CO-OPERATION AND RESISTANCE: INDIAN-EUROPEAN RELATIONS ON
THE MINING FRONTIER IN BRITISH COLUMBIA 1835-1858

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Indian-European relations on the mining frontier in British Columbia. In the mid-nineteenth century, Europeans became interested in exploiting the mineral resources of British Columbia, specifically coal and gold. These minerals were of little intrinsic value to the native populations. Coal was used as a pigment and in ornaments such as labrets, but it was not utilized extensively. Gold was not used at all in the traditional or early post-contact periods. Mining was, therefore, an unfamiliar activity to the Indians. Nevertheless, when Europeans turned to exploiting these resources, the Indians demonstrated that they could readily adapt to this new activity.

Several aspects of traditional northwest coast societies facilitated native integration into mining. Coastal cultures were preoccupied with prestige and rank. Positions in the social hierarchy were hereditary but had to be upheld constantly by means of property distributions called potlatches. In order to sustain the potlatch surplus production and business ability were necessary. While the natural wealth of the region, in part, enabled the Indians to maintain the potlatch, so did their energy and trading skills. The native populations had, in fact, numerous specialized economic activities, most of which aimed at producing a surplus of goods, both foodstuffs and manufactured articles.

These features of traditional northwest coast societies facilitated Indian adaptation to mining and provided an incentive for their participation in this activity. The fur trade, however, furnished the frame of reference for the relationship which emerged on the mining frontier. The Indians mined and traded coal and gold to the Hudson's Bay Company for
some years thus maintaining a cooperative economic relationship similar to that established during the fur trade. Eventually, this relationship was threatened by white miners, who, with their superior mining techniques and equipment, demonstrated that the Indians were irrelevant to their aims. The native populations did not passively submit to efforts by white miners to displace Indian labour and to secure control over production. On both the coal and gold mining frontiers, Indians resisted attempts by white men to disrupt the cooperative economic relationship established between themselves and the Hudson's Bay Company.
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INTRODUCTION

The contact of Indian and European cultures is one of the main themes of the history of British Columbia. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of literature concerned with the history of race relations in this province. With few exceptions, these works focus on white assumptions of racial and cultural superiority and the many activities and policies these beliefs fostered in relation to Indian societies. Indian responses to the advent of the European are largely ignored.

The dearth of literature dealing with the reactions of the native populations to changes introduced by Europeans is, in part, a reflection of the lack of sources from the Indian point of view but, it is also an indication of the bias of those who have written the history of this province. To most historians, the whites are the principal actors; the Indians are merely passive beings, acted upon but not acting. The image of the passive Indian has been reinforced by the belief that European dominance was secured in British Columbia with little violence in comparison to the United States and Australia. This assumption, whether correct or not, has diverted historians from analyzing the conflict which did erupt in this province. A closer examination of Indian-European relations reveals that, far from remaining inert, the Indians of British Columbia demonstrated a multiplicity of responses to changes introduced by Europeans including collaboration and resistance. If the dynamics of race relations are to be understood, the various native peoples must be seen as
groups "coping creatively in a variety of ways with the different situations in which they found themselves."^4

Indian responses to the advent of the mining frontier provide an opportunity for one such examination. In the mid-nineteenth century, Europeans became interested in exploiting the mineral resources of British Columbia, specifically coal and gold. Most historians have either ignored or only superficially examined native reactions to the introduction of this new economic activity. Since the aboriginal populations do not play an important role in the works of Ormsby, Schoefield or Gosnell,^5 it is not surprising that these historians do not examine Indian reactions to the mining frontier. Bancroft, Begg, Howay and Lamb mention that Indians mined and traded coal and gold, but they do not analyze this response nor do they recognize its significance. In referring to the works of Howay and Lamb, W. L. Morton suggests that "the contact of culture is much of the story, yet neither historian seems aware of the theme."^6 Morton's observation is equally applicable to the works of Bancroft and Begg. In a similar manner, historians who have written specifically about the history of mining in British Columbia such as Trimble, Rickard, Morrell and Kemble, fail to analyze this important aspect of mining history in any depth.\(^8\)

Thus, although Rickard devotes an article to "Indian Participation in the Gold Discoveries," he regards native involvement in mining as an inexplicable aberration. Even the works of those few historians who have concentrated on Indian responses to the intrusion of European culture, such as F. E. LaViolette's *The Struggle for Survival* and E. P. Patterson's section on the native population of British Columbia in *The Canadian Indian: A History Since 1500*, do not examine Indian reactions to the introduction of mining.
In its analysis of race relations on the mining frontier, Robin Fisher's *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890* marks an important departure from past interpretations. Fisher, however, concentrates on the placer gold rushes rather than considering mining as a whole. In this respect, he differs little from earlier historians who similarly fail to recognize that what happened on the Fraser was indicative of a general response of Indians to mining. Nevertheless, Fisher, unlike previous historians, attempts to examine native reactions within this limited framework. He argues that the fur trade provided the frame of reference for Indian responses to gold mining. Fisher maintains that during the fur trade period, the relationship between Indians and Europeans was one of economic cooperation: the Indians supplied white men with furs and in return received goods which they desired and valued. The native populations were not merely passive objects of exploitation, but rather, "tough-minded manipulators of competition." Indian experience in the fur trade taught the natives the value of certain commodities to Europeans so that when white men became interested in exploiting gold, the Indians were quick to perceive its potential as a trade item. What Fisher fails to recognize is that a cooperative economic relationship similar to that of the fur trade was established and maintained for some years on the mining frontier.

While Fisher's arguments suggest why the Indians were quick to recognize the value of gold, they do not explain why a people, traditionally perceived by white men as "indolent" and unable to adapt, became involved in mining. Fisher, like earlier historians, fails to fully analyze Indian reactions to the advent of the mining frontier.

The minerals which Europeans began to exploit in the mid-1800's were of little intrinsic value to the indigenous peoples of British Columbia.
Coal was used as a pigment and in ornaments such as labrets, but it was not utilized extensively. Gold was not used at all by the Indians of the northwest coast in the traditional or early post-contact periods. Mining, therefore, was an unfamiliar activity to them. Nevertheless, when Europeans turned their attention to exploiting these resources, the Indians demonstrated that they could readily adapt to this new enterprise.

Helen Codere, an anthropologist, provides an explanation as to why the Indians of the northwest coast were integrated into new economic activities with relatively little difficulty. Although her study, Fighting With Property: A Study of Kwakiutl Potlatching and Warfare, 1792-1930, focusses primarily on the Kwakiutl, she argues that her findings could be extended to include all northwest coast societies. Codere maintains that many aspects of traditional Kwakiutl society facilitated Indian adaptation to new economic enterprises. The culture and society of the Kwakiutl were, like those of other northwest coast societies, preoccupied with prestige and social rank. Positions were hereditary but had to be upheld constantly by means of property distributions called potlatches. In order to sustain the potlatch, both production and business ability were necessary. Codere suggests that, while the natural wealth of the region, in part, enabled the Kwakiutl to sustain the potlatch, so did "their magnificent technical and artistic virtuosity" and "unusual energy." The Kwakiutl had, in fact, numerous specialized activities, most of which aimed at producing a surplus of goods, both foodstuffs and manufactured articles. Codere maintains that

...Kwakiutl habits of industriousness, the Kwakiutl assumption that production aimed at a surplus...all were potential for success in the new economic setting.
These aspects of traditional northwest coast societies not only facilitated Indian adaptation to mining, but also, provided an incentive for the native populations to enter into this new economic activity and maintain a trade with Europeans. Since historians have failed to provide a comprehensive examination of Indian responses to the introduction of mining, they do not understand the nature of the conflict which erupted on the mining frontier. Focussing on the placer gold mining frontier—historians to date have failed to acknowledge that there was any conflict on the coal mining frontier—they conclude that the friction on the Fraser resulted primarily from "the overbearing attitudes and aggressive acts of whites." Even Fisher, who acknowledges that the Indians recognized the value of gold and therefore, were "unlikely to look with favour on miners who came rampaging in to take resources that they not only owned, but also knew the value of," emphasizes that the friction on the Fraser was generated by reckless miners who, having been "cut loose from the ties and restraints of established societies...had become habituated to violence." Here again, historians have focussed more on the activities and attitudes of white miners than on the responses of the Indians.

The conflict which erupted on both the coal and gold mining frontiers was primarily economic, not racial, in origin. The Indians recognized the value of minerals and their potential as trade items. On both frontiers, they mined these minerals and traded them to the Hudson's Bay Company for a number of years. Because of the correlation between wealth and prestige so prevalent in traditional northwest coast societies, the Indians had a vested interest in maintaining the coal and gold trades with the Hudson's Bay Company. When white miners arrived on the mining frontier with their superior technology, they demonstrated that the natives were irrelevant
to their aims and thus they became competitors with the Indians for these resources. The native populations did not passively submit to efforts by white miners to displace them. On both the coal and gold mining frontiers, Indians resisted the attempts of white men to disrupt the cooperative economic relationship established between themselves and the Hudson's Bay Company.
FOOTNOTES

Introduction


2 L. Kopas, "Political Action of the Indians of British Columbia," E. P. Patterson, The Canadian Indian, and F. E. LaViolette, The Struggle for Survival trace the development of land protest in British Columbia but all three works are based on superficial research; R. Fisher, Contact and Conflict, provides a good analysis of Indian responses to the fur trade but with the advent of the settlement frontier Fisher's focus shifts from the Indians to the activities and policies of missionaries, settlers, and government administrators; J. Kennedy, "Roman Catholic Missionary Effort," analyzes the responses of the Indians of the Fraser Valley to missionary acculturation programmes. Van Den Brink, The Haida Indians, is an analysis of cultural change but it is based on superficial research.


9 Fisher, Contact and Conflict, p. 8.


12 The Indians of British Columbia used copper, but it seems that they did not mine it themselves because there were no extensive copper deposits available to them in this area. They traded most of their copper from the Tlingit Indians in southeastern Alaska. See T. A. Rickard, "The Use of Iron and Copper by the Indians of British Columbia," British Columbia Historical Quarterly, 3 (1939), pp. 25-50.

13 Codere, Fighting With Property, p. 20.

14 Ibid., pp. 20-21.


16 Fisher, Contact and Conflict, p. 98.
CHAPTER I

COAL ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

The aboriginal populations of British Columbia made the discoveries which precipitated European interest in both coal and gold. Indian discovery of coal preceded that of gold. The exploitation of this resource centred around two areas, the north-eastern tip of Vancouver Island between Alert Bay and Port Hardy, and central Vancouver Island, near Nanaimo. These areas were inhabited by two different groups of Indians, the Kwakiutl (north-eastern Vancouver Island) and the Nanaimo, a Coast Salish tribe. Nevertheless, both the Kwakiutl and the Nanaimo demonstrated similar responses to the advent of the mining frontier.

Indians first informed the Hudson's Bay Company of the existence of coal on the northwest coast in 1835. In this year, a group of Kwakiutl from north-eastern Vancouver Island who had gone to Fort McLoughlin to trade furs

...observed coal burning in the furnace of the blacksmith's and in their natural spirit of curiosity made several inquiries about it.... They then pointed out where it could be found of the richest quality rising in hillocks and requiring little labour to dig it out. 1

The blacksmith reported this information to William Fraser Tomie, chief officer at the post who, in turn, conveyed it to John McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver, the Hudson's Bay Company's headquarters on the northwest coast.

At this time, the Company's interest in coal was limited to supplying the small quantity required for use in blacksmith shops at its various
However, a new need for coal arose shortly after the Company learned of the deposits. In 1834, the Board of Management of the Hudson's Bay Company had approved Governor Simpson's suggestion that a steam vessel be stationed on the coast as one of several measures intended to improve the Company's returns from the coastal trade. In 1836, the steamer Beaver arrived at Fort Vancouver to begin its long career on the northwest coast. The Company had been importing coal for its blacksmith shops from Britain at considerable expense and inconvenience. The arrival of the Beaver exacerbated this problem and therefore the Hudson's Bay Company was eager to secure a cheap and readily accessible source of coal.

In the summer of 1836, John McLoughlin ordered the Beaver to investigate the coal deposits reported by the Kwakiutl the previous year. Duncan Finlayson, a Hudson's Bay Company trader, was placed in charge of the expedition which arrived, in November 1836, at the area indicated by the Kwakiutl. Finlayson and his men examined the area and found extensive surface outcroppings, samples of which were tested by the engineer of the Beaver and found to be "of very good quality."

During this preliminary investigation of the coal fields of northeastern Vancouver Island, the Kwakiutl demonstrated that they already recognized the value of this mineral to Europeans and its potential as a trade item. Finlayson reported to McLoughlin that the Kwakiutl "informed us that they would not permit us to work the coals as they were valuable to them, but would labour in the mine themselves and sell to us the produce of their exertions." It is not surprising that the Kwakiutl were quick to perceive the benefits they could derive from the coal trade as they had had extensive commercial dealings with Europeans in the fur trade. The first reported contact between the Kwakiutl and Europeans was in 1798 during Captain Vancouver's circumnavigation of Vancouver Island. Vancouver stopped at
several Kwakiutl villages where trade was conducted with the natives. He found the Kwakiutl "well versed in the principles of trade" and during the next forty years the Kwakiutl developed their trading skills further and gained a reputation as astute and sophisticated businessmen.

The Kwakiutl were "anxious" to work the coal and trade it to the Hudson's Bay Company and the Company was, in turn, willing to use Indian manpower to exploit this resource. A trading relationship similar to that of the fur trade was therefore established with the Kwakiutl in 1836 and during the next ten years the Beaver stopped regularly to obtain coal from the Suquash diggings.

The Kwakiutl made the transition from the fur trade to coal mining with little difficulty despite the fact that this activity was unfamiliar to them. They became involved in every aspect of coal production from extracting the ore to transporting it to the waiting steam vessel. The Suquash area was covered with extensive surface outcrops which the Kwakiutl could work easily with their traditional implements. With "hatchets and wooden tools" they were able to dig sufficient quantities to supply the Hudson's Bay Company's demands. Once dug, the coal was loaded in canoes and transported to the steamer. The method by which the coal was loaded onto the vessel is described by one observer:

...I slung a tub, holding about 6 cwt., from the fore-yard, which was lowered into a canoe and quickly filled; in this manner we received 62 tons from the 24th to the 26th paying for each tub as it came up, by articles of trifling value.

Reports from the Hudson's Bay Company confirmed the facility with which the Kwakiutl adapted to this new economic enterprise. They were portrayed as industrious and efficient, able to procure large amounts of coal in a short time. As one report suggested:
A large quantity of coal may at any time be got there by employing the Indians who are numerous and active to dig and transport them to the ship. They are by no means averse to such employment and ask a moderate remuneration for their labour. On one occasion when we employed them for that purpose they brought in upwards of 90 tons in a few days which they dug with hatchets and other inconvenient implements.

The Hudson's Bay Company and the Kwakiutl had maintained this regular trade at Suquash for ten years when, in 1846, another group of white men became interested in the coal deposits on Vancouver Island. As steam propulsion began to supersede sail, the Royal Navy became increasingly dependent upon coal and was, therefore, always anxious to secure cheap and convenient sources of this mineral. Its most immediate need on the northwest coast was to fuel the steamer Cormorant which was stationed in the Pacific during the Oregon dispute. However, the Navy also sought a supply for its stockpile at Valparaiso, a station for the British fleet. The Navy knew that coal had been discovered at Suquash and therefore, in 1846, Captain Gordon of the Cormorant was ordered to examine "the localities in which coal had been obtained by the Hudson's Bay Company from the Indians."

Gordon and his men represented a group of white men unfamiliar to the Indians. The Kwakiutl were suspicious of these Europeans who had come to examine a resource which they regarded as their own. Captain Gordon reported that "On first going on shore the natives appeared tenacious of our examining the coals, and accused us of coming to steal them." After ten years of trading coal to the Hudson's Bay Company, the Kwakiutl regarded these newcomers as a potential threat to the cooperative relationship established between themselves and the Company. However, once Gordon indicated that he and his men were willing to trade coal from the Kwakiutl, the Indians began to dig and transport the coal to the Cormorant. Thus, "having made a few presents to some of the chiefs, they entered into our views and became very active."
Gordon was impressed with the Kwakiutl whom he described as "industrious" and he estimated that, "assisted by the natives, we could fill our coal bunkers in from 10 to 14 days." Yet, although Gordon was convinced of the feasibility of using native manpower, and although the coal obtained from the Kwakiutl was found to be well suited for steaming purposes, the Navy did not establish a regular trade with the Indians. The settlement of the Oregon dispute and the consequent withdrawal of the Cormorant eliminated the Navy's most pressing need for coal on the northwest coast. At the same time, since coal imported to the Navy's station at Valparaiso from Britain remained cheaper than Vancouver Island coal, the Navy had no further interest in the deposits at Suquash.

While the Navy was itself investigating the possibilities of the coal deposits on Vancouver Island, the Hudson's Bay Company had been conducting a thorough examination of the surface outcroppings from Beaver to McNeill's Harbour in hope of selling coal to the Royal Navy. Although the Navy lost interest in the coal on Vancouver Island, a new market opened up in 1848 with the establishment of a mail steamship service between Panama and Oregon. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company, as the new service was called, knew that coal had been discovered on Vancouver Island and it hoped that the deposits might provide a supply of fuel for its steamers. In 1848, the two companies negotiated a contract by which the Hudson's Bay Company agreed to supply the Pacific Mail Steamship Company with 1000 tons of coal, 300 tons deliverable by May 1, 1849, the remaining 700 by May 1, 1850.

When the Hudson's Bay Company began its negotiations with the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, the right to exploit the coal deposits was in question. The British Government realized the potential value of the coal resources and it wanted the development of this mineral to be in the proper hands. The coal deposits became an important issue in the discussions.
between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Colonial Office on the terms of the proposed grant of Vancouver Island. After a lengthy deliberation, the Colonial Office granted the Company mineral rights on Vancouver Island and following further negotiations concerning cost, both parties agreed to a royalty of two shillings six pence per ton of which the Company would be entitled to ten per cent, the remainder to be used for the development of the colony.\textsuperscript{19}

The terms of the grant of 1849 opened the way for the Company to expand its commercial operations on Vancouver Island. In this year, the Hudson's Bay Company began construction of a post, Fort Rupert, at Beaver Harbour. The post was primarily intended to protect the development of the Company's mining operations but it was also to replace Fort McLoughlin as a centre of trade. Fort Rupert was built approximately six miles from the Suquash diggings and following its construction, four Kwakiutl tribes established a village very close to the fort apparently in expectation of participating in the coal trade. One of these tribes was from the Alert Bay area, very near the original Suquash diggings.\textsuperscript{21}

Until this time, the Kwakiutl had been able to supply the coal requirements of the Hudson's Bay Company. Surface deposits extended all along the coast from McNeill's to Beaver Harbour and the Kwakiutl had been able to dig sufficient amounts to satisfy the Hudson's Bay Company's needs. The Company, therefore, had been content to maintain a trading relationship. But the surface coal, having "been exposed to the action of the elements" was found to be "not well adapted to steam purposes."\textsuperscript{22} While the Kwakiutl could dig the surface coal, they did not possess the technology to exploit the subsurface deposits. Consequently, in order to begin underground mining operations, the Hudson's Bay Company had to import white miners. Accordingly, in September 1849, six miners and an overseer arrived at Fort Rupert.
When these miners arrived at Fort Rupert, the Kwakiutl were still mining coal at Suquash and had stockpiled approximately 700 tons. However, soon after his arrival, John Muir, the overseer, examined the Indian diggings at Suquash and "pronounced the seam too small to be workable." The miners found that the surface beds in many parts of the area were no thicker than 18 inches. They continued to search for a suitable place to begin underground mining operations and, on October 25, 1849, Muir and the other miners began to sink a shaft at a promising location one-half a mile from the fort. The Kwakiutl regarded this attempt to supplant Indian labour with white manpower as a threat to their trade with the Hudson's Bay Company. On October 29, "the Indians surrounded the mouth of the shaft protesting that they would kill all below unless compensation was given them for their land rights." The Kwakiutl accused the miners of stealing the coal and "demanded pay for the land or its product."

This display of hostility was sufficient to compel the miners to abandon their work at the shaft. They retreated to Fort Rupert to demand protection suggesting that the shaft be "made secure from the Indians with pickets that we might work without molestation." Muir and his men returned to work, but they did not receive any assistance from the Company's employees at the fort. At the same time, the demands of the Kwakiutl were not met and they continued to obstruct the miners for the next six months. The miners repeatedly demanded protection from "their (the Kwakiutl) annoyances by day and their thieving depredations by night," but no assistance was forthcoming. On April 16, 1850 matters came to a head when, once again, the miners "were compelled to stop work without assistance and protection." At this point, the miners, frustrated with the Hudson's Bay Company for not providing them protection, and unhappy with other aspects of the working conditions at Fort Rupert, staged a strike.
The troubles with the Kwakiutl retarded the development of the mines at Fort Rupert. Muir, having received no help from the chief officer at the post, wrote to J. H. Pelly, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, complaining of the "want of assistance and protection" against the Kwakiutl at Fort Rupert. Pelly, disturbed by the state of affairs at Fort Rupert, wrote to Douglas, that he "cannot but lament that the work which I consider of the greatest importance and the most valuable part of the gift of the Crown, should be standing still." 30

Although the strike at Fort Rupert lasted only a few days, it impressed upon the Hudson's Bay Company's Board of Management the necessity of taking action to deal with the Indians. The Company realized that no arbitrary or severe measures could be adopted in dealing with the Kwakiutl as they were too numerous and well-armed. 31 Therefore, it decided on a policy of conciliation in order to secure access to the coal deposits at Fort Rupert.

In August 1850, Archibald Barclay, secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company, wrote to Douglas advising him of the policy which should be pursued.

\[
\text{I am to state that the Governor and Committee consider it highly desirable that no time should be lost in purchasing from the natives, the land in the neighbourhood of Fort Rupert. } 32
\]

The royal grant of 1849 did not provide any specific instructions as to Indian rights or title to land. However, in this year, the Colonial Office prepared a "Confidential Report" on Vancouver Island which outlined the Hudson's Bay Company's responsibility with regard to Indian land rights.

The report stated that:

\[
\text{It must however, be added that in parting with the land of the Island Her Majesty parts only with Her own right therein and that whatever measures she was bound to take in order to extinguish Indian title are equally obligatory on the Company. } 33
\]

Although the report explicitly recognized Indian title on Vancouver Island,
it did not make any specific instructions concerning compensation to be paid to the Indians or the extent of land to be preserved for their use. It was felt wiser to make "no stipulations respecting them in grant" as

Little is in fact known of the natives of this land by the Company or by anyone else. Whether they are numerous or few, strong or weak, whether or not they use the land for such purposes as would render the reservation of a large portion of it for their use important or not are questions which we have not the full materials to answer. 34

The Hudson's Bay Company based its policy regarding Indian land rights on the findings of the House of Commons Committee set up to examine the claims of the New Zealand Company. The report of the Committee maintained that aboriginal populations held only qualified dominion based on occupancy, not title. 35 In his instructions to Douglas concerning Indian title, Barclay stated that

...you are to consider the natives the rightful possessors of such lands only as they are occupied by cultivation... all other land is to be considered as waste and applicable to the purposes of colonization. 36

On the basis of these instructions, Douglas concluded two treaties with the Kwakiutl of north-eastern Vancouver Island in February 1851. By the terms of these treaties, the Kwakiutl surrendered the "lands situate and lying between McNeill's Harbour and Hardy Bay inclusive of these ports and extending two miles into the interior of the island." 37 The Kwakiutl retained possession of their village sites and enclosed fields but ceded title to the area which included the coal deposits. In return for the surrender of the coal fields, the Kwakiutl were paid a total of 150 pounds sterling in trade goods including blankets, cotton, handkerchiefs, gunpowder and tobacco. 38

The Fort Rupert treaties were made with the Kwakiutl in an attempt to pacify them and thereby secure the coal deposits on north-eastern Vancouver Island. There were no further reports of Kwakiutl resistance following the
conclusion of these treaties. It is uncertain whether it was the treaties or the eventual failure of the mines and the subsequent withdrawal of white miners which subdued the Kwakiutl. Although exploratory work continued at Fort Rupert until 1852, attempts to locate a seam of adequate depth were unsuccessful. After a large expenditure in an effort to make the mines a productive enterprise, the Hudson's Bay Company finally abandoned the Fort Rupert mines in favour of the more promising coal fields at Nanaimo.

The existence of coal at Nanaimo had first been drawn to the Company's attention by a Nanaimo Indian in 1849. Joseph William McKay, a Hudson's Bay Company employee who was to be associated with the mines at Nanaimo for several years, records the circumstances of the discovery of the coal deposits thus:

While engaged in the office there I was one morning in December called out by the foreman of the Blacksmith shop, who told me that an Indian from the vicinity of Protection Island had been in the shop to have his gun repaired and while waiting and watching operations he picked up some lumps of coal which he observed very closely. Subsequently, when he saw the men use some coal to replenish the fire, he said that there was plenty of such stone where he lived.

McKay told the Indian that if he brought some coal to the fort he would be given a bottle of rum and his gun would be repaired free of charge. The Indian went away but did not return with the coal until the following spring. Tests indicated that the coal was of good quality and so, in May 1850, McKay led a small expedition to investigate the area where the Indian had obtained the coal. 39

McKay succeeded in locating a seam of coal and when he returned to Victoria "made a favourable and circumstantial report" to Douglas concerning his findings. 40 However, the Hudson's Bay Company, still optimistic about the mines at Fort Rupert, did not undertake commercial operations at Nanaimo
at this time. By 1852, it was evident that the mines at Fort Rupert were a failure, and so the Company's interest in the Nanaimo coal fields was renewed. In the spring of this year, McKay conducted yet another investigation of the Nanaimo area. His report impressed Douglas, but, to ensure that the Company did not get involved in dubious prospects as it had at Fort Rupert, Douglas decided to make a personal visit to the coal fields. His expedition, in August 1852, located three seams of coal and the abundance and depth of the deposits convinced the chief factor of their value. Douglas therefore ordered McKay

...to proceed with all possible diligence to Wentuhuyse Inlet commonly known as Nanymo Bay and formally take possession of the coal beds lately discovered there for, and in behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Accordingly, in late August, McKay and a small party of traders proceeded to Nanaimo to secure possession of the coal fields and to begin commercial operations.

The Hudson's Bay Company had demonstrated to the Indians on its earlier exploratory missions that it regarded coal as a trade item. During his investigation, Douglas traded "about 50 tons in a single day at a total cost of 11.0 pounds sterling paid in goods." Even after the commencement of operations at Nanaimo the Company was still prepared to use Indian man-power to exploit the coal. The first reported shipment of coal from Nanaimo was in September 1852 when the schooner Cadboro was loaded with 480 barrels of coal, all of which had been mined by, and traded from, the Indians.

The Nanaimo, like the Kwakiutl, readily adapted to coal mining. At first, they used their own implements—axes and adzes—to mine the surface outcrops. However, the Hudson's Bay Company soon supplied the Indians with light pickaxes to facilitate their work and increase their production.
With these tools, the Nanaimo were able to dig out the surface deposits to a considerable depth. McKay, who had been appointed chief officer at Nanaimo in the fall of 1852, was impressed with the efficiency and industry of the natives. The willingness and ability of the Nanaimo to work the coal is shown in the amount they dug. McKay estimated that the average daily output was twenty tons. By November 1852, just two months after production at Nanaimo had gotten underway, a total of 1315 tons of coal had been traded from the Indians. The Nanaimo not only mined the coal, but also transported it by canoe to waiting ships as the Kwakiutl had done. This practice was continued until loading facilities and a fort were constructed in 1854.

The Nanaimo were skillful and shrewd in their commercial dealings with the Hudson's Bay Company. When the Company established its mining operations at Nanaimo, the Indians "were at first, so extravagant in their demands" that McKay was forced to establish a tariff. The Nanaimo not only demanded high prices for the coal they mined, but were also discriminating in the types of goods they would accept, with woollens, tobacco, shirts, and blankets amongst the preferred trade items. Certain articles were in demand amongst the Nanaimo at different times. For instance, at one point, cut glass beads, kettles and soap were sought after, while at another, cod-hooks were in heavy demand. Moreover, the Nanaimo would not accept goods which they did not value, for example, they would not trade certain types of beads.

While the Hudson's Bay Company and the Nanaimo maintained this trading relationship, white miners also began working the deposits at Nanaimo. In August 1852, John Muir and two of his sons, Archibald and Robert, as well as John McGregor, arrived at the new coal diggings. Unlike the Kwakiutl, the Nanaimo demonstrated little hostility or resistance to these men. The Company experienced some difficulty with Indians "pilfering" coal which may
have been a manifestation of native resentment towards these intruders, but these thefts stopped once a guard was posted near the stock-piles of coal and the miners and the Company were not obstructed again.

The lack of resistance by the Nanaimo can be attributed to several factors. At first, the miners merely carried on exploratory work and so they did not compete directly with the Indians. Even when the miners began to extract coal, however, the Nanaimo did not become hostile. Apparently they did not object to the activities of these white men because they did not supplant Indian manpower. The number of white miners remained so few—never more than nine—and the surface outcrops were so extensive and of such good quality, that the natives were able to continue working coal and the Hudson's Bay Company remained willing to trade whatever quantities the Nanaimo could produce. At the same time, the few white miners engaged by the Company at Nanaimo did not work directly alongside the Indians. The miners worked a seam in the Nanaimo Harbour area, on Vancouver Island, while the Indians mined the deposits on Newcastle and Protection Islands. At Nanaimo, therefore, unlike Fort Rupert, the presence and activities of white miners did not pose a visible threat to the cooperative economic relationship established between the Indians and the Company.

Although the Nanaimo had demonstrated no significant resistance to white mining operations, the Hudson's Bay Company decided to take measures to secure its title to the Nanaimo coal deposits. In January 1853, Douglas received instructions from the Board of Management of the Hudson's Bay Company advising him to extinguish Indian title to the Nanaimo coal district. The Company decided on this policy for a number of reasons. It had learned from its experience at Fort Rupert that Indians regarded minerals as trade items and would not allow white men to secure control over production until
they had been duly compensated. The Company also knew that when, and if, its charter was revoked, the coal deposits would revert to the possession of the Crown. It decided, therefore, that it should extinguish any Indian claim to the deposits, and then buy the coal fields from the Crown itself.

Douglas assured the Hudson’s Bay Company that in carrying out their instructions he would "select such portions of land as may be considered most valuable as containing seams of coal." But his first attempts at extinguishing the Nanaimo Indians’ title were unsuccessful. In May 1853, he reported to Barclay that he would

...attend to their (the Board of Management’s) instructions as soon as I think it safe, and prudent to renew the question of Indian rights, which always gives rise to troublesome excitements, and has on every occasion been productive of serious disturbances.

When the Nanaimo realized that Douglas’s efforts were an attempt to destroy their control over the production of coal, they resisted and for over a year, the Company was unable to negotiate a settlement with them. Douglas, however, finally "settled the claims of the Nanaimo Indians," concluding a treaty with them on December 23, 1854. With the signing of this agreement, the Nanaimo ceded approximately 6200 acres of land to the British Crown in return for 299 pounds sterling worth of trade goods. Although the text of the treaty, like those made with the Kwakiutl, made no mention of minerals, its prime objective was to secure possession of the valuable coal deposits.

The Kwakiutl and the Nanaimo responded similarly to the introduction of coal mining. Both groups made the transition from trading furs to mining coal with little difficulty. Initially, a relationship of economic cooperation similar to that of the fur trade was established between the Hudson’s Bay Company and the indigenous populations of the Nanaimo and Fort Rupert areas. Eventually, however, both the Kwakiutl and the Nanaimo lost
control over the production of coal. Yet, at Nanaimo, where the coal deposits proved to be extensive and of good quality, the Indians continued to mine. Here, white expertise was required to dig shafts, but the Indians provided the major source of labour for the mines until, at least, the mid-1860's.
FOOTNOTES

Chapter 1


5D. Finlayson to J. McLoughlin, 26 September 1836, Ibid.

6Codere, Fighting With Property, p. 21.

7Ibid., pp. 21-23.

8Dun. Oregon and British North America Fur Trade, p. 241. Dunn was one of several Hudson's Bay Company employees to accompany Finlayson in 1836 on his investigation of the reported coal fields on north-eastern Vancouver Island. He emphasized that the Kwakiutl were very "anxious" to enter the coal trade and that the Hudson's Bay Company, realizing that the natives were numerous and their labour cheap, agreed to establish a regular trade with the Kwakiutl.

9Suquash was an Indian name which referred to the Indian diggings near McNeill's Harbour.


18 The Times, 4 May 1849, *Colonization of Vancouver Island*, p. 16.


23 M. Muir, "Reminiscences," Record ed for H. H. Bancroft in B. C. Sketches, 1878, MS, Photostat of Original, PABC.

24 A. Muir, "Private Diary Commencing 9 November 1848 to 5 August 1850," TS, PABC, p. 86.

25 M. Muir, "Reminiscences."

26 Bancroft, *History of B. C.*, p. 198. Bancroft obtained his information concerning the coal fields at Nanaimo from Michael Muir. Although Muir makes no mention in his "Reminiscences," of the natives demanding compensation for the coal that was being extracted, it is likely that he reported this to Bancroft who, in turn, records this in his history.
27 A. Muir, "Diary," p. 89.

28 Ibid., p. 90.

29 Ibid.

30 J. H. Pelly to J. Douglas, 25 October 1850, Fort Victoria Correspondence Inward, 1849-1859, from the Hudson's Bay Company, London to J. Douglas, MS, PABC.

31 J. S. Helmcken estimated that there were 3000 Indians around Fort Rupert while the Company's employees numbered between 30 and 40. J. S. Helmcken to R. Blanshard, 17 July 1850, Vancouver Island, Courts, Magistrates Court, Fort Rupert, Reports to Governor Blanshard, July 2 and 17, 1850. MS, PABC. E. Colville estimated that the number of Indians at Fort Rupert was 1000, a figure which was probably closer to the Kwakiutl population at the post. E. Colville to J. Pelly, 6 February 1850, E. Rich, London Correspondence Inward from Eden Colville, 1849-1852, London, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1956, p. 16.

32 A. Barclay to J. Douglas, 23 August 1850, Fort Victoria Correspondence Inward, 1849-1859. The conflict between the miners and the Kwakiutl at Fort Rupert, as well as any negotiations the Company may have had with Indians, were overshadowed by another event in the summer of 1850. In June, three British seamen were reportedly murdered by the Newitty, a Kwakiutl tribe. The three men had escaped at Victoria on the Norman Morison which they believed was bound for the California gold fields. Instead, the vessel proceeded to Fort Rupert where the seamen left the ship and were later reported killed by the Newitty. The motives behind the murders are unclear. One report suggested that the Hudson's Bay Company had offered the Indians a reward for the capture of the deserters, dead or alive. Another suggested that the men had bought some meat from the Newitty but the Indians were dissatisfied with the amount paid to them and demanded more. When the seamen refused to pay, the Newitty supposedly, murdered them. Although the motives behind the murders are not clear, they were not related to the resistance at Fort Rupert. A small group of the Newitty tribe moved to Fort Rupert after its construction, but the main body remained at their traditional village site, approximately 25 miles from the fort. It was here, and not at Fort Rupert that the three seamen were murdered and therefore, it is highly unlikely that the Newitty murders represented a manifestation of Indian resistance to the activities of white miners. See Vancouver Island, Courts, Magistrates Court, Fort Rupert, Diary of J. S. Helmcken, June 27-August 20, 1850; R. Fisher, Contact and Conflict, pp. 50-53; B. A. McKelvie, Tales of Conflict, Vancouver, The Vancouver Daily Province, 1949; B. Gough, "The Power to Compel."

33 "Vancouver's Island, Confidential Report," Great Britain, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, Vancouver Island, 1846-1867, CO. 305/1.

34 Ibid.

36. A. Barclay to J. Douglas, December 1849, *Fort Victoria Correspondence Inward, 1849-1859*.


38. Ibid.

39. J. W. McKay, "Recollections of a Chief Trade in the Hudson's Bay Company Fort Simpson, 1878*, MS, Photostat of Original, PABC.

40. Ibid.


42. J. Douglas to J. W. McKay, 24 August 1852, *Fort Victoria Correspondence Outward, 1850-1858*, Letters signed by J. Douglas, (unbound letters), MS, PABC.


45. J. W. McKay to J. Douglas, 30 September, 1852, Ibid.

46. J. Douglas to Pakington, 24 November 1852, CO. 305/3.

47. J. W. McKay to J. Douglas, 9 September 1852, "Nanaimo Correspondence."

48. J. W. McKay to J. Douglas, 16 September 1852, Ibid.

49. J. W. McKay to J. Douglas, 17 July 1853, Ibid.

50. J. W. McKay to J. Douglas, 16 September 1852, Ibid.

51. The Kwakiutl had also taken coal from the miners at Fort Rupert and the Haida and the Coast and Interior Salish also "pilfered" gold in an attempt to resist the mining activities of the whites.
52 J. McKay to J. Douglas, 13 July 1853, "Nanaimo Correspondence."

53 "Nanaimo Correspondence."


55 Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, 7 May 1855, Hudson's Bay Company, London, "Statement Regarding Nanaimo District Lands, MS, PABC. The minutes of the Committee indicate that Douglas was given instructions to extinguish Indian claims to the Nanaimo coal deposits on the 16th January and the 18th of November 1853, however, no record of these instructions seems to exist.

56 The Company had, by this time, also learned from its experience with the Haida on the Queen Charlotte Islands.

57 The Company carried out this plan and in May 1855 purchased 6000 acres from the Crown at Nanaimo at a cost of one pound sterling per acre. Hudson's Bay Company, London, "Statement Regarding Nanaimo District Lands."

58 J. Douglas to A. Barclay, 12 July 1853, Fort Victoria Correspondence Outward on the Affairs of Vancouver of Vancouver Island, 16 May 1850-6 November 1855, MS, PABC.

59 J. Douglas to A. Barclay, 3 September 1853, Ibid.

60 Hudson's Bay Company, London, "Statement Regarding Nanaimo District Lands."


CHAPTER II

GOLD ON THE QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS

The responses of the Kwakiutl and the Nanaimo to the advent of mining frontier were not isolated cases. The Haida and the Interior and Coast Salish tribes who respectively inhabited the Queen Charlotte Islands and the Fraser-Thompson River areas responded similarly to European interest in another mineral, gold. The first discovery of gold in British Columbia was on the Queen Charlotte Islands. In the summer of 1850, a group of Haida took several pieces of gold with them on one of their regular trading expeditions to Fort Simpson.\(^1\) There is evidence to suggest that the Haida were looking for new trade items. When the sea-otter became depleted in the waters around the Queen Charlotte Islands, the Haida turned to the cultivation of potatoes in an effort to regain some of the wealth lost by the decline of the fur trade in this area.\(^2\) The potato became a staple article of trade, although hardly a lucrative one. Therefore, the Haida continued to look for other articles to trade. They frequently made expeditions to California to obtain abalone shells\(^3\) and they may have learned of the value of gold from Indian tribes of this area who were aware of the developments on the gold mining frontier. Accordingly, the initial gold trading expedition to Fort Simpson represented an attempt to establish a wider basis for Euro-Indian trade.\(^4\)

The Haida mission was immediately successful. The pieces of gold, one weighing 4\(\frac{1}{2}\) ounces, the other 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) ounces, were quickly exchanged for
goods at Fort Simpson. News of this transaction created great excitement at the post. One observer reported that "I found the gold mania had seized them here both foreigners and natives and I suppose there will soon be a hunt for the locality." Encouraged by their success, and perhaps prompted by the Hudson's Bay Company, the Haida continued to take gold to Fort Simpson as, in March 1851, Governor Blanshard reported that "I have heard that fresh specimens of gold have been obtained from the Queen Charlotte Islanders."  

Despite the excitement which the gold generated, the Hudson's Bay Company did not send an expedition to investigate the Haida discovery until May 1851 when John Work, chief factor at Fort Simpson, proceeded to the Queen Charlotte Islands with a small crew. The Haida directed Work and his men to the area where they had originally obtained the gold, at Gold Harbour, on the west side of Moresby Island. Work found the natives in possession of a substantial quantity of gold. The deposits on the Queen Charlotte Islands were lode ore associated with quartz formations. The Haida found some of this gold "among the loose stones, and in the open seams of the grey rock." However, they also procured gold in the following manner: "The Indians built a fire on the rock and when sufficiently heated poured water on it and caused it to break." This technique was developed from traditional culinary skills. The Haida used hot stones to boil water for cooking and they often observed hot rocks break when put into cold water.  

The Hudson's Bay Company possessed more sophisticated methods of exploiting gold. Using blasting equipment, its exploratory crew attempted to determine if any rich veins existed in the quartz formations. Work's
Immediately commenced blasting the rock and made two blasts 14 inches deep but found no gold, the men and the Indians searching among the stones and sand found a few small pieces. 12

Subsequent blasts similarly failed to uncover significant quantities of gold. After two days, Work and his men ceased their operations when their boring equipment broke. 13

The Haida had permitted the Hudson's Bay Company to search for gold because they assumed that Work and his men were trying to determine if this mineral existed in sufficient quantities to exploit as a trade item. This is evident from the Haida's reaction to the failure of the Company to find gold at this time. Work reported that "The Indians are dissatisfied and disappointed that we have found no gold by blasting as it damps their hopes of having a fort." 14 Although Work's party was not successful in locating gold, they did not leave the Island empty-handed. The Haida were eager to trade the gold they possessed and the Hudson's Bay Company was equally anxious to obtain it from the natives. Several pieces were bought from the Haida including "a lump of over a pound, nearly pure." 15 These transactions must have reinforced the Haida's impression that the Company intended to establish a trade in this mineral.

Although the Hudson's Bay Company failed to find a rich vein of gold, the fact that the Haida had gold to trade convinced the Company to send another expedition to investigate the area around Gold Harbour. In July of 1851, a party of eleven men, including John Work and Captain William H. McNeill, arrived at the Queen Charlotte Islands to conduct exploratory work. They remained on the Island for five days blasting rock in an effort to locate a gold vein but again failed to uncover any rich deposits. However, they did barter 60½ ounces of gold from the Haida. It seems that the
Hudson's Bay Company still intended to limit its operations to trading rather than production. Indeed, Work was so optimistic about the potential of the gold resources on the Queen Charlotte Islands that he suggested that the Company construct a fort for the specific purpose of trading gold from the Haida.

Since the Hudson's Bay Company demonstrated that it sought to maintain a trading relationship with the Haida, it did not pose a threat to the economic cooperation established between the two peoples during the fur trade. Whether the Company actually intended to carry on a trade in gold, or was forced to by its own failure to find gold, is difficult to determine. Nevertheless, the Hudson's Bay Company did not, at this time, disrupt the customary relations between the Haida and itself. When subsequent expeditions of both Hudson's Bay Company traders and Americans threatened these relations, they were met by resistance from the Haida.

In the fall of 1851, James Douglas made a third attempt and ordered the Hudson's Bay Company's brigantine Una, under the command of Captains Mitchell and McNeill, and eleven men, to spend the winter searching for gold on the Queen Charlotte Islands. This expedition, unlike the previous two, demonstrated that it had no intention of cooperating with the Haida. Spurred on by reports that several American vessels were preparing to journey to the Queen Charlotte Islands to mine gold, the Company now had no time for the natives. The Hudson's Bay Company wanted to ensure that it, and not these American "adventurers," derived the benefits from any gold that existed on the Queen Charlotte Islands. The Company could not claim exclusive ownership of the mineral resources of the Islands because the only right it had on the Islands was that of trading with the Indians. Therefore, the Company could only secure a monopoly on the gold resources by mining the ore.
before the Americans could get to it. The main factor weighing against the
use of indigenous manpower was the technological inferiority of Indian
mining methods in comparison to those of the Company. The Haida method of
separating gold from quartz and other rock was a tedious process in com­
parison to the Company's mining techniques. With the threat of competition
from the Americans, it became imperative for the Hudson's Bay Company to
exploit the gold resources quickly in order to maintain a monopoly.

The crew of the Una began blasting gold immediately upon arrival and
succeeded on the first attempt in locating "a rich vein of gold, averaging
6\frac{1}{2} inches in width, bedded in quartz rock, running 80 feet parallel with
the coast." Subsequent blasts uncovered large quantities of ore, one
yielding 4 pounds of gold. When the Haida saw these white men extracting
their gold without paying for its removal, they became hostile and attempted
to obstruct the Hudson's Bay Company's efforts. They told McNeill and his
crew "to be off" as, if they remained, "they (the Haida) will have nothing
to trade with ships when they may come here." When McNeill's men
continued to take gold, the Indians became more forceful in their opposition
and once a blast was made would

...make a rush for the gold; a regular scramble between
them and our men would take place; they would take our
men by the legs and hold them away from the gold; some
blows were struck on those occasions; the Indians drew
their knives on our men often.

McNeill and his crew estimated that the Haida took as much as "one-half of
the gold thrown out by the blast." The Haida obstructed the Company's
efforts to mine throughout the three weeks McNeill and his men spent on the
Queen Charlotte Islands.

Haida resistance had not yet gone beyond these verbal threats and minor
acts of physical intimidation. This was undoubtedly, in part, because
McNeill and the other traders, realizing their vulnerable position vis a vis
the numerically superior Haida, did not provoke them further. There were
two Haida villages located very close to Gold Harbour, Kai-sun, near the
entrance to Gold Harbour, and Cha-atl, at the entrance to Skidegate Channel. 22
According to Work's estimate, the combined male population of these two
villages was about 150, all of whom frequented the mine at Gold Harbour. 23
In the face of such substantial numbers of hostile and well-armed Indians,
the Una's crew was "obliged to leave off blasting and quit the place for
Fort Simpson." McNeill had been ordered to spend the winter on the Queen
Charlotte Islands but he was unable to persuade his men to stay and continue
mining. They told him that "our force was not strong or large enough to
work and fight also" and they feared "blood would be shed if they continued
to work." 24

Accepting that he could no longer mine, and hoping to make some profit
from the expedition, McNeill traded 87½ ounces from the Haida before he
left the Islands, 24 complaining all the while that they demanded "large
prices" for their gold. 25 One piece weighing 1 pound 2 ounces, was bartered
for, amongst other things, 26 blankets, 10 cotton handkerchiefs, 41 yards
of 26 inch cotton, 10 yards of 36 inch cotton, 17 feet of twist tobacco,
2 kettles and 12 strings of light blue beads. 26 On several occasions, the
Haida demanded such large prices for their gold that McNeill and his men
would not trade with them.

The Haida thus proved to be hard bargainers. This group of Indians
had had commercial dealings with Europeans in the fur trade since 1774 27
and their experience, in part, explains the high prices they demanded. But
several factors inflated the price of gold. The Hudson's Bay Company had
paid high prices for gold on its first expeditions to the Islands and was
now obliged to match these prices. 28 At the same time, the Haida felt
that since the Company's traders were "getting gold for nothing at the
diggings," they "must pay a high price for what we trade."\(^{29}\)

The Haida had successfully resisted attempts by McNeill and his men
to exploit the gold resources of the Queen Charlotte Islands and had
forced them to retreat. But McNeill was still convinced, from the amount
of gold the Indians possessed, and from his own experience, that "gold is
to be found in quantities at Mitchell's harbour alone to pay an expedi-
tion to go there."\(^{30}\) He maintained, however, that if the Hudson's Bay
Company intended to mine the gold "a sufficient force must be here to secure
it from the natives and fight for it if necessary."\(^{31}\) McNeill suggested
that a company of 80 men would be sufficient to awe the natives.\(^{32}\)

Although the Company approved McNeill's suggestion of sending a
force to impress the natives, it would not condone any actions that might
generate serious conflict with the Indians. Douglas emphasized that, with
respect to the recent troubles with the Haida, "the policy of the Company
and the voice of humanity are equally enlisted in behalf of conciliatory
measures." Therefore, in the spring of 1852, Douglas ordered Dr. Kennedy,
a Hudson's Bay Company employee who had proven particularly able in dealings
with the natives, to proceed to the Queen Charlotte Islands with 44 men to
secure a "friendly working arrangement with the natives for working the
mine." Kennedy was instructed to obtain the "surrender" of the district
surrounding, and including, the gold mine in return for "a reasonable amount
of compensation by way of purchase money." Douglas suggested that once the
Haida had ceded this area, Kennedy's party should erect a breastwork of
rough logs around the mine and then warn the Indians not to enter the area
without permission. He also advised Kennedy that several sentinels should
be posted around the mine to ensure that the Haida would "be restrained
from further aggression."\(^{33}\)
In instructing Kennedy to purchase the gold mine on the Queen Charlotte Islands, Douglas was not suggesting that Indian title be formally extinguished as the Company was not empowered to conclude formal treaties with the Haida on behalf of the Crown. The Company could only make an informal agreement with the Haida which would enable it to exploit the gold. Such an arrangement seems to have been reached as Douglas was soon able to report that the crew of the *Recovery* had taken "unmolested possession of the only surface vein in Gold Harbour with the consent and approbation of the natives."\(^{34}\) Exactly what measures Kennedy took to appease the Haida are not clear but their failure to obstruct his activities may have had something to do with the fact that his expedition was unable to find any significant quantities of gold.\(^{35}\)

Although Kennedy's main objective had been to negotiate an agreement with the Haida for working the mine, his expedition was also an attempt to outmanoeuvre the Company's American competitors. American gold-seekers had begun to arrive on the Queen Charlotte Islands in January 1852. Throughout the winter, their numbers remained few, but Douglas anticipated a rush in the spring. Initially, he had suggested that the Government should exclude all foreign vessels from that part of the coast.\(^{36}\) However, the Colonial Office quickly replied that it would not be "expedient to issue any prohibition against the resort thither of foreign vessels."\(^{37}\) It was at this stage that Douglas decided to send the *Recovery* to secure possession of the gold mine for the Hudson's Bay Company before the anticipated rush.

In suggesting that the Colonial Office prohibit Americans from the Queen Charlotte Islands, Douglas was not merely responding to the threat of American competition. He feared the American presence for other reasons as well. As Governor of Vancouver Island, he was worried that an influx of
Americans would threaten British sovereignty and provoke another crisis such as the Oregon dispute. Douglas also believed that the presence of unruly Americans would lead to serious difficulties with the Indians. He knew that the Haida objected to white men extracting gold without compensation and he feared that Americans would provoke the Indians and precipitate a disastrous Indian war. Furthermore, the Haida had already proven hostile to American miners when they first arrived in Gold Harbour in January 1852. Douglas reported that "the first American ship which arrived in Mitchell's Harbour remained only a few days, as the adventurers on board were intimidated by the hostile appearance of the natives, and would not venture on shore." The crew of the Damariscone, another American vessel which went, in February, to the Queen Charlotte Islands, was similarly forced to leave as "when they arrived the Indians were in force, and made so warlike a demonstration as to compel them, being few in number, to hasten their departure." These miners returned to the United States where they warned prospective "adventurers" of the hostility they had encountered. Had these tales discouraged Americans from coming to the Queen Charlotte Islands, Douglas' worries would have been eliminated. However, rather than being dissuaded, prospective miners armed themselves "to set the Indians at defiance, and commence working the mines."

Douglas' worst fears did not materialize. Nevertheless, considerable conflict occurred between the Haida and the American miners who ventured to the Queen Charlotte Islands in the spring of 1852. In late March, the Exact and another unidentified American vessel were forced to leave the Islands because of the obstructions of the Haida. The crew of the Exact reported on their return that they "had neither the proper tools nor sufficient force to contend with the Indians. We made only one blast and
from that we found we should have to fight for what we got." In April 1852, another American ship, the Damascus was similarly "beaten off by the natives." In April and May, at least six other vessels sailed from San Francisco with 250 to 300 Americans all intent on mining gold. These expeditions were accorded a similar reception by the Haida.

During the peak of this rush, Douglas once again informed the Colonial Office that he believed measures should be taken to control American activities on the Queen Charlotte Islands. This time, the Colonial Office abided by Douglas' request. In the summer of 1852, three ships were sent to protect British sovereignty on the Queen Charlotte Islands and to keep order on this "turbulent frontier." To assert the British Crown's undisputed right to the Islands, the Colonial Office provided Douglas with a commission as Lieutenant-Governor. In a further effort to regulate American activity, Douglas was instructed to adopt a licensing system similar to Australia's, a measure which the newly-appointed Lieutenant-Governor did not implement until 1853.

All of these measures came too late to affect the issue, for, by late August, "the Americans had all left," discouraged by the Haida and by their own failure to find gold on the Islands. In the final analysis, serious conflict did not break out on the Queen Charlotte Islands because the gold deposits were not as extensive as believed. Had there been gold in sufficient quantities to produce a rush on the same scale as that which had occurred in California, the ominous prediction of Captain McNeill might have proven true.

They (the Haida) little think that the Gold on their land will be the means of exterminating them, for exterminated they will be, the gold will never be obtained in place otherwise.
Chapter 2

1D. Wishart to J. S. Helmcken, 17 August 1850, "Helmcken Correspondence, 1848-1851," vol. 1, folder 2, NS, PABC.

2Fisher, Contact and Conflict, p. 44.


4The Haida also attempted to establish a trade in copper in the 1850's but apparently the Hudson's Bay Company was not interested. W. H. McNeill to the Board of Management of the Hudson's Bay Company, Fort Victoria, 26 August 1852, W. H. McNeill, "Fort Simpson Correspondence Outward," 20 November 1851 to 2 November 1855, MS, PABC.


6D. Wishart to J. S. Helmcken, 17 August 1850, "Helmcken Correspondence."

7R. Blanshard to Earl Grey, 29 March 1851, Gold on Queen Charlotte's Island (P.P. 788), p. 1.

8Gold Harbour was also known as Mitchell's Harbour.

9J. Work to J. Douglas, 6 August 1851, Great Britain, House of Commons, Gold on Queen Charlotte's Island, (P.P. 788-1), p. 6.

10C. A. Bayley, "Early Life on Vancouver Island," Reminiscences Prepared for H. H. Bancroft, 1878, TS, PABC.

11Conversation with Prof. M. Kew, August 1977.
12 J. Work, "Diary of a Trip by Chief Factor Work in 1851 from Fort Simpson to the Queen Charlotte Islands to Investigate Reported Gold Discoveries, 13 May 1851-26 May 1851, TS, Special Collections, UBC Library, p. 14.

13 Ibid., p. 19.

14 Ibid., p. 18.

15 Ibid., p. 22.

16 J. Work to J. Douglas, 6 August 1851, Great Britain, House of Commons, Gold on Queen Charlotte's Island, (P.P. 788-1), p. 6.


20 Ibid., 28 October 1851, p. 6.


23 J. Work to J. Douglas 6 August 1851, Great Britain, House of Commons, Gold on Queen Charlotte's Island, (P.P. 788-1), p. 6. This may have been an underestimate although accounts of a later date in The Oregonian Weekly suggested that the Indians at Gold Harbour numbered about 150. The Oregonian Weekly, 6 March 1852.


25 Ibid., 22 October 1851, p. 2.

26 Ibid., Account of Gold traded in Mitchell's Harbour, p. 17.

27 Van Den Brink, The Haida Indians, p. 27.

Contrary to what Fisher suggests, Fishers, Contact and Conflict, p. 70, the capture and plunder of another American vessel, the Susan Sturgis, was not related to the resistance of the Haida at Gold Harbour. The Susan Sturgis was seized by the Masset Indians off Rose Point on Graham Island. There is no evidence to suggest that the Masset were involved in mining at Gold Harbour. The rough terrain of the Islands impeded communications between the various Haida tribes. McNeill suggested that even at the best of times, it took the Skidegate tribes who inhabited the southeastern tip of Graham Island at least two days to reach Gold Harbour. (W. H. McNeill to J. Douglas, 20 November 1851, Great Britain, Parliament, Gold on Queen Charlotte's Island, (P.P. 788-1), p. 8. It would have taken the Masset
Footnote 44 continued:

tribes who inhabited the northern extremity of Graham Island much longer to reach the mines. Nevertheless, other Haida groups reacted in a similar manner to European interest in minerals. For instance, the Skidegate tribes mined coal and copper in the 1860's and they, too, resisted attempts by white men to secure control over production. See Van Den Brink, *The Haida Indians*, pp. 49-50.


GOLD ON THE MAINLAND

Although European interest in the gold resources of the Queen Charlotte Islands was short-lived, the Haida had benefitted considerably from the gold trade while it lasted. Indeed, to the extent that so many goods had been thrown on the market that they had little incentive to take any furs to Fort Simpson. The wealth which the Haida derived from gold soon led other tribes to search for deposits of this mineral. In 1852, Indians from the Nass and Skeena River areas took gold to Fort Simpson to trade. The Hudson's Bay Company examined the area where the Indians had found the gold but failed to locate any veins. In a similar manner, Indians from the Thompson River area took gold dust to Fort Kamloops in 1852. Donald McLean, chief factor at the post, bought the gold from the natives and encouraged them to bring as much as they could to the fort. A regular trade was established and throughout the next six years the Company received quantities of gold from the natives. Although the amount of gold traded was probably relatively small, it was rumoured to be quite considerable; as one contemporary noted, "the Company has collected more gold in this way, and for a mere trifle, than it is willing to make known." The Company was willing to use indigenous manpower to exploit the gold as its own employees had never mined alluvial gold and were unable to
recognize this mineral in its natural state. The Hudson's Bay Company was, therefore, dependent upon the Indians to prospect and dig for gold. Furthermore, since these traders could not locate gold themselves, they did not realize the richness or extent of the gold-bearing region. The fur trade continued to be their major preoccupation and consequently, the Company remained content to barter whatever quantities the Indians could procure. The Indians were anxious to mine and trade the gold and the relatively small amounts they bartered were not a reflection of a lack of industry, but rather, a want of proper mining tools. As Douglas suggested:

They are, however, at present almost destitute of tools for moving the soil, and of washing implements for separating the gold from the earthy matrix, and have therefore, to pick it out with knives, or to use their fingers for that purpose.

The monopoly which the Indians and the Company shared was soon to be challenged. Following the discovery of gold in California in 1849, the American mining frontier began a steady advance northward. In 1855, gold was discovered in the Colville district just south of the 49th parallel. News of the Indian discoveries in the Thompson River area spread quickly to Colville and miners began to move northward. The Indians of the Couteau district, as the lower Thompson River area was known, were probably responsible for transmitting this information, although the precise circumstances under which it was conveyed to Fort Colville are uncertain. George Dawson conducted a geological survey of the region in 1878 and at that time was informed that a group of Thompson Indians told miners at Colville of the gold discoveries in the Couteau region while visiting a member of their tribe who lived there with her French Canadian husband. Paul Fraser, a Hudson's Bay Company employee, recorded in his "Thompson's River Journal" that in April 1855, he sent an Indian runner to Fort Colville "with letters
It may have been this runner, or one of several others, who carried word of the gold discoveries on the Thompson to Colville. In any event, enticed by reports of gold, miners began to push northward from Colville to the Couteau region in 1856. Unlike the Company's employees, these men were able to identify gold-bearing material and they possessed more sophisticated mining techniques than those of the Indians. In this sense, then, the indigenous populations were irrelevant to their aims. However, these miners soon discovered that they could not easily push the natives aside.

The Couteau country was inhabited by the Thompson Indians, an Interior Salish group whose villages extended all along the Fraser River from Spuzzum to 43 miles beyond Lytton. The Thompson recognized the value of gold as they had been bartering this mineral to the Hudson's Bay Company for some time and had derived considerable benefit from the gold trade. Consequently, these Indians did not look favourably upon white miners who challenged their monopoly and in doing so threatened to disrupt their trade with the Hudson's Bay Company.

From the outset, the Thompson Indians resisted the efforts of white miners to exploit gold. Most of the first gold-seekers to enter the Couteau region were forced to retreat due to the hostility of the Indians. In the fall of 1856, Douglas reported to the Colonial Office that

...the number of persons engaged in gold digging is extremely limited in consequence of the threatening attitude of the native tribes who, being hostile to Americans, have uniformly opposed the entrance of American citizens into their country. 10

This first group of miners was too few in number to displace or oppose the Thompson Indians who were consequently able to maintain control over production in the area. The hostility of the Thompson, in another way,
inadvertently enabled them to maintain their monopoly. Since only a small number of miners were able to enter the Couteau district, the extent of the gold deposits was not revealed. As late as July 1857, Douglas reported that, "there is, as yet a degree of uncertainty respecting the productiveness of those gold fields." To be sure, this was one factor which prevented a large-scale rush at this time.

Throughout 1856-1857 the Thompson continued to resist attempts of gold-seekers to mine in the Couteau region. In the summer of 1857, the Thompson forcibly ejected those miners who had managed to penetrate the area. These Indians informed Douglas that they would continue to "resist all attempts at working the gold in any of the streams flowing into the Thompson's River." Douglas concluded that the actions of the natives stemmed primarily "from a desire to monopolize the precious metal for their own benefit," and also from a fear that the salmon runs would be disrupted. Salmon was the principal source of food for the Thompson Indians and they had several practices and taboos concerning this fish. For instance, they forbade members of their tribe to swim in the rivers during the spawning season as they feared disturbing the salmon on their annual migration. This belief was well-founded, as any disturbance of the river bed's soil might block the ascent of the salmon or smother the eggs of the spawning fish. The miners violated this, and probably many other Indian observances concerning salmon and the Thompson held them responsible for the shortage of salmon which produced a famine in 1857-1858. While several factors may have contributed to the scarcity of salmon in these years, such as a cyclical decline, or neglect, on the part of the Indians of their traditional occupations in favour of gold mining, the miners undoubtedly exacerbated the problem. The hardships which the Indians experienced in 1857 and 1858
increased their hostility towards white miners and their determination to resist the activities of these gold-seekers.

In the winter of 1857-1858, another group of white men threatened to disrupt the cooperative economic relationship which had been established between Indians and Europeans. Once they had learned to recognize gold in its natural state, the Hudson's Bay Company's employees attempted to mine this mineral without the aid of the indigenous population. A number of traders spent the winter in the Couteau region in hope of mining gold. Their efforts were obstructed and

They were on all occasions narrowly watched, and in every instance when they did succeed in removing the surface and excavating to the auriferous stratum, they were quickly hustled and crowded by the natives, who, having by that means obtained possession of the spot, then proceeded to reap the fruits of their labour.15

These traders did not take any retaliatory action as "the savages were far too numerous for resistance." Besides, they had been instructed by Douglas "to respect the feelings of the natives and in that matter not to employ any of the Company's servants in washing out gold without their full approbation and consent."16

Although the Hudson's Bay Company's efforts to mine gold were thwarted, as were those of other gold-seekers, Douglas was undoubtedly secretly pleased that the Indians had managed to keep American miners out of the Couteau region. By early April 1858, few Americans were mining. As Douglas reported

The search for gold and 'prospecting' of the country, had up to the last dates from the interior been carried on almost exclusively by the native Indian population, who have discovered the productive beds and put out almost all the gold. 17

With its rivals thus eliminated, the Company hoped to monopolize the gold deposits through trade with the Indians. From October to December 1857,
the Hudson's Bay Company traded 300 ounces of gold from the Thompson and
by April 1858, it had bartered a further 800 ounces. The Company was so
optimistic about the prospects of the gold trade that it began construction
of a fort at Lytton for the specific purpose of trading gold. As late as
April 1858, then, the Hudson's Bay Company still intended to maintain a
reciprocal relationship with the Thompson Indians. Neither the Company nor
the Indians could foresee the flood of white miners that would soon sweep
into the area destroying, once and for all, their joint monopoly of the
gold resources.

In early April, 800 ounces of gold which the Company had traded from
the Indians were taken to the mint at San Francisco. This shipment con­
vinced many prospective gold-seekers in California that large quantities
of gold existed in the British territory to the north and it precipitated
a rush to the area. On April 25, 450 miners from California arrived at
Victoria. As the spring progressed, more and more gold-seekers, primarily
Californians, flooded into the area. In all, some 25,000 miners came to
British Columbia in 1858 in search of gold. As the number of white miners
increased, Indian hostility and resistance intensified. The native popula­
tions found it increasingly difficult to maintain their hegemony. No
longer were more threats or minor acts of physical intimidation sufficient
to stop the miners. The Indians were forced to resort to more formidable
types of resistance.

The Thompson did not cease mining in the face of this tremendous in­
flux. Indeed, the number of Indians mining gold increased as new groups,
such as the Coast Salish tribes of the Lower Fraser, learned of the
lucrative gold trade. Indians could be found working alongside white miners
on almost every bar. On a visit to the diggings in the spring, Douglas
estimated that, on one bar, there were "about 190 men and there was probably double that number of native Indians promiscuously engaged with the whites in the same exciting pursuit." In the early months of the rush, the Indians outnumbered white miners by similar proportions on most of the bars. The Indians quickly adopted the mining techniques of the white miners after observing how much more gold could be procured by these methods. A contemporary observer described the techniques used by the Indians thus:

A host of Indians are at work along the banks, with wooden boxes or bowls twelve inches square and some with a rude imitation of a sluice, dug out of cedar, about two by five feet...they put the earth into it and then throw water upon it, collecting the gold which remains in the bottom, and panning it out in the usual way.

With whites and Indians working alongside each other in such close proximity the potential for conflict increased.

In May, the centre of mining activity shifted from the Couteau district to the lower Fraser between Hope and Yale. This shift occurred because the river above Yale was flooded by the spring thaw and so its waters were too high for the gold-seekers to pan for gold. On the lower Fraser, miners came into contact with several Coast Salish tribes. These Indians resented the presence and activities of white miners as much as the Thompson and they similarly resisted white efforts to exploit gold. Conflict of a serious nature broke out in June between miners and the Yale tribe, at Hill's Bar, 2 miles south of Yale. The Indians working at the bar "mustered under arms in a tumultuous manner and threatened to make a clean sweep of the whole body of miners assembled there." One report suggested that there were 80 whites and 500 Indians working at Hill's Bar, while another suggested that there were 30 miners and 300 Indians. Whichever estimate was the more accurate, it is evident that the miners were significantly outnumbered and had the Indians been provoked further,
it is not unlikely that they would have driven the miners from the area.

In the face of such formidable opposition, the miners grew alarmed and sent word to Douglas that the situation at Hill's Bar was critical. Douglas proceeded to the area in hope of resolving the conflict before there was bloodshed. After hearing testimony from both miners and Indians, Douglas concluded that the disturbance had arisen "out of a series of provocations on both sides and from the jealousy of the savages who feel annoyed at the large quantities of gold taken from their country by white miners." In an attempt to prevent further difficulties, Douglas decided to appoint Indian magistrates from amongst the most prominent men of the tribe whose responsibility it was to report any offences committed by members of their tribe. Douglas also made it clear to the miners that they would be severely punished for crimes committed against the Indians. In order to regulate the activities of the gold-seekers, Douglas appointed white magistrates.

The action taken by Douglas resolved the conflict at Hill's Bar temporarily. However, it did nothing to remedy the basic grievance of the Yale Indians—a grievance shared by most of the Indians of the Fraser-Thompson River area—the exploitation of gold by white miners. Douglas could not adopt a policy similar to that which had been implemented at Fort Rupert, Nanaimo or Gold Harbour. By 1858, he had relinquished his position as chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company and he could no longer obtain the monies necessary to extinguish Indian title from the Company's coffers. At the same time, neither the Colonial Office nor the Assembly of Vancouver Island would allocate funds to continue this policy as each argued that this responsibility devolved on the other. Even if Douglas had had financial support, it is questionable whether he would have been able to purchase Indian title to the gold deposits as he had bought native rights
to mineral deposits elsewhere. The alluvial gold deposits of the Fraser River area extended over hundreds of miles and therefore it would have been very difficult and expensive for Douglas to purchase and maintain control over this resource as he had done with the relatively concentrated coal and gold deposits of other areas. Douglas realized that the measures which he implemented to resolve the conflict at Hill's Bar were insuffi-
cient and he admitted that "it will require, I fear, the nicest tact to avoid a disastrous Indian war."  

Further conflict did erupt on many bars on the lower Fraser throughout July. The Victoria Gazette carried numerous reports of "Trouble With the Indians" at various locations on the Fraser. For instance, on July 29, 1858 the Gazette reported that a "battle" had nearly taken place on one unidentified bar. Apparently the 80 or 90 whites working at this spot told the Indians that "they (the whites) would not allow any Indian to mine on the river." The Indians did not passively submit to the miners' dictates. Two hundred Indians "armed and prepared for a fight" descended on the miners. In the face of such resistance, the miners were forced to yield to the Indians' demands and allow them to dig for gold.

Throughout July and August, there were also many reports in the Gazette of Indians killing white miners. Many of these were exaggerated in their horrifying descriptions of headless bodies floating down the river. However, there was probably considerably more bloodshed on the part of both whites and Indians than was reported. The killing of white miners was not an indication of innate barbaric or savage tendencies of the Indians but rather, a manifestation of resistance. As a contemporary observer suggested

The Indians opposed the miners at every foot of the way when they saw that their object was to mine for gold and after the miners got established between Yale and Lytton, the Indians were continually on the watch for small unprotected parties.
But miners were no longer deterred by reports of Indian hostility. More gold-seekers poured into the area in August and, as the waters above Yale receded, the miners pushed further and further upstream where they once again came into contact with the Thompson Indians. The Thompson renewed their attempts to obstruct the progression and the activities of white miners. In early August, some gold-seekers recently returned from the Couteau country complained that the Indians "plunder the miners in the most shameless manner." In mid-August, the Gazette reported that "the Indians are very troublesome and try in every way to prevent whites from ascending the river."

As Indian resistance intensified, many white miners became more determined than ever that the Indians would have to be pushed aside. In August, a group of gold-seekers formed a rifle company in order to force a passage to Lytton. There are slight variations in detail in the reports of the actions of this company but it seems that, en route to Lytton, they destroyed several Indian villages forcing the natives to flee. One of the Gazette's correspondents accused the members of the rifle company of committing many indiscriminate acts against the Indians. He argued that "the whites are constantly insulting their (the Indians') wives and injuring them in various ways," and he maintained that "the burning of rancherias and killing of Indians" was, in most instances, unprovoked. In mid-August, the rifle company arrived at Boston Bar, the largest and most populous of the Thompson villages. The Indians here had been resisting the miners for some time and, just before the arrival of the rifle company, had killed two Frenchmen. The miners at Boston Bar asked the men of the rifle company to stay and help them fight the Indians. A "battle" was fought which lasted three hours and resulted in "the complete rout of the savages."
Several Indians and one white man were killed and the miners burnt the
encampment of the Indians and destroyed their provisions.\textsuperscript{35}

When this conflict erupted, most of the miners between Boston Bar
and Lytton "abandoned their claims" and went to Fort Yale for protection.
Although the miners had forced the Indians to retreat, rumours that large
numbers of Indians had "assembled evidently for no friendly purpose"\textsuperscript{36}
made the gold-seekers uneasy. The miners held a meeting at Fort Yale and
organized themselves into companies "for the purpose of proceeding to the
scene of the Indian difficulties."\textsuperscript{37} A report in late August of massacre
of 42 miners near Boston Bar, although later retracted—only two miners
had been killed—prompted the miners to take action. Four companies of
men "armed with rifles and revolvers" proceeded upstream from Fort Yale.
The leaders of these organized parties disagreed as to what measures
should be adopted to deal with the Indians. The captain of one company,
an American named Snyder, favoured conciliatory measures while Graham, the
leader of the other group, advocated using force to pacify the Indians.
Snyder was supported by one of the other companies and he gained more
allies as he made his way upstream. He was eventually able to persuade
Graham not to take any retaliatory measures until he had tried to persuade
the Indians to stop obstructing the miners. In late August, Snyder held
meetings with many Indians from Spuzzum to Lytton which resulted in a series
of informal treaties. An agreement was concluded with "the tribe that had
caused the most trouble to the whites," near Boston Bar. Another treaty
was made with Spintlum, chief of the Lytton tribe, and one of the most
influential of the Thompson chiefs. Spintlum persuaded six chiefs and
their tribes, 300 in all, to refrain from obstructing the miners in any way.
In total, Snyder estimated that he had entered into treaties with 2000
Indians.\textsuperscript{38}
With the pacification of the natives, the miners crowded back to their claims. Although Snyder and his men had resolved the conflict, when Douglas heard of the troubles on the upper Fraser, he proceeded to the area with a force of 35 men, including 15 sappers and 20 marines from HMS Satellite. Douglas held meetings with the Indians at Fort Yale where he heard grievances of tribes from various locations along the Fraser River. He reported that the natives "made no secret of their dislike of their white visitors" whom they claimed had maltreated them. Douglas granted redress where possible. One group of Indians demanded that a part of the river be set aside for their use, a request which Douglas promptly acceded to. An area was staked out for these Indians and the miners were informed that they were not to infringe on this part of the river. In order to appease the Thompson Indians, Douglas distributed presents amongst the most powerful of their chiefs.39

The peak of Indian resistance had been reached in August. The conflict which, at this time, had threatened to erupt into "a sanguinary war of races,"40 quickly subsided. By September, there were few reports of Indian hostility or resistance. There is no doubt that the conciliatory policies adopted by Snyder and Douglas had been instrumental in preventing the outbreak of full-scale resistance. Yet, ultimately, the Indians were pacified by the sheer demonstration of force by the whites. The miners had shown the Indians that they could unite to force the natives to yield, as had been done at Boston Bar. The various Indian tribes could not, in the face of such large numbers of organized and well-armed white men, individually, sustain their opposition. Yet, traditional inter-tribal hostilities, as well as cultural differences, prevented the Indians from coordinating their resistance in a concerted effort to drive out these white intruders.41
Thus realizing their disadvantageous position, the natives yielded to the miners. As Splintlum stated in a speech to his peoples, "we must conciliate their goodwill, otherwise they will destroy us." Although the Indians could no longer resist the miners' activities, they continued to mine gold. By late fall, however, most of the surface placers were exhausted and the miners were forced to dig shafts to depths of 15 feet and greater. The Indians did not possess the technology to mine the deep diggings and their role in the exploitation of this resource was progressively reduced to scavenging the leavings of the white men.
FOOTNOTES

Chapter 3


2. F. W. Howay, British Columbia From the Earliest Times to the Present, p. 9.


12. Ibid.


18. Douglas to Tolmie, 28 December 1857, Fort Victoria, Correspondence Outward, 1850-1858.


24. Douglas to Stanley, 10 June 1858, Great Britain, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, British Columbia, 1858-1871, CO. 60/1.


27. Douglas to Labouchere, 15 June 1858, CO. 60/1.

29. Douglas to Labouchere, 15 June 1858, CO. 60/1.


31. J. Douglas, "Diary, May 24-September 14, 1858," Private Papers, First Series, MS, PABC.

32. *Victoria Gazette,* 20 August 1858.

33. Ibid., 1 September 1858.


35. *Victoria Gazette,* 1 September 1858.

36. Ibid., 20 August 1858.

37. Ibid., 24 August 1858.

38. Ibid., 1 September 1858.

39. Douglas to Lytton, 12 October 1858, CO. 60/1.

40. J. Douglas to Capt. Montresor, 24 August 1858, CO. 60/2.


42. *Victoria Gazette,* 1 September 1858.

43. Ibid., 6 November 1858.
CONCLUSION

In the spring of 1859, Matthew Begbie travelled throughout the interior of British Columbia where he met many Indian tribes. Begbie returned from this journey with a very different impression of the native peoples than that of most of his contemporaries. He argued that, contrary to popular opinion which maintained that the Indians were "improvident" and "extremely averse to work," he "found almost everywhere Indians willing to labour hard for wages and bargaining acutely."\(^1\)

Begbie's observations are certainly confirmed on the mining frontier. Four distinct Indian groups responded similarly to the introduction of mining. The Kwakiutl, the Coast and Interior Salish, and the Haida adapted to this new economic activity and, in a relationship similar to that of the fur trade, mined and traded coal and gold to the Hudson's Bay Company. Reports from Company employees confirmed that the natives were industrious and efficient and the Hudson's Bay Company was content, for some years, to maintain cooperative economic relations with the natives. Eventually, however, this relationship was threatened. In the case of coal, the surface outcroppings proved to be inferior to the subsurface deposits and therefore, the Hudson's Bay Company had to import white miners to begin the underground operations for which the Indians did not possess the technology. With regard to gold, the superior technology of Europeans quickly made the natives irrelevant to the aims of white gold-seekers. Whereas previously Indians and whites were part of a mutually beneficial economic relationship, now they became competitors for these minerals.

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On four fronts, Indians resisted attempts by white men to disrupt the nature of economic relations between the two peoples. The native populations on the gold mining frontier offered a more formidable resistance than those on the coal mining frontier. The stronger opposition posed by the Haida and the Coast and Interior Salish tribes of the Fraser River, was not a reflection of innate differences between these Indians and the Kwakiutl and Nanaimo. Rather, it was an indication of dissimilarities in the nature of the resource extraction on the two frontiers. The exploitation of gold was an especially fast process in comparison to coal mining and the high profits it yielded attracted large numbers of whites who competed more intensely with Indians for this mineral.

Despite a stronger resistance, the Indians on the gold mining frontier, like those on the coal mining frontier, ultimately yielded to the whites. Yet, although the native populations lost control of production in these areas, they did not, as Fisher has suggested, become immediately irrelevant to the development of British Columbia. Their response to mining confirms Helen Codere's argument that Indians became integrated into European-initiated economic activities with little difficulty and it suggests a new direction for the study of cultural contact in British Columbia.

Historians who have studied the development of Indian-European relations in this province generally agree that "there was a sharply definable shift from the fur trade to settlement," a shift which produced a major change in the nature of Indian-European relations and which resulted in the destruction of Indian societies. They argue that, during the fur trade period, relations between the native populations and Europeans were of a
symbiotic nature. The Indians provided white men with furs and in return received goods which they highly valued. The fur traders had no desire to change the Indians and the goods which they introduced into native societies altered, but did not undermine traditional cultures. Indeed, this new wealth stimulated Indian societies to new growth along the lines they had already been developing. Thus potlatches became more lavish and Indian art more elaborate. Fisher maintains that the changes introduced by the fur trade did not undermine Indian cultures because they were directed by the native populations themselves. The Indians were able to control change during the fur trade period because the power relationship between the two peoples weighed in their favour.

With the decline of the fur trade and the beginning of settlement, new forces, it is argued, were introduced which brought about the immediate destruction of Indian societies. The aboriginal populations were irrelevant to the aims of settlers who quickly usurped Indian lands. Fisher argues that "the extent to which an indigenous people have retained their land is the best single criterion on which to judge their survival" and he concludes, as do other historians, that the alienation of Indian lands in British Columbia was the decisive factor which led to the demise of native societies. Along with those who took their lands came the missionaries, architects of intricate acculturative programmes which undermined native beliefs and customs. Government administrators, it is argued, worked in collusion with settlers and missionaries to quickly bring about the destruction of Indian societies.

With the advent of the settlement frontier, historians shift their focus from the Indians to the assumptions and policies of white intruders, all the while ignoring the reality of what was happening to the Indians.
It is questionable whether the usurpation of Indians lands was the decisive factor leading to the demise of Indian societies. G.F.G. Stanley has argued that the prevalence of fish lessened the importance of land as an essential part of Indian economies in British Columbia. Since northwest coast Indian economies were not land-based, the alienation of native lands did not deprive the Indians of their means of subsistence. Similarly, it can be argued that missionary activities did not immediately destroy native cultures. Historians who have examined missionary efforts in British Columbia most often focus on William Duncan and from his example conclude that missionaries were successful in undermining native cultures. Jacqueline Kennedy has argued in her study, "Roman Catholic Missionary Efforts and Indian Acculturation in the Fraser Valley, 1860-1900," however, that Roman Catholic acculturative programmes did not alter Indian cultures in the period 1860-1900.

Indian cultures in British Columbia were not immediately destroyed because the source of wealth necessary to maintain the basic features of their societies was not undermined. From the moment the Kwakiutl near McNeill's Harbour showed the Hudson's Bay Company employees lumps of coal at Suquash, the Indians of the northwest coast embarked on a course of progressive adaptation to the white man's economy. After the closure of the mines at Fort Rupert, the Kwakiutl became involved in logging, canning and commercial fishing. The Nanaimo Indians continued to mine coal until, at least, the mid-1860's. With the retreat of the gold-seekers from the Queen Charlotte Islands, the Haida turned to mining copper and coal. The Coast and Interior Salish tribes continued to work the placer deposits on the Fraser River until well into the 1870's and they became involved in hop-picking and commercial fishing. The native populations were easily
incorporated into the new economy and, until the 1880's, they represented
the largest manpower reserve for a labour-hungry province.  

Indian participation in these new activities meant that the basic
features of native societies on the northwest coast were retained. Just
as the goods introduced during the fur trade strengthened native cultures,
the new wealth derived from Indian incorporation in the new cash economy
enabled the native populations to sustain the potlatch and their emphasis
on prestige. Helen Codere has argued that throughout the period 1849-1930,
Kwakiutl participation in commercial fishing, logging, mining and
numerous other activities, resulted in an elaboration of potlatches even
in the face of attempts by white men to suppress it. As she suggests,
"Kwakiutl economic achievement was motivated by potlatching and sustained
and increased potlatching." Jacqueline Kennedy similarly argues that
the adaptation of the Stalo Indians to mining, commercial fishing and
hop-picking, enabled them to retain the basic features of their culture
even when confronted by missionary efforts to alter them.

This suggests, then, that the demise of Indian societies occurred at
a later date than has been suggested and it was brought about not by the
alienation of Indian lands, but by the undermining of native sources of
wealth. This probably occurred in the late nineteenth century as large-
scale industry began to replace small-scale operations and as Asian and
white labour began to displace Indian manpower. It was undoubtedly at
this time, as native cultures began to be undermined, that Indians became
more receptive to missionary teachings.

The emphasis on wealth and prestige so prevalent in traditional
northwest coast cultures facilitated native integration into European-
initiated economic activities. The ability and incentive to adapt to
these new enterprises differentiated coastal cultures from other Indian societies. Yet, historians have, for the most part, failed to recognize this important difference and have attempted to apply general theories of cultural contact to the study of Indian-European relations in this province. If the study of race relations is to be more than an intellectual history of missionaries and government administrators, historians must begin to examine this important aspect of Indian-European relations. It is hoped, that this examination of Indian responses to the mining frontier provides a starting point for the re-examination of Indian-European relations in British Columbia.
Conclusion


2 Fisher, Contact and Conflict, p. 96.

3 Ibid., p. xiv. See also LaViolette, The Struggle for Survival; Patterson, The Canadian Indian; and anthropologist W. Duff's work, The Indian History of British Columbia.

4 Duff, The Indian History of British Columbia, p. 57.

5 Fisher, Contact and Conflict, p. 23.

6 Ibid., p. 106. See also LaViolette, The Struggle for Survival and Patterson, The Canadian Indian, passim.


9 Kennedy, "Roman Catholic Missionary Efforts," pp. 59-86.

10 Codere, Fighting With Property, pp. 31-32.

11 Brown, Vancouver Island Exploration, p. 15.

12 Van Den Brink, The Haida Indians, pp. 49-50.


14 In 1881, the Indians comprised 51.88% of the population, whites 30.32% and Asians 8.8%. "Populations of British Columbia by Census Years, 1871-1931," adapted by H.K. Ralston from: Census of Canada, 1931.

15 Codere, Fighting With Property, p. 127.

16 Kennedy, "Roman Catholic Missionary Efforts," pp. 59-86.

17 Codere, Fighting With Property, p. 127. Codere suggests that the Kwakiutl met increasing competition from whites, Japanese and Chinese but were able for some time to maintain an important role in British Columbia's economy.

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