their own purposes, a request which was immediately granted, the space staked off, and the miners who had taken claims there, were immediately removed, and public notice given that the place was reserved for the Indians and that no one could be allowed to occupy it without their consent.”

The location and extent of this first Mainland reserve has also been lost to history. For all of the complaints and distress that Douglas undoubtedly heard, he chose not to record the particulars of extreme Native-White conflict in his official despatches to London, despatches that were ultimately published as Parliamentary Papers. Douglas’ only response was the formal Proclamation “prohibiting the gift or sale of intoxicating drinks to the Native Indians of Fraser’s River,” a decree that might equally have been levelled against the White mining population of Fort Yale, but one that nevertheless provided convenient closure to a most tumultuous and inauspicious beginning to the fledgling British Colony that was shortly to be proclaimed.

Though the Governor informed Lytton that he witnessed lamentable “fatal accidents that were daily occurring [sic] to miners,” who had capsized their boats and canoes attempting to navigate the higher reaches of the Fraser, he never reported the significantly greater number of deaths of the Fraser River War. In short, it would have been viewed as a major embarrassment to British and Hudson’s Bay Company policy towards Native peoples. One need not wonder how the Secretary of State for the Colonies would have viewed a report in which the foreign mining population was found to have taken the law into its own hands, massacring significant numbers of Native peoples, in the absence of any significant British colonial presence. Especially so, considering that the powerful and
influential Aborigines Protection Society had just made representations to Lytton earnestly imploring that the genocidal actions of the California gold fields not be repeated in British Columbia.

If one compares Douglas' early despatches through 1857 and early 1858 with his reports in the aftermath of the Fraser River War, his tone, once overwhelmingly pro-Native, was to become decidedly dismissive of their rights. It is important to remember that Douglas' early despatches were subsequently published, and therefore, groups like the Aborigines Protection Society were given access to Douglas' views and pre-colonial policy as it was literally taking shape. Specifically, Douglas had earlier sounded the warning bell with regard to future conflict between Americans and First Nations, and though Whitehall was less inclined to act, pressure from the Aborigines Protection Society forced the Colonial Office to acknowledge Douglas' concerns. The Governor's later silence with respect to the Fraser River War, undoubtedly, was in part due to the realization that whatever he wrote would not only be seen by Lytton and other members of the Colonial Office, but other outside interests that might use the despatches to discredit the British Government. This makes particular sense if the full text of the Aborigines Protection Society letter sent to Lytton is examined, keeping in mind that Douglas received a copy of the text after the conclusion of the war (Appendix C).

Lytton wrote to Douglas, as early as 31 July 1858, that "The feelings of this country would be strongly opposed to the adoption of any arbitrary or oppressive measures" towards the Native population of Fraser River. He further instructed Douglas that "the prevention of affrays between the Indian and the immigrants . . . . must be solved by your knowledge and experience, and I commit it to you, in the full persuasion that you will pay every regard to the interests of the Natives which an enlightened humanity can suggest." Writing from the other side of the world, Lytton, unaware that a major conflict had just occurred between Natives and foreign goldseekers, expanded his view,
2 September 1858, to include the sentiments of the Aborigines Protection Society. Forwarding their
communique to Douglas for his “prompt and careful consideration,” he nevertheless cautioned that
he did not want to be seen as adopting the Society’s suggested means by which First Nations should
be protected. In essence, Lytton demanded protection but left the practicalities of the matter to
Douglas’ expertise. Though Douglas’ own words were used by the Society to justify the protection
of Fraser and Thompson River Native peoples, and the recognition of their pre-existing rights and
title to the land, the Governor did not follow their advice by concluding Treaties in a “spirit of justice
and equality.” Instead, he simply confirmed that he would give the matter his “prompt and careful
consideration” and assured the Colonial Office “that the native Indian tribes are protected on all their
interests to the utmost extent of our present means.” Lord Carnarvon noted, “This will be
sufficient to furnish an answer to any questions on the subject,” to which Lord Lytton added his
instruction that the Douglas despatch be immediately printed for Parliament.

Here were Douglas’ warnings of potential war being thrown back in his face, and too late to
have halted the disastrous consequences of the Fraser River War. And here, too, was the “first
missed opportunity” to acknowledge Native title in mainland British Columbia. The general
absence within the gold fields of any significant civil administration meant that White miners quite
happily operated according to their own customs, rules and regulations until the overwhelming threat
of war with Native peoples caused them to embrace colonial rule: “The necessity which has for some
time existed for the appointment of peace-officers, and the establishment of some kind of government
... has been apparent to every one.” While Douglas was on the Fraser, miners continued to
report that his presence was particularly for the purposes of making peace with First Nations. It
also appears that many Chiefs accompanied Snyder back to Fort Yale and eventually attempted to
meet personally with the Governor. Nowhere are these meetings recorded or the nature of the
discussions held between the representative of Her Majesty Queen Victoria and the Native peoples of the Fraser River corridor.

Likewise, upon reaching Yale, 20 September 1858, and establishing a camp on the opposite river bench from the town site, Douglas was to grant an audience with Captain H.M. Snyder. The old San Franciscan, since the war, had become a leader of the White mining community and, in essence, Spintlum's opposing counterpart. "I had quite a long conversation with him," stated Snyder. "I was much pleased with his course, which he says will be pursued in regard to the miners. He will not interfere with any rules and regulations that the miners may have adopted. He complimented me highly for the course I had adopted in restoring peace with the Indians; and also tendered me any assistance I might wish in the way of an office. I thanked him. As for the pay that officers get here, a man, to be honest, would starve." Douglas' reported words to Snyder only make sense if we consider the tenuous position of British authority on the Fraser in 1858. Like First Nations, colonial authority was also overwhelmed by sheer numbers of miners and weaponry. Just as Douglas had written that it was "prudent to pursue a conciliatory policy" with respect to First Nations such as the Nlaka'pamux, one may also be forgiven for assuming that this strategy was equally applicable to the intransigent White mining population that had taken the law into its own hands.

In the contest over land and resources the Native peoples of the Fraser River corridor, and all along the system of trails that reached into the goldfields, were finally overwhelmed by sheer numbers of miners and weaponry, their monopoly control of gold forfeited, their claim to the land marginalised unto the present day. The Fraser River War may have ultimately precipitated the institution of full British sovereignty, but it also broke the back of full-scale Native resistance. Within British Columbia, the number of Native deaths at the hands of White miners also appears to
have been much larger than previously suspected (perhaps those of White miners by Natives, too). Once these military-like actions were complete, the Fraser River corridor was further appropriated and ordered into a typical California landscape segregated by race and ethnicity, an extension of the American West, and one in which Native peoples were quickly compartmentalised and reduced to a matrix of Indian reserves. Nor were the Fraser River gold fields the only region in which Native peoples suffered the consequences of these gold seeking conquistadors. In fact, the whole transboundary region of southern British Columbia and northern Washington Territory was impacted. During 1858, the American Indian Wars in the Pacific Northwest, like the Fraser River War, were devastating contests that dispossessed Native peoples on either side of the 49th parallel of much of their traditional landscape, with some further evidence to suggest an extended impact on Native peoples within the larger Pacific Slope region.
NOTES


2. An extremely important event in Pacific coast history, the 'Fraser River War' has received little attention by academics who have preferred to let local histories, latter-day reminiscences, and 'popular' accounts speak for themselves. Some of the material presented in this chapter appeared in the first half of a draft paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association. Daniel P. Marshall, "Claiming the Land: The Fraser River Gold Rush and the 'Conquest' of Native Lands," *CHA Conference*, Montreal, Quebec, 1995.


5. The Crown Colony of British Columbia was proclaimed 19 November 1858 at Fort Langley, B.C.

6. The recent invasion by some 45,000 miners of the traditional lands of the Yanomami tribes people of Brazil and Venezuela is a recent example of land appropriation of Aboriginal peoples. Berwick notes that 'homen branco' is a term used throughout Latin America "to describe European culture, descent, or affiliation. It refers to a state of mind not to the colour of a person's skin." The "state of mind" of Americans, British, and other Europeans, for all the apparent divisions created by separate ethnicity, can be considered to have a common consensus among them on the question of resource exploitation. I, like Berwick, will use the term Whiteman, from time to time, as an equivalent generic term. See Dennison Berwick, *Savages: The Life and Killing of the Yanomami* (Toronto: MacFarlane Walter & Ross, 1992), 10.

7. For similar conflict between White miners and the Aborigines of Australia, see Ch. 3; "Conflict on the Mining Frontier, 1869-1897" in Noel Loos, *Invasion & Resistance: Aboriginal-European Relations on the Queensland Frontier, 1861-1897* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1982), 62-269. Thanks to Dianne Newell for directing my attention to this work.

9. The Oregon Boundary Settlement of 1846 established the 49th parallel west of the Rockies.


12. Ibid., 15-25 August 1855.

13. Kerns stated, "we arranged matters to raise a war next morning with them if they refused us their canoes to cross in... [a] big Dutchman (an old Texas ranger) took up and ordered the Indian to put across the river in a hurry, but the Indian thought he would show a little bravery by telling the dutchman plainly that he would not, whereupon the dutchman knocked him down. The Indian got up and came at him and the dutchman downed him again and asked for his gun to shoot him, but his demand not being supplied, he laid hold on the Indian and backed him down to the river to drown him... We looked for a regular battle, but the other Indians (about 100 in number) looked on without saying a word." Ibid., 7-9 September 1855. The next day Kern noted: "had some sport shooting sage hens and prairie chickens. Came near to shooting some Indians today for some of their meanness."

14. Ballou started the first Express Company in California before arriving in Seattle in 1857. Ballou's Pioneer Express was then begun on Fraser River in 1858 before being sold in 1863 to Deitz & Nelson, who in turn sold their business to Barnard's 'BX' line. Ballou then travelled to Idaho where he claims to have been elected a member of the Idaho Council. He also claimed to have journeyed with Mark Twain to Salt Lake City. H.H. Bancroft noted Ballou as "a spinner of great yarns. His sober tongue may have vibrated a little over the bounds of truth here." See "Adventures of William I. Ballou." Seattle: 1878. P-B/1 Bancroft Library.

15. Ibid.

16. Of the Fraser River diggings: "There is no question... [we] are a nation of filibusters. Show one of the universal Yankee fraternity where the almighty dollar is planted, and he's after it hot foot, no matter if he has to dig clams and scalp Indians in the chase. He is bound to have it. Jonathan is no respecter of persons...." in "Editor's Table," *Hutching's Illustrated California Magazine*, (August 1858) No. 26, pp. 92-93. Californians "were never guilty of neglecting a region simply because it did not fly the Stars and Stripes." Rodman W. Paul, "Old Californians' in British Gold Fields," *Huntington Library Quarterly* XVII:2 (1953-54): 161.

17. For an interesting account of how wagons were floated across the Columbia River, Fraser River bound, see Joel Palmer, "The Si-mil-ka-meen and Frazer River Gold Fields: Advantages of the Columbia River Route over
others for Travel and Commerce," 28 January 1860. Howay Reid Collection, Box 46:5 (Manuscript), University of British Columbia Special Collections.

18. Some more romanticised, jingoistic accounts inflate their numbers to as many as 800 miners forming a single armed-company. William Shannon, "Richard G. Willoughby" unpublished manuscript. BC Archives.

19. For a detailed example of volunteer troops mustered in this manner for waging war with Indians, see William N. Bischoff, We were not Summer Soldiers: The Indian War Diary of Plympton J. Kelly. 1855-1856 (Tacoma: Washington Historical Society, 1976). For an example of the large numbers & muster roll listings of volunteer veterans in the Native-White conflicts of Oregon, see Frances Fuller Victor, The Early Indian Wars of Oregon from the Oregon Archives and other original sources (Salem, Oregon: Frank C. Baker, 1894). In the case of Washington Territory, see Washington Territorial Volunteers' Papers: Indian War Muster Rolls, 1855-1856 (Office of the Secretary of State, Archives & Records Management: 1990).

20. For an accounting of these battles by the commanding general of the U.S. Army, see Thomas W. Prosch, "The Indian War of 1858" Washington Historical Quarterly (Oct. 1907-July 1908), hereafter cited as WHQ. and T.C. Elliot, "Steptoe Butte and Steptoe Battle-field" WHQ Vol. XVIII (1927). See also, "Later from Oregon: The Frazer River and Fort Colvile Mines" Bulletin, 22 May 1858, p.3 where Steptoe's campaign is first announced as preserving "that quietness which is essential to the rapid development of our rich upper country."

21. Shannon, "Richard Willoughby," p. 11. "A requisition was immediately made upon the commanding officers of the military posts of fort Steilacoom and fort Vancouver...to furnish protection to such persons as might be traveling to, or returning from the Colvile mines." Acting Gov. Charles Mason, 7 December 1855. See Gates, Messages of the Governors of the Territory of Washington, 17.

22. David McLoughlin was the son of Dr. John McLoughlin, Governor of the HBC west of the mountains and considered the "Father of Oregon."


25. The bluff at the entrance to 'McLoughlin Canyon', although largely reduced by later railway construction along the Okanogan River, still bears many ancient rock-writings of these Native peoples; their signs of ownership clearly visible today, as undoubtedly in 1858. The canyon, near present-day Tenasket, is an awe-inspiring natural corridor that was used by HBC trappers and thousands upon thousands of miners making their way to the Fraser gold fields.

26. Frost's views are representative of the Oregon contingent in the McLoughlin party and states that there were approximately 150 men, whereas Willoughby was a member of the California contingent that joined them. Willoughby's memory glorifies and embellishes the McLoughlin Canyon event, evident in the fact that he claimed 800 men participated accompanied by 2000 pack animals.


30. "The Yakima Expedition," The *Weekly Oregonian*, 14 August 1858. This article gives a complete listing of all the miners who enlisted in companies A through F, their place of origin, and a tallying of rifles, revolvers, horses and provisions for each company forming the expedition. An editorial in The *San Francisco Bulletin* under the title "The New Northern Mines . . ." notes the Robertson party's hostile encounter with natives on the Columbia River were 20 Indians where apparently either killed or wounded. 19 July 1858, p. 2. The *Oregonian* establishes that Reinhart's party was indeed led by Capt. Robertson, not Robinson as Doyce Nunis, editor of *The Golden Frontier*, has suggested. See p. 131n.

31. Reinhart, 120.

32. Ibid., 126

33. Reinhart thought that 10 or 12 Natives must have been killed and a similar number wounded, "a deed Californians should ever be ashamed of, without counting the consequences." Ibid., 126-27. Also see, Peter Carstens, *The Queen's People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accommodation among the Okanagan of Canada* (Toronto & London: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 29-53.

34. James Teit noted these attacks: "Some of the overland parties proceeded from California and Oregon to the Fraser River gold-diggings in 1858-1860, when passing through the Okanagan country, were attacked and harassed by the natives, who opposed their passage at some points by erecting breastworks and shooting from them, setting fire to the grass, stampeding horses, picking off stragglers, and even attacking camps. In one instance a large White party [David McLoughlin] was driven to the river and forced to cross. A number of Whites were killed in these skirmishes." Teit, *The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus*. Ed. Franz Boas. Vol 45, Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology. (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1930), 198-294.

35. Reinhart, 130.


39. Beam to Ebey, 20 August 1858, Puget Sound Bar, Fraser River. Winfield Scott Ebey Papers, Incoming Correspondence. UWL Archives.

40. "This flooding of the country with strangers may have a tendency to rouse the whole northern Indians to an active spirit of hostility, the consequences of which will be truly disastrous to the Whites; as much blood will be spilt before an opening can be affected to the [Fraser] mines." See, James Beith, Letter book (1854-
1867), 10 July 1858, pp. 27-29. Bancroft Library.


45. Reinhart, 130 and 135. Yale Bar is at the site of present day Yale, B.C., the location of Fort Yale, an HBC post established in 1848.

46. "Reported Bloody Fight with the Indians on Thompson River," Bulletin, 7 September 1858, p. 3. As found in Yreka Union, 2 September 1858.

47. Elsewhere, Chief Tolo is noted as the head of the Tribe in the country around Yreka, Northern California, though he certainly seems to have had connections to the Scott Valley Tribe, too. See "The Rogue River War" in Glassley, Pacific Northwest Indian Wars, 62-63.

48. A Spokane Native is said to have been mining on the Fraser in early 1858. See "Later from Washington Territory and the British Possession," Bulletin, 3 May 1858, p. 3. There is much evidence to state the obvious, that Natives on either side of the border were in communication with each other. For instance, see Gates, Messages of the Governors of the Territory of Washington, 20, 43 & 50-51.

49. "Indian Difficulties on Fraser River," Bulletin, 1 September 1858, p. 3. With regard to the charge of treason, the reporter continued "a crime which less profound statesmen than his Excellency might imagine none but subjects could commit."


51. The Stó:lo peoples live along the lower reaches of the Fraser River and are neighbours to the Yale First Nation and the Nlaka'pamux who live beyond. The cultural dividing line between these two peoples occurs approximately in the vicinity of Spuzzum.

52. "The Federal Government and the Northern Indians," Bulletin, 20 May 1858, p. 2. "Heretofore these Indians do not seem to have been guilty of any overt acts of hostility, that had not been provoked by the acts of bad whites."

54. "Indian Troubles on the Columbia -- Great loss of U.S. Soldiers," *Bulletin*, 31 May 1858, p. 2. This paper reported that 50 men and 3 officers were killed in the battle. See also "Letter from Fort Hope, Fraser River," *Bulletin*, 31 May 1858, p. 2.

55. *Papers Relative to the Affairs of British Columbia* Part I (London: 1859), 16.


57. "People crazy to get to the new mines should not over look the fact that mining amid a swarm of hostile Indians, is a very different thing from mining in California." See "Take It Coolly," (editorial) *Bulletin*, 7 June 1858, p. 2. Of the general panic to be the first on the ground, Pennsylvanian Joseph Haller wrote from San Francisco: "I will be on the Frayer River on 4th July, and probably digging gold. . . If anybody wants to come over here from there he had better come right away; there is supposed to be far more gold than there has ever been in California." Joseph Haller (1858-1866), Cariboo Letters. Vancouver City Archives, Vancouver, B.C.

58. The practice of mascarading as non-Americans was quite common in both Eastern Washington territory & British Columbia. Roderick Finlayson, stationed at Fort Colvile claimed that HBC Brigades were never interfered with by Native peoples whereas "the sight of an American was shot down at once." Finlayson, "The History of Vancouver Island and the Northwest Coast," Reminiscences (1878). Bancroft Library.

59. Reminiscences of Lucius Samuel Edelblute. BC Archives. 'Boston Men' and 'King George's Men' were terms used by Native peoples to describe the American and English sea otter traders during the 18th century, terms still used at the time of the 1858 gold rush.

60. T.A. Rickard, "Indian Participation in the Gold Discoveries," *BCHQ* II (1938), pp. 3-18.


62. Douglas to Labouchere, 6 April 1858 (No. 8), *Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold*, 10. Of gold discoveries made by Native peoples, see Rickard, "Indian Participation in the Gold Discoveries," p. 9.

63. "The Indian chief's name is Hi-He. He is one of the finest looking Indians I ever saw. . . We have taken up nineteen claims on the bar, and named it Spring Bar." H.M. Snyder was writing as of 17 July 1858. "Editor of the San Francisco Bulletin," *Bulletin*, 2 August 1858, p. 2. See also H.M. Snyder, "Letter from Fraser River," *Bulletin*, 18 August 1858, p. 3. For conflict between White miners and Natives south of Fort Langley see "Serious Trouble with Indians on the Lower Fraser," *Bulletin*, 2 August 1858, p. 3.


66. "He was finally released and allowed to go to the fort. He remained there about ten days, during which time a party of eight half-breeds arrived there from Thompson river, with a large quantity of gold dust which they had dug there since last fall. . .". See "The Gold Mines and the Hostile Indians in Washington Territory," *Bulletin*, 19 August 1858, p. 3.
An excellent example of an unfounded rumour fuelled by newspapers occurred in the Dakota Territory in 1867. This particular Indian "massacre" of White settlers received national coverage for almost a month before it was finally viewed as a hoax. Robert G. Athearn, "The Fort Buford 'Massacre,'" Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLI (March 1955): 675-84. Also see, James L. Thane, Jr., "The Montana 'Indian War' of 1867," Arizona and the West, X (Summer 1968): 153-70. My thanks to Professor Brian Dippie, University of Victoria, for drawing my attention to the above articles.


The article also noted: "The Chinamen are getting a bad odour here, some of them having been caught selling guns, powder and shot to the Indians. The consequence is that no Chinaman is allowed to go up the river past New York Bar, a mile above here [Fort Yale], by the miners." With respect to the deaths of the two Frenchmen, the correspondent credited the information to two other members of the mining party, Messieurs A. Camels and Francois Moran.


James Douglas noted the deaths of the two Frenchmen by Nlaka'pamux Natives in his diary entry, 14 July 1858. Yet he was noticeably silent throughout official and non-official documents with regard to the large-scale violence that was to ensue, most likely as it would have provided evidence for limited British sovereignty and that British colonial authority was being severely undermined by a foreign mining population. See "Diary of Gold Discovery on Fraser's River in 1858," BC Archives. Ovid Allard, the HBC trader at Fort Yale wrote to Douglas about the conflict. Allard to Douglas, 20 August 1858. CC. BC Archives.


Unless otherwise noted, most of the information found here is in "Taken from Edward Stout at Yale, British Columbia," 14 May 1908. E/E/St71. BC Archives.

A more detailed version of Ned Stout's account is found in "Reminiscences by Edward Stout of Yale, B.C." E/E/St71. BC Archives. It is difficult to determine how accurate this account is in that some of the basic details have been elaborated on to such an extent that the interviewer may have embellished Stout's story. Stout, in later life, would be interviewed by a number of people interested in Fraser River War and, as time went on, the number of deaths of his own mining party seems to have increased. See W.W. Walkem, Stories of Early British Columbia (Vancouver: New Advertiser, 1914). I have decided to use Stout's first interview conducted by the province in 1908 (the 50th anniversary of the Fraser River gold rush) as it seems to be less embellished. Stout claimed that he and his party sought refuge from Native attack in a cave somewhere on the Fraser River above Boston Bar. Stout also stated that many of his party were killed at this place, Stout being one of the few survivors. This portion of Stout's story may be plausible if Francis Wolff's recollections are examined. Having travelled to Fraser River from Fort Colvile, Wolff was informed of the war on Fraser River, and apparently joined in with volunteer forces at Yale. "On arriving there," he stated, "we joined the volunteers and assisted in cleaning out the Indians, seeing at one place in a cave 16 dead miners mutilated...". Francis Wolff, "Ambush at McLaughlin Canyon and other Adventures of Francis Wolff," Okanogan County Heritage II:3 (June 1964): 11.


80. Letter from Capt. Snyder, "The Indian Difficulties," Gazette, 24 August 1858, p. 3. Note: 'rancheries' or 'rancherias' was a Spanish term used in California to describe Native village sites.

81. Kowpelst, or ‘Copals’ as he was referred to in press reports, was a chief of the Spuzzum peoples. See Andrea Laforet and Annie York, Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 1808-1939 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998), 51.


83. Gazette, 24 August 1858, p. 2. Capt. Rouse's company "killed, in all, some thirty-one Indians -- as reported by the Indians themselves." See "Letter from Fort Yale," Gazette, 1 September 1858, p. 2. Also see "Another Letter from Fort Yale," Gazette, 1 September 1858, where it states: "The chief says that 31 warriors and 5 chiefs have been killed; he does not know how many whites." On p. 3 of same issue Capt. Snyder reported that Rouse had "indiscriminately killed some 31 Indians, the most of whom had always been friendly to the whites. . .". Robin Fisher mistakenly referred to this period of conflict as "a potentially ugly situation. . . . The miners at Yale formed themselves into volunteer companies to take reprisals against Indians up river. There was wild talk about exterminating the Indians, but these militia units involved themselves more in bravado than in action." The foregoing suggests that there was much more than 'bravado' occurring along the Fraser River in 1858. Fisher, Contact & Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1977), 99.

84. The correspondent for the Gazette wrote, "It is hard to tell here, whether there is going to be a general war between the miners and Indians or not." See "News of the Morning," Gazette, 24 August 1858, p. 2.

85. Tom G. Todd, Fort Yale, to Charlie M. Dewey, Placer County, California, 18 August 1858. My sincere thanks to Robert Chandler, Historical Services, Wells Fargo Bank Archives, San Francisco, for this very pertinent and telling letter that he discovered in their private collections.

86. Beam Diary, 18 August 1858.

87. Beam Diary, 21 August 1858.

with locks of hair from the enemy’s scalp, from the longest of which they made belts and braids, with the addition sometimes of eagle-feathers."

89. In addition to articles found throughout the San Francisco Bulletin and the Victoria Gazette, as well as many other Pacific Northwest newspapers that note instances of beheaded miners being pulled from the Fraser River, there is also the diary & letters of Captain George Wesley Beam, the Reminiscences of Billy Ballou, Edward Stout, William Yates, H.F. Reinhart, Frank Tarbell, Thomas Spence and many others. In the case of Thomas Spence, a veteran of a filibustering campaign in Sonora, Mexico, and later immortalized in the town today know as Spence’s Bridge, he claimed that there were upwards of two hundred decapitated bodies taken from the river, but nowhere have I found this extreme number confirmed. See Arthur Wellesley Vowell and Thomas Spence, “Mining Districts of British Columbia,” 1878. Reminiscences. PC/28. Bancroft Library.

90. Radcliffe Quine to his brother John, 22 March 1878, Seattle. Oregon Historical Society Library.


92. Ovid Allard to Chief Trader James M. Yale, stated that the salmon trade at Fort Yale was effectively suspended and Native labourers for the transport of goods to Fort Langley were not to be found as the “Indians are so much afraid” due to warring action of White miners. At the same time, Allard also noted that some 400 miners had left the Fraser in the previous four days, presumably due to the heightened conflict. Allard to Yale, 20 August 1858. Fort Langley, Correspondence In, 1844-1870. Hudson’s Bay Company Archives.

93. Beam Diary, 22 August and 25 August 1858.

94. “Miners Meeting at Fort Hope,” Bulletin, 1 September 1858, p. 3.


96. Ibid.

97. Ibid. The committee included of J.D. Galbraith, J.C. Rice, W.T. Knox, A.J. Weaver and Dr. R.W. Murphy.

98. Ibid.

99. Ibid. A Mr. Burch and [J.C.] Rice were selected to go to Fort Langley. Richard Hicks, the lone British gold commissioner, wrote to Chief Trader James Yale, “to my great surprise and sorrow have been informed that you have been sent to for Arms, &c, to fight the poor indians. . . . [I] trust you will not forward any arms whatever should any thing of the sort be wanted I will immediately make the application to you myself with every particular.” Hicks to Yale, 22 August 1858. Fort Langley, Correspondence In, 1844-1870. HBCA.

100. Ibid.

101. “To His Excellency Jas. Douglas, Governor of Vancouver Island, etc.,” Bulletin, 2 September, 1858, p. 3.

102. George Wesley Beam to Winfield Scott Ebey, Puget Sound Bar, 20 August 1858.

103. Beam Diary, 23 August 1858. Beam noted 24 August, “Two more men picked up with their heads off.” 27 August, “Picke[d] up a man at Hill’s Bar [and] supposed he had drowned.”

105. “Narrative of a Voyage to Victoria, V.I.” *Bulletin*, 7 September 1858, p. 1. Major Mortimer Robertson’s party of 350 miners headed for Fraser River is mentioned in this article. See also, “Overland Travel of Miners through Northern California and Oregon, to Thompson River,” *Bulletin*, 7 September 1858, p. 3. In this letter from George Armstrong a miners’ militia with 150 members is mentioned.


107. For a detailed account of Colonel Wright’s campaigns in the Yakima and Coeur D’Alene Wars, see Glassley, *Pacific Northwest Indian Wars* (Portland: Binford & Mort, 1953), 143-150.


113. “General Palmer’s Command -- The Columbia Valley Open to Fraser River,” *Bulletin*, 16 October 1858, p. 3.


115. Joel Palmer’s 1858 wagon train was seen floating down Okanagan Lake on rafts by John Callbreath who recorded it in a letter to his mother. See Callbreath, Bancroft Library.


117. Allard to Douglas, 20 August 1858, CC. BC Archives. The disarming of the Yale First Nation is confirmed by Captain George Beam: “They have taken the arms from the Indians at Fort Yale so they would not join the hostiles...”. See Beam to Ebey, 20 August 1858.

118. "From the Mines," *Gazette*, 24 August 1858, p. 2. One of the greatest indications of the American presence on Fraser River are the great number of California-like gold rush bar place names that existed. Here is a sampling of those that reflect American nationality: Fifty-Four Forty Bar, Santa Clara Bar, American Bar, Yankee Doodle Bar, Eagle Bar, Sacramento Bar, Texas Bar, Ohio Bar, New York Bar, Washington Bar, and Boston Bar.

119. Ibid.
120. "An Indian War Broken Out," 1 September 1858, p. 2, and found under "Armed Companies Proceeding up the River." The Chasseur de Vincennes was a massive French fortress and the Zouaves were well-known Papal Guards. My thanks to Mark Cox for this.


122. Allard to Douglas, 20 August 1858. CC. BC Archives.

123. H.M. Snyder, Capt. of the Pike Guards & Commander of Company, to James Douglas, Governor of Vancouver Island, 28 August 1858. CC. BC Archives. The campaign lasted from the 16th to the 26th of August and the other officers elected were John Gordon, 1st Lieutenant; P.M. Warner, 2nd Lieutenant; D. McEachern, Orderly Sargeant; and P. Gascoigne, Quarter Master.

124. Snyder issued a "certificate of membership" to each of the men who enlisted under his command during the ten day campaign up the Fraser River.

125. Edward McGowan stated that his close friend Martin Gallagher was in command of one of the companies that went up the Fraser. His jingoistic recollections suggested that: "Two companies, of one hundred men each, were organized to proceed up the river and teach these Indians a lesson. Martin Gallagher was placed in command of one of the companies, and a man by the name of Snyder, an old San Franciscan, of the other. They stole a forced march on the Indians and surprised them. As soon as the fighting commenced, the Indians placed their squaws in front, thinking the miners would not fire on them. After a few volleys they raised a white flag. A number of bucks and squaws had been killed. . . . An Indian who had escaped to a mountain exhibited his contempt for the clutchmen [calling the Americans women] by making indecent signs . . . . An old Missourian in Snyder's company had one of the old-fashioned hunting rifles he called 'Betsy;' he stepped out saying: 'I think I can save that varmint!' levelled his piece and brought him down. This threw consternation among the Indians, and peace was made with them." Edward McGowan, "Reminiscences: Unpublished Incidents in the Life of the 'Ubiquitous.' The Argonaut, 1 June 1878. M/454 BC Archives.

126. Snyder to Douglas, 28 August 1858. The result of Snyder's speech is that a further 31 miners joined his command for a total of 82 men. This occurred near present-day Spuzzum (meaning 'little Flat') at the south side of the confluence of Spuzzum and Fraser Rivers. The company known as the 'Whatcom Guards' under the leadership of Capt. Graham were for total extermination.

127. Allard to Douglas, 20 August 1858. CC. BC Archives.


129. Laforet and York, Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 55.


131. Yates recalled: "He sent me with a party of 25 to follow him up and ask him what he meant by not sticking to his promise. He told the head of my party to tell our captain Sneider [sic] that he was on his way to hell and he hoped that he would be following him." Ibid.

132. Snyder to Douglas, 28 August 1858. CC. BC Archives.
The HBC Brigade Trail was located by A.C. Anderson in 1848. It climbs the mountain, which is to say, out of the canyon at present-day Alexandra Lodge where portions of this historic route may still be traversed.

“The indians had nothing but the old fashioned Hudsons Bay guns those days.” Yates Reminiscences.

Snyder to Douglas, 28 August 1858.

My thanks to Andrea for having shared this important point with me some years ago prior to the recent publication of her book. See Laforet and York, Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 55-56. At the same time, I can not agree with her assessment that the killing of Graham and his 1st Lieutenant looked “suspiciously like a garden-variety homicide by one of Graham’s companions.” I believe that Snyder’s words to Douglas combined with Andrea Laforet’s own insight into the important role played by Nlaka’pamux emissaries suggests otherwise, especially in terms of the larger, and until now, untold context of this chapter.

Ibid.


H.M. Snyder, "Letter from Fort Yale, Fraser River," Bulletin, 25 September 1858, p. 2. Snyder claimed, “Spintlum -- is one of the finest-looking Indians that I have ever seen. He appears to have great control and influence over the different tribes. He made two speeches to the Indians. His manner of speaking is calm and cool, though with a great deal of force.”

Snyder to Douglas, 28 August 1858. The letter of proceedings is recorded in "Massacre of Forty-Five Miners by Indians," Gazette, 25 August 1858, p. 2. The "treaty" was subsequently shown to Graham of the Whatcom Guards, "The Story of the Massacre of the Forty-Three White Men Untrue," Gazette, 26 August 1858, p. 2.


"Latest News from the Fraser River: Indian Hostilities -- Prospects of the Diggings," Bulletin, 2 September 1858, p. 3. Same article noted an additional five corpses picked up from the River about Fort Yale, swelling the number to thirteen. Also see, "To Our Atlantic Readers," Bulletin, 4 September 1858, p.1 where is stated, "Since the formation of the treaty no outrages had been committed. But as the presence of the miners on the bars and banks of the Fraser river interfere with salmon fisheries which are the chief dependency . . . for food, it is certain that serious difficulties must hereafter be continual between them and the miners.”


"The Coming of the White Man" as told by Mary Williams (Translated by Mamie Henry) in Darwin Hanna and Mamie Henry, Eds. Our Tellings: Interior Salish Stories of the Nlha7kápmx People (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996), 130-31.
147. For thousands of miners who had been waiting months for the Fraser to fall in order to gain access to the gravel bars, Snyder's expeditious plan to conclude peace instead of costly war was most welcome. See the special correspondent's "Account of Capt. Snyder's Expedition," Gazette, 1 September 1858, p. 3. For a latter-day, perhaps embellished, account by a gold miner who was in open armed-conflict with Natives on Thompson and Fraser and who claimed to have been rescued by the timely appearance of the Snyder Expedition, see Ned Stout's account entitled "A Pioneer of '58," in Walkem, Stories of Early British Columbia, 51-62. Stout claimed in later years that of his party "only four of the twenty-six survived the war with the Indians on Fraser River." For other references to the war see, "Indian Troubles," Ibid., 9-11. Vowell & Spence, "Mining Districts of British Columbia," (1878) Reminiscences, pp. 9-10. Bancroft Library. Alexander Allan, "Cariboo and the Mines of British Columbia," (1878) Reminiscences, pp. 5-6. Bancroft Library. Radcliffe Quinn, 3 letters 1861-1878, OHS Library. Billy I. Ballou, "The Adventures of Billy I. Ballou," (1878) Reminiscences. Bancroft Library. Allard to Douglas, 20 August 1858, CC. BC Archives. George Wesley Beam Diary (1858), UWL Archives. Alfred Waddington, The Fraser Mines Vindicated, or The History of Four Months (Victoria, B.C.: De Garro, 1858), 37. Edward McGowan devoted considerable space to the Fraser River War in his Reminiscences. He wrote, in part, "Several Americans who had gone up the river prospecting were murdered, their heads cut off. . . . This was done in order to deter others from making inroads into the Indian country." McGowan, "Reminiscences: Unpublished Incidents in the Life of the 'Ubiquitous,'" The Argonaut (May-June 1878). BC Archives. Other references to this conflict will be found throughout this dissertation.


149. As transcribed by the author. The monument to Spintlum's memory was dedicated 16 April 1927.

150. In re-examining these words, I believe that Spintlum had more than one meeting with vice-regal authorities, having met with the Marquis of Lorne, Governor General of Canada, in the later 19th century, and possibly Lorne's predecessor, Lord Dufferin. These different vice-regal meetings seem to have fused into a single story of meeting the representative of the "Great White Mother," or Queen Victoria. In 1946, Chief Andrew Paull, then President of the North American Indian Brotherhood, stated that "Queen Victoria sent the Marquis of Lorne to Chief Spintlum with a flag and a bible and sword to ratify this early treaty." Certainly, the Spintlum monument is inscribed with the images of these gifts. Yet, the early "unwritten treaty" that Paull spoke of is in reference to Spintlum's participation in the Fraser River War, his meeting with Captain Snyder, and undoubtedly, the later meeting he had with Governor James Douglas. Paull further stated: "The white men came up the Fraser River as far as Yale where they were picking gold dust, and these professional prospectors said, ‘There must be some nuggets up there'; but Chief Spintlum and 4,000 Indians said, ‘You are not going up there.’ Well, they made an agreement to the effect that these white men could go up there on certain conditions which were dictated by Chief Spintlum; and if the Indian committed a crime no white man could take the Indian from his reserve and put him in the hands of the law without the consent of the Chief. The treaty was ratified." Considering that these miners' militias were in pursuit of "Indian perpetrators" and had already brought a number of Natives into Fort Yale for "Justice," Paull's reference to Spintlum not allowing any of his people to be taken from the "reserve" and placed "in the hands of the law without the consent of the Chief," suggests that the Snyder-Spintlum compact was much more than simply overwhelming Native peoples with superior fire power. It was, in fact, a treaty between "equals." See testimony of Andrew Paull, Meeting No. 9. Minutes of Proceedings. The Special Joint Committee of the senate and House of Commons appointed to examine and consider the Indian Act. (27 June 1946): 422-43. My sincere thanks to Adrian Clark for having brought this important document to my attention.

151. "Later from the Northern Waters: Departure of Governor Douglas for Fraser River," Bulletin, 6 September 1858, p. 3. See also, Douglas to Lytton, 12 October 1858, No. 3, CO 60/1, p. 213. PRO.
152. Douglas wrote, “an alarming report reached this place of the murder of 42 miners by the Indians of 
Fraser’s River . . . That alarming report has since been contradicted . . . I am nevertheless preparing for an 
excursion to Fraser’s River, with a small military force of 35 men . . . for the maintenance of peace and good 
order among the motley population of foreigners . . . The military force is absurdly small for such an occasion, 
but I shall use every exertion in my power to accomplish the great object in view, and to assert the rights of 
my Country, in hopes that early measures will be taken by Her Majesty’s Government to relieve the country 
from its present perilous state.” Douglas to Lord Stanley, 27 August 1858, CO 60/1, p. 129. PRO.


154. J.C. Prevost, Captain of HMS Satellite, stated, “It is reported that in consequence of the naked and 
headless bodies of two white men, supposed to be Frenchmen, having been picked up floating down the stream, 
a large body of Frenchmen, said to number about 120, had organized themselves and determined upon 
immediate Retribution. They proceeded up the river to a considerable distance above Fort Yale (about 130 
miles from its entrance) and dividing themselves into two parties had descended the river, one party along one 
bank, and the other party by the other bank, Shooting every Indian that they met with. . . it is undoubtedly 
of the highest importance for the preservation of life and order, and of national prestige, that a large body of 
regularly organised & disciplined Troops should without delay be sent to the country.” Prevost to Rear 
Admiral Robert Lambert Baynes, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Station, 31 August 1858. Enclosure 
contained in William Govet Romaine, Secretary to the Admiralty, to Herman Merivale, Under-Secretary of 
State for the Colonies, 15 October 1858. CO 60/2, p. 31. PRO.

155. Douglas to Lytton, 9 September 1858, No. 39, CO 60/1 p. 156. PRO.

156. Ibid., 5 September 1858.

157. Ibid.

158. Teit, Mythology of the Thompson Indians, 412.

159. Ethnographer James Teit recorded Spintelum’s [Cixpē’ntlam] own description of the four posts that 
delineated the traditional lands of the Nlaka’pamux such that, “One post up the Fraser at [La Fontaine] -- one 
down the Fraser at Spuzzum -- one up the Thompson River at Ashcroft -- one up the Nicola River at Quilchena 
-- one down the Similkameen River at Tcutcuwixa [near Hedley]. All the country between these posts is my 
country and the lands of my people. At Lytton is my centrepost. It is the middle of my house, and I sit there. 
All the country to the headwaters of all the streams running into the valleys between these posts is also our 
territory in which my children gather food. We extend to meet the boundaries of the hunting territories of other 
tribes all around over all this country I have spoken of, I have jurisdiction. I know no white man’s boundaries 
or posts. If the whites have put up posts and divided my country, I do not recognize them. They have not 
consulted me. They have broken my house without my consent. All Indian tribes have the same as posts and 
recognize boundaries, and the chiefs know them since long before the first whites came to the country.” My 
thanks to Wendy Wickwire for the above quote taken from Teit, unpublished field notes, (1898-1918).
American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, and found in Michael M’Gonigle and Wendy Wickwire, Stein: 

160. Douglas to Lytton, 12 October 1858, No. 3, CO 60/1, p. 213. PRO.

161. Lytton to Douglas, 31 July 1858, No. 6, CO 410/1, p. 147. PRO.
162. Lytton to Douglas, 2 September 1858, No. 12. This despatch and the enclosure which contained the letter from the *Aborigines Protection Society* has been reprinted in *Papers Connected with the Indian Land Question, 1850-1875* (Victoria, B.C.: Government Printer, 1875), 12-14.

163. Douglas to Lytton, 5 November 1858, No. 17. CO 60/1, p. 366. PRO. It took Douglas thirteen further despatches before he buried the following brief entry within the text of an exceedingly long report: “Some trouble had arisen between the Miners and Indians, which was however fortunately arrested after a loss of several lives on both sides.” Douglas was perhaps covering himself in the event that the *Aborigines Protection Society* might discover the truth of events and wonder why he had remained silent. Douglas to Lytton, 9 November 1858, No. 30. CO 60/1, p. 400. PRO.

164. Ibid. Carnarvon appended his note to the Douglas despatch, 18 January 1858. Lytton’s instruction to print followed, 19 January 1858.

165. Hamar Foster has suggested that the “first missed opportunity” was much later in 1875. See “Missed Opportunities” in Foster, “Honouring the Queen’s Flag: A Legal and Historical Perspective on the Nisga’a Treaty,” *BC Studies* No. 120 (Winter: 1998-99): 11-36.

166. Ibid. Reported on same day, “From Oregon: Progress of Indian War,” *Bulletin*, 6 September 1858, p. 3.

167. “Saw at Hope Governor Douglass and some thirty soldiers on their way up the River to make peace with the Indians.” George Wesley Beam, 5 September 1858. Beam Diary. UW Archives.

168. “Latest News Direct from Fraser River,” *Bulletin*, 25 September 1858, p. 2. Captain H.M. Snyder noted, “The chief from the head of the Big Canon, where all the trouble was, came down here [Fort Yale] this morning to see Governor Douglas.”

169. Ibid.

170. During the McKenna-McBride Royal Commission on Indian Affairs (1913-1916) Chief George of the Boston Bar Band gave testimony that the original reserve promised by James Douglas in 1859 had not been kept: “It was when the first white men came here, we were at war, when they were killing us off. In the spring there was an agreement made between the Queen’s officers and Chief Pellock.” See *Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia*, testimony of Chief George, 17 November 1913, North Bend, B.C.

171. "Disempowered communities often preserved considerable autonomy for themselves by maintaining control over an isolated geographic space. The evolution of such enclaves, and of their complex relations to the society around them, is a crucial story that scholars are just beginning to explore." William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, "Becoming West: Toward a New Meaning for Western History," in Cronon, Miles and Gitlin, *Under An Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past* (New York & London: W.W. Norton, 1992), 19.
You can not ascend the mountains, towards the mining towns or pass from one mining camp to another, without noticing the contrast in the scenes around you to anything you ever saw before. . . Men met in groups packing their provisions; then a train of Indians. . . Anon you met throngs of Chinamen packing up the river; they pass and greet you in broken English with, 'how do you do John,' . . . . Next comes the Negro, with a polite 'good morning sar,' or Chileano, Mexican or Kanaka, each with a heavy load.

-- Victoria Gazette (1858)

In describing the Fraser River gold rush most academics have been content to offer the image of as many as thirty thousand miners descending upon New Caledonia, all of them 'Old Californians' of primarily Anglo-American origin. Certainly, as this dissertation has illustrated, one of the principal cultural forces that existed during this time was that of the Californian world, in addition to the fur trade and British worlds described in previous chapters. These three worlds together represented the dominant political, economic and social influences that defined the cataclysmic year of 1858, yet to the exclusion of racial and ethnic minorities that had also joined the rush north. One of the most permanent indications of this racial and ethnic diversity can still be found today in the place names that continue to exist along the banks of the Fraser River -- names such as China Bar, Kanaka Bar, or Nicaragua Bar -- yet names that are but a mere residue of the flood tide of the California mining frontier that receded as quickly as it had risen to encompass British Columbia. This chapter examines the place names that existed in 1858-59, far greater in number then, as evidence for the
multi-ethnic and racial composition of the British Columbia rush, and more particularly, as evidence of ethnic and racial segregation imbedded into the very geography of this waterway. California mining culture appropriated the Native landscape contained in the linear corridor of the Fraser, and ethnic and racial animosity indicative of the California gold fields was also exported to British Columbia and found in the myriad of gold rush bar names stretching from south of Fort Hope to just North of Lillooet.

These landmark names are explored as the spatial-discursive forms that the gold mining culture used to stake-out its presence in the Fraser River corridor. This geographical naming is a process which Paul Carter defines as "transforming space into place, the intentional world of the texts." It is within this theoretical context that the historical significance of gold rush bar place names will be established. In addition, the existence of such place names today may be seen as both legitimizing the colonial presence along the Fraser River and the continued possession of Native lands and culture.

Many witnesses to the actual events of 1858 recorded the extent of ethnic and racial diversity. Landing at Victoria, James Bell wrote that "every country of the world seemed to be presented." Touring Yale in June 1858, Dr. Carl Friesach, a professor of mathematics and later Chief of the Observatory of Austria, believed that “It would be difficult to find in one place a greater mixture of different nationalities. Americans were in the majority -- California, especially had sent a large contingent. Then followed the Germans, French, and the Chinese. Next come Italians, Spaniards, Poles, etc. The feminine population consisted of only six.” Governor James Douglas was undoubtedly relieved to see such a cosmopolitan mix. "There is no congeniality of feeling among the emigrants," he initially concluded, “and provided there be no generally felt grievance to unite them
in one common cause there will, in my opinion, always be a great majority of the population ready to support the government."

If there was little rapport found among emigrants it can be safely assumed that such a representative sample of Californian society also embraced the racial and ethnic animosities for which California was famous. Like the Fraser River region, California too, represented all the nations of the world. J.S. Holliday's well-known work, *The World Rushed In*, aptly described the similar cultural geography of California while recalling the splendid diversity of gold rush place names of the past. "California's dynamic intermingling," he stated, "was colorfully reflected in the names of mining camps and towns: German Bar, Iowa Hill, Irish Creek, Cape Cod Bar, Tennessee Creek, Chinese Camp, Georgia Slide, Dutch Flat, French Corral, Michigan Bluffs, Illinois Town, Nigger Hill, Washington, Boston, Bunker Hill, Italian Bar, Dixie Valley, Vermont Bar and Kanaka Bar." Compare to this list the brief tallying of British Columbia bar names provided by Alfred Waddington to the *Victoria Gazette*, 15 September 1858. Waddington's reconnaissance of the gold fields examined a fourteen mile stretch of claims that ran from below Fort Hope to Fort Yale. At the commencement of his trip he related: "I now started in my canoe, (Sept. 7th) at 8 in the morning . . . and visited every bar in succession up to Fort Yale as follows: Fifty-Four Forty Bar, Union, Deadwood, Express, American, Puget Sound, Victoria, Yankee Doodle, Eagle, Alfred, Sacramento, Texas, Emory's, Rocky, Hill's, Casey, and Fort Yale." One can see by this list that many of the Fraser River names are not only as colourful as their Californian equivalents, but also reflect ethnicity. Yet they also give the impression of an American-dominated gold rush which is not completely accurate. There are, in fact, at least a hundred different gold bar names along the full extent of the Fraser between the years 1858-1859, and although only a few have found a permanent place in the
toponymy of the Fraser River landscape, many of the original names were neither American nor British in origin (Appendix E).

If the events of 1858 are followed more closely, it becomes apparent that there were two distinct periods in the initial year of the gold rush. There were also two distinct regions, both dictated by the natural flow of the Fraser and defined by the peculiar geography found above Fort Yale: two regions, two times, and two distinctly different human geographies.

Initial cartography of the Fraser River reflected the difficult terrain that early explorations encountered. In 1808, upon descending the watercourse of Hell's Gate and the approach to Black Canyon, Simon Fraser declared, "It is so wild that I cannot find words to describe our situation at times. We had to pass where no human being should venture...". David Thompson's map of this region recorded three separate portage sites required before navigation was again possible above Fort Yale. All subsequent maps pinpointed Fort Yale as the head of navigation for the Fraser due to the impassable nature of the falls above; particularly once the river swelled during late spring and summer. The falls between Spuzzum and Yale also seemed to have acted as a natural dividing line for rival Native groups. A.C. Anderson, the HBC's acknowledged authority on the geography of the region, claimed that "a ceaseless feud... prevail[ed] between the Couteau [Nlaka'pamux] and the lower Indians [Sto:lo], who differ from each other in many respects." Natives along the Upper Fraser and Thompson Rivers were much more militant towards the "Boston Men" who had attempted early intrusions into their country. When, as a consequence of unique geography and the potential enmity of the Nlaka'pamux, the gold rush commenced in spring of 1858, the vast majority of miners were prevented from prospecting further than the Fort Yale vicinity. Most remained within a short fourteen mile length of waterway below the falls. Prior to this point in time, the earliest non-Native
goldseekers on the Fraser, mainly from Washington and Oregon Territories, had worked their placer claims before the spring thaw and consequent rise in the river.\textsuperscript{14}

Individuals such as James Moore, one of the first from California, confirmed that any reconnaissance above Yale was essentially impossible until the retreat of summer flood conditions in late fall.\textsuperscript{15} Once news of Hill's Bar and other lucrative claims had reached the outside world, through newspaper reports printed in Pacific Northwest locales and subsequently reprinted by San Francisco editors, large numbers of Californian miners flooded into British Columbia at the same moment the Fraser deluged its banks.\textsuperscript{16} Then commenced a waiting game by those all too impatient to enter the Upper Country in order to stake-out the unclaimed stretches of river, the richest diggings along the lower Fraser already having been claimed. By July, as many as six thousand sojourned in Victoria, ready to embark at a moment's notice once the river had fallen.\textsuperscript{17} Moore claimed that at least twenty thousand lingered at Yale during the high water mark.\textsuperscript{18} California merchant James Bell described the scene. "Close above Yale, the river cuts its way through the Cascade Mountains, causing deep foaming chasms, inaccessible either by water, or land, thus have the body of miners been shut off from the Upper Country," stated Bell. "Last summer, there accumulated around Yale, an immense crowd of people. The River at the time was swelled to its greatest hight [sic], caused by the melting of snow on the mountains; The best diggings were all under water, provisions were scarce, consequently high in price. The snow covered Cascade Mountains frowned above, forbidding farther approach."\textsuperscript{19}

Bell, like Moore and others, verified that the river above Yale had been as yet "imperfectly explored" as late as spring of 1859.\textsuperscript{20} The Victoria Gazette reported that for those who waited at Yale for the waters to recede, "their patience [was] aggravated by the extraordinary success of a few more fortunate than themselves in a period of arrival or location of claims..."\textsuperscript{21} In addition to these hindrances, the Puget Sound Herald cautioned that at diggings immediately above Yale, Natives were
deemed "a little troublesome; imposing a tax of a blanket or a shirt on each miner who worked on the ground the Indians claimed."\(^{22}\) The temptation to risk the rapids above, and the unknown reception that might await them by Natives possibly more hostile to their trespasses, must have finally become unbearable to the many who forfeited their small savings made in California in order to reach the New Eldorado trumpeted by the San Francisco press.\(^{23}\) The Bellingham Bay editor for Whatcom's *Northern Light* chronicled the apparent futility of the situation. "Above that point, they cannot get," he warned, "on account of the water in the canyon. The whirlpools are frightful. They would swallow a canoe at once. A great many lives had already been lost by the utter recklessness of men. The Indians refusing to go on it, ought to be sufficient caution for white men. But 'Gold!' 'Gold!' is the cry; and they rush heedlessly on to death."\(^{24}\)

As we have seen, news of the gold discoveries had not reached California until March, and consequently, as the water rose, a flood tide of emigration began "at the most unpropitious moment . . . only to meet with discouragement and disappointment."\(^{25}\) With all the accessible gold rush bars on the lower Fraser taken, the newly arrived were confronted with three choices: either return to California, wait for months until the waters receded, or attempt to push on into the upper reaches of the river. For those few who elected the last alternative, Henry De Groot related that "all arrived so utterly impoverished, or completely broken down, as to be unfit to do anything."\(^{26}\) And yet, along with certain prospectors who climbed the river in early 1858, many goldseekers with less to lose were compelled to advance beyond Fort Yale.\(^{27}\) In particular were those individuals recently persecuted in the California gold fields -- individuals who undoubtedly preferred a universally-applied miner's license as instituted in New Caledonia to the California foreign miner's head tax.\(^{28}\) For such people, returning south was not an attractive option as xenophobic agitation started in 1849 and the early
1850s purged many 'aliens' from Californian mines. In 1858, J.C. Bryant, a Cornish miner who travelled to British Columbia via the circuitous route of the copper mines of Lake Superior, afterwards Nicaragua, and thence to Grass Valley, California, related a scene from Fort Hope that would not have been out of character had it occurred in the Golden State. Bryant watched as a boat approached near the banks of the HBC outpost carrying a large number of Chinese miners captained by a White man. He recounted that "as the boat with the Chinese crew came alongside of the bank, a crowd of Californians lined the top and declared that no Chinese would land there. The white man pleaded that he had been paid to transport these Chinese to Fort Hope . . . 'Well, it doesn't matter whether you are paid or not, no Chinese will land at Fort Hope. We'll see who is going to have the say about whether Chinese come here or not. We say they shall not,' said the Californian crowd."29

The Californians were overruled, however, as HBC Chief Trader Donald McLean happened to arrive on the scene, quickly enforcing HBC sovereignty, and inviting the Chinese to camp within the confines of the fort. Recent scholarship has drawn the conclusion that past conflict over Western resources was, in fact, more akin to 'race wars,' and it is likely that among those who remained on the Fraser after the exodus of Californians returning south, were those non-Anglo-Americans who undoubtedly recalled the ethnic and racial tensions that permeated the Sierra Nevada range.30

It was, of course, essentially Euro-Americans from Washington and Oregon Territories, some early Californians, in addition to former Hudson Bay Company employees, who secured the most profitable claims before the Fraser rose, thus preempting gold mining until fall of the year. That Anglo-American influence was most dominant in the lower Fraser River mines below Yale is made plainly evident by Figure 38 which illustrates the place names given to major gold rush bars in this
Figure 38. Gold Rush bar place names reflecting race and ethnicity, Fraser River, 1858. © Daniel P. Marshall.
region. To Alfred Waddington’s list may be added many more that confirm the Californian, but especially British and American control of this portion of the river. A more extensive ethnogeography of gold rush bar names is as follows: Cornish, Fifty-Four Forty, Canadian, Santa Clara, Eagle, American, Yankee Doodle, Texas, Sacramento, London, Ohio, Wellington, New York, Trafalgar, and Washington.

For those who managed to climb the Fraser while it was high, or those who waited patiently for water levels to recede along with a majority of disappointed Californians, Anglo-American dominance ceased to be the overwhelming force it had once been. Many Californians felt that the combination of high water and high prices, poor trails and poor climate, did make the Fraser River gold rush a complete humbug. The flood tide of Californians that eventually receded took with it the kind of Anglo-American dominance found in the Lower Mines, but not before having forced non-Anglo-Americans out of their space. The extraordinary geography of the Fraser River canyons, unlike the expansive gold fields of California, offered only one choice to disaffected miners -- only one direction for travel -- and that was to continue up the river. The upper Fraser mines awaited conquest by all those who did not share in the success of the Lower Mines; or more particularly, those made unwelcome by California mining society centred at Yale. Anxious to escape the discrimination of Fort Yale society, and driven by the commonly-held notion that fine placer gold necessarily indicated the existence of a upstream mother load, many must have felt compelled to break free from the constraints of the lower river into the higher reaches of unexplored terrain. Here, at least, might be offered prospects for gold and a certain degree of spatial autonomy. Unlike the lack of accommodation afforded by diggings in the Lower Mines, the bars above Spuzzum were largely separated by substantial distances, thus offering alienated miners some degree of peace from ethnic, indeed racial, intolerances.
Again, if we focus solely on those place names that reflect ethnic and racial identity we find evidence of a very different human geography above the dividing line of the Falls. Gold rush bar place names in this instance are: Dutch Bar, Nicaragua Bar, China Bar, Boston Bar, Italian Bar, Siwash Bar, Kanaka Bar, Mormon Bar, Spindulem Flat, French Bar, and Upper Mormon Bar. The anomalies in this decidedly non-Anglo-American list are obviously Boston Bar, and the two Mormon Bars. Boston Bar, still a major feature on the map today, was favourably situated across from the mouth of Anderson River where it enters the Fraser. It is probable that some of the earliest non-Native miners utilized A.C. Anderson's old HBC fur brigade trail to this point prior to the swelling of the Fraser in Summer of 1858, or possibly as part of the Whatcom Trail from Bellingham which in its second attempt at reaching the Fraser connected with existing HBC trails, ultimately to places above Yale like the Anderson River. Even so, this name stands in stark contrast to the rest of the list. Mormon Bar and Upper Mormon Bar at The Fountain -- the geographical limit of 1858 prospecting -- are not so unusual if one remembers that it is approximately around this time that U.S. Federal Troops had been ordered to invade Salt Lake City. Mormons, not generally liked by the rest of the American population, were persecuted until ultimately driven into the Utah desert. It is reasonable to assume that the cultural milieu of Anglo-American dominance on the lower Fraser would have discriminated against Mormons, as if they were, indeed, a race unto themselves. Siwash Bar and Spindulem [Spintlum] Flat (named for the powerful Native chief who met Captain Snyder at the grand council of war at Lytton), have been also included in this list as representative of the Native population that continued to practice placer mining.

At the same time, Anglo-American culture cannot be viewed as a cohesive and homogeneous whole. Texan, Bostonian, and Ohioan Americans were undoubtedly quite as divided, too. Charles Ferguson, a young Ohioan entering the gold fields of California, recalled how he passed several
camps of his fellow countrymen representing a variety of U.S. regions before joining a group of unknown Ohioans who welcomed him with open arms. Perhaps in this we have an explanation for the separateness of gold rush bar names like Texas Bar, Ohio Bar, New York Bar, and Boston Bar on the Fraser. Texas had only recently been admitted to the Union, and the American Civil War would shortly divide North and South even further. These tensions must have contributed to the regional pride reflected in gold rush place names. Still, there was undoubtedly more that held Americans together, in general, compared to those outside their citizenship. If nothing else, there existed a consensus with regard to resource development and exploitation.

In Yale mining society, Californian ways had become well rooted. Certainly the combined forces of the Royal Engineer Corps, Royal Navy, Hudson's Bay Company, and colonial British rule ultimately tempered American enthusiasm. Yet the presence of the infamous Ned McGowan and members of the Vigilance Committee of San Francisco, along with Californian merchants, explorers, engineers, saloon-keepers and newspaper reporters made the lower Fraser a natural extension of the Californian world -- especially with so many claiming that the Lower Mines were inside American Territory. With such a secure sense of place established, even in a foreign landscape, the designation of various gold rush bars with names like "Fifty-Four Forty" were not only jingoistic pronouncements to the non-American mining community (that a Californian culture had arrived on the scene), but the act of naming was, in effect, the appropriation of the Fraser River's landscape, perhaps even an assertion of near-sovereign control. Naming legitimated the Californian presence in a British colony in the same way that earlier HBC naming of forts and landmarks authenticated the monopoly's claim to Aboriginal lands.
An examination of early maps produced before and after the 1858 Fraser River gold rush affirm this appropriation of landscape. "Maps are never value-free images," advises J.B. Harley, but "part of the broader family of value-laden images." A.C. Anderson's series of pre-1858 maps are decidedly different from maps produced in San Francisco during 1858 in one important regard — Native place-naming along the Fraser was included by Anderson while on the latter they were removed altogether and replaced by California-style gold camp names. Anderson's explorations of 1846 through 1849 incorporated knowledge of the Thompson and Fraser Rivers into a sketch map that clearly identified major Native settlements and appended Native names to these sites and all major rivers flowing into the Fraser (Figure 39). Many of these names were subsequently retained on a 1858 map produced in San Francisco that utilised Anderson's work. Instead of the gold rush bar names that would be established very quickly, Anderson provided names of a decidedly fur trade nature.

Once again, if we start at Fort Hope and ascend the river to The Fountain, place

![Figure 39. A.C. Anderson's Fur trade oriented map featuring Native place names. BC Archives.](image-url)
names exist as landmarks of an HBC-controlled world that included the Native as essential in the trade relationship. Consequently, Anderson recorded as follows: "Fort Hope, Rapids, Upper Teet Vil[lage], Douglas Portage, Falls, lowest Couteau Vil[lage], Spuzzum, Ke-quelouse Vil & Jacobs Grave, Anderson R[iver], Tqua-yowm Vil, Tum-mulh R, Tze-wamma R, Ka-path R, Tzae-hoose R, Skaoose Vil, Thlikumcheen or Great Forks, Lower Fountain Vil, Bridge R., Upper Fountain Vill." Anderson's map is considered "unquestionably the most accurate representation of interior British Columbia available" at this time. Yet it detailed no particular gold rush information from miners working along the Fraser -- perhaps not surprising if one acknowledges that fur traders and gold miners viewed things quite differently.

By contrast, a sketch map published by the San Francisco Bulletin offered a Californian depiction of the gold fields that replaced all Native-HBC landmark names with those appreciated by a mining audience (Figure 40). The ground was now made familiar to those about to embark on the long sea journey north from San Francisco. A 'New El Dorado' was invented out of the 'vacant' space of the Fraser corridor, and in so doing, was brought into "cultural circulation." Arriving at Fort Langley, the Californian would next ascend past the following: Fort Hope, Hunter's Bar, Hill's Bar, Ft Yale, Rapids, Sailor's Diggings, Rapids, Mormon Bar, and Grand Falls; only if the hopeful miner was first able to run the gauntlet of seven separate "Indian Villages" which stood between the mouth of the Fraser and Fort Hope. Native names were removed and in their place Native settlements were inscribed upon the map not unlike warning beacons to the wary.

The human geography was about to be changed dramatically by miners who had no role for the Native. The effects of placer mining took a considerable toll on the traditional Native landscape. At Hill's Bar, known amongst the Stó:lō as Hemhemetheqw, meaning "good place to make sockeye
miner's stripped away the ground and overturned large numbers of boulders containing pock-marked bowls used for the collection of fish oil. Throughout the Fraser and Thompson corridors, immense amounts of sand, gravel and other natural debris were washed into the rivers,
along with age-old fishing and hunting grounds, places of habitation that had been scarred by ditches, flumes, and test-holes, preparatory to excavating entire hillsides or bench lands.\(^{52}\)

Californian discourse, in representing Indians as impediments to progress, encouraged a process of colonization that, in effect, not only changed the human geography, but ultimately for Natives the physical geography of boundary and space. The discourse of naming has been compared to acts of "christening" not unlike earlier North American explorations that used the appropriative power of naming. Stephen Greenblatt in *Marvelous Possessions* argued that Christopher Columbus' use of place naming was akin to christening under the authority of Christian imperialism. Greenblatt maintained that "Such as christening entails the cancellation of the native name -- the erasure of the alien, perhaps demonic, identity -- and hence a kind of making new; it is at once an exorcism, an appropriation, and a gift. Christening then is the culminating instance of the marvelous speech act: in the wonder of the proper name, the movement from ignorance to knowledge, the taking of possession, the conferral of identity are fused in a moment of pure linguistic formalism."\(^{53}\) Certainly, the myriad of gold rush bar place names along the Fraser River are evidence of a cancellation of Native names -- "the erasure of the alien." And befitting the kind of mass democratic society that California felt it had achieved, acts of possession were now no longer limited to a single mighty explorer, but to all those who 'discovered' their own version of a "New World Bar."\(^{54}\)

These first names applied to the region were the basis for an invented cultural space that enticed further discovery and the prospect of hidden gold. "For how," as Paul Carter suggests, "without place names, without agreed points of reference, could directions be given, information exchanged, 'here' and 'there' defined? . . . they embody the existential necessity the traveller feels to invent a place he can inhabit. Without them, punctuating the monotony, distinguishing this horizon from that, there would be no evidence he had travelled."\(^{55}\) Maps are, in fact, a cultural text that
perhaps tell more about the social structure of the place of origin, than the actual human and physical landscape it described. By 1858, the California gold fields had seen their best years and with word of a ‘new’ California to the north, expectations ran high. The Fraser River Fever compelled many to join the fray only to be severely disappointment upon arrival. Gold rush bar place names such as Humbug Bar, Poverty Bar, and perhaps even Pike’s Bar are indicative of miners' expectations of a quick and easy wealth that never materialized.56

Indeed, it is at times more instructive to see what has been excluded from a map, than that which has been included. On California-produced representations of British Columbia, we may easily locate bar names of Anglo-American origin, but no indication of Nicaragua, China, or Kanaka Bars, and virtually no Native presence. J.B. Harley, in viewing the map as a "spatial panopticon" that produces power, wrote that "the map maker merely omits those features of the world that lie outside the purpose of the immediate discourse." In this instance, California-based gold rush discourse normally referred to non-Americans only when justification was required for the discriminatory practices of White society.

Once the Fraser River rush had subsided, and the remainder of goldseekers had been drawn to the Cariboo gold fields, Californian-style place names were largely dropped from colonial mapping endeavours, or rather ignored, in keeping with a resurgent imperial discourse. A Royal Engineer’s map for 1861 listed merely Chapman's Bar and Boston Bar; John Arrowsmith’s Map of British Columbia for 1862 contained no gold rush names; and John Palliser’s "A general Map of the route in British North America" marked only Hope, Yale and Lytton, as befitting a Pacific Colony with the institutions of British power now more firmly established than previously. In a similar way to the racial blindness of gold rush-specific cartography, officials of Empire preferred to disregard nomenclature of a non-British sort. The mere fact that California-style place naming could be
dropped so quickly from the colonial government's lexicon further illustrates the very transient nature of gold rush related human geographies.

By 1870, the Fraser River rush was virtually a forgotten past. The impermanence of gold rush life meant that communities of miners devoted to the collection of gold dust soon moved on once the river sand bars had been thoroughly depleted through placer mining techniques. Of the first river-bottom bars that were prospected between Fort Hope to The Fountain, historian Hubert Howe Bancroft wrote, “Nearly all of these were wiped out of memory as the inhabitants migrated and the traces of their existence were washed away by the recurring floods of the rivers; so that only a few have found a permanent place in the geography of the country.” Yet, though the presence of the goldseeker was so ephemeral, the lasting result of gold rush bar names that remained had far greater implications for the human geography of Native settlements in future.

In 1871, new considerations re-focussed the colonial government's attention along the Fraser River corridor and resurrected many gold rush bar names from obscurity, ultimately to give them a permanence in the landscape perhaps inconceivable to earlier British cartographers. Joseph Trutch, as Chief Commissioner of Lands & Works, was responsible for having gathered information on all surveyed portions of British Columbia to be included on a new map considered "a milestone in the historical cartography of B.C." Trutch's map located, between Hope and Lytton alone, the following place names: American Bar, Emory Bar, Texas Bar, Yale, Wellington Bar, Spuzzum River, Chapman's Bar, Alexandra Bridge, Big Canon, Anderson River, Boston Bar, Fargo Bar, and Mariner's Bar. Perhaps it was Trutch's eight years experience as a surveyor and farmer in the United States that gave him an affinity for California-type place names. Of greater significance though, was the emerging province's need for readily available and identifiable landmarks in which to locate the
technical descriptions of the 1870-1871 re-survey of Fraser River topography. Gold rush bar place names would have provided the key, for as Carter maintains, "Naming words were forms of spatial punctuation transforming space into an object of knowledge, something that could be explored and read."⁶⁴ The River had already been defined by the HBC, but it was the gold rush that carved the landscape up into a linear series of over a hundred existing points of reference.

With British Columbia's entry into the Canadian confederation, article thirteen of the Terms of Union stipulated that responsibility for Native affairs would rest with the federal government. Under such a system, Trutch was required to furnish specific information with respect to the location and extent of Indian Reservations. The act of place naming under earlier influences of both the HBC and gold rush were instances of de facto near-sovereignty over the landscape, but later colonial power enacted full-sovereignty aided by existing place names which explicitly defined the new world ordering of life along the river.

When in fall of 1858-59, James Douglas attempted to protect Natives along the Fraser River -- while also accommodating the advance of gold miners -- he established "Anticipatory reserves of land for the benefit and support of the Indian races."⁶⁵ This was akin to Queen Victoria's paradoxical policy that proclaimed "to protect the poor natives and advance civilization."⁶⁶ Lord Carnarvon wrote to Douglas:

Proofs are unhappily still too frequent of the neglect which Indians experience when the White man obtains possession of their Country and their claims to consideration are forgotten at the moment when equity most demands that the hand of the protector should be extended to help them. In the case of the Indians of Vancouver Island and British Columbia Her Majesty’s Government earnestly wish that when the advancing requirements of Colonization press upon Lands occupied by Members of that race measures of liberality and justice may be adopted for compensating them for the surrender of the territory which they have been taught to regard as their own.⁶⁷
Douglas’ choice of the word "anticipatory" suggested that future reserves were only to be confirmed to regions where the White mining frontier was next expected to advance. Indeed, Lytton and Carnarvon encouraged Douglas that “care s[houl]d be observed in laying out & defining the several reserves, in order to avoid checking at a future day the progress of the White Colonists.” In this instance, White colonists can be more aptly referred to as White goldseekers, and these land development attitudes of the Colonial Office rooted not so much in the promotion of agricultural settlement, but the fast-paced expansion of the mining frontier. During Douglas’ time in office, Indian reservation policy in British Columbia “anticipated” further gold discoveries, which is to say, no reserves were to be marked-out and formalized until prospectors had thoroughly scrutinized all the lands of the Mainland colony for valuable mineral deposits. Once an area had been thoroughly explored, and mined if rich in auriferous deposits, a reserve was subsequently and safely laid-out. In the opinion of Douglas, backed by Colonial Office demands not to impede “progress,” there was no point in concluding treaties or formally marking-out reserves to Native territories before the mining frontier had made a clean sweep of them. To have done so would have run the risk of confirming Native interests to lands which conceivably could be overrun by an intractable mining population the following year. Is it little wonder, then, that with the mining frontier having developed the Lower Mines of the Fraser River in 1858, that the first Mainland reserves would be formalized in this region. As goldseekers radiated outwards from the Lower Mines to such places as the Cariboo gold fields to the north, or the Rock creek diggings to the east, Indian reserves were established in these regions, too -- after the fact. Though historian Robin Fisher concluded that “the gold miners were the advance guard of the settlement frontier,” during Douglas’ governorship, the establishment of Indian reserves followed the advancing path of goldseekers, as opposed to agricultural settlers.
The Colonial Office also enquired of Douglas whether it was feasible to permanently settle Native peoples in villages, in part for “their security against the aggressions of immigrants.” Douglas agreed, and also advocated “that they should in all respects be treated as rational beings, capable of acting and thinking for themselves. . .”. The Governor expressed “unhesitating confidence” that the plan would work, and similarly believed that its effect would save “the Colony from the numberless evils. . . of national injustice, and from having the Native Indian Tribes arrayed in vindictive warfare against the white settlements.” Though the conclusion of the Fraser River War had ended full-scale Native resistance to the continued onslaught of White miners, Douglas rightly determined that the issue of Native land and gold had not gone away.

Upon his arrival in 1858, one of the first actions taken by Colonel Richard Moody, the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works and Lieutenant-Governor, was a request to the Colonial Office for an extensive selection of Parliamentary Papers to be used as a guide in establishing practical policies for the new Mainland Colony. With regard to Native land policy, Moody specifically asked for “Two Reports of Committee on securing the Protection of their Rights & of promoting the Spread of Civilization among them, 1836-37.” While Douglas had concluded the “Fort Victoria Treaties” on Vancouver Island during the early 1850s, not unlike the Robinson Treaty of 1850 between the crown and the Ojibewa Natives of Lake Superior, by the time of the Fraser River gold rush, colonial policy had shifted away from treaty-making so that no such agreements were concluded in the Colony of British Columbia. Though political scientist Paul Tennant judged that there existed an “explicit assumption by the Colonial Office” that Douglas “would arrange treaties and compensate the Indians for their lands” in mainland British Columbia, further evidence seems to suggest otherwise.
One of the Parliamentary Papers sent to Moody was the Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines (1837). With the guidance of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton of the Aborigines Protection Society, the report considered “Treaties with Natives inexpedient.” The Committee agreed that “Compacts between parties negotiating on terms of such entire disparity are rather the preparatives and the apology for disputes than securities for peace: as often as the resentment or the cupidity of the more powerful body may be excited, a ready pretext for complaint will be found in the ambiguity of the language in which their agreements must be drawn up, and in the superior sagacity which the European will exercise in framing, in interpreting, and in evading them. The safety and welfare of an uncivilized race require that their relations with their more civilized neighbours should be diminished rather than multiplied.”

The report also suggested that “whatever may be the legislative system of any colony...the Aborigines [should] be withdrawn from its control,” and that legislators should “have no authority to make enactments” with regard to First Nations people. Perhaps, here was further justification for establishing British Columbia as a crown colony with no immediate responsible, let alone representative, institutions. The White population of the Fraser River landscape was overwhelmingly American and anti-Native, and an elected assembly would have shown great bias towards First Nations, as was subsequently the case with the eventual creation of political representation in the colony. As a consequence, all authority and executive pronouncements with regard to British Columbia’s Native peoples was solely governed by James Douglas under authority of the Queen.

Though Douglas did not formalize the guarantees of the Fort Victoria Treaties into comparable agreements with mainland Native peoples, his informal meetings with the First Nations of Lillooet, Lytton, and Similkameen essentially confirmed the right to hunt and fish as previously over unoccupied crown lands. Writing to the Duke of Newcastle of his extensive trip through
interior British Columbia in 1860, Douglas reported having met with large gatherings of Native peoples in these three locations in which he delivered the very spirit of the Island Colony’s Treaties.

I had an opportunity of communicating personally with the Native Indian Tribes, who assembled in great numbers at Cayoosh [Lillooet] during my stay. I made them clearly understand that Her Majesty’s Government felt deeply interested in their welfare, and had sent instructions that they should be treated in all respects as Her Majesty’s other subjects; and that the local Magistrates would attend to their complaints, and guard them from wrong. . . . I also explained to them that the Magistrates had instructions to stake out, and reserve for their use and benefit, all their occupied village sites and cultivated fields, and as much land in the vicinity of each as they could till, or was required for their support; and that they might freely exercise and enjoy the rights of fishing the Lakes and Rivers, and of hunting over all unoccupied Crown Lands in the Colony, and that on their becoming registered Free Miners, they might dig and search for Gold, and hold mining claims on the same terms precisely as other miners: in short, I strove to make them conscious that they were recognized members of the Commonwealth . . .”.

Douglas subsequently delivered the same guarantees to the Native people of Lytton who had “mustered in great force” during his stay, and later at Similkameen and the new gold diggings discovered at Rock Creek. While at the latter location, Douglas entered into conversation with the assembled chiefs with the object of determining what grievances they might have that could “induce them to make reprisals on the white settlers.” The Governor was to discover that:

There was one subject which especially pre-occupied their minds. . . . namely the abject condition to which the cognate Native Tribes of Oregon have been reduced by the American system of removing whole Tribes from their native homes into distant reserves where they are compelled to stay, and denied the enjoyment of that natural freedom and liberty of action without which existence becomes intolerable. They evidently looked forward with dread to their own future condition, fearing lest the same wretched fate awaited the native of British Columbia. I succeeded in dis-abusing their minds of those false impressions by fully explaining the views of Her Majesty’s Government, and repeating in substance what . . . . was said on the same subject to the Assembled Tribes at Cayoosh and Lytton. Those communications had the effect of re-assuring their minds and eliciting assurances of their fidelity and attachment.
As we have seen in a previous chapter, Douglas' primary responsibility as a *provisional* governor was to "preserve peace between the natives and the foreigners at the gold diggings," and, in this sense, he fulfilled his mandate having continued a policy of appeasement through spoken word, but with few written, legal guarantees. Douglas had orders from Britain not to check White progress and so Indian reservation policy became a function of mining progress, and where Natives were lucky enough not to inhabit gold bearing sands, they might continue to be left to themselves for a period longer. If Douglas was able to confirm fishing and hunting rights and reserves to such places as Lytton and Lillooet by 1860, it was largely due to the fact that these areas had been thoroughly prospected, the mining frontier having shifted its focus further north to the confluence of the Fraser and Quesnel Rivers, and ultimately the Cariboo goldfields.

The Colonial Office advocated that the welfare of Indians be protected in the form of the Indian reserve -- a refuge from White encroachment -- yet, the boundaries of such were never fully delineated under Douglas as he had done with the "Fourteen Agreements" of Vancouver Island. Legal boundaries, if any, prior to the "Preemption Act" of 1859, were exclusively in the domain of mining claims in keeping with Australian-borrowed regulations. All future reserves remained undefined in a state which easily allowed later administrators the ability to tamper with them as needed, depending on where the next gold discovery might lay, the next road built, settlement planned or future town site placed. Douglas followed his instructions accordingly when, 23 October 1862, his Colonial Secretary, W.A.G. Young advised Colonel R.C. Moody, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works that:

I am desired by the Governor to acquaint you that on his late return by canoe from Yale, he landed to refresh his crew at an Indian House situated on a large Island on the left bank of the Fraser, about a mile and a quarter below the mouth of the
Harrison River, and that he discovered what he has long been in search for, a means of access to the Chilwayhook [Chilliwack] plains by an uninterrupted land communication from Fraser River . . . By opening a road from the Indian House before mentioned in a straight line toward the mountains . . . this valuable district could be opened for settlement [and] should at once be examined by a party of Royal Engineers. . . . The party should also be directed to mark out by corner posts 600 acres of land as a Townsite, either at the Indian House in question, which appears to be a favourable spot -- or at any other spot possessing greater facilities. . .

In this instance, Native grounds were not sacrosanct, but of secondary importance to the development goals of the colony. William McColl, the Royal Engineer responsible for having allotted many of the reserves along the Fraser River, recalled that he had surveyed his sites according to Douglas' early instructions that "the Indians were to have as much land as they wished." McColl actually granted minimum allotments of one hundred acres where Indian demands were overly modest -- in keeping with further verbal instructions from Douglas. Yet, these Native reserves were later deemed excessive by the administrators of crown lands who followed after Douglas' retirement in 1864. Joseph Trutch, whose name the former Governor offered to imperial authorities for the position of chief commissioner -- essentially gained control of Native land policy by deferral from Frederick Seymour, Douglas' replacement. Trutch embarked on a further redefinition of Indian reservation policy in much the same way Douglas had done in response to the gold rush of 1858. Colonial debt, now drastically larger than at the time of the gold rush, not only demanded the merger of the two Pacific coast colonies, but also confederation with Canada in 1871.

It is important to remember at this point that the Crown Colony of British Columbia had been established provisionally. Just as responsible government was not conferred on the Mainland in 1858 -- due to the unknown and transitory nature of the gold rush -- neither was any formal model of land management. Britain had adopted a 'wait-and-see' approach, and in this sense, Douglas, and subsequently Trutch, were not at variance with Colonial Office policy. Once again, had treaties or
reserves been confirmed to untested lands, lands in which goldseekers had not yet prospected, colonial authority risked precipitating further Native-White violence by placing potentially-rich mining grounds beyond the reach of a well-armed, aggressive mining population that cared little for outside authority. In essence, portions of the Native traditional landscape could have been guaranteed, only to have them subsequently stampeded by miners in the pursuit of gold. As a consequence, Native lands were purposely left by Douglas in a state of legal uncertainty. When pushed, as in the case of the first Mainland reserves along Fraser River in 1858, Douglas might order an impromptu reserve to be marked-out, so as to keep the peace, but these first confirmations of Natives lands were never duly recorded.

By comparison, Trutch applied a strict legal definition to all reserves in existence just prior to 1871. He concluded that there was no established system under James Douglas' administration for reserving land, no official gazetting of reserves, and no written instructions on record. Consequently, on this basis, Trutch determined that “the Indians really have no right to the lands they claim, nor are they of any actual value or utility to them . . . they should be confirmed in the possession of such extent of lands only as are sufficient for their probable requirements. . . . the remainder of the land now shut up in reserves should be thrown open to preemption.” Trutch was writing after the time of further smallpox epidemics that had swept through the Mainland in the early 1860's, leading to substantial decline in Native populations. Though it has become fashionable, of late, to demonize Joseph Trutch and his harsh, racist and legalistic approach to Indian lands, it was the earlier nondescript policies of James Douglas, in keeping with Colonial Office edicts, that allowed later colonial administrators, like Trutch, to further marginalise Native claims to the land.
In just ten short years since the gold rush began, Fraser River Natives, once controlling-agents in the collection of HBC gold, were now further dispossessed of their marginal reserve allotments. The new Chief Commissioner immediately embarked on a program of Indian reservation curtailment concordant with increased public pressure for lands. William McColl's reservations were brought into question, including his comprehension of what Douglas had originally conveyed to him. As one of the highest ranked Royal Engineers stationed in the colony, it is not likely that McColl would have misunderstood his instructions, and in fact, former Chief Commissioner Chartres Brew confirmed that "McColl obeyed his orders to the fullest." Nonetheless, McColl's reserves were deemed too large and through a process of subtle distortion of Douglas' early land policies, all such reserves were reduced in size prior to the approaching transfer of responsibility for Natives to the federal government. In having gained control of Indian reservation policy, Trutch demanded explicit definition of all and future Indian reserves. He declared that "it appears most advisable that it should be at once constituted the definite province of some person or persons, to make a thorough enquiry into this subject throughout the Colony and ascertain as exactly as practicable what lands are claimed by the Indians. What lands have been authoritatively reserved and assured to the various tribes, and to what extent such Reserves can be modified with the concurrence of the Indians...". By 1870, John Trutch, the Chief Commissioner's brother, had re-surveyed many of the reserves along the Fraser River. By 1871, Joseph Trutch was able to offer the federal government a schedule of seventy-six fully surveyed, and legally gazetted, reserves within the Province of British Columbia, many of which were to be defined by the language of the gold rush.

The Chief Commissioner's use of Anglo-American place-names to categorize Indian reserves filled the void called wilderness and left even less room for Aboriginal peoples. The Hudson Bay Company's definition of place had located only the most minimal of landmarks significant for the
perpetuation of their trade. Later imperial designs were primarily interested in marking the sites of colonial power and authority. By contrast, the gold rush had labelled stretches of the Fraser River so thoroughly as to suggest that this corridor was fully occupied, and hence, Natives confirmed only in the barest minimum of land for their essential needs. The erasure of Native sovereignty through use of California-like place-names not only disconnected Natives from the physical geography of the river, but perhaps, too, from the very soul of Native culture. The importance of place-names in other Native cultures goes beyond mere points of reference on the land and suggests that oral history gains significance by being "spatially anchored" to a unique and personal geography. The place-name, in this instance, offers the memory detailed pictures of the myths, sagas, and community-history of centuries. A name will automatically recall a unique point in the land, and in turn, the land invokes the wisdom of a culture. For the Apache, geographical features "served the people for centuries as indispensable mnemonic pegs on which to hang the moral teachings of their history." As Raymond Fogelson maintains, "all peoples possess a sense of the past, however strange and exceptional that past may seem from our own literately conditioned perspectives." The fact that Native culture on the Fraser River was comparable, suggests that the consequences of a permanent gold rush vocabulary have been severely underestimated.

It is not surprising, perhaps, that a gold rush which had refashioned the human geography of the Fraser River corridor into a series of distinct, ethnically and racially-segregated mining enclaves, would also compartmentalise Native peoples into a chain of racially-defined reserves. Joseph Trutch's re-introduction of gold rush landmarks naturally intertwined with Indian reserve names as they ascended the Fraser. Surveyor John Trutch used the language of the gold rush when he named the location of "Boston Bar Indian Reserve #5," or described Kop-chichen Indian Reserve #6 as "situated on Yankee Flat," and Shoo-ook Indian Reserve #7 "on Boothroyd's Flat." Ironically, the Fraser
River gold rush not only precipitated the institution of the reservation system in Mainland British Columbia but, in certain instances, continued to define many of the limited Indian lands left behind in the wake of the events of 1858-59.

Once British Columbia joined Canada, Joseph Trutch's commemoration of the "cult of first-comers" not only re-embedded these 'discoveries' into the geography of the canyon walls, and more permanently on maps, but by doing so provided further justification for curtailment of reserves through the continued legitimation of the colonial presence through place names.97 Pick any current map covering a portion of this river, and the ironic, taunting names that appear will haunt you: Trafalgar Flat Indian Reserve, Chapman's Bar Indian Reserve, China Bar Indian Reserve, Boston Bar Indian Reserve, Boothroyd Indian Reserve, or Cameron Bar Indian Reserve.98 The juxtaposition between gold rush bar names and Indian reserves is perhaps enough of a memory of the events that led to the appropriation of Native lands, but the incorporation of these signal acts of sovereignty into the very names of the reserves constitutes a continued possession of the Native landscape by the miners of old (Appendix F). All other races that had flooded into the canyon to occupy a piece of the river ultimately receded leaving only a name behind. But the Native Indian, the final inheritor of a geographical corridor delineated by race, has remained within a matrix of reserves which recall the segregated landscape of the gold rush of 1858.
NOTES


2. See "Legacy of the Fraser River Gold Rush: Remaining Gold Rush Bar Place Names," Appendix F.


6. British Columbia. Papers Relative to the Affairs of British Columbia. 1 July 1858, (No. 29): 19-20. Douglas noted the following "nations" who volunteered their labour for the Harrison-Lillooet Road construction were "British subjects, Americans, French, Germans, Danes, Africans, and Chinese ...". 19 August 1858 (No. 34): 27-28.


8. Alfred Waddington's letter, Gazette, 15 September 1858.

9. Further work is required in comparing California and British Columbia gold rush place names as early evidence suggests that similarities found between these two regions could provide a link between emigrant miners in B.C. with particular regions in California or the wider U.S.


11. For David Thompson's map which includes the Fraser River consult CM/D114. BC Archives.


13. This "age old hostility" between Upper and Lower Natives is also confirmed in Rickard, "Indian Participation in the Gold Discoveries," p. 15.

14. Governor James Douglas confirmed the earlier interest of Washington and Oregon, prior to the rush from California, in Douglas to Labouchere, 8 May 1858, (No. 19) Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold In Fraser's River District (London: 1858), 12. Bellingham Bay was to become the main stop off point for American miners who wanted to evade the British port of Victoria, and more particularly, the miner's license fee. See R.L. Reid, "Whatcom Trails to the Fraser River Mines in 1858," Washington Historical Quarterly XVIII (1927): 199-206, 271-276. Hereafter cited as WHQ. For first news of this rush which effectively closed down the Bellingham Bay Coal Company, see "Gold Discovery Confirmed!" Puget Sound Herald, Steilacoom, Washington Territory, 26 March 1858.
15. Moore claimed not to have left Yale to go up river until 17 December 1858. He and his party reached Lytton 26 January 1859. See James Moore, "The Discovery of Hill's Bar in 1858," BCHQ III:3 (1939): 220.

16. Army desertions in Washington Territory and the anticipated rush from California are noted in the Puget Sound Herald, 2 April 1858. The newspapers of Washington Territory have not been sufficiently explored for information on the Fraser River gold rush. A brief survey undertaken at the University of Washington, Seattle, suggests that there were at least four newspapers operating in the Puget Sound area that pre-date B.C. newspapers. Of particular interest are the Northern Light, Pioneer-Democrat, Washington Standard, and the Puget Sound Herald. American miners to Fraser River were in contact with these American newspapers, not the B.C. newspapers which have been utilized for gold rush history to date. See Glenda Pearson, Pacific Northwest Newspapers on Microfilm at University of Washington Libraries (1982-83).


20. Ibid., p. 245.


22. In particular, this had occurred above Sailor's Diggings. For approximate location of Sailor's Bar see Appendix E. For above quotation see, Puget Sound Herald, 4 June 1858.

23. Referred to by discouraged miners as the 'Fraser River hysteria' or 'Fraser River humbug,' many left Fraser River and returned to California having become 'flat broke.' The combination of high water, high prices, poor weather and poor trails drove many of them away. Only the most determined remained through the fall-winter of 1858-1859. See Rodman W. Paul California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1947), 177-179. Also see Paul, Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880 (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963), 38-39. For an early refutation of the humbug thesis see Alfred Waddington, The Fraser Mines Vindicated: The History of Four Months (Victoria: 1858).


27. Douglas had claimed that John K. Ledell had travelled further than anyone else up the Fraser in early spring of 1858, or so the prospector maintained to his wife. "Narrative of a Miner's Trip to the Head Waters of the Gold Region." Northern Light, 16 March 1858. Ledell named Foster's Bar.

28. In 1850, the prohibitive Foreign Miner's Head Tax was twenty dollars a month and, although technically applied to all non-Americans, was in practice levelled primarily against Chinese and Mexicans. See William S. Greever, Bonanza West: The Story of the Western Mining Rushes, 1848-1900 (1963) Reprint. (Moscow, Idaho: University of Idaho Press, 1990), 71.


31. See the inset in Figure 38: "Gold Rush Place Names, Fraser River, 1858-59." These bar names are approximate locations compiled from sources listed in Appendix E. The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Eric Leinberger, Cartographer, Department of Geography, UBC, for assistance in designing this map.

32. See Appendix E for an extensive listing of gold rush bar place names.

33. As Waddington noted, the Lower Mines comprised only fourteen miles out of the approximate 140 miles from south of Hope to the Fountain above Lillooet.

34. See Figure 38, map of "Gold Rush Place Names, Fraser River, 1858-59," particularly between Spuzzum and the Fountain.

35. See Appendices E and F. There were two French Bars on the Fraser. One in the Lower Mines, the other in the Upper Mines. Perhaps there is a distinction to be drawn between Continental French and French Canadiens? French Canadiens, formerly employed by the HBC, undoubtedly would have been early arrivals in the Lower Mines. Gudde notes that the adjective French was used more than any other ethnic description in Californian place naming. See Erwin G. Gudde, *California Gold Camps* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).


37. Waddington detailed the extent of mining during the 1858 rush as follows: "all the diggings that have been worked up to this day (1858), have been strictly speaking river diggings and lie between Murderer's [Cornish] Bar, 4 miles below Fort Hope, and the Fountain, 6 miles above the Big Falls, stretching over a total length of 140 miles: and that the three quarters of them have been worked over a distance of 14 miles between Fort Hope and Fort Yale." See Alfred Waddington, *Fraser Mines Vindicated*, 7.


39. Although of European stock, the Mormon practice of polygamy was abhorred. For discussion of discrimination in mining camps against Mormons and other groups, see Duane A. Smith, "Not All Were Welcome," *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps: The Urban Frontier* (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1967), 29-41.

40. Further work is required in establishing the multi-racial flavour of the gold rush era. Certainly church archival records may prove to be an invaluable source. A tantalizing example is found in the early Anglican church records for Lillooet where the marriage register for 1861 recorded the first formal exchange of vows in this locale between two Latin Americans, one from Chile and the other from San Salvador. See St. Mary's Church Register, Lillooet, 1861-1915. UBC Special Collections.
41. Charles D. Ferguson, *The Experiences of a Forty-Niner* (Cleveland, 1888.)

42. Until formal surveys were finally completed in keeping with the Oregon Boundary Settlement of 1846, many Americans claimed that the Fraser -- at just 15 miles inside the British Columbia border -- was actually in American territory.

43. The idea that naming legitimates a colonial presence is developed in Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, xvi.


45. For a vast dictionary-compendium of California place names comparable to those found on the Fraser, see Gudde, *California Gold Camps*.


47. *Routes of Communication with the Gold Region on Frasers River*. Compiled from Original Notes By Alexander C. Anderson (San Francisco: J.J. Lecount, 1858) CM/A78 Map Division. BC Archives. This map also accompanied the guidebook entitled *Hand-Book And Map To The Gold Region Of Frazer's and Thompson's Rivers* (San Francisco: J.J. Lecount, 1858). UBC Special Collections, BC Archives. This guidebook and map would have been used by the majority of miners travelling from California to British Columbia.


49. "Cultural circulation" is a term coined by Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, 28. British Columbia was often referred to as the "New El Dorado" and at least one author made this the subject of a book. See Kinahan Cornwallis, *The New El Dorado; Or, British Columbia* (London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1858). BC Archives.

50. "Sketch of Frazer River and the New Gold Mines," *Bulletin* (1858). CM/A295: Sh. 1. Map Division. BC Archives. A similar map is drawn by merchant C.O. Phillips who established a store on Bridge River in November 1858. Indians are simply located and gold rush bars limited to the following: Sea Bird Bar, Murderer's, Texas, Emory's, and Hill's. See Howay, "To the Fraser River!" *CHSQ*, following p.154. Waddington's map of 1858 contains neither gold bar names nor Native information, preferring to simply point out where the rich diggings were located. One exception is that "Indian Diggings" are located along the Thompson River. See A. Waddington, *A Correct Map of the Northern Coal & Gold Regions comprehending Frazer River* (San Francisco: May 1858).


52. Elder Harold Wells of Union Bar (near Hope) was told by his grandmother how Chinese miners left a permanent scar, a twelve foot deep quarry on their land, while away visiting relatives farther down the Fraser River. Ibid., 62.

54. Paul Carter states that "New . . . is a name that refuses to admit the place was there before it was named." This was typical of the gold rush mentality that re-invented the Fraser along Californian lines. See Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, 9.

55. In essence, naming allowed one to mark the present, possess it, and then travel onward, leaving behind beacons for future travel, landmarks for the map, and to allow a space to enter history. Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, 46-47.

56. Gudde suggests that Pike was often used by gold diggers from Pike County, Missouri, later by those unwilling to tell where they were from, and finally it was applied to rough miners or new immigrants. See Gudde, *California Gold Camps*, 265. A more pertinent explanation perhaps is that Pike's Peak Rush in Colorado was greatly exaggerated. It occurred in 1858-1859 and whether news of its bust would have travelled to the Fraser is quite possible. Those returning from Pike's Peak to California became known as "Pikers" or failed miners. It might be, therefore, that Pike's Bar on the Fraser is suggestive of dashed expectations. See Paul, *California Gold*, 39 and Greever, *Bonanza West*, 158. There again, yet another explanation is that the bar could have been named after Zebullon Pike who had invaded Canada during the War of 1812. Of course, Captain H.M. Snyder had commanded the "Pike Guards" during the Fraser River War.


58. These and other maps consulted in the post-1858 period: H.S. Palmer, "Sketch of Route from Fort Hope to Fort Colville," (1859); R.E. map "British Columbia: New Westminster to Lillooet," (New Westminster, 1861); and John Arrowsmith, "The Provinces of British Columbia & Vancouver Island," (South Kensington, England, 1862). Map Division. BC Archives.


60. Hubert Howe Bancroft, "Fraser River Mining and Settlement, 1858-1878" in *History of British Columbia* (San Francisco: History Company, 1890). Bancroft supplies an invaluable list of gold bar names and other landmarks compiled from a variety of sources.


62. Ibid.


68. Douglas to Lytton, 14 March 1859. No. 114. CO 60/4. The above quotation was taken from Carnarvon’s note appended to the despatch to which Lytton approved “the caution recommended by Lord C[arnarvon].” Ibid. The official response to Douglas stated: “whilst making ample provision under the arrangements proposed for the future sustenance and improvement of the native tribes, you will, I am persuaded, bear in mind the importance of exercising due care in laying out and defining the several reserves, so as to avoid checking at a future day the progress of the white colonists.” Carnarvon to Douglas, 20 May 1859, *BC Papers*, 18.


71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.


74. For an excerpt from the 1850 Robinson Treaty (Lake Superior), see Thomas Isaac, *Aboriginal Law: Cases, Materials, and Commentary* 2d ed. (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1999), 204-205. Treaty-making east of the Rockies does not appear to have resumed until 1876 with the signing of Treaty No. 6 that covered the mid portions of Saskatchewan and Alberta. By this time, British Columbia was a province of the Dominion of Canada. Ibid., 205-214.


76. House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, VII: No. 425. (1837), 80. PRO.

77. Ibid., 77.


79. Douglas to Newcastle, 9 October 1860. No. 11678. CO 60/8. Note: Author’s emphasis.

80. Ibid.

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82. Ibid. For examples of American Native peoples being relocated from traditional lands to reserves, see Trafzer and Scheuerman, *Renegade Tribes: The Palouse Indians and the Invasion of the Inland Pacific Northwest.*

83. Lytton, House of Commons, 8 July 1858. *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: Third Series* CLI, 1104.

84. The "Fourteen Agreements" are listed in *British Columbia. Papers Connected with the Indian Land Question,* 5-11.

85. Australian precedent was used in the Queen Charlotte's gold rush. See Great Britain, *Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold at Queen Charlotte's Island* (London: 1853), 3-5.

86. Colonial Secretary to Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, 23 October 1862, pp. 1-5. F329: No. 145 BC Archives. Lieutenant Leech later staked out Douglas' government reserve site as instructed even while noting the presence of Native cultivation of potatoes -- land normally offered protection. In the end, however, this town site reserve, with exact dimensions intact, was used as an Indian reserve. See P.J. Leech, R.E. to Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, 14 November 1862, p. 1. F974/1. BC Archives.

87. Douglas' preemption law of 1859 had originally protected such Native lands. It was formally specified that: "You will cause to be reserved, the sites of all Indian Villages, and the Land they have been accustomed to cultivate, to the extent of several hundred acres round [sic] each village for their especial use and benefits." See "Copy of a Circular from Douglas to the Gold Commissioners and Magistrates of British Columbia," Fort Yale, 1 October 1859, p. 2. F485/8f. BC Archives. Also see, Phyllis Mikkelsen, "Land Settlement Policy on the Mainland of British Columbia, 1858-1874," M.A. Thesis, UBC, 1950. Add. Mss. 2193. BC Archives.


89. Trutch to Acting Colonial Secretary, New Westminster, 28 August 1867, *B.C. Papers,* 41-43.


91. Trutch to Colonial Secretary, 20 September 1865, F942/17. BC Archives.

92. See "Schedule of all Indian reserves (surveyed) in the Province of British Columbia" in *B.C. Papers,* 104-105. Note: Tracings for schedule A - Q, of the seventy-six reserves noted above, were located by Heather West, Surveyor-General's Office, BC Department of Forests and Lands, Victoria. Copies of tracings for Mainland reserves have been deposited by author at Special Collections, UBC.


95. In addition, the later effect of two transcontinental railways being built on either side of the Fraser River Canyon must have levelled many important stone monoliths that held the ancient history of these First Nations.
96. See John Trutch's 1870 maps that correspond to the A-Q schedule of reserves compiled for the federal government in 1871; particularly, the sheet entitled: "Indian Reserves situated on or near Fraser River in the Lytton District." Copies deposited at UBC Special Collections.

97. The "cult of first-comers" is described by Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, xviii.

98. Boothroyd Indian Reserve was named for George Washington Boothroyd who was a member of Major Mortimer Robertson's "Yakima Expedition," the volunteer miners' militia that fought with Native peoples through the Canadian and American Okanagan in its bid to reach the Fraser River gold fields. Ironically, this Indian fighter's name defines the limited space of this particular reserve. In the same way Stout Indian Reserve is named after Edward Stout, both a '49er and a '58er, and participant in the Fraser River War. See "A Pioneer of '58," in Walkem, *Stories of Early British Columbia*, 51-62.
CHAPTER EIGHT

INVENTING CANADA FROM WEST TO EAST

Even before the discovery of Gold on the Fraser River the attention of the Inhabitants of Minnesota and Canada had been drawn to the Hudson’s Bay Company’s Territory on the Red River of the North as a country well fitted for free settlement. The Region referred to would probably have been soon invaded by spontaneous immigration and the jurisdiction of the Company might have been severely tried by the advent of a population ill disposed to their authority. The Western movement, however, now obeys a novel and powerful stimulus, the mineral fields of New Caledonia will no doubt attract crowds of adventurers both from the North Western States of the Union and the British Provinces... Every scheme for opening New Caledonia to the easy access of Emigrants of British Birth and allegiance is worthy of the attention of Her Majesty’s Government. Could the people of Canada and England be poured in equal numbers with those of the United States in the new Colony it would go far to neutralize many embarrassments and dangers, nor will Her Majesty’s Government undervalue the claims and services of the Indians, Negroes, Half-castes of all complexions or asiatics [sic], who, maltreated or excluded in the United States will again repair to a land, we trust of irreproachable equality and freedom with instincts of affection towards the British Crown.

-- Lord Napier, British Minister to Washington, D.C., 30 July 1858.¹

The preceding chapters established that the Fraser River gold rush was a pivotal event in the history of the Pacific Slope region; but what of the extended impact beyond the West Coast of North America? British Columbia’s first significant gold rush was to have important and lasting political repercussions far exceeding that of the concurrent formation of a British Crown colony on the shores of the Pacific ocean. In fact, Fraser River gold was an important impetus for practical notions of a transcontinental British North America, the ‘all Red Route,’ that would expand from coast to coast.
And too, there is significant evidence that the United States weighed the risks of war with Britain against the possibility of annexing the Pacific coast colonies, thus capturing the imagined wealth of British Columbia that was seen initially to rival, perhaps even exceed, that of California.

What little has been written about the Fraser River Fever of 1858 has confined its influence to populations existing in Vancouver Island, Washington Territory, Oregon and California, yet the research presented here will clearly show that, for a brief period, the idea of a New El Dorado existing north of the 49th parallel excited the imagination of eastern American and Canadian audiences that had become party to Pacific Slope newspaper reports, reprinted and circulated throughout North America, Europe and even Asia. “The Fraser river gold discoveries had awakened a tornado of excitement in the Eastern States and Europe,” enthused one reporter.² Just as Californian news-reports had been reprinted in Eastern U.S. papers, the Fraser River story subsequently spread westward into the interior of the continent with Toronto and Montreal gaining much of their news from New York and London-based media.

Fraser River was considered the third great mass migration of humans in the pursuit of gold, following that of California and Australia in the previous decade. Governor James Douglas’ own opinion of the fabulous wealth to be claimed, once British policy solidified around the idea of opening B.C. to White settlement, was reprinted in August throughout the newspapers of the world. “This I tell you, as my own settled opinion,” announced Douglas, “that I think the country is full of gold, and that east and north and south of Fraser River, there is a gold field of incalculable value and extent. I have told our Glorious Queen so; and I now tell you so.”³ The Governor’s words were reprinted, again and again, so that the wild excitement that had climbed in California reached the entire continent. Indeed, the anticipated impact of the gold discoveries were to become just as important,
if not more so, than the reality of such, each new report fueling greater and greater enthusiasm for westward expansion to the New El Dorado.⁴

Vessels were quickly put up in New York for “Fraser River Direct” via Panama and San Francisco, to American destinations such as Port Townsend in Puget Sound.⁵ Harper’s Weekly soon published a map of the new gold fields.⁶ The increasing presence of news in mainstream dailies “very nearly drove some of our folks crazy,” suggested one New Yorker who believed that “if all turn out as predicted, there will be another great ‘rush’ to the Pacific.”⁷ Manton Marble, a writer for the New York-based Knickerbocker Magazine, suggested in October that Panama-bound steamships were “crowded to overflowing” and that speculators had wrung upwards of three times the normal ticket price from passengers.⁸ “Everywhere, from Maine to Minnesota, we hear of preparations for emigration to the new Dorado,” stated the Bulletin, “the young men of Washington [D.C.] are shaking off their dust and sluggishness, and getting up an expedition for the far-off goldfields. Philadelphia and Boston are also preparing to furnish their full quarter of emigrants; and Canada is alive with the subject.”⁹

Large steamships such as the Star of the West, Grenada and the St. Louis headed for Aspinwall in August loaded with immense crowds of Fraser River bound miners. The U.S. government also arranged to send further troops from the American East Coast as part of a final military operation to crush the armed-resistance of Native peoples in the Columbia Plateau region and provide overwhelming protection for miners in transit. The St. Louis carried upwards of 500 American soldiers for service against Native peoples in the Pacific Northwest. In fact, General Scott had ordered that “all the available troops on the Atlantic seaboard to be in readiness to reinforce the army in Washington Territory.”¹⁰ The total time for the trip was estimated at 27 days, including the time spent aboard the Sonora that traveled from Panama to San Francisco. Likewise, British ships
were also reported as being outfitted for links to Central America and San Francisco.\textsuperscript{11}

While American citizens pondered the immense wealth they might collect, or at the very least the exciting adventure they might experience, others were increasingly concerned about the new reality of a powerful political presence that might reconstitute itself into a transcontinental nation of British North America. The New York \textit{Herald} sounded the initial alarm bell when it wrote: “What effect would be produced on the destinies of the Pacific states, and, indeed, of the whole Union, by the establishment of a powerful British Colony at and around Vancouver Island, commanding the only coal depot on the Pacific, and the only military railroad route across the continent, it will behoove the statesmen of this country to consider.”\textsuperscript{12} The San Francisco \textit{Bulletin} concurred, such that “the unexpected discovery of gold fields in those regions will stimulate the action of our Government.”\textsuperscript{13} The \textit{Bulletin} further reported of the “Westward March and Destiny of Canada” that plans were immediately being prepared to build a transcontinental rail link to Vancouver Island.\textsuperscript{14} “[T]he transcontinental road will be through Her Majesty’s Dominions,” stated Lord Napier, the British Minister to Washington D.C., “and the immense preserve of the trappers and savages will be traversed by multitudes depositing along their trail the seeds of Agricultural, or at least, of pastoral industry.”\textsuperscript{15} Indeed, the Canadian Executive Council viewed its future connection with Vancouver Island “as the key to all British North America” if it were to become a truly transcontinental nation.\textsuperscript{16}

Of course, Captain John Palliser had begun his explorations west towards the Rocky Mountains in 1857.\textsuperscript{17} “Already their surveyors are in the field,” warned the \textit{Bulletin}, “mapping out a line from the Western shores of Lake Superior through the territories of the Hudson’s Bay Company, to Vancouver Island, on the Pacific Ocean. The recent discoveries of gold on Fraser River will give a fresh impetus to the enterprise, by convincing English capitalists that it will pay. . . . and gain to themselves and their country all the advantages for such a line that should have accrued to
us.” As historian E.E. Rich determined, “the discovery of gold on the Fraser . . . made the British and Canadian governments alike more aware of the importance of preserving the route across the prairies” to link with the Pacific Slope.

For American interests, then, by August, Fraser River no longer represented a minor gold rush flurry, but was about to seemingly eclipse California as a gold producing region, provide a renewed impetus for a federal union of British colonies that would dwarf the United States in size, and spark British capitalists to make renewed efforts to project a railway route from Halifax to Fraser River. Englishman Kinahan Cornwallis, in *The New El Dorado* (1858), gave glowing descriptions of British Columbia in 1858, and concluded “As to the probability of a railway being constructed from Canada to some point in British Columbia. . . . there can be but little doubt.” Charles H. Mason, Acting Governor of Washington Territory was of the same opinion. The U.S. had earnestly hoped for a Pacific rail road to California, but sectional differences in American politics had forestalled its construction. Anxious eyes were now cast north of the border with the fear that British interests were about to capture the Asian trade through the establishment of a land-based northwest passage. Manton Marble prophesied from New York:

The gold of Australia was the magnet that drew surplus thousands from England and peopled her largest colony. The gold in California drew an emigration thither which has created our Pacific States. The gold of Fraser River, be it much or little, has drawn the attention of the world to the unexampled richness of the north-western areas of this continent, and given already a stupendous impulse to their settlement.

Vancouver’s Island, from a hitherto insignificant existence upon maps, looms up in a not distant future to the proportions of a British naval station, whose arms may stretch across the seas yet, and grasp a portion of the swelling trade with China and Japan, the Indian Archipelago and Australia. British Columbia, hitherto considered an inaccessible and remote region of wild territory . . . feels the same impulse, and grows into the last link of a chain of British States, or perhaps of another united confederation like our own, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific seas.

. . . it requires less than the foresight of these British statesmen to see that on
events which now seem local and confined, imperial issues wait, though they are now but dimly foreshadowed ... Another effect of the Fraser River discoveries is their determination of the route for the great Pacific Railroad ... The Fraser River discoveries have hastened the result, they have not diverted it.  

Though the idea of a transcontinental railway across British North America had been discussed for at least ten years prior to 1858, the Fraser River gold rush had made its consideration "a practical question."

American settlements from St. Paul, Minnesota to Bellingham Bay became convinced that U.S. plans for a Pacific Railroad to California should be diverted farther north to Puget Sound to take advantage of their close proximity to the Fraser River mines. A Select Committee of the Minnesota House of Representatives was subsequently struck to determine an overland emigration route from outfitting centres such as St. Paul to "British Oregon." During a large meeting of their citizens, resolutions were unanimously adopted in favour of locating a practicable route, thus guaranteeing the city's future as the main supply centre for westward traveling goldseekers. "Such a continental communication has suddenly become a practical question," stated the Report, "in view of the discovery of gold upon the waters of Frazer and Thompson Rivers. Little doubt now remains that Great Britain is in possession of a district on the Pacific coast which is likely to become a second Australia, changing the current of emigration from southern to northern routes across the Continent."  

Two important factors contributed to the Minnesota Legislature's unanimous support for an overland route to the North Pacific Slope. Fraser gold was certainly the impetus, but Americans were also cognizant of the fact that Hudson's Bay Company claims to Rupert's Land were about to be surrendered to settlement and their license to trade with Native peoples west of the Rockies would
expire in May 1859. The immense fur trading district from west of Lake Winnipeg to the Pacific Ocean was about to be colonized by Britain, and Minnesotans believed that river-based transportation routes, via the Mississippi, Red, and Saskatchewan Rivers, offered the most practicable route for both Canadians and Americans traveling to the new mines. “In this respect,” the Report urged, “our interests are identical with the inevitable policy of Great Britain.”

The citizens of St. Paul watched events closely and learned from press reports that the Royal Geographical Society, with later British government approval, had encouraged Captain John Palliser to locate a pass through the Rocky Mountains. Also, Henry Youle Hind led more limited Canadian-backed expeditions in 1857 and 1858, though his ambitious plans for a third trip in 1859, specifically to reach the British Columbia goldfields, never materialized. By contrast, miners, merchants and St. Paul boosters, thoroughly imbued with the Fraser River Fever, joined forces in their plans to capitalize on the westward expansion of British North America. The Honorable Martin McLeod presented a variety of resolutions that were unanimously approved (See Appendix D).

The St. Paul resolutions sparked interest among other mid-Western towns such as Mankato, Woodsville, Shakopee, Hastings, Faribault, and Chicago. These towns hoped to send their own parties of miner-explorers. A Glencoe resident addressed the meeting and expressed the opinion “that the Frazer River discovery would lead to a knowledge of the interior of British America, which would make the navigation of the Red and Saskatchewan Rivers a very important commercial fact.” Another went further yet and proposed that if the U.S. government did not get on with the important question of a transcontinental railway route, then Minnesota had “only to reach a friendly hand across the border to extricate herself from all the consequences of Congressional injustice,” and even alluded to the possibility of a new “Political Association.” This certainly expressed the American point of view, but for Canadians the thought of St. Paul prosecuting a transcontinental transportation route
through British North America was an unsettling fact compounded by recent memories of U.S. territorial expansion throughout the North American hemisphere. Colonists and Natives in New Caledonia, of course, had already witnessed American attempts to push the Whatcom and Columbia-Okanagan trails into their territory.

American interest in the New El Dorado also reached new heights in the political circles of Washington, D.C. In anticipation of the imminent departure of thousands from the eastern States to British Columbia, U.S. President James Buchanan took the unprecedented step of appointing special agent John Nugent, former editor of the San Francisco Herald, to New Caledonia; the official purpose was apparently “to infuse among the citizens of the United States [there] . . . a spirit of subordination to the colonial authorities of Great Britain.” And yet, Nugent’s original and unpublished orders from U.S. Secretary of State, Lewis Cass, expressed great interest in the gold deposits of Fraser River. The feeling in California was “that Uncle Sam sadly blundered when he yielded Lewis Cass’ ultimatum of ‘54° 40’.” Cass, a well-known American imperialist, strongly anti-British, who had urged the annexation of Texas and the whole of the Oregon Territory, as well as the occupation of Mexico, advised Nugent accordingly: “the President desires to be accurately informed with respect both to the locality and extent of these discoveries, the mode in which they are improved . . . the quality of the gold discovered . . . means of access to the gold region . . . and generally all information on that subject of a reliable character.” Nugent’s appointment was greeted by the San Francisco Bulletin with total disdain. “That he will permit the occasion of his official career to pass without getting Brother Jonathan into a collision with John Bull, is hardly possible” the editor accused.

“Americans and Englishmen cannot mix,” asserted a letter writer to the Bulletin, “and but
little will be needed there on Frazer river to provoke a crisis -- a sort of independent California fight which will involve the two nations, even if the British cruisers on the other side do not." As it was, friction between British and American ships had already begun off the coasts of Cuba, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. In the summer and fall of 1858, the British Navy had taken upon itself to haul over U.S. vessels, searching them for both Black slaves and American filibusters. American officials were incensed with what they regarded as the high-handed practices of the British government in its attempts to patrol the North American hemisphere to prohibit the trade in slaves.36 One agitated American, writing of the acts of British cruisers on the Cuban coast, looked forward to the day when Fraser-bound miners "might become the conquerors of Vancouver Island" believing that his fellow citizens would "thunder a welcome to the new State of Vancouver."37

If anything, the British naval decision to conduct a right of search aboard American vessels served to fuel the filibustering mood among American communities along the Pacific Slope.38 But of greater provocation were later British plans to support the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican governments against the filibustering raids of the American General William Walker.39 Though Britain was about to relinquish its territorial claim to the Moskito Protectorate, their departure was forestalled by the discovery of gold on Fraser River.40 The Central American routes gained more importance to British interests with the creation of the Crown Colony of British Columbia. As the American Minister to Britain, G.M. Dallas, hypothesized to Lewis Cass, "the discovery of the golden sands in Frazer river, leading to the creation of the new colony of British Columbia, has increased the solicitude of Isthmian routes of transit."41

With the goldfields of Fraser River apparently offering untold riches beyond those of California, British interests required a strong presence in Central America, and with the appointment
of John Nugent, the actions of the Royal Navy off Nicaragua sent a strong message to American interests that regardless of the self-serving pretensions of the Monroe Doctrine, filibustering, whether in Nicaragua or potentially in British Columbia, would be met with strong opposition.  

James McIntosh, the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Home Squadron, felt that the inspection of his ships by a foreign power was an invasion of National sovereignty. McIntosh, writing aboard the Flagship USS Roanoke off the coast of San Juan del Norte, informed the Secretary of the U.S. Navy, Isaac Toucey, that “it looks like a renewal of the scenes which lately occurred around the Island of Cuba, changed only to filibusters for Africans. You may rely on my taking prompt and efficient measures to protect the honor of our flag should it become necessary; and, if really her Britannic Majesty’s officers have instructions to board and examine American merchant ships for filibusters, under the very guns of the ships of my squadron, the time must be very short before the most serious consequences may be anticipated.”

McIntosh was of the opinion that the British Navy had abrogated the terms of the Clayton-Bulwer Convention, agreed to by both countries, which stipulated that “neither will ever erect or maintain any fortifications commanding the same, or in the vicinity thereof, or occupy, or fortify, or colonize, or assume or exercise any Dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito [Moskito] Coast, or any part of Central America.” Yet, the American Commander was to have a frank discussion with a British officer in the region who “distinctly declared that England had never abandoned the protectorate . . .”. Fraser River gold had undoubtedly delayed Britain’s departure.

General M.M. McCarver, a member of the California Legislature, gave as his considered opinion that the discovery of gold on Fraser River “on the line which divides the territory of two of the most powerful nations on earth . . . may be the means of producing blood as well as gold.”
Indeed, there were numbers of Fraser River miners who had participated in previous filibustering expeditions prior to traveling to New Caledonia. Individuals such as James Houston, who claimed to have discovered gold at Tranquille Creek, after having served under General Walker in his earlier raid on Nicaragua. Or Thomas Spence, who had enlisted in a revolutionary war party into Sonora, Mexico. There were even reports as far away as England that Walker himself might have “possible intentions in British Columbia on the part of the Americans — with or without direct support from their Gov’t.” And yet, it was the arrival of Edward McGowan that caused the greatest alarm amongst the few British representatives then in New Caledonia.

The story of “Ned McGowan’s War” is one of the only tales of the Fraser River gold rush that has earned a place in the history of British Columbia due to McGowan’s infamous reputation amongst the Vigilance Committee of San Francisco. While mining at Hill’s Bar, McGowan had apparently entertained notions of furthering American Manifest Destiny. McGowan recalled that, “We had arranged a plan, in case of a collision with the [British] troops, to take Fort Yale and then go down the river and capture Fort Hope . . . . and retreat with our plunder across the country into Washington Territory — only twenty miles distant. This would, we supposed, bring on the fight and put an end to the long agony and public clamor — through the press of the country — that our boundary line must be ‘fifty-four forty or fight.’” There is some evidence for McGowan’s plan. Gold Commissioner Richard Hicks had kept a close watch on the Hill’s Bar crowd. “There are men here who call themselves Americans that are a disgrace to civilized society,” Hicks warned Governor Douglas, “and I defy any officer in power to satisfy their grasping propensities.” Hicks continued such that McGowan had tried “to excite the miners to revolt . . . and that if the miners would only stand by him he would put all Englishmen to defiance.”

With the arrival of special agent John Nugent, McGowan recalled that his appointment “was
hailed with delight by all the residents on the river, and particularly at Hill’s Bar.” Nugent immediately set about preparing a detailed and extensive reconnaissance report, much as a diplomatic spy might do. He appraised the military capabilities of the two colonies, particularly the Royal Navy based at Esquimalt harbour. His diplomatic appointment was charged with discovering exactly the “military or naval force the British authorities [had] in the vicinity of the river.” The agricultural potential was also assessed, along with the resources of timber, coal, and of course, gold. In addition, he leveled substantial criticism against the HBC and its “oppressive” system of licences and taxation; their monopoly control of navigation of the Fraser River. When he approached James Douglas with these grievances, Douglas apparently responded “that there was nothing to prevent the Americans going elsewhere if they were dissatisfied with their treatment in the two colonies.” Nugent did not stop here, but further reported to the U.S. President that the HBC had encouraged First Nations in Eastern Washington and British Columbia to resist the influx of American miners. From American military officers, engaged against First Nations culminating in Lieutenant Colonel Steptoe’s defeat, Nugent learned that mules, horses and other property of the U.S. government — the spoils of war — were subsequently purchased by HBC officials at Fort Colvile. “But they did not confine themselves to simply receiving this stolen property,” Nugent asserted, “but absolutely supplied the Indians then in the field against our troops with ammunition and arms . . ..”

Lewis Cass instructed Nugent to be as exacting as possible in his official report of the Fraser River gold discoveries as “you can understand their bearing upon the great interest of our North West Territories.” Nugent proceeded to collect affidavits from among the American mining population of their many grievances of ill-treatment at the hands of colonial and HBC authorities. “Numberless complaints of this character poured in on me from day to day,” he stated, “all of them proving a most
grasping and avaricious spirit on the part of the petty authorities of the place, or else a studied
determination to disgust the Americans with the country.'"61 Nugent concentrated the focus of his
most trenchant criticisms against the fledgling system of law practiced in both Vancouver Island and
British Columbia and the administration of Crown lands.

Numerous complaints reached me, of outrages committed by the subordinate
officers of the Hudson’s Bay Company, of dishonest dealings by the Commissioner
of Public Lands, and of flagrant bias, according as their prejudices tended, on the part
of the courts. The probity of the judges in pecuniary matters was unimpeached, but
it was evident in many cases that their national prejudices carried them far out of the
path of justice. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the courts, from the peculiarity
of their constitution and the eccentricity of their action, were the merest travesties of
judicial tribunals. Their pure unsophisticated ignorance of law was only equalled by
the vehement bigotry that characterized their proceedings in many cases.62

Nugent believed that Americans had been denied their universal right to proper representation
in the court system since Douglas would not allow American lawyers admittance to the bar of the
Colony of Vancouver Island. This was considered oppression of the worst sort that could not go
unnoticed in American government circles. Nugent had found his point of attack, and in a public
meeting held in Victoria, addressed American citizens in the two colonies and pledged “the
intervention of their own government for the redress of their grievances and the protection of their
rights.”63 The U.S. special agent continued the thrust of his report by making direct reference to
known American policy in Nicaragua. “That the government of the United States,” he declared,
“upon proper cause being shown, after recourse shall have been had in vain to the tribunals against
acts of oppression or injustice, will so intervene for the redress and protection of its citizens in British
Columbia and Vancouver’s Island, I am authorized and instructed to give them an emphatic
assurance... The best guarantee I can furnish them of the certainty of such interposition [is]... by
the honorable Lewis Cass, Secretary of State of the United States, in a recent despatch to our minister
in Nicaragua, enunciating clearly and vigorously the views of our government in respect to the rights of our citizens visiting foreign countries. With Cass' Nicaraguan directive being applied to the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, little wonder then that Britain reinforced its presence in Central America.

In 1858, there was still no easy route of communication from the St. Lawrence Valley, north around the Great Lakes, to places like Fort Garry, and as a consequence, the east-to-west transit south of the 49th parallel through American territory, via St. Paul and the Red River, was increasingly seen as a viable though dangerous precedent to the future expansionist ambitions of Canada. In fact, in the years preceding 1858, the Red River Settlement's main connection with the rest of the world had shifted south from Hudson's Bay to St. Paul. Minnesota, elevated to statehood in 1858, was strategically positioned to take advantage of westward migrations from either side of the border, and in effect, become the gateway to the British Northwest Territories for both settlement and the pursuit of Fraser River gold.

"The Americans are fully alive to the importance of the late gold discoveries at Fraser's river," alerted the Toronto Globe, "and ere long thousands of people from other states than California will be wending their way to the new El Dorado." The St. Paul meetings were given full coverage by the Globe, the paper's editor presaging that "active measures will undoubtedly be taken, and that with as little delay as possible to establish an overland communication" to the new gold mines. Indeed, some eighty-six Canadians and Americans began the westward journey through the Canadian prairies in summer of 1858.

These initial explorations were, of course, to coincide with Captain John Palliser's second year in British North America. In 1857, a Select Committee of the British House of Commons had agreed
in principle to Canada's "just and reasonable wishes" to annex the HBC lands of the northwestern territories comprising Rupert's Land, the area drained by rivers flowing into Hudson's Bay, and the further huge contiguous HBC fur trading districts that spanned all the way to the Rocky Mountains. This acknowledgment of Canada's claim to the territory west of the Great Lakes heightened aspirations for westward expansion, and with the discovery of Fraser River gold in the same year, practical notions of a transcontinental state began to take active shape.

Interestingly, within Canadian historiography, nowhere is there to be found any reference to the pivotal role played by the Fraser River gold rush in accelerating these expansionist ambitions. And yet the findings of the British North American Exploring Expedition were to appear along side reports of these gold discoveries in the daily presses of Canada and Britain. In the same way, many proponents of a transcontinental British North America were arguing their case from the other side of the continent, in Victoria, though this fact has been largely ignored. For instance, Alfred Waddington, former San Francisco-cum-Victoria merchant, member of the Vancouver Island Legislative Assembly, and author of *The Fraser mines vindicated* (1858), became one of the chief advocates of a transcontinental railway linking Canada with the Pacific Coast.

Neither has Canadian 'nation-building' history examined currents of British Columbia public opinion that were opposed to the formation of a Canadian-centered transcontinental nation. The English lawyer, novelist and historian, Kinahan Cornwallis, author of *The New El Dorado; or British Columbia* (1858), was adamantly opposed to Canada including the British possessions on the Pacific Slope in its annexation of HBC lands west of the Great Lakes, largely because of the invasion of American goldseekers.

... by all means let it remain independent [he stated], and tributary alone to the mother country. ... To make it a mere undignified parasite of Canada would be the greatest blunder in statesmanship ever committed. ... the representatives of the elder
colony would be as little respected by the heedless population who are now swarming from Puget’s Sound to Thompson’s River, as the laws they might be instructed to enforce. It is therefore to be sincerely hoped that the result of present and future deliberations . . . will be such as to obviate the hazardous evils which would inevitably arise from a union at any time of Canada and British Columbia. . . .

In Canadian historiography, in general, there is little mention of the Fraser River rush, British Columbia, or any West Coast authorities who urged, either for or against, east-west expansion from sea-to sea. Historian Suzanne Zeller wrote, “Until recently, many prominent Canadian historians continued to promote ‘nation-building’ interpretations in tones not unlike those of the Victorians; in particular the Metropolitan and Laurentian schools of Harold Innis and Donald Creighton, with their prominent geographical determinism. . . .” Zeller is certainly correct in that historians of the ‘nationalist’ school have continued to ignore the Pacific Slope region north of the 49th parallel within existing models of Canadian expansionism. British Columbia, the area west of the Rocky Mountains, the west beyond the west, as Jean Barman puts it, has never fit the grand conceptions of a geographically determined east-west alignment. The north-south orientation of B.C. was part of a larger Pacific Slope puzzle; a piece that has never properly fit the nationalist jigsaw that continues to cut British Columbia out of the picture.

No doubt, historians are correct in arguing that a small intellectual elite from central Canada were partially responsible for refashioning ideas about the Prairie region known as Palliser’s Triangle, and other misconceptions of the Canadian prairies, that later compelled thousands of immigrants to populate the southern landscape from Red River to Banff. But quite clearly, the practical notions of goldseekers had little to do with the preoccupations of Toronto-based elite culture in their determination to reach the Fraser River gold fields, and by default, establish routes of communication through HBC territory that others might follow. While British Columbia promised to rival California in mineral wealth, those in the pursuit of gold, whether Canadian or American, needed little
encouragement to go west. And also, with the threat of thousands of Americans about to invade and plunder Indian lands that Canada hoped to annex, the impetus for the idea and formation of a transcontinental nation was more firmly rooted in the assertion of British sovereignty against the incursion of a foreign power.

While Canada waited for a host of “Inventory Sciences” to map the geology, terrestrial magnetism, meteorology, boundaries, and botany of the region, goldseekers simply took individual initiative and pushed forward in advance of any scientific determination. It is unlikely that typical goldseekers concerned themselves with such lofty questions before yelling, “Westward Ho!” Instead, they scrambled to be the first on the ground at new gold diggings, taking any route that might carry them safely, quickly, and cheaply to their sought after destination, at times with disastrous consequences, but always assessing the climate, natural resources and agricultural possibilities of the landscape they traveled through, negotiating with Native inhabitants, and in most cases, diligently reporting back their findings to throngs of potential migrants waiting to improve their life either through the accumulation of gold, or at the very least, relocation to greater and richer lands. One such party of American goldseekers was to become known as the John Jones Overlanders.

John Jones and party were from Faribault, Minnesota and set out from St. Paul after a night of festivities, 20 July 1858, at the height of the gold rush. The nine Americans anticipated no great hardships in making their long westward trek, believing that a network of pre-existing trails would guide them safely to Fraser River. Certainly a well-defined path had been beaten from St. Paul to the Red River Settlement, and too, they rightly thought that they might travel along a succession of fur trading posts to Fort Edmonton, the old Carleton Trail. But their assumptions of clearing past the Rocky Mountains through passes previously located by the HBC were not quite as well founded. By
the time they reached Fort Edmonton, using ox-carts ladened with supplies, winter's approach had begun and the first of many light snows had blanketed the land.

HBC employees, such as Chief Trader William Joseph Christie, whom Jones described as "the biggest toad in the puddle," warned them against further advance until the following summer of 1859. The Rockies were impenetrable during winter, but Jones and party were anxious to be on Fraser River and also wanted to quickly report back that they had succeeded in locating a practicable route for other goldseekers to follow. Thus, HBC warnings went unheeded and these American goldseekers diverted their course south, hoping to take a more southerly pass to Fort Colvile in Eastern Washington. "This is perfect madness," insisted HBC Governor George Simpson, "they will perish on the road."

As luck would have it, Captains John Palliser and Lieutenant Blakiston were also at Fort Edmonton at this time in pursuit of transcontinental routes to the Pacific, and they offered advice based on explorations from the previous year. Jones recounted the meeting in his diary, 18 October 1858.

Here also, we received an introduction to Capt. Palliser and Captain Blakiston [sic], British officers sent by their government on an exploring expedition. . . Captain Blakiston took his departure at noon. From him we gleaned many items of interest about the route we were going to take. . . We were told by everyone here that it was a dangerous undertaking to cross the Rocky Mountains at this season of the year, and that by no means could we cross them at Jasper House Pass with animals. Furthermore, that if we overcame that formidable barrier there was no trail to Fraser River on the other side of the mountains. . . . Finding this to be the case we abandoned the idea of crossing them at that point and concluded that we would try the Sinclair Pass. . . Had a conversation with Capt. Palliser, who gave us considerable information as to what route we should take . . . he had been through Sinclair Pass and had blazed the path clear through.

Though Jones was determined to push on, three of his party decided to remain behind, undoubtedly influenced by the negative reports from men who had been in the field longer than themselves. Their
party now consisted of ten members, and with great haste departed from Fort Edmonton before worsening winter conditions prevented them from crossing the mountains to the south at Kootenay Pass. Yet after only a day's travel they gained news that deep snows had also shut down this route through the Rockies. In addition, the Blackfoot Confederacy were reported as hostile, and so Jones and party decided in favour of the Sinclair Pass once more, but not before losing the trail and ultimately entering the (North) Kootenay Pass. The party were to endure great hardships. Freezing weather conditions and deep snow, compounded by massive amounts of fallen timber that impeded their travel, lack of supplies and consequent starvation, and encounters with the Blackfoot Confederacy east of the Rockies that were only assuaged by masquerading as members of Palliser's British Exploring Expedition. Like many Californian miners who had adopted HBC dress while on Fraser River, Jones and party, when questioned by chiefs Bear's Hip-Bone and Bull's Head, claimed to be King George's men even though they were adamantly anti-British.83

The year of 1858 was a terrible period of unrest for First Nations on either side of the Rockies: not only for Native peoples in British Columbia and Washington Territory, but, among others, the Blackfoot Confederacy who ranged from the Rocky Mountains well into Saskatchewan, and from the North Saskatchewan River towards the Upper Missouri in the United States. As the Blackfoot were engaged in battle with the U.S. Army, Jones' deception worked, and his party were permitted to continue their journey. The tale is one of great odds by men lost in the mountains, suffering untold privations, before ultimately emerging at the HBC post Kootenay House after forty days travel from Fort Edmonton. The local HBC Trader, John Linklater, offered some sustenance to the frost-bitten party. The local Indians, known as the Kootenais, also provided hospitality and the Jones Party, or what was left of it, were encouraged to think that a distance of three weeks remained between them and Fort Colvile, as was suggested to them at Fort Edmonton. But, once
again, due to the harsh realities of winter, and the beleaguered state of the Americans, their trek toward the Colville Valley would take another four and a half months of slow, arduous travel and further starvation.

When they finally made it out to ‘civilization,’ Fraser River bound miners were encountered working their way up the Columbia-Okanagan route, and not one of the remaining members of the Minnesotan group were attracted to continue north. The chase of the golden butterfly had succumbed to a tenuous quest for survival. The Jones Party henceforth claimed the Fraser River gold rush a huge humbug, and the party disbanded to go their separate ways. Nevertheless, the fact that they had made the crossing seemed proof enough that a transcontinental trail existed, and so miners that had remained to winter east of the Rockies, in addition to new parties formed in Minnesota, New Brunswick and Canada, began westward treks anew in spring and summer of 1859, being ever watchful that they approached the continental divide well-before winter. In total, ten parties formed consisting of some 102 Overlanders, including Canadian nationalists John Jessop and Dr. Augustus J. Thibodo.

Thibodo joined the Northwestern Exploring Expedition that had begun organizing in St. Paul in 1858; led by American military leaders Colonel William Noble and General S.B. Olmstead. As with the Jones Party, they commenced “the exploration of the immense and fertile district Northwest of Minnesota,” but also proposed examining the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains, “carefully prospecting for gold in the mountain streams, and obtaining full particulars of soil, water, timber and mineral resources, as far north as Edmonton.” “The Fraser River gold hunting and Saskatchewan exploring expedition,” believed that the lands between the Rockies and the limits of navigation on the Saskatchewan would “be found more desirable for settlement of a populous and prosperous
community than even the well known valley of the Red River of the North." Unlike the Palliser Expedition, or Henry Youle Hind’s Canadian-government sponsored Red River and Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of the previous two years, the Noble-Olmstead Expedition included seven newspaper correspondents from the Toronto Leader and The Globe, the Detroit Free Press, New York’s Evening Post and Tribune, the St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat, while Harper’s Weekly sent well-known correspondent Manton Marble. In addition, the Smithsonian Institute appointed Dr. C.L. Anderson as naturalist and geologist, and medical doctor J.D. Gooderich supplied his services along with "a good chest of medicines."

Thibodo, a native of Kingston, Ontario, had received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at Queen’s College before becoming the first graduate of medicine at Trinity College, Toronto. While at Trinity it is assumed Thibodo had met H.Y. Hind, a professor of geology and chemistry, who was continuing his second year of explorations in the North West, though it should be noted that Hind’s limited expedition had been given no mandate to cross the Rockies. Thibodo had joined the ranks of an American expedition to equal those of Palliser, and significantly exceed those of Hind, with the especial objective of reaching the Fraser River gold fields.

It should also be noted that during Palliser’s final year of exploration in 1859, several American goldseekers, who had wintered east of the Rockies in 1858, joined the British explorations that were about to cross into British Columbia from Fort Edmonton. The Americans were anxious about encountering hostile Native peoples en route, and so asked permission to travel with Palliser who claimed, “I should not have succeeded in traversing the country . . . but for the large preponderance of the Anglo-Saxon element among our forces . . . . Americans, Maxwell, McLaren, Cook and one colored man, Dan Williams.” Likewise, Palliser’s geologist, Dr. Hector, had hired
American George Burnham of St. Paul who had broken off from the John Jones Overlanders at Fort Garry before their desperate crossing of the Rockies during the winter of 1858. Hector stated, "I engaged one of them, Burnham who had been a California miner, as I had found at Fort Pitt that he was very handy and thoroughly to be trusted."\(^90\) So handy, in fact, that they had prospected their way together through Howse Pass into the upper Columbia Valley of British Columbia.

Once through the Rockies, these American goldseekers left the British exploring expedition, some of them immediately starting out for the Similkameen mines near Fort Colvile, and glad not to have met with the same fate as their predecessor John Jones. Governor James Douglas reported to the Duke of Newcastle the success of similar overland parties that had made a successful crossing to the gold fields and urged that the Province of Canada develop a proper route across the west to the Pacific.

From Lytton, a natural pack-road now exists leading to Red River Settlement by the Coutannais Pass, through the Rocky Mountains, and from thence following the valley of the Saskatchewan, chiefly over an open Prairie Country of great beauty, and replete with objects of interest to the tourist and sportsman; a settler may then take his departure from Red River in spring with his cattle and stock, and reach British Columbia by that road in course of the autumn following. This is no mere theory, the experiment having been repeatedly made by parties of Red River people travelling to Colvile, from whence there is a good road to Lytton; so much so indeed that one of those persons assured me that the whole distance from Lytton to Red River, with the exception of the Coutennais Pass, which is thickly wooded, may be safely travelled with carts. If the Canadian government would undertake to open a road from Red River to the borders of Lake Superior, which really represents no very formidable difficulties, the connection between British Columbia and Canada would be complete, and the whole distance might I think, be travelled on British soil.\(^91\)

Nowhere are the overland transits of Fraser River-bound gold miners, nor their contributions to Palliser's Expedition, recorded in the works of historians of Canadian nationalism. Nowhere is British Columbia formerly placed within the central-Canadian idea of a transcontinental nation. And
yet, Palliser, having visited Governor James Douglas at Fort Victoria at the conclusion of his three-year exploration, was later recommended by Joseph Trutch to represent the Colony of Vancouver Island at the Great Exhibition in London. Clearly, Palliser had made his mark in the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, but the later two and integral regions that would form part of a transcontinental British North America have not made their presence known within Canadian historiography as presently written.

In the very same year that Palliser reached Fort Victoria, a number of Canadian-sponsored business enterprises took quick action with the intention of profiting from a new transcontinental connection across British North America. The “Canada Agency Association Limited” proposed that they be made the sole agents for the sale of crown lands in Vancouver Island and British Columbia in anticipation of Canadian settlement expanding to the Pacific Slope. The issue of harmonizing currencies in British North America was also immediately addressed, “the wisest course to be adopted in the case of the currency of British Columbia will be to assimilate it to that of Canada, with which colony it will doubtless be brought eventually into close intercourse.” And too, the British War Office acknowledged a despatch from the Governor of Canada that a Volunteer Calvary Corps in Upper Canada solicited “permission to raise a force of one hundred Men for service in British Columbia.” Quite clearly, the expansionist circles of Canada were not waiting for the idea of the West to be altogether refashioned before seeing the advantages of linking-up with the British colonies on the Pacific Ocean. The “North West Navigation and Railway Company of Canada” offered to run a postal service across the continent. Lord Carnarvon saw the “great political advantages” of this scheme which would “probably go far to facilitate the erection of colonies, the development of natural resources & the consolidation of B.N. America as part of the Empire.” At the very least, Arthur Blackwood, Senior Clerk in the North American Department of the Colonial Office, believed
that a transcontinental route was an invaluable asset if relations between the United States and Britain 
worsened in Central America. “If a war should break out with the U. States interrupting our maritime 
communication with V.C. Isl[an]d & B. Columbia [he stated] we have the consolation of knowing 
that we can still fall back upon this overland route.”

During the initial months of the Fraser River rush, Douglas had been confronted by a two-
pronged approach of Californian miners entering the gold fields by land and sea; that is by way of the 
Columbia-Okanagan route and outward-bound ships from the Port of San Francisco to communities 
adjacent to the Gulf of Georgia. But once the Fraser River Fever had swept the entire North 
American continent, migration routes expanded well beyond the Pacific Slope, again by land and sea, 
but from overland routes that reached across the continent and ocean-going transits that revitalized 
the geopolitical importance of Central America. While Douglas coped with a regional gold rush that 
spanned along north-south lines, the threat of a much more massive invasion from larger population 
centers east of the Rockies would have strained the practical limits of the few resources for the 
assertion of British sovereignty at his command.

Luckily for Douglas, U.S. agent John Nugent determined that the richness and extent of 
British Columbia gold was limited and did not warrant the continued influx of American miners. 
Had it been otherwise, one may assume that American policy would have favoured annexation. 
Nugent decided otherwise though, leaving the door open for later American acquisition. In his 
Presidential Report, the U.S. agent concluded:

The Americans, it is true, were in sufficient force any time within the first six months 
to make successful any movement on their part towards the seizure of the colonies, 
which the fears of the authorities may have suggested as possible; but they entered the 
country with no marauding propensities; and furthermore, setting aside their 
indisposition to disturb the peaceful and friendly relations subsisting between their
own country and Great Britain, the two colonies of Vancouver's Island and British Columbia really offered no inducements sufficient to render them worthy of even a temporary struggle. It is true that, in all probability, both will eventually cease to be under European control. Their ultimate accession to the American possessions on the Pacific coast is scarcely problematical — but in the meantime their intrinsic value either of locality, soil, climate, or productions, does not warrant any effort on the part of the American government or the American people towards their immediate acquisition. . . I do not regard the gold fields of the colony hitherto prospected as valuable. Gold will be found over the whole country; but it is not extravagant to say that every ounce hitherto taken out of the Frazer river gold diggings has cost much more than an ounce to obtain it, not to mention the immense number of lives lost in the whirlpools of that treacherous stream. As national possessions, then, with the exception of the harbor of Esquimalt, these colonies are, as I have stated, to us comparatively valueless.

Of course, while Nugent wrote these words, the limit of 1858 prospecting was in the vicinity of The Fountain, north of Lillooet. By 1859, prospectors had travelled beyond Fort George on Fraser River, and rapidly approached the famous Cariboo gold strikes further north, culminating in the Cariboo gold rush of 1862 to 1867. The Cariboo rush, for all practical purposes, was an extension of the Fraser River rush of 1858, but by then, Fraser River had become sufficiently sullied in the Californian press as to require a change of name for further gold discoveries in the British possessions. Had Nugent known of the wealth of the Cariboo, perhaps things may have turned out differently. By the time of the Cariboo rush, however, the United States was preoccupied with Civil War, and the main migrations to B.C.'s gold fields were British subjects, especially Canadians taking overland routes, rather than the preponderance of Americans who had dominated the land during the year of 1858. As New Yorker Manton Marble stated, "The gold of Fraser River, be it much or little, has drawn the attention of the world to the unexampled richness of the north-western areas of this continent." And similarly, it was Fraser River gold that inaugurated the overland transit of Canadian miners and settlers, and soon, the expansion of the Canadian State to the shores of the Pacific Slope.
1. Napier to Lord Malmesbury, Foreign Secretary, 30 July 1858. London Correspondence between HBC and HM Government, 1858-59. Hudson's Bay Company Archives. Hereafter cited as HBCA.


7. Ibid.


15. Napier to Malmesbury, 30 July 1858. London Correspondence between HBC and HM Government, 1858-59. HBCA.


20. See Ch. VIII, "Overland Railway and Other Communication Between Canada, the United States and British Columbia" in Kinahan Cornwallis, The New El Dorado; or British Columbia (London: Thomas Cautley Newby, publisher, 1858).

21. Charles H. Mason stated: “The formation of the Colony of British Columbia, the emigration thither, the establishment of naval depots, and the location of troops, the surveys of the country of the Red River and the Saskatchewan, are all significant facts — and by delay we may, in this amicable contest, find that we are left in the rear, and the golden prize has fallen into the hands of our neighbours of the North.” Acting Governor Charles H. Mason to the Sixth Annual Session of the Legislative Assembly, 8 December 1858, in Messages of the Governors of the Territory of Washington to the Legislative Assembly, 1854-1889, edited by Charles M. Gates (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1940), 57.


23. Legislature of Minnesota. Report from a Select Committee of the House of Representatives, on the Overland Emigration Route from Minnesota to British Oregon (St. Paul: Earle S. Goodrich, State Printer, 1858), 3. “The Fraser river mines have already been mentioned in the British Parliament as not less valuable and important than the gold fields of Australia, and it is in view of the influence of these events upon overland emigration, that the present report is submitted.” Ibid., 10. With appendices, this report amounted to 100 pages of text in support of an overland route from Minnesota to Fraser River.

24. Ibid., 11.

25. Lord Lytton was to forward “extremely curious specimens” of gold sent by Douglas to the Royal Geographical Society for their museum, including the Governor’s remarks on the climate of the colony. See Robert Murchison, Museum of Practical Geology to Merivale, 2 April 1859. No. 3572. CO 60/6.

26. By 1859, Hind’s exploratory work of the previous two years had been brought into disrepute. He had apparently pushed his work beyond agreed limits and the reports that were produced raised suspicions of plagiarism. Though his greatest interest was geological research, by the time his focus shifted from settlement of the prairie west towards migration to the Fraser gold fields in 1859, his attempts to replicate the Canadian parallel of the Palliser expedition was not to be supported by the Canadian government. W.L. Morton, Henry Youle Hind, 1823-1908 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 67-81.

27. Legislature of Minnesota. Report from a Select Committee of the House of Representatives, on the Overland Emigration Route from Minnesota to British Oregon, 22.
28. Opinion of Colonel John H. Stevens. Ibid., 27. The Honourable A. Ramsey, Governor, urged his fellow Minnesotans that representations were required to the U.S. government demanding reciprocity with the Red River settlements, and foresaw "the grand scheme of an inter-oceanic railroad, which is yet to connect the Valley of the Mississippi with that of Frazer River, . . . [and] the golden harvests of the mineral slopes of the Pacific and the rich freight of China and India." Ibid., 29.

29. Ibid., 35.


32. Cass had also supported the removal of Eastern U.S. Native peoples from their traditional homelands to the trans-Mississippi Indian Territory. He was seen by Whites as an expert on Indian affairs. For a short biographical sketch on Lewis Cass, see Dan L. Thrapp, Encyclopedia of Frontier Biography I (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 240-41.

33. U.S. Secretary of State Lewis Cass to John Nugent, 2 August 1858, as found in Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Canadian Relations IV (Concord: Rumford Press, 1945), 170.


35. The writer continued: "And depend upon it, if Vancouver Island once falls into American hands it will stay there." See "The Frazer Exodus and Its Ultimate Results," Bulletin, 21 June 1858, p. 2.


37. The writer continued: "the '54° 40" mistake of President Polk; his blunder in permitting the English to retain Vancouver Island — the key to Puget Sound." See "The Frazer River Exodus and Its Ultimate Result," Bulletin, 21 June 1858, p. 2.


40. Lewis Cass in the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine asserted that the U.S. "Will not consent to the subjugation of any of the independent States of this continent to European powers, nor to the exercise of a protectorate over them, nor to any other direct political influence to control their policy or institutions." Cass to Augustus C. Dodge, 21 October 1858, Confidential. No. 66. In "Visitation of American Vessels by Officers of the British


42. Britain was also encouraging Spain to re-enter North America in support of Mexico against further American filibustering attempts in that region. General Sam Houston of Texas fame supported annexation of Mexico though official U.S. government support had been denied. Houston saw Mexico “as easy prey to any adventurer from abroad” and is purported to have said: “if the government of the United States did not think it proper to interfere, there were not lacking private individuals who would not shrink from the responsibility of ‘interposing’ to protect the rights of fellow citizens.” See “Annexation of Mexico — Gen. Houston,” Bulletin, 1 July 1858, p. 2.


44. McIntosh to Sir W.C. Aldham, Commander, HMS Valorous, 29 November 1858. No. 3. Ibid., 17.

45. McIntosh to Toucey, 3 December 1858. No. 53. Ibid., 11. The sovereignty of Nicaragua to the Moskito Coast was recognized by Britain in 1860 on the condition that the Moskito Indians should continue to enjoy local self-government. Britain, in various ways, maintained support for the Moskito peoples well into the early 20th century. Alan Burns, History of the British West Indies (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954), 690-92.


47. “This was the period of William Walker’s activities in Nicaragua. Walker, a native of Tennessee, came to California in 1850 and three years later led an abortive filibustering expedition to effect the ‘independence’ of Lower California and Sonora. In 1855 Walker took a company of ‘emigrants’ to Nicaragua and the next year seized the presidency of the country. Four years later, after incurring the enmity of Cornelius Vanderbilt, he was executed by a firing squad at Trujillo.” As noted in Polly Welts Kaufman, Ed., Apron Full of Gold: The Letters of Mary Jane Megquier from San Francisco, 1849-1856 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 140.

48. The great benefactress, Baroness Angela Burdett Coutts, who had funded the formation of the Anglican Diocese of Columbia, sent an urgent message to Lord Lytton such that “the well known Walker had reached California in disguise... with possible intentions in British Columbia on the part of the Americans — with or without direct support from their Gov’t. ... Still as it was named to me so seriously by persons of intelligence & judgement & I should be very sorry for the Bishop of Columbia to find Walker amongst his Parishioners...”. Coutts to Lytton, 16 April 1859. No. 4415. CO 60/6.

49. Edward McGowan’s participation in the Fraser gold rush is a well documented and an oft told story, one that will not be examined here. McGowan was well-known to the press and public of the Pacific Slope region. His career took many a turn, from Pennsylvania judge to gold miner, notorious gambler-cum-newspaper editor, a ballot-stuffer and influence pedlar, in addition to saloon brawler, gentleman dueler, and fugitive from San Francisco’s infamous Vigilance Committee. McGowan was also an acquaintance of special agent John Nugent, having been an occasional correspondent to the San Francisco Herald during his time in Mexico. When McGowan left for Fraser River in the summer of 1858, the Vigilance Committee were hot on his trail, but


51. Hicks to Douglas, 17 November 1858. CC. BC Archives.

52. Hicks to Douglas, 28 October 1858. CC. BC Archives.

53. McGowan stated in full: “He was clothed with plenary powers, and was also to look after the interests of the Americans in that country, and send back all those who wished to return again to the United States, and had not the means to do so. It was estimated that there were 30,000 Americans there, not one-third of whom had employment. The appointment of Mr. Nugent was hailed with delight by all the residents on the river, and particularly at Hill’s Bar (many of the expatriated were on the Bar), in consequence of the stand the San Francisco Herald had taken against the mob, Mr. Nugent being the principal editor and owner of the paper.” McGowan, “Reminiscences: Unpublished Incidents in the Life of the Ubiquitous.” See also, Lewis Cass, Transportation of Destitute Americans from Victoria to San Francisco. Letter from the Secretary of State. 35th Congress: 2d Session. House of Representatives Ex. Doc. 12 (1858).


55. Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Canadian Relations IV (Concord: Rumford Press, 1945), 170.


57. Nugent claimed to have gathered much evidence in this regard, and attributed to a Colonel Snowden of Yuba County, California that “he learned from several Indian chiefs, that they and their people were led to believe by the representations of Hudson’s Bay Company’s servants, that the Americans were coming there to rob them of their cattle, of their food, and their squaws; and were advised by those same evil minded individuals to commence a war of extermination against our citizens. . .”. Ibid., 14.

58. Ibid., 14-15.
Charles Mason, Acting Governor of Washington Territory, similarly criticized the HBC such that “we, having no affinities with such monopolists, but in all our business relations diametrically opposed to them, should earnestly demand their speedy extinction within our territory.” Charles H. Mason, 8 December 1858, in *Messages of the Governors of the Territory of Washington to the Legislative Assembly*, 59. Governor Isaac Stevens stated, “Colville is at this moment practically a British dependency.” See Stevens to the Fourth Annual Session of the Legislative Assembly, 3 December 1856, Ibid., 44.

60. *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Canadian Relations* IV (Concord: Rumford Press, 1945), 170.


62. Ibid., 10.

63. Ibid., 11. John Nugent’s Address appeared in the *Victoria Gazette*, 13 November 1858. Also found in *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Canadian Relations*, 74.

64. Nugent continued: “If wrong be done to them, let them appeal to the courts. It is hoped that they will obtain justice; but should those tribunals, unfortunately, be too impotent, too ignorant, or too corrupt to administer the law with impartiality and firmness, our citizens may reckon with certainty upon the prompt and efficient interference of their own government in their behalf. The best guarantee I can furnish them of the certainty of such interposition will be found in the subjoined declaration by the honorable Lewis Cass, Secretary of State of the United States, in a recent despatch to our minister in Nicaragua, enunciating clearly and vigorously the views of our government in respect to the rights of our citizens visiting foreign countries.

‘The United States believe it to be their duty [stated Cass], and they mean to execute it, to watch over the persons and property of their citizens visiting foreign countries, and to intervene for their protection when such action is justified by existing circumstances and by the law of nations. Wherever her citizens may go through the habitable globe, when they encounter injustice they may appeal to the government of their country . . . . Circumstances as they arise must prescribe the rule of action. In countries where well-defined and established laws are in operation, and where their administration is committed to able and independent judges, cases will rarely occur where such intervention will be necessary. But these elements of confidence and security are not everywhere found; and where that is unfortunately the case, the United States are called upon to be more vigilant in watching over their citizens, and to interpose efficiently for their protection when they are subjected to tortious [sic] proceedings by the direct action of the government, or by its indisposition or inability to discharge its duties.’ Ibid., 13.


66. *Toronto Globe*, 12 July 1858. This report was later reprinted in Manchester and Glasgow papers as noted by Smith, *Survival on a Westward Trek*, xx.

69. Wright has provided the most detailed account yet of these overland migrations of Canadians and Americans to Fraser River in 1858.


70. For instance, focusing on the Prairie West, Doug Owram examined how a small group of Canadian expansionists reshaped the image of the North West Territories from an inhospitable fur trade preserve into a vast prairie land ripe for agriculture and colonization. They transformed the very idea of the west in such a way as to make immigration attractive and inevitable. However, the author's conception of the emergent Canadian State does not include British Columbia or the existence of a New El Dorado west of the Rocky Mountains. The omission is unfortunate considering that some of Owram's principle sources were written by men who had joined the Fraser River Rush in 1858 such as Alfred Waddington, Robert Ballantyne and Thomas Spence.


72. Doug Owram cites Waddington, but not his active promotion of a transcontinental B.N.A. and rail-link from the other side of the continent in Victoria. “As early as 1868 Alfred Waddington warned that ‘unless a counterline be built through British territory, this line [the Union Pacific] will furnish the only outlet for the Red River Settlement and Saskatchewan territory, and thus prepare the way for her separation from the Mother Country.”’ Owram, *Promise of Eden*, 105 and 122. Likewise, though Robert Ballantyne’s romantic writings on the west are referred to, there is no mention of the author’s *Handbook to the new goldfields; a full account of the richness and extent of the Fraser and Thompson River gold mines with a physical and geographical account of the country and its inhabitants, routes, etc.* (Edinburgh: Alex. Strahan, 1858). Owram, *Promise of Eden*, 17-18, 70 and 187. And, too, Owram included Thomas Spence in the expansionist circles of Red River after his relocation from British Columbia in 1866. “He became known in expansionist circles in the later 1860s for his efforts to set up an independent government of Portage la Prairie in defiance of the Hudson’s Bay Company,” noted Owram, *Promise of Eden*, 104. This was the same gold seeker who had joined a filibustering expedition in Sonora, Mexico, before joining the Fraser River rush from California. See Arthur Wellesley Vowell and Thomas Spence, “Mining Districts of British Columbia,” (1878). Bancroft Library. Owram wrote that the name of Thomas Spence was more widely known in Europe than Canadian nationalist Charles Mair, but makes no mention of Spence’s previous experience in the Fraser River gold fields. Owram, *Promise of Eden*, 104. References to Spence are also found on pages 103, 106, 112, 116, 122, 150, and 161.

73. Alfred P. Waddington, *The Fraser mines vindicated; or, the history of four months* (Victoria, B.C.: P. de Garro, 1858); *Overland Communication by land and water through British North America* (Victoria, B.C.: Higgins, Long and Co., 1867); *Overland Route through British North America; or, The shortest and speediest route to the East* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1868); *Sketch of the proposed line of overland railroad through British North America* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1869). For reference to the South American Waddington family and their substantial mercantile, agricultural, and other business interests, including the construction of a 20 mile long canal system near Valparaiso, see Jay Monaghan, *Chile, Peru, and the California Gold Rush of 1849* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 23.

74. Cornwallis, *The New El Dorado; or British Columbia*. 
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75. Such is the case in Suzanne Zeller, *Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987). Similar to Doug Owram's work, the West meant prairie West, but the 'shortfall' certainly mitigates against explanations of nation.

76. "Inventory sciences contributed substantially to the modern intellectual framework within which Canada was 'invented' and even re-invented by Canadian historians of the 'nationalist' school." Ibid., 273-274.

77. For instance, Owram, *Promise of Eden* and Zeller, *Inventing Canada*.

78. Zeller wrote of an "ideology of nation-building," or how British North Americans created "the idea of a transcontinental nation" in the years preceding 1867. Zeller examined four prominent Victorian sciences — geology, terrestrial magnetism, meteorology, and botany — and argued that the systematic, scientific surveys of the lands and resources of the North West Territories shaped the idea of a transcontinental nation by giving Canadians "a sense of direction, stability and certainty for the future." Ibid.

79. The details and route taken by the John Jones Overlanders are outlined by Dwight Smith in his Introduction to Jones' diary of the 1858 trip. See Smith, *Survival on a Westward Trek*, xxii-xxvi.

80. Simpson to Ramsay Crooks, New York, 26 July 1858. George Simpson. Correspondence Out. HBCA.


82. The three who remained to winter at the Devil's Lake Settlement were Ed Hind and John Sanford of Faribault, and a man by the name of Brewster from Mankato, Minnesota. Jones Diary, 18 October 1858, in Smith, *Survival on a Westward Trek*, 66.

83. Jones Diary, 23 October 1858. Ibid., 74. See also, Wright, *Overlanders*, 46.

84. The foregoing, brief description of the horrific, yet fascinating trip made by the Jones Party was taken largely from Richard Wright's account. Wright, *Overlanders*, 45-58.

85. Ibid., 109.

86. Ibid., 90.

87. The Canadian government refused to support Hind's application to the imperial government for a third expedition in 1859 that would have extended his work of the previous two years by crossing the Rockies to establish a route to the Fraser River gold fields. Morton, *Henry Youle Hind*, 84.

88. Neither in Owram's *Promise of Eden* or Zeller's *Inventing Canada* is there any mention of the American-based Northwestern Exploring Expedition or the participation of Canadian Augustus Thibodo who certainly could be safely included in the intellectual circles of Canada West.


90. Ibid., 393. Also noted in Wright, *Overlanders*, 112.

91. Douglas to Newcastle, 18 October 1859. No. 224. CO. 60/5.
92. Speaking of the International Exhibit of Works of Industry and Art, 1862, Trutch wrote: "the Executive Committee of the Industrial Exhibition for Vancouver Island by whom I am desired to convey to His Excellency the Governor through you their respectful recommendation of Captain Palliser and Hon. A.J. Langley as most fitting and able Commissioners to represent this colony at the Great Exhibition in London."
J.W. Trutch to W.A.G. Young, Acting Colonial Secretary, 15 July 1861. F1777. CC. BC Archives.

93. T.W.C. Murdoch and Frederic Rogers, Emigration Office to Merivale, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, 27 May 1859. No. 5429. CO 60/5.

94. Hamilton to Merivale, 10 December 1859. No. 12167. CO 60/6.


96. George A. Hamilton, Treasury Chambers to Merivale, 31 May 1859. No. 5533. CO 60/6. Note: Carnarvon’s comments were appended to this inter-government communication.

97. Note by Blackwood to Merivale, 6 June 1859, as appended to Hamilton to Merivale, 31 May 1859. No. 5533. CO 60/6.


100. Governor Douglas wrote of 1859 miners that 150 miles past Fort George was "the extreme point to which they have yet prospected...". Douglas to Newcastle, 18 October 1859. No. 224. CO 60/5.

101. "I am directed by the Earl of Malmesbury to transmit to you, to be laid before Secretary E.B. Lytton, copies of a Despatch and its enclosures from Her Majesty’s Minister at Washington reporting the discourteous and intemperate behaviour of Mr. Nugent, the Special Agent of the United States in British Columbia, before his departure for Washington." Hammond to Merivale, 19 January 1859. No. 734. CO 60/5. Unfortunately, time did not permit finding the enclosures with this communication which are recorded as Lord Napier, British Minister at Washington to Malmesbury, 31 December 1858, reporting the actions of Mr. Nugent; and Douglas to Napier, 15 November 1858, forwarding his correspondence with Nugent, with explanation. Ibid. Also, there is apparently correspondence regarding a conversation held between Napier and Lewis Cass re. John Nugent including “a copy of a memorandum which he [Nugent] had unofficially placed in General Cass’ hands respecting the rights of foreign Miners as laid down by the State Legislation of California.” Hammond to Merivale, 9 February 1859. No. 1502. CO 60/5.

CONCLUSION: 'THE RIVER BEARS SOUTH'

The Steamer came up to Hope and brought the report that the Boundary Commission had said that the line between H.B.M. and U. States runs North of Fraziers River and gave [the] U.S. Fort Langley. You bet it done me some good. . . The River bears south much more than you have an idea.

-- Captain George Wesley Beam, Puget Sound Bar, August 1858

Though the Fraser River was not to be found flowing south of the border in the geographic territory of the United States, for all practical purposes, the social and economic flow of cross-border migration patterns placed the Fraser River gold fields decidedly within the American-dominated Pacific Slope region. The fact that it has taken over one hundred and forty years to tell the larger story of the Fraser River gold rush suggests that, if the 49th parallel has played a role in shaping the Pacific Slope, its influence has been most dramatic within the written histories of the United States and Canada. Before the repercussion of East-West linkages realigned the Pacific Slope, it is quite clear that British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California were part of a larger North-South transboundary region. For Native peoples, fur trappers, gold miners, and others during the last century, the 49th parallel was little more than a paper demarcation with no parallel in physical space. It was seen by the Duke of Newcastle as an "imaginary boundary."
For both Canada and the United States, the historical exploration of borderland regions, such as the Fraser River, have been largely undermined by preoccupations with national history and the blinding influence of a political divide. Though the events of the 1858 gold rush were centred north of the border, key aspects of the rush, and indeed much of the paper trail, are to be found to the south. By examining this Pacific Coast paper trail it becomes obvious that the dominant, defining influence in mainland British Columbia during its formative year was not that of Britain or Canada, but the extended reach of the American West. Clearly, the 49th parallel's greatest influence at this time was not so much the physical reality of a dividing line, but the persuasive force lent to national myths -- myths that have failed to recognise these important North-South linkages within a shared region that had previously experienced a period of joint British-American sovereignty and the rapacious expanse of the Californian mining frontier.

Beam's notion that "The river bears south much more than you have an idea," are words that could equally have been expressed to historians of the "nation-building approach to Canadian history." As argued in the previous chapter, these historians and their ideas of the formation of a transcontinental nation have effectively ignored British Columbia's previous North-South alignment. The Pacific Province does not fit the Laurentian thesis, an argument successfully perpetuated by succeeding generations of academics, but falls short of spanning the continental divide. But then, historians of British Columbia have also, more often than not, denied the American presence as having effectively shaped our social, political and economic life north of the border.

As the preceding chapters have illustrated, British authority in New Caledonia was marginal during the year 1858. The establishment of firm British law and order did not occur until after the Fraser River gold rush, contrary to historians such as Frederick Howay, Margaret Ormsby, and Barry Gough, to name a few. The weakness of British power, particularly in the interior reaches of the
Fraser River, meant that Native peoples were ultimately overwhelmed by a mass invasion of foreign goldseekers. That there is no parallel in Canadian history to the kinds of exterminationist violence levelled against Native peoples, such as occurred in the Western States, is an oft repeated rule that in this instance is quite unfounded. Conflict on the Fraser River was inevitable once gold mining pursuits began to rival the age-old fishing traditions of First Nations. Though there are only veiled references to the Fraser River War within British Columbia historiography, the archival record dispersed throughout the Pacific Slope region suggests a conflict of cataclysmic proportions. The conflict for Native peoples was multidimensional: both gold and salmon resources existed in their traditional territories, and they had been accustomed to profit from both through trade with the HBC. Natives asserted control over access to these resources: miners were charged for transport along the navigable portions of the lower Fraser while tolls were exacted on Indian trails that skirted the unnavigable canyons. The timing of the height of the rush was a critical moment for Native peoples and their fisheries. Just as the immense salmon runs returned in late summer, extensive placer mining threatened the future of the very resource on which Native peoples depended. Traditional fishing grounds were encroached upon while the spawning habitats of creeks were rerouted by water companies, the sand and gravel bars washed away. Here the chronology of events in 1858 was crucial since the peak of the rush was also the peak for salmon fishing in the canyons; large communities of Native peoples having left their villages unprotected while occupying their traditional fishing sites. Increasingly, with the rising number of goldseekers, Native lands were claimed by others, their trade in gold marginalised, and traditional fisheries circumscribed.

Conflict was inevitable, as Governor Douglas had warned, since local Indian power and fledgling British colonial authority were overwhelmed. The year 1858 was a year of chaos unlike
any other in British Columbia and American Pacific Northwest history, a period of transition in which the fur trade world had the most to lose. In the space of this one year traditional Native territories were largely circumscribed, full-scale Native resistance broken, the fur trade world irrevocably changed. Native claims to the land were disregarded not only by foreign goldseekers that invaded the gold fields, but also by later colonial authorities who were charged with advancing White settlement. And in the same way, the Hudson’s Bay Company’s interests in the region were also marginalised by the events of 1858.

From a fur trade perspective, the Fraser River gold rush was the third and final event in a series of West Coast population influxes that altered, dramatically, the geopolitical significance of the HBC in the Pacific Slope region. First, the Oregon Trail had conveyed thousands of Americans to the Willamette and adjacent valleys of ‘Old Oregon,’ precipitating not only the Oregon Boundary Settlement of 1846, but a British fur trade world ultimately circumscribed to north of the 49th parallel and Fort Victoria. Second, the California gold rush of 1849 built a further and huge population base on the Pacific ocean, galvanizing coastal economies into a magnetic North-South pull, and providing further disorganizing effects on HBC operations. Finally, the third most cataclysmic event on the Pacific Slope for the HBC was the Fraser River gold rush of 1858. Both the American settler society left behind on the Columbia River, and the California goldseekers that transformed Yerba Buena into the metropolis of San Francisco, headed north to populate the top half of Old Oregon, calling for an end to monopoly rule, and, in effect, driving the last nail into the Company coffin, the British government being more than prepared to abolish HBC rights and power from the company’s last remaining portion of the Pacific Slope.

The following year in 1859, the Hudson’s Bay Company’s proprietorship over the Colony of Vancouver Island was not renewed and their monopoly trade privileges to fur districts on either side
of the Rocky Mountains revoked. By 1863, the International Financial Society of London purchased controlling-interest in the HBC. Shareholders, once attracted by the wealth in furs to be harvested, now invested in British Columbia and Rupert’s Land, in part, for their potential wealth in minerals. The Fraser River gold rush had contributed, substantially, to altering the image of the company’s chartered-territories from that of an inhospitable fur trade preserve to a westward land of promise.

It is certainly not difficult to imagine what may have occurred in the British possessions north of the border without the presence of the Hudson’s Bay Company. The words anarchy and chaos come immediately to mind. In the absence of any real British authority in the interior reaches of the Fraser River corridor, the HBC had acted to assert some semblance of British sovereignty in advance of the Crown Colony of British Columbia being proclaimed. The British Emigration Office, highlighting this popular local notion of the HBC having been an imperial agent in New Caledonia, stated: “Governor Douglas wages strongly the claim of the Hudson’s Bay Company to liberal consideration on the ground of their services in securing the Country West of the Rocky Mountains for Great Britain, and the loss they have incurred by the premature revocation of their Trading License.” Douglas, on behalf of the HBC, had claimed some 98,000 acres of land in B.C. in the aftermath of the gold rush, lands used for cultivation and cattle grazing which surrounded each of their many forts and outposts. For instance, upwards of ten square miles were claimed in the vicinity of Fort Langley and 640 acres at Fort Hope. In effect, the HBC were claiming some of the best lands in New Caledonia where future gold rush town sites might be established. “This seems to raise some questions of great difficulty,” Herman Merivale of the Colonial Office cautioned. “The H.B.C. never had or asked for any title from the crown to the parcels of land which they have occupied . . . . What semblance of title they may have derived from Indians, does not appear. Legally
speaking I take it they are mere squatters." The Duke of Newcastle was of the same opinion: "I can not conceive how the Company can claim any rights as Landlords under the License unless they can shew, beyond the powers of the License, either a grant by the crown or a purchase by themselves of the lands in question."

How ironic, that for HBC land title to be recognized it required an implicit recognition of pre-existing Indian title. In the case of the adjacent Colony of Vancouver Island, the HBC had been made proprietors through a crown grant and, of course, Native title had been recognized and 'purchased' in the form of the Douglas Treaties. Conversely, in the mainland Colony of British Columbia, the crown had never formally recognized Native title or, as a result, HBC claims to the land. As Douglas had predicted from the outset of the rush, the discovery of gold would be "the forerunner of trouble without end," not just for First Nations, but also the HBC and the fur trade world they shared.

If one travels the Fraser Canyon today, you will still see one of the haunting legacies of this rush in the cryptic place names that have become a fixed, permanent reminder of a single tumultuous year: American Creek, Texas Bar, Boston Bar, China Bar, and Kanaka Bar, to name a few. Even the limited Native lands left behind in the wake of 1858 continue to tell the story of invasion and 'conquest': names like Trafalgar Flat Indian Reserve, Boston Bar Indian Reserve, or Boothroyd Indian Reserve. And yet, if one digs deeper, there are also ancient Native names hidden below the surface that tell a very different story: for instance, Ts'quo:la, Xwoxewla:lhp, Tseequaloose, Koia'um, or Lkamtic'н. These Indian names have existed for millennia, yet it is the gold rush of a single chaotic year that continues to define this space, and in a sense, our limited view of the past.

We have convinced ourselves that colonialism was a relatively temperate process, especially when viewed alongside the genocidal history of the American West. British Columbia, in fact, may
be viewed as one of the most successful colonies in the world if we continue to forget our colonial past, and in large measure we have done just that. Through the selective writing of history, we have offered a European-centred view of things that has become generally accepted by the majority of the non-Native public. By disconnecting and thus denying the Native past in Pacific Slope history, a self-justifying story of the progress of White civilization has seemingly swept the loose ends of colonialism under the carpet. These self-justifying words are of the type that continue to perpetuate our present white-washed view of history.

The single most important contest in imperialism has always been on the ‘land question’: who owns it, who wants it, who first settled it, and who currently decides its future and the future right to resources. And these battles over land, beginning with the Fraser River gold rush, have been, more often than not, “reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative.”¹¹ That is to say, land questions have been ‘settled’ amongst the pages of colonial correspondence, the primary and admittedly biased source material used to construct our historical understanding of the past.

The story of the Fraser River gold rush presented here is decidedly different from accounts previously written by European colonists and their descendants. As the cultural critic Edward Said asserts, “nations themselves are narrations. The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them.”¹² Hence, this dissertation is a substantial revisionist history of the events of 1858. It is an attempt to pull together the loose ends of colonialism and portray the gold rush in a new and informed light.

Though goldseekers, settlers, and governments colonized the First Nations landscape, today the danger of not questioning these legitimizing stories is that they will continue to colonize the
popular consciousness of British Columbian society “into a set of unquestioned, taken-for-granted historical truths.” By retracing the footsteps of goldseekers throughout the transboundary Pacific Slope region, a hidden archival landscape emerged that portrays the effects of the gold rush to Native peoples as a devastating contest over land and resources. This narrative of the gold rush has been blocked from entering mainstream consciousness, the full story of the Fraser River War, as presented here, being particularly indicative of this unsettling fact.

From a modern perspective, the devastating effects of the Fraser River gold rush can still be seen as the province continues to grapple with Native land claims -- claims that began in 1858 -- and a Treaty-making process that often appears to have no end in sight. The words of the Aborigines Protection Society, written in England at the time of the gold rush, are hauntingly appropriate to today.

As, therefore, the Indians possess an intelligent knowledge of their own rights, and appear to be determined to maintain them by all means in their power, there can be no doubt that it is essential to the preservation of peace in British Columbia that the natives should not only be protected against wanton outrages on the part of the white population, but that the English Government should be prepared to deal with their claims in a broad spirit of justice and liberality. It is certain that the Indians regard their rights as natives as giving them a greater title to enjoy the riches of the country than can possibly be possessed either by the English Government or by foreign adventurers. The recognition of native rights . . . Whenever this principle has been honestly acted upon, peace and amity have characterized the relation of the two races, but whenever a contrary policy has been carried out, wars of extermination have taken place; and great suffering and loss, both of life and property, have been sustained both by the settler and by the Indian. We would beg, therefore, most respectfully to suggest that the Native title should be recognized in British Columbia, and that some reasonable adjustment of their claims should be made by the British Government . . . if British Columbia is to become an honourable or advantageous portion of the British Dominions. It would seem that a Treaty should be promptly made between the delegates of British authority and the chiefs and their people. . . . Nothing short of justice in rendering payment for that which it may be necessary for us to acquire, and laws framed and administered in the spirit of justice and equality, can really avail.
Here was the "first missed opportunity" to acknowledge Native title in British Columbia, almost one hundred and forty years in advance of the historic *Delgamuuk* decision made by the Supreme Court of Canada, 11 December 1997.\(^\text{15}\) Obviously, the Aborigines Protection Society’s words, written so long ago, and from so far away, have just as much pertinence for British Columbia today, as they did then. Though, as we have seen, the Fraser River gold rush provided the impetus for the expansion of Canadian sovereignty to the Pacific Slope, the question of pre-existing Native sovereignty continues to claim the land.
NOTES


2. Newcastle's view is found appended to a letter from T.W.C. Murdoch, Emigration Office, to Herman Merivale, Permanent Under-Secretary, Colonial Office, 23 September 1859. CO 60/5.

3. The 'joint sovereignty' I refer to is the period from 1808 to 1846 during which time Britain and the United States both occupied the Oregon Territory to the exclusion of other nations.

4. The "nation-building approach to Canadian history," wrote J.M. Careless in 1969, "neglects and obscures even while it explains and illuminates, and may tell us less about the Canada that now is than the Canada that should have been — but has not come to pass." As quoted in Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing since 1900 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 262.


6. T.W.C. Murdoch to Herman Merivale, Permanent Under-Secretary, 29 August 1859. CO 60/5.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid. Herman Merivale's private note appended to the above Colonial Office communication.

9. Ibid. Newcastle's private note appended to the above Colonial Office communication.

10. Douglas to Captain Charles Dodd, 22 September 1857, Fort Victoria, CO.


12. Ibid.


14. F.W. Chesson, Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, to Lord Lytton, Secretary of State for the Colonies. See Lytton to Douglas, 2 September 1858. CO. See also Appendix C.

15. Hamar Foster has suggested that the "first missed opportunity" was much later in 1875. See "Missed Opportunities" in Foster, "Honouring the Queen's Flag: A Legal and Historical Perspective on the Nisga'a Treaty," BC Studies No. 120 (Winter: 1998-99): 11-36.
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The Governor wrote to the British government as follows:

1. Since I had last the honour of addressing you . . . in reference to the discovery of gold, in the Couteau or Thompson's River District, we have had much communication with persons, who have since visited that part of the country.

2. The search for gold and ‘prospecting’ of the country, had . . . been carried on almost exclusively by the native population, who have discovered the productive beds, and put out almost all the gold, about eight hundred ounces, which has been hitherto exported from the country; and who are moreover extremely jealous of the whites and strongly opposed to their digging the soil for gold.

3. The few white men who passed the winter at the diggings, chiefly retired Servants of the Hudson’s Bay Company, though well acquainted with Indian character, were obstructed by the natives, in all their attempts to search for gold. They were on all occasions narrowly watched and in every instance, when they did succeed in removing the surface and excavating to the depth of the auriferous stratum, they were quietly hustled and crowded by the natives, who having, by that means, obtained possession of the spot, then proceeded to reap the fruits of their labors.

4. Such conduct was unwarrantable and exceedingly trying to the temper of spirited men, but the savages were far too numerous for resistance, and they had to submit to their dictation. It is however worthy of remark and a circumstance highly honorable [sic] to the character of those savages that they have on all occasions scrupulously respected the persons and property of their white visitors, at the same time that they have expressed a determination to reserve the gold for their own benefit.

5. Such being the purpose of the Natives; affrays and collisions with the whites will surely follow the accession of numbers, which the latter are now receiving by the influx of adventurers from Vancouver’s Island, and the United States Territories in Oregon, and there is no doubt in my mind that sooner or later the intervention of Her Majesty’s Government will be required to restore and maintain the peace; up to the present time however, the country continues quiet; but simply I believe because the whites have not attempted to resist the impositions of the natives. I will however make it a part of my duty to keep you well informed in respect to the state of the gold country.
6. The extent of the gold region is yet but imperfectly known, and I have therefore not arrived at any decided opinion as to its ultimate value as a gold producing country. The boundaries of the gold district have been however greatly extended since my former report.

7. In addition to the diggings before known on Thompson’s River and its tributary streams, a valuable deposit has been recently found by natives on a bank of Fraser’s River about 5 miles beyond its confluence with the Thompson, and gold in small quantities has been found in the possession of the natives as far as the Great Falls of Fraser’s River, about eighty miles above the Forks. The small quantity of gold hitherto produced, about eight hundred ounces by the large native population of the country is however unaccountable in a rich gold producing country, unless we assume that the want of skill, industry, and proper mining tools, on the part of the natives, sufficiently account for the fact.

10. ... the proclamation issued by me asserting the rights of the Crown to all gold in its natural place of deposit, and forbidding all persons to dig for gold without a license have been published in the Newspapers of Oregon and Washington Territories, and that notwithstanding some seventy or eighty adventurers from the American side have gone by the way of Fraser’s River to the Couteau mines, without taking out Licenses.

11. I did not, as I might have done, attempt to enforce those rights by means of a detachment of Seamen and Marines, from the ‘Satellite’, without being assured that such a proceeding would meet with the approval of Her Majesty’s Government; but the moment your instructions on the subject are received, I will take measures to carry them in effect.

12. There being only two practicable routes, from the sea coast to the Couteau Mines; those could be guarded at little expense, and the country rendered as secure from foreign intrusion, as the fabled garden of the Hesperides.
APPENDIX B


The War has commenced at last, between the White men and the Indians. As I write this, companies are being formed outside amidst a crowd of 800 men, who are all excited, all talking; and tomorrow morning they start up the river. I fear every Indian they meet will get little mercy at their hands. ... The miners in many places have been driven from the bars by force, and in other places only suffered to remain on payment of provisions and shirts. It is charged that the Chinamen who have gone up the river have supplied the Indians with revolvers and ammunition; and as proof of this the fact is cited, that they are not molested by the Indians, who suffer them to remain where the whites have been driven off. This may be mere rumour -- and Fraser River is notorious for all sorts of improbable reports -- but it has gained general credence; so much so, that Chinamen are searched at several of the bars before the miners will allow them to proceed, and at New York Bar -- one mile above here -- I understand that they do not let them pass at all. ... yesterday afternoon the news came down that all the miners for twenty miles above the canons had come down to the end of Douglas Portage, burying their canoes with their provisions in them, driving the Indians off on both sides of the river. Later arrivals confirmed this; and this morning some sixty men came down, and brought the news that 180 men had gone up the river, in two parties, one each side; had attacked the 'rancheria,' killed eight Indians, and had captured a lot of guns.

PUBLIC MEETING AT YALE

Considerable excitement arose, knots of men were gathered together listening to some one just arrived who had news to communicate. A notice was posted up, calling a meeting of the miners, at 5 P.M.; and at that time some 800 men assembled. Several speeches were made, and the result was, that it was resolved to organize into companies, the captains of which were to make the necessary arrangements, procure arms, of which many were deficient, etc. Great indignation was expressed at the inertness hitherto shown by the government, in not having up to this late day sent up any officials, who would have been able to have exercised a control over the Indians, and prevented all this. As it is now, there is but one official [George Perrier] on this side of Fort Langley; and he is a Justice of the Peace, who is located at Hill's Bar below here, and who is himself a miner, possessing no sort of influence or control over the Indians above here. ... Men of the stamina of those who have come up here are not going to be driven back, robbed or shot at by these savages; and ere long the Indians will find to their cost that the 'Bostons,' if slow to be aroused, will prove terrible to them when they do act.

THE MINERS ARRIVING AND ORGANIZING

This morning [17 August] some five or six companies met and enrolled into companies of about thirty men each. On mustering, the most of them were found provided with guns. By the way, I forgot to mention in my letter of yesterday, that, last evening, all the guns were taken from the Indian ranch here [Yale Reserve], and distributed at this place amongst those going up.
HARANGUE BY FRIENDLY INDIAN CHIEFS

About 10 o'clock, two old chiefs of the tribe living at the head of the lower canon, about seven miles above here, came down. A crowd soon beset them, and though they showed no design of committing any violence on them, they crowded around the [HBC] company's house where they had taken refuge. Mr. [Ovid] Allard came forward, and the chiefs, through his desire, addressed the men, he interpreting for them. The chiefs were both old men, and were eloquent in their gestures and address. They said, 'that their tribe was not the one that had troubled the whites; that they had often had the white man to eat with them, and none could say that they had either killed or maltreated the white man.

Before the white men came here, they were poor and naked. When the salmon did not come, they starved; but now they had plenty of blankets, good clothes and food, and they knew it was owing to the white men coming amongst them. The Indians above were their enemies, and always had been. They were always at war with each other, and it was they who had been robbing and murdering the whites.

The great God above would be sorry if he were to see his children killing one another, and would hide his face from them. In conclusion, he said that his young men would either go with the white men and help them fight the other Indians, or they would pack their provisions. Several men spoke up and corroborated the old man's story, relating how he had given them food when on the trail. The upshot was, that two white flags were given to them to attach to staffs at their ranch up the river, and they went away in their canoes, with a cheer from the miners, who agreed not to molest them. They were given to understand that a large party was going up the river to chastise the bad Indians, and that the white men intended justice should be done to the Indians as well as the white men.

ROUSE'S RIFLE COMPANY AND THE INDIANS

During the morning canoes continued to arrive from Hill's Bar and Texas Bar, filled with men armed with guns and pistols. The captain of the Rifle Company, who have been up the river the past week, arrived here this morning, having in custody 'Copals [Kowpelst]', the Chief at Spuzzem. The Captain, whose name is Charles Rouse, is an old Texas Ranger; and I must say that he expressed himself most sensibly in regard to the Indians. From all I have heard, his company have acted well.¹

They have not molested any but those whom they knew were implicated in the murders and robberies that have been committed. In one instance, a white man was tried before him for selling the Indians powder, guns, and whiskey; which, if it had been fully proved, would have caused him to have been served with the same justice which they are determined to mete out to the Indians. Captain Rouse tells me that about 25 Indians have been shot at different places amongst the canon. The Indians were leaving for the mountains, and those here went down the river this morning.

Copals has just been examined. The object in bringing him down was to have an understanding with him, to find out the authors of several outrages, etc. He is now released, and will be taken back in safety to his house, and the guns, etc., which were taken from his

¹Not everyone was to agree with the Bulletin's correspondent that Rouse's party had "acted well" towards the Natives of Spuzzum. As Alfred Waddington wrote, "thirty-three [Natives] belonging to a friendly tribe were surprised and massacred, and their huts and winter provisions destroyed. They were Indians, and that was enough, so the thing was done just to teach them better manners, and inspire more confidence among the hostile tribes." See Waddington's, The Fraser Mines Vindicated, or The History of Four Months (Victoria, B.C.: De Garro, 1858), 37.
people will be returned to them on condition of their remaining peaceably at their fisheries, and
not troubling the whites. This is in consequence of there being nothing known against him,
and in consequence of Mr. Allard speaking well of him and his tribe in connection with the
whites. 

**AN INDIAN CHIEF A PRISONER**

This afternoon, about sundown, an Indian chief named ‘Suseechus,’ of a Harrison river tribe,
was brought in a prisoner, charged with aiming his gun at white men and acting otherwise
badly. His reputation is not very good, as he has been implicated previously in several
quarrels with the miners. He was the Indian who caused the first difficulty on Hill’s Bar. .
don the memorable occasion when the whiskey barrels were staved in -- though in that case
as in most of all similar ones that have since occurred on the river, whiskey was the infernal
cause. The wildest excitement reigned here for a short time when this chief was brought in.
Some had cried out that he had shot a white man, and cries of ‘hang him!’ resounded in all
directions. But it was finally concluded to keep him until to-morrow morning and then give
him a trial.

Of course all that is known here is to the prejudice of the Indian; but I heard one of the old
chiefs, this morning, telling of white men coming into their (the Indians’) camp, insulting their
wives and in many instances, breaking faith with them in regard to services rendered. I have
always borne in mind, that there is ever two sides to a story; and probably if the Indians could
be heard, they could easily make out a case the other way. However, in the affair of the two
Frenchmen who were shot, I think there is no doubt of its being a cold-blooded murder.
It appears, from all the sources of information open to us, that unless wise and vigorous measures be adopted by the representatives of the British Government in that Colony [British Columbia], the present danger of a collision between the settlers and the natives will soon ripen into a deadly war of races, which could not fail to terminate, as similar wars have done on the American continent, in the extermination of the red man. The danger of collision springs from various causes. In the first place, it would appear from Governor Douglas’s Despatches, as well as from more recent accounts, that the natives generally entertain feelings of hostility towards the Americans, who are now pouring into the Fraser and Thompson Rivers by thousands, and who will probably value Indian life there as cheaply as they have, unfortunately, done in California. The reckless inhumanity of the gold diggers of that State towards the unfortunate Indians, is thus described in a recent number of the New York Times:

...It is the custom of miners generally to shoot an Indian as he would a dog; and it would be considered a very good joke to shoot at one at long shot, to see him jump as the fatal bullet pierces his heart. And when in the spirit of retaliation, some poor hunted relative watches his opportunity, and attacks a straggling whiteman, the papers at once teem with long accounts of Indian outrages. And yet the men who shoot down these poor Indians are not the ruffians we are led to suppose are always the authors of atrocities, but the respectable sovereign people, brought up in the fear of God by pious parents, in the most famed locations for high moral character...who return looking as innocent as lambs. There never yet existed so bad a set of men on the face of this fair earth as a certain class of the highly respectable sovereigns of the states who find their way to the frontiers. It is much to be rejoiced at that the Fraser River Indians are of a serious turn of mind, and can’t take a joke; and in their ignorance of the sports and pastimes of the great American nation may deprive some of the practical jokers of their ‘thatches.’

The Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society was to continue:

The necessity which is imposed upon Her Majesty’s Government to adopt measures to protect the Indians against this class of diggers is too obvious to require any further illustration or
argument on our part. But there is another aspect of the question which is of equal importance. The Indians, being a strikingly acute and intelligent race of men, are keenly sensitive in regard to their own rights as the aborigines of the country, and are equally alive to the value of the gold discoveries; no better proof of which could be furnished than the zest and activity with which large numbers of them have engaged in gold digging. Governor Douglas states that in the earlier stages of the gold discoveries they endeavoured to expel the settlers, who were then few in number, and to obtain possession of the fruits of their labour. But he also states that while manifesting a determination to reserve the gold for their own benefit, they yet respected the persons and property of the whites. . . . They are further described as having learnt the full value of their labour; in proof of which it is stated that they now charge five dollars to eight dollars a day, instead of one dollar, for their services as boatmen in navigating Thompson and Fraser rivers.

As, therefore, the Indians possess an intelligent knowledge of their own rights, and appear to be determined to maintain them by all means in their power, there can be no doubt that it is essential to the preservation of peace in British Columbia that the natives should not only be protected against wanton outrages on the part of the white population, but that the English Government should be prepared to deal with their claims in a broad spirit of justice and liberality. It is certain that the Indians regard their rights as natives as giving them a greater title to enjoy the riches of the country than can possibly be possessed either by the English Government or by foreign adventurers. The recognition of native rights . . . Whenever this principle has been honestly acted upon, peace and amity have characterized the relation of the two races, but whenever a contrary policy has been carried out, wars of extermination have taken place; and great suffering and loss, both of life and property, have been sustained both by the settler and by the Indian. We would beg, therefore, most respectfully to suggest that the Native title should be recognized in British Columbia, and that some reasonable adjustment of their claims should be made by the British Government. . . . if British Columbia is to become an honourable or advantageous portion of the British Dominions. It would seem that a Treaty should be promptly made between the delegates of British authority and the chiefs and their people. . . . Nothing short of justice in rendering payment for that which it may be necessary for us to acquire, and laws framed and administered in the spirit of justice and equality, can really avail.
APPENDIX D


RESOLUTIONS

Resolved, That the overland emigration to British Oregon, attracted by the gold discovery on Frazer and Thompson Rivers, will find Minnesota the most desirable point of departure and supply for the following reasons:

First, The emigration has the choice of three routes, far more easy and direct than any to the south of St. Paul, to wit: (1) By Pembina, Carlton, Edmonton, Athabasca Portage and the Boat Encampment on the Columbia; (2) By the South Saskatchewan and the Kootnais Pass to Fort Colville; and (3) By Gov. Steven’s well known Rail Road route on the American side of the international boundary.

Second, Either of these routes has more water, timber and game, and is less difficult, than those which start from the Missouri River.

Third, Supplies of all kinds are very cheap in Minnesota.

Fourth, Faithful guides and attendants are easily obtained on our frontiers, and in the territory of the Hudson’s Bay Company.

Fifth, There is no danger of molestation from the Indians on these Northern routes.

Resolved, That the citizens of Minnesota will join heartily with the people of Canada in the policy of colonizing the Western districts of British America, which is about to be established; and that relations of reciprocal trade with the United States, if not now existing, should be extended over that region of North America.

Resolved, That our citizens be urged to encourage the formation of parties over either of the routes above designated.
APPENDIX E

LIST OF GOLD RUSH BAR NAMES, FRASER RIVER, 1858-59

[Below Hope]  Maria Bar  Savage Flat
  Hudson Bar  Steamboat Bar
  Blue Nose Bar  Humbug Bar
  Prospect Bar  Surprise Bar
  Cornish or Murderer's Bar  Washington or Bamboo Bar
  Mosquito or Poverty Bar  Kelly Bar
  Fifty-Four Forty Bar

[Above Hope]  [Above Spuzzum]  Chapman's Bar
  Fifty-Four Forty Bar  Dutchman's Bar
  Union Bar  Cross Bar
  Canadian Bar  Swan's Bar
  Santa Clara Bar  Nicaragua Bar
  Posey Bar  China Bar
  Deadwood Bar  Boston Bar
  Express Bar  Tehama Bar
  American Bar  Island Bar
  Puget Sound Bar  Yankee Bar
  French Bar  Fargo's Bar
  Victoria Bar  Mariner's Bar
  Yankee Doodle Bar  Putnam's Bar
  Eagle Bar  Italian Bar
  Alfred Bar  Siwash Bar
  Sacramento Bar  Kanaka Bar
  Texas Bar  Rancheria Bar
  Rosey Bar  New Brunswick Bar
  Niagara Bar
  London Bar  Mormon Bar
  Hunter Bar  Spindulen [Spintlum] Flat
  Emory's Bar  Cameron Bar
  Rocky Bar  McGoffrey Dry-diggings
  Trinity Bar  Horse-Beef Bar
  Ohio Bar  Foster's Bar
  Hill's Bar  Brady's Bar
  Casey's Bar  Rosie Bar
  Fort Yale Bar  Willow Bank Bar
  New York Bar  [Above Lytton]
  Fletcher's Flat
  New World Bar
  Hole in the Wall Bar
  Trafalgar Bar  [Above Lytton]
  Wellington Bar
  Pike Bar
  Sailor's Bar
  Higon or Hiyou Bar
  Madison Bar

[Limit of 1858]  •

[Limit of 1858]

•

This list is an approximate ordering of gold rush bars from below Fort Hope to The Fountain, the northern limit of mining in 1858. Sources from which these place names have been compiled are: Victoria Gazette (particularly 15 Sept. 1858); BC Gold Commissioner. Yale. “Manual of Record and Land Register, Hope and Yale,” GR 252, 12:1; BC Archives; Richard Hicks, Gold Commissioner, Claims Record Book, Special Collections, UBC; Alfred Waddington, Fraser Mines Vindicated: The History of Four Months. Victoria, 1858; Governor James Douglas, BC Papers, No. 26-34; F.W. Howay, The Early History of the Fraser River Mines. Victoria, 1926; H.H. Bancroft, History of British Columbia, 1792-1887. San Francisco, 1890; and R.C. Mayne, Sketch of Part of British Columbia. London: War Office, 1859. Surveyor-General's Vault, Victoria.
APPENDIX F

LEGACY OF THE FRASER RIVER GOLD RUSH:
REMAINING GOLD RUSH PLACE NAMES

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Gold Rush Bars:</th>
<th>Other Features:</th>
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<td>The Fountain</td>
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