GOLD AND THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1858-1885

by

ANGUS MACLEOD GUNN

B.Ed., University of British Columbia, 1961

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the Department
of
Geography

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
September, 1965
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Geography

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date September 27, 1965
ABSTRACT

Mining frontiers have rarely attracted the attention of geographers because of the transitory nature of settlement in such areas. However, a more stable pattern of settlement emerges if the area of study is broadened to include the supply centres for the mines and the transportation routes along which the supplies were carried. The permanent impact of mining on settlement occurred in these service centres and along the main transportation routes leading to the mines. This study examines the nature of the permanent impact on British Columbia of the gold rushes which occurred between 1858 and 1866. These rushes established a new pattern of settlement which remained until the coming of the railway in 1885, and, later, they acted as guidelines in the development of settlement.

The British Columbia frontier was part of a larger frontier which was opened in California in 1848 and spread northward and eastward in the ensuing twenty years. San Francisco early secured a dominant position as the manufacturing centre for this frontier area, and it retained this position throughout the period of the British Columbia gold rushes. As a result, British Columbia remained within San Francisco's hinterland from 1858 to 1885 and most of the gold mined was shipped to the San Francisco
Mint to pay for manufactured goods. The main flow of gold arrived when the United States Government was in very great need of gold to back its borrowing for the conduct of the Civil War.

The determination of the Colonial Government of British Columbia to secure political autonomy in spite of economic dependence on the United States led to the construction of costly wagon roads from east to west across the mountain barrier of the Coast ranges. These roads funneled trade from the interior of the Province through the Lower Fraser Valley to New Westminster and Victoria and thus avoided the traditional Columbia fur trade supply routes which lay in United States Territory. The wagon roads inaugurated a new era of transportation, and determined the locations of all important subsequent transportation routes in the southwestern part of Mainland British Columbia.

Land was a strong interest among those who arrived in the gold rushes, and, at times, this land interest rivalled their interest in gold. The group of settlements subsequently established in the Lower Fraser Valley formed the nuclei of many present day communities, and the system of land survey which guided some of these early settlements shaped subsequent patterns of transportation. In the
Province as a whole the patterns of settlement established between 1858 and 1866 remained substantially the same until the coming of the railway in 1885. With the coming of the railway the Province entered a new phase of economic development, but the broad lines of settlement which the gold rushes created remained dominant and today they are still evident in the spatial organization of economic activities. Gold initiated a pattern which was confirmed by the subsequent construction of the trans-continental railway, the growth of the forest industries, and the development of agriculture.


TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Methods</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE FAR WEST MINING FRONTIERS</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold in the United States Economy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The California Gold Rush</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement of the Frontier</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco's Hinterland</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FRONTIER PRIOR TO 1858</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fur Trade</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Colonial Administration</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE GOLD RUSHES OF THE PERIOD 1858-1866</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Initial Impact</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement into the Interior</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Scale of Gold Production</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Impediments</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. ACCESS TO THE GOLD CENTRES</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Inherited Transportation System</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Transition from Pack-animal to Steamer and Wagon</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wagon Road Era</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Victoria's Trade, 1861-1863</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Miners on the Fraser, 1858</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Gold Production in British Columbia</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Gold Production in British Columbia and California</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Populations of Victoria, New Westminster and Yale</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Populations of San Francisco, Portland, Victoria and New Westminster</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Populations of Principal Rural Communities in the Lower Fraser Valley</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lower Fraser Valley</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Far West Mining Frontiers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Indian Population, 1835; Fur Trade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forts, 1805-1849</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The British Columbia Gold Rushes</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Main Routes Before, During, and After the Gold Rushes</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hierarchy of Service Centres, 1865</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lower Fraser Valley Pre-eminptions</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to thank the following people and organizations for their help in the preparation of this thesis: the staffs of the Departments of History and Geography, University of British Columbia, particularly Dr. David Ward and Dr. Alfred Siemens of the Department of Geography for their advice, encouragement, and guidance; the Government Agents and their staffs in Vancouver and New Westminster; Provincial Archives, Victoria; Legal Surveys Division of the Department of Lands and Forests, Victoria. The author also wishes to acknowledge with thanks the assistance given by his wife in proof reading and in typing.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PROBLEM

In January of 1858 there were fewer than 200 white people in all of Mainland British Columbia, and these people were mainly concerned with the fur trade. They were located in sixteen forts scattered throughout the area later known as the Colony of British Columbia. From 1858 to 1866 a series of gold rushes occurred in this area, and these rushes brought to an end the era of fur trading, focussed world-wide attention on a hitherto unknown territory, made available a substantial amount of capital, and thus attracted a large number of people with a variety of interests: gold, land, food and accommodation services, and transportation.

Between March and October of 1858 the Fraser Rush alone (Fig. 1) brought some thirty thousand Americans into the Fraser Valley in the vicinity of Hope (Fig. 1). The interest of both British and American authorities was accordingly focussed on this part of the Pacific Northwest, and extensive exploration was promoted by the British Colonial Office. Within twenty years a new colony had been established, new towns such as New Westminster, Hope, Yale, Lytton (Fig. 5) had emerged, and new forest industries had
expanded to compensate for declining gold fortunes. The coming of the railway in 1885 introduced a new generative factor into the economy of British Columbia and so modified the influence of gold. But the inheritance of gold, though modest, persisted in all subsequent phases of the occupancy of British Columbia so that, today, the early gold rushes are very important in terms of an understanding of the contemporary scene.

The settlement process represents the clearest record of the above technical, social, and economic developments, and so the present study investigates the effects of gold on rural and urban settlement, and on communication patterns. The focus of interest is the enduring impact of gold as distinct from its more publicized expressions in such things as mining ghost-towns and their associated landscape relics. Both the distinctive regional characteristics which differentiated the British Columbia gold rushes from those of other countries, and the role of location in the rapid growth of some areas, are included in the investigation.

Mining frontiers have rarely attracted the attention of geographers, partly because of the transitory nature of settlement in such places, and partly because the rapid changes of population and of economic fortunes made it difficult to secure reliable distributional data. E. W. Kersten's
study of Aurora, Nevada is one of the few studies of a mining frontier. The rapidity of change, and the general instability of the population, in a gold rush frontier of the early 1860's is well illustrated by R. W. Paul in the following extract. Paul is describing conditions typical of Nevada and Montana but his description fits very closely the circumstances of the Fraser Gold Rush of 1858.

The cycle started, in most cases, with a real or alleged discovery—it might be either—in an area little known to white man. Quite commonly the area was one of difficult topography or climate. After a very brief period of concealment by the original discoverers, rumors would leak out and quickly become exaggerated. A disorderly crowd would then come rushing in to the new El Dorado. Usually the leaders were a few veterans of previous similar excitements, but the bulk of the population, being quite inexperienced, was bound to suffer disappointment and hardship. The early discoverers would sell out to the "tenderfoot", or the man with capital, and push off on prospecting trips into the surrounding area, thereby increasing the known area. A brief period of flush production (usually less than six years) would follow. Then depression followed by subsequent booms with increased capital and technical ability, or general decline. In either case the ultimate fate was the status of a ghost town.

It is easy to see how a geographer would be discouraged from undertaking serious distributional studies in such an area. The effect of a gold mining frontier on service

---


2R. W. Paul, Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880, pp. 9-10.
centres and transportation routes was, however, both more permanent and more extensive for, in such cases, the decline of gold production in one mining camp would be offset by the appearance of a new mine within the hinterland of the service centre which supplied the first camp. In this way the cumulative needs of mining over large areas maintained the service centres.

In the early days of most gold rushes the number of people employed in the service industries was equal to the number at work in the mines, as Paul has shown:  

Half the people in Boise Basin were engaged in mining; the other half in serving those who mined. This division of labor was not unlike that ascribed to California in its flush days. Merchants, lumbermen, hotel, restaurant, and saloon keepers, gamblers, theatrical people, blacksmiths, lawyers, teamsters, ranchers, and an occasional minister, all these could be seen thrusting their way through the crowded, crooked streets of the Basin's towns and camps.

In time the size and importance of the service centres far outgrew the mining camps, and indeed the former became more and more independent of the minerals which had brought their first wealth. Sacramento and New Westminster, for example, soon outgrew their original function as mine service centres. Some of the transportation routes like the Yale-Cariboo Wagon Road remained important after gold production.

---

3 Ibid., p. 139.
had declined, and formed a pre-existing pattern for later traffic in both highways and railways. In British Columbia various components of the contemporary spatial organization of economic activities, and significant elements of the cultural landscape, can be traced directly to the circumstances and consequences of the gold rushes of 1858 and of the 1860's.

II. THE METHODS

The analysis of the impact of gold mining on settlement has both distributional and developmental dimensions and this study therefore falls naturally into the category of historical geography. The approach of historical geography to settlement has matured over the past two decades as a growing body of case studies have demonstrated both its strengths and its weaknesses.  

Historical geographers have approached their data and problems both in terms of the reconstruction of past geographies and in relation to regional development. Sequent occupancy studies were among the first endeavour to relate

---

settlement to the developmental process. These studies saw settlement as a succession of stages of human occupance in which the enduring attributes of one stage were seen to affect its successor. The predominant purpose, however, was to explain the contemporary scene. Frequently the stages, or cross-sectional views, were selected without a sense of historical priority, and often within periods of slow change where data was limited. As a result it was difficult to understand the process of change itself.

In recent years a promising line of development focusses on the geography of change as a field of investigation in its own right, in the context of a critical place and time. This study of the gold rushes of British Columbia may be considered as a study of geographical change in these terms. It deals with the spatial characteristics of an area which was experiencing rapid social and economic changes within a period of time clearly marked off at its beginning by the transition from fur trading to gold mining, and at its ending by the arrival of the trans-continental railway.


6A. H. Clark, "Geographical Change--a Theme for Economic History," *Journal of Economic History*, December, 1960; Clark,
The cultural and economic milieu of the area under study was the rapid advance of the "mining frontiers of the Far West" between 1848 and 1880. Technical, social, and economic aspects of the various developments in British Columbia were rooted in earlier activities in American areas to the south. The analysis thus opens with a survey of the development of western mining areas and their effect upon the rushes north of the International Boundary. This analysis provides comparative data with which to understand the local and generic studies of British Columbia which follow.

CHAPTER II
THE FAR WEST MINING FRONTIERS

I. GOLD IN THE UNITED STATES ECONOMY

The opening of a series of mining frontiers in the West in 1848 coincided with a continental demand for gold—a demand which was greatest between 1845 and 1865. Gold has always held a fascination for man. It was probably the first metal worked because ornaments are so easily shaped from it. When trade developed to the point where barter systems became inadequate, gold was the metal chosen to back currency, and to establish a system of credit, largely because of its qualities of malleability, ductility, rareness, and freedom from tarnishing. That system of credit is still a powerful factor in present day international relations as the following extract from the Vancouver Times shows:

Gold is of little commercial value and its demand stems only from medieval traditions that persist in the world of international finance. In spite of its uselessness, demand for gold has been so great that it is threatening to devalue the currency of the world's richest and most powerful nation.

---

8 Vancouver Times, January 8, 1965.
That "most powerful nation," the United States, was experiencing a similar currency threat a little over a hundred years ago because of the shortage of gold. A rapid increase in international trade was occurring. Tonnage had doubled between 1838 and 1849. It doubled again in the following decade. This commercial growth, which reflected so accurately the cumulative progress of the Industrial Revolution, was also marked by the appearance of larger, faster, and better-equipped ships. The immediate effect of the growth in trade was a new demand for gold to provide a larger basis for credit and currency. Californian gold was discovered at this time of great demand.

The volume of Californian production was enormous—averaging over $70 million a year between 1852 and 1854—yet, in spite of these large additions to the world's gold supply, the succeeding decade brought no diminution in world demand. The advent of the Civil War had created new credit needs within the United States and, indeed, in February of 1862, the United States Government was forced to issue the "Greenbacks" as a new form of paper currency. The first issue was for $150 million, and the only gold backing it received was the promise of interest payments in gold. The issue was in-
tended to be a temporary measure but by June of 1865 there were greenbacks in circulation to the value of $500 million. Confidence in the greenbacks had by this time fallen, and $100 worth could be purchased for $35 of gold. Thus anyone holding gold could secure 15% or more interest on an investment, when the official rate of interest was 6%, through the purchase of greenbacks by gold and the receipt of interest in gold. Under such circumstances a steady demand for the precious metal was inevitable.

II. THE CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH

In January of 1848 gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill, to the east of Sacramento (Fig. 2), and so the first and best-known of the western mining frontiers appeared. Its isolation—a problem which was to be even more acute a decade later as the intermontane, and the more northerly sources of gold were exposed—is suggested in Paul's description of the long trek westward in 1849:

By steamer, sailing ship, and overland wagon tens of thousands of Americans departed in the early months of 1849. In wagons they toiled along the Oregon Trail to the Rockies, thence across the arid lands of Utah and Nevada to the final barrier of the Sierra Nevada. In sailing ships they fought heavy weather off Cape

---


Fig. 2
THE FAR WEST MINING FRONTIERS

(R.W. Paul: Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880)
Horn, pumped endless hours to keep their leaky ships from sinking, and lived on poor food and rationed drinking water.

It has been estimated that the population of California prior to the gold rush was approximately 14,000. By the close of 1849 there were 100,000; by the latter part of 1852 there were 250,000; and by 1860, 380,000. These figures are in sharp contrast to the increases recorded for commercial or agricultural pioneer areas of the West. In Utah the Mormon colonizers were able to add 11,000 between 1847 and 1850. Oregon, whose attractions were advertised across the nation, drew 10,000 settlers between 1840 and 1848. Sudden growth of great proportions was to be typical of the new mining frontiers. Sudden decline was to be equally characteristic.

Fortunately for the 1848 pioneers, California provided physical conditions unusually favourable for the simplest kind of placer mining. Placer deposits were shallow, relatively accessible, and very extensive. Had it been otherwise the Gold Rush would have ended within a few months, for most of the gold seekers were ignorant of everything connected with mining. So rich were the virgin deposits that the only technique needed was to dig out the gold with a knife or shovel and wash it in a pan. The high spe-

\[12\text{Ibid.}\]
cific gravity of gold ensured its retention when other materials were washed away. A few of the miners had previously worked gold deposits in the Southeastern parts of the United States, and in the latter part of 1848 these men introduced the "rocker" or "cradle." This instrument greatly increased production. During 1849 and 1850 quicksilver was introduced as an aid in separating the very fine gold. Two years later, in 1852, mining techniques passed beyond the point of using well-established methods, and the first of the distinctly Californian techniques—hydraulic mining—made its appearance. 13

When the Gold Rush began, California had a small military government which was unable to maintain law and order in the many camps and towns scattered throughout the State. Finding themselves left to their own devices, the new communities worked out their own solutions. Each local area formed itself into a district, appointed a presiding officer, drafted a code of laws, and kept a record of mining claims. A miners' jury, consisting of a dozen men or even the whole camp, would try cases of robbery and murder. Punishment was often severe and swift. In some areas self-appointed "vigilance committees" were formed. These groups were semi-

13J. S. Hittel, Resources of California, pp. 241-284.
military in organization. They captured and tried alleged criminals in secrecy, and for a time superseded all established forms of law enforcement. Many of the miners who came to British Columbia in the Rush of 1858 had lived in communities ruled by vigilance committees.

III. MOVEMENT OF THE FRONTIER

For ten years after the Sutter's Mill discovery gold mining was confined to California. Then quite suddenly the frontier moved to the Fraser in 1858. W. J. Trimble has summarized the reasons for this sudden change:

Conditions in California early in 1858 were favorable for a swift and great exodus of population to a promising field. Production was decreasing . . . Moreover, the conditions and methods of production were changing. At first it had been comparatively easy for men to find good claims which could be cheaply worked . . . but now, with the exhaustion of the surface layers, there was increasing necessity for the employment of capital on a large scale and of resort to corporate methods in order to work the deep diggings.

The Fraser Gold Rush was, however, short-lived. Most of the thousands who sailed from San Francisco (Fig. 2) in April and May were back by October. But there were other promising new sources of gold. In 1849 came the discovery of gold and silver in Western Nevada (Fig. 2), one of the most lucrative of all mining opportunities. Between 1860

\[^{14}\text{W. J. Trimble, The Mining Advance into the Inland Empire, p. 26.}\]
and 1862 gold discoveries were made in Idaho, and in Montana between 1862 and 1864 (Fig. 2). British Columbia recovered its reputation with new discoveries in 1861. The Eastern Rockies, and especially Pikes Peak, attracted miners from the Mississippi Valley as well as from California. During the 1850's and 1860's there was a simultaneous advance into the interior of the Far West from both the Pacific Coast and the Mississippi Valley to exploit the mineral resources. The dividing line between these two advances was the eastern boundary of San Francisco's hinterland (Fig. 2). The extent of the total population movements is suggested by the populations of several Western States for the year 1866. There were 50,000 people in Nevada; 20,000 in Idaho; and 20,000 in Montana, and the vast majority of these came with the gold rushes.\textsuperscript{15} There were no less than 200 mining camps in Nevada at this time, and 100 in Idaho.\textsuperscript{16}

IV. SAN FRANCISCO'S HINTERLAND

In the movement eastward and northward from California, San Francisco remained the predominant supply and market centre. The established oceanic commercial connec-

\textsuperscript{15} Pacific Coast Business Directory, 1867.
tions, and the pioneer steamboat companies in the Great Valley and along the Coast enabled San Francisco to establish its primacy over a large area extending from the Stikine River in the North to a point just east of the Colorado in the South (Fig. 2). Even British Columbia, one thousand miles away, was supplied by San Francisco and, by the early 1860's, British Columbia's trade was conducted much more heavily with San Francisco than with Great Britain (Table I). 17

### TABLE I

**VICTORIA'S TRADE, 1861-1863**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>England to Victoria</th>
<th>$0.5 million</th>
<th>$1.2 million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>$0.5 million</td>
<td>0.7 million</td>
<td>1.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>0.7 million</td>
<td>2.4 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>1.3 million</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The eastward extension of San Francisco's hinterland was limited by competition from those advancing westward from the Mississippi Valley, and from Utah traders who extended their influence as far as the Nevada border and into southeastern Idaho. On the Upper Missouri steamboats were able to deliver freight at Fort Benton at lower prices than

17 M. Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, pp. 106-107.
San Francisco merchants could provide. 18

The most common items sent into the interior from San Francisco were food, clothing, hardware, and mining supplies. Along with the returning gold came the miners who wanted to spend their earnings in "the city." In fact, this type of tourism came to be an important part of the San Francisco economy. The economic expansion of the city was very rapid, and its population, which had been less than a thousand in 1848, had grown to 36,000 by 1852, and to 57,000 by 1860.

At the time of the Fraser Rush, San Francisco's position on the Pacific Coast was very secure, and it was natural that the economic life of the Fraser Valley should be dominated by men from California.

The Californian Gold Rush of 1848 was the first of many western mining frontiers. The Fraser was the second frontier and so British Columbia became the goal of all those who could no longer find rich diggings in California. These Californians brought their mining skills to the Fraser but the application of these skills was considerably influenced by the regulations and taxes imposed by the British Colonial Administration.

CHAPTER III

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FRONTIER PRIOR TO 1858

I. THE FUR TRADE

The impact of the discovery of gold in British Columbia was complicated by the presence of the long-standing fur trade monopoly of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Miners and business men from California were not able to move into this new frontier with the same degree of freedom as they were able to exercise in such places as Nevada and Idaho. San Francisco’s economic influence remained dominant in all the gold mining areas of British Columbia, but the long history of British occupancy affected the form of that influence in each locality.

For sixty years after the establishment of Mackenzie’s trading post on the Peace River in 1792, there was an active British fur trade west of the Rockies, with fur trade forts being established westward from the Peace and from the Columbia (Fig. 3). These forts were located near the concentrations of Indian population (Fig. 3) since much of the fur trade depended on the Indians. The forts marketed the furs and received their provisions by means of pack-animal trains. The most favoured of the routes by which provisions reached the forts were the fur brigade trails.
Fig. 3
INDIAN POPULATION, 1835
FUR TRADE FORTS, 1805-1849
In 1839 the Hudson's Bay Company established a subsidiary organization, the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company. There were three reasons for this departure from a traditional fur trade economy. In the first place the Hudson's Bay Company undertook the provision of food for Russian fur traders in Alaska in exchange for extended fur trading rights in the areas bordering Alaska, and the existing Company food supplies were inadequate for this demand. In the second place, the large influx of settlers into Oregon threatened British interests north of the Columbia. It was hoped that the Puget Sound settlement would establish pre-emption rights in favour of British settlers when the international boundary would be extended to the Pacific. The third reason for the new agricultural policy was the declining fur trade. The supply of furs was decreasing, and the European markets were offering less money for furs. The Hudson's Bay Company was therefore forced to broaden its economic base by producing and marketing a variety of agricultural products.

The attempt at agricultural settlement proved disastrous. Few men were willing to exchange the relatively comfortable life of the fort for the hazards of pioneer farming. Administrators who had spent a lifetime in the fur trade were not equipped to undertake the planning of agricultural
settlements. Furthermore, as M. A. Ormsby has pointed out, there was an inflexible outlook on marketing at this time.

The eyes of the Bay men remained fixed on London, their traditional mart. Trans-Pacific trade to Canton had not been established; and neither the California nor the Hawaiian market had been greatly expanded. All the time American pedlars had been busy shuttling from Pacific port to Pacific port ...

II. BRITISH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Treaty of Washington fixed the International Boundary at the 49th Parallel, and the Hudson's Bay Company was faced with the problem of east-west transportation across the mountains to replace the old Columbia route which now lay in American territory. The Company developed a new brigade trail from Hope to Kamloops, and this route served the needs of the fur traders until 1858. The establishment of the International Boundary brought to an end the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company and all the other activities of the Hudson's Bay Company south of the 49th Parallel.

Under these changed circumstances the Hudson's Bay Company, conscious of their failures, and fearful of further

19 H. H. Bancroft, History of British Columbia, p. 211.
21 Bancroft, op. cit., pp. 177-178.
American encroachment, appealed for the replacement of their chartered trading rights by colonial rule. Colonial status would ensure British military protection, which included the North Pacific Fleet. The Company, however, hoped to restrict colonial government to Vancouver Island, where limited settlement along the lines of privately-sponsored colonization could be encouraged. The mainland, by the retention of its original status, could be preserved as a game reserve for the continuance of the fur trade. This scheme also envisaged the strict control of coastal trade, while the Company's monopoly of geographical data would ensure the effective isolation of the mainland from private encroachment.

In 1849 the British Government granted colonial status to Vancouver Island, a status which gave absolute control to the Colonial Office while delegating all financial responsibility to the new Colony. For most of the period 1849-1858, James Douglas was both Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island. This dual role unfortunately involved conflicting interests. His many years with the fur Company had served to entrench his primary loyalty to their interests, and consequently the rights of the new settlers who were beginning to take up land on the Island were often restricted. The terms of government in the new Colony made it mandatory for the Company to en-
courage settlers since the main source of revenue was to be land sales. However, the conditions associated with settlement were so restrictive that only fifteen people took up land in the first three years of the new Colony.

The first difficulty experienced by the settlers was the cost of moving to Vancouver Island. For every hundred acres purchased, at the fixed price of one pound per acre, a settler was obliged to bring out, at his own expense, three families or six single persons. Only British subjects could buy land at this time. At this same time, land was available in United States territory at one fifth this price. In Oregon land was free to bona fide settlers. When, after the tedious six months voyage, the new arrivals reached the Island, they met numerous frustrations. All supplies had to be purchased from the Company store at prices inflated by the sales to Californian miners. His produce had to compete in the market with the output of the Company farms which were large and well established. Politically he was little better than a medieval serf.

The slow process of settlement in the Colony of Vancouver Island, and the retention of the mainland solely

---


23 A. Begg, History of British Columbia, p. 195.
for furs, meant that settlement was very limited in 1857. The total non-Indian population of Vancouver Island was one thousand while the Mainland was less than two hundred. The distribution of population on the Mainland was dependent on the distribution of Indians, and on the continuance of the fur trade (Fig. 3). When, therefore, the whole fur trade collapsed at the time of the first gold rush in 1858, both the distribution of population, and the total number of people, were profoundly changed.
CHAPTER IV

THE GOLD RUSHES OF THE PERIOD 1858-1866

I. THE INITIAL IMPACT

Gold was discovered in British Columbia in 1856, but James Douglas, the Governor of Vancouver Island and Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, was able to suppress the news for two years. The developments in California since 1848 were well known to him, and he had every reason to believe that a gold rush to British Columbia would mean the end of the fur trade, and possibly the loss of British territory to the Americans. But news of gold could not be kept secret for long, and when it was known that a shipment of eight hundred ounces of gold was sent from Victoria to the San Francisco mint in February of 1858 a tremendous exodus of Californian miners occurred. In April, five hundred miners arrived from California, double that number in May, more than seven thousand in June, seven thousand in July, while eight thousand more who could not afford even deck passage made their way overland. In all some thirty thousand Californians started for the Fraser River Mines in the Spring and Summer of 1858.\textsuperscript{24} R. A. Billington and F. W. Howay both use Lewis

\textsuperscript{24}R. C. Lundin Brown, "British Columbia Essay," p. 3;
and Dryden's record of marine history as sources for these figures. But the turmoil of the times was not to be so easily tabulated. Ships accepted more than their official number of passengers, in many cases twice the number considered safe. R. C. Mayne states that the Sierra Nevada landed nineteen hundred people in Victoria on July first, yet she sailed from San Francisco the previous month with a "maximum" of nine hundred passengers.

The first focus of mining activity and population movement was at the junction of the Thompson and the Fraser Rivers. Many aspiring miners travelled overland by a variety of routes but the vast majority came by way of Victoria, from which point they made their way as best they could, using canoes or boats, to the Fraser canyon area. The Fraser River experiences an annual rise of water level between June and September which is caused by melting snow in the interior. The rush to the Fraser Canyon was not inhibited by this freshet for Bancroft maintains that although this factor was known to the Californians many of them felt they could work the dry diggings as they had done in California.

---

R. A. Billington, The Far Western Frontier, p. 246; F. W. Howay, British Columbia, p. 17.

Lewis and Dryden, Marine History of the Pacific Northwest, p. 69.

R. C. Mayne, British Columbia and Vancouver Island, p. 46.
Indeed the real obstacle to the early miners of the dry ravines of British Columbia was the much greater over-burden of glacial material compared with the Californian valleys. Only hydraulic mining was to expose fully the dry diggings of British Columbia.27 As soon as it was known that a waiting period of two months or more was necessary to allow the river to subside and therefore permit access to the river bars, the return to California began. Boredom and the very high cost of living in Victoria were factors contributing to this premature return to San Francisco. For those who had reached the Fraser before May, or were willing to wait out the period of high water, there were rich bars to exploit. The lower limit of profitable exploitation was five miles downstream from Hope. The upper limit was set by the logistical problems of supply, and was located about one hundred miles upstream from Hope.

The maximum number of miners known to have been at work on the Fraser at any one time in 1858 was ten thousand six hundred (Table II).28 These miners worked in the sides of the Canyon and on the exposed bars in the river. The

27 Bancroft, op. cit., p. 440.
TABLE II

MINERS ON THE FRASER, 1858

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of Miners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Hope and Yale</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yale</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Yale and Lytton</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lytton</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Lytton and Lillooet</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,600</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
equipment employed was the pan and rocker, and at least half a million dollars worth of gold was extracted before the end of the year.

The Fraser Canyon was only a suggestion of more lucrative sources for, to every miner from California, the presence of fine gold, such as they were finding in the Lower Fraser bars, meant larger, richer, deposits farther upstream. J. W. Finch has explained the reasons for such expectations.²⁹

The fineness of placer gold is generally greater than that of the lode gold from which it is derived, and its degree of fineness increases as distance from its source increases owing to the leaching action of streams that transport it.

The low stage of the Fraser early in 1859 allowed access to the interior of the Colony. By March, fifteen hundred had left for the Upper Fraser by boat. Another fifteen hundred went by the Harrison trail (Fig. 4).³⁰

As the centre of mining shifted upstream, the technology of extraction advanced at a far greater rate than had occurred in the early years in California because the experience of California stimulated the transition from a large labour force to company operations. John Damon's reports of

²⁹J. W. Finch (ed.), Ore Deposits of the Western States, p. 23.
³⁰British Columbia Papers, Part III, p. 6.
Fig. 4
THE BRITISH COLUMBIA GOLD RUSHES
the winter of 1858-1859, as recorded by R. E. Lindgren, show this transition.\(^ {31} \)

The transition from the cradle to the sluice is evident everywhere . . . The day of the "Pan" man is over . . . The miners, in view of the more rigorous climate, are preparing for winter by building cabins and establishing themselves permanently along the river. This advance in technology, the difficulties of extraction, and the rather limited yield from the mines, combined to accelerate the process of abandonment. Victoria, which had experienced a flood of miners in 1858, now witnessed an ebb-tide of almost equal proportions so that, by the end of 1859, most of those who had arrived in 1858 had departed.\(^ {32} \)

II. MOVEMENT INTO THE INTERIOR

The waning interest in the Fraser was arrested by the discovery of gold in Antler Creek late in 1860. The deposits had a regular yield of $50 per day per man. The discoveries at Antler Creek were followed by those of Lightning Creek, and then by Williams Creek which became the richest and best-known of all the Cariboo creeks with its renowned Diller, Barker, and Camerontown claims. All these


\(^ {32} \)Bancroft, op. cit., p. 470.
places were in the vicinity of Barkerville (Fig. 4) at the heart of the Cariboo mining region. By 1861 these creeks were being worked and the year's output exceeded $2 million.

The discoveries of 1860 and 1861 marked the beginning of an intensive phase of exploration for gold in the interior of British Columbia. Indeed, the mobility of the miners was so great that the Colony as a whole might be regarded as the unit of production during the early years of the 1860's. In all there were six important gold rushes between 1858 and 1866: Fraser, Stikine, Cariboo, Peace, Kootenay, and Big Bend (Fig. 4). Of these, the Fraser and Cariboo were by far the most important, the Fraser because it was the first rush and because it attracted the largest number of miners, and the Cariboo because it was the most sustained and lucrative. Furthermore, it was these two rushes which had the most enduring effect on the growth of settlement and the development of transportation systems.

The Cariboo gold rush coincided with the opening of the 1862 mining season. By June first summer had advanced sufficiently to permit work in the mines, and six thousand miners were in the vicinity of Barkerville ready to begin digging as soon as claims could be recorded. The deep diggings on Williams Creek were the focus of interest. These diggings were located some fifty to eighty feet below the
surface along the beds of former river channels, and they were destined to be the main source of Cariboo wealth for many years. The peak year of gold production in the Cariboo was 1864. Ten thousand miners were at work on Williams Creek in that year, and the yield for the year exceeded $3 million. These three years of production persuaded Government authorities that gold mining in the Cariboo was an established industry, and that costly wagon road construction could therefore be undertaken on the strength of future gold yields.

The Stikine Rush in 1861 attracted eight hundred miners who took up claims along the lower one hundred and fifty miles of the Stikine River. The Peace Rush, which occurred in the following year, attracted a smaller number than the Stikine. The significance of these two rushes lies in the profound effect they had on the map of British Columbia. The 1858 northern boundary of the Colony (Fig. 4) was pushed northward into the area now known as the Yukon one year after the beginning of the Stikine Rush. The Peace Rush created hopes of new gold fields east of the Rockies and so, in 1863, the British Columbia boundary was moved eastward to a line coincident with the present border. The northern boundary, at the same time, was withdrawn southward to 60°N, thus establishing the present-day boundaries of the Province.
In the Fall of 1863, just as the Cariboo production was nearing its zenith there came reports of a new field in the Kootenays. The main diggings were on Wild Horse Creek, a tributary of the Kootenay, about fifty miles north of the International Boundary. (Fig. 4). The location of the mines threatened the plan of the Governor of British Columbia to draw all trade through the Fraser River. One thousand men were at work on Wild Horse Creek in 1864, and a further thousand arrived in 1865. In these two years, $1 million of gold was mined, and all the mining supplies were provided from the American side of the border. Immediate efforts were made to build supply routes via the Fraser but before these trails and roads could be constructed, the news of the Big Bend discoveries had started to draw men away from the Kootenays. Some twelve hundred miners were at work in the Big Bend area in 1865, and the total production for 1865 and 1866 was less than $1 million. The more northerly location (Fig. 4) of the Big Bend mines compared with the Kootenays enabled the Colonial Government to compete with the Americans in supplying these mines.

The decline of the Big Bend mines in 1866 marked the end of an important series of gold rushes. For the twenty years which followed, gold production decreased steadily.
Table III shows the extent of this drop in production.

III. THE SCALE OF GOLD PRODUCTION

The total output of gold from the British Columbia mines for the period 1861 to 1866, that is, from the beginning of the Cariboo mining to the end of the Big Bend mining, is tabulated in Table IV along with the Californian output for the same period. The average annual output for these six years was: British Columbia, $3,200,000; California, $31,000,000. The yield of the Californian mines was approximately ten times that of British Columbia. Yet the total population of California was twenty times that of British Columbia. This ratio of twenty to one gradually changed in the years following 1866 until it stood at forty to one in 1870. One of the principal reasons for the disparity between the populations sustained by gold in these two areas lay in the administrative problems which the miners encountered in British Columbia, and in the failure of the British authorities to utilize the gold for the economic growth of


TABLE III

GOLD PRODUCTION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA
(in millions of dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Total Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1858-1862</td>
<td>$9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863-1867</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868-1872</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873-1877</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878-1882</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-1887</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$54.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE IV

GOLD PRODUCTION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA AND CALIFORNIA
(in thousands of dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>British Columbia</th>
<th>California</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>$2,666</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>2,856</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>3,913</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>3,735</td>
<td>27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>3,491</td>
<td>29,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>2,622</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the Colony.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE IMPEDIMENTS

The high cost of mining gold in British Columbia was a discouragement to American miners from the beginning. Mining licences and other charges unknown in the United States were levied by the Governor of British Columbia. All new arrivals had to take out a miner's licence costing $5 a month even though many of the newcomers did not intend to mine. In addition, $2 head money was charged on everyone entering British Columbia; $12 a trip was taken from every ship entering the Fraser River, and 10 per cent tax was levied on all goods imported. These charges meant that American miners worked only when the diggings were very rich, and they left the Country with their gold as soon as returns began to fall, leaving the Country impoverished rather than enriched by their stay.

Quite apart from their taxation policies there were other serious administrative weaknesses. It took two years to establish an assay office. Private companies had established assay offices in San Francisco within a year of the

first rush to California. There was a branch of a private San Francisco assay office in Victoria a year before the Government Office was in operation. When the Government Office finally began, bars were marked in sterling values, and these bars had to be taken to private assay offices to be converted to dollars before they were useful currency. The result was that the Government bars sold at a 2 per cent discount compared with privately assayed bars.\textsuperscript{36} A gold export tax was urged from the beginning by the gold commissioners in the field, as a substitute for the mining licences. The experience of Australian authorities during the Gold Rush in that Country in the 1850's had shown that a gold export tax was the preferable of the two methods.\textsuperscript{37} The Government decided to impose the tax just when the Kootenay mines were opening in spite of the fact that these mines were very close to the United States border and indeed received all their supplies from the United States. It was impossible to collect this tax from the Kootenay miners because of the ease with which gold could be sent into the United States. Furthermore, Cariboo miners could send their gold southward via the

\textsuperscript{36}R. L. Reid, \textit{The Assay Office and the Proposed Mint}, p. 23.  

\textsuperscript{37}J. D. Rogers, \textit{Historical Geography of the British Colonies}, p. 2.
Kootenays to the United States, so they too evaded payment. The tax was dropped a year after it was introduced. The Australian experience should not have been duplicated in British Columbia without careful consideration of local differences. Equally unwise was the gold escort project of the British Columbia Government in which the Government provided fast stages to carry gold along the Cariboo Road. The one essential requirement in a gold escort, from the miners' viewpoint, was security, and this the Government was unwilling to guarantee for any of its escorts. The result was a loss of eighty thousand dollars in operating costs in two years. During this time the private express companies, relying on their past performance, retained the confidence of the miners, and made substantial profits.

The gold rushes of the period 1858 to 1866 attracted a very large population into the interior of British Columbia and this population, in spite of high legal costs and difficult terrain, extracted gold equal in quantity to one tenth of the Californian production. Nevertheless, administrative weaknesses on the part of the British Colonial Authorities forced many miners to leave the Colony prematurely, and encouraged others to send their gold directly to San Francisco rather than to Victoria or New Westminster. Thus capital which might have contributed to the economic growth
of British Columbia was used to build up the economy of San Francisco.
CHAPTER V

ACCESS TO THE GOLD CENTRES

I. THE INHERITED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The discovery of gold and the changes in the government of British Columbia profoundly affected the pattern of transportation. Within the first year of the Fraser Gold Rush, age-old trails gave way to wagon roads, and canoes were replaced by steamers. The traditional fur trail followed the Athabasca Valley to the Northern Forts and thence to Kamloops, the Okanagan, the Columbia, and the Sea (Fig. 5). After the 1846 Treaty of Washington a new trail entirely within British Columbia was opened. This route left the Fraser at Hope, followed the Coquihalla to the Tulameen River, and from there to Kamloops (Fig. 5). This trail was much inferior to the Columbia Valley and, at the time of the 1858 Gold Rush, the original route was used for a brief period of time, thus linking the first gold rush with an early pattern of fur trade transportation. The use of this earlier route was, however, shortlived, and by the Fall of 1858 the Fraser


39 A. C. Anderson, Handbook and Map to the Gold Region of Fraser's and Thompson's Rivers.
Fig. 5

MAIN ROUTES BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE GOLD RUSHES
steamers were the dominant means of access for the vast majority of miners.

Before the Fraser River route was fully established as the quickest and the easiest means of access for the mines, another overland route, the Whatcom Trail (Fig. 4), flourished for a time. As long as Langley was the effective head of navigation, this trail offered some competition to the Victoria-Langley route, since it was much closer to the gold fields than was Victoria. Furthermore, since it was based on American territory, it was an attraction for United States citizens. Certainly the inhabitants of Whatcom were not slow to point out the advantages of their site and situation as this extract from The Northern Light shows:

Every American who has the least spark of national pride should avoid Victoria, and everything that is British. We have ample land communication, over our own soil, almost to the very threshold of the different mining regions, where the unjust and illiberal policy of the Hudson's Bay Company fails to reach.

Pack animal transportation supplemented water transportation in the early stages of mining in the Fraser Valley, but in the narrow canyons of the Lower Fraser miners had to

---

41 The Northern Light, Whatcom, September 4, 1858.
walk from the end of water connections, carrying with them sufficient supplies for, at most, a few weeks. To eliminate this serious supply problem, Douglas, in August of 1858, authorized the construction of mule trails from Yale to Lytton, and from the north end of Harrison Lake to Lillooet (Fig. 5). Within a month both trails were usable, and for the 1859 season there was no problem of packing supplies from the head of steamer navigation at Douglas or Yale to Lillooet (Fig. 5). 42

II. THE TRANSITION FROM PACK ANIMAL TO STEAMER AND WAGON

As long as trails and not wagon roads were needed, Governor Douglas was able to supervise the construction of adequate transportation. When the need for wagon roads of eighteen feet in width became apparent on the Harrison-Lillooet Trail, Governor Douglas was faced with a new challenge, and the technology of fur trade transportation provided him with little help in facing this challenge. In the circumstances he decided to widen the Harrison-Lillooet Trail so that, at a later time, it could be converted into a wagon road. But the result was unsatisfactory. When Lt. Palmer of the Royal Engineers inspected the widened trail

42 British Columbia Papers, Part II, p. 6; Part III, p. 3.
in 1859, with a view to conversion to a wagon road, he was amazed at the technical errors. Port Douglas at the north end of Harrison Lake (Fig. 5) was located in a small, almost inaccessible cove quite unsuitable for large steamers or bad weather conditions; the gradient of the trail was much too steep because it had been constructed along the west bank of the Harrison River. 43

The mule trail to the Upper Fraser was a slow and expensive operation which became more and more unsuitable as the distance from the head of navigation increased. When mining reached the Cariboo, the time occupied on the Yale-Barkerville mule trail was approximately one month. A team of say thirty-two animals could take four tons of freight, and make the return trip three times in a six month season. By contrast, fast freight was able to make the same return journey in eight days once wagon roads were available. But more serious than the time delays was the expense of a system which was wholly dependent on a pack animal method of supplying necessities. Freight was a dollar a pound from Yale to Quesnel. Five years later, the cost of freight on the same route, under wagon road conditions, was fifteen cents

a pound.\textsuperscript{44}

On June seventh, 1858, the steamer "Surprise" made the first steamer trip beyond Fort Langley. On July twentieth, the "Umatilla" reached Fort Yale.\textsuperscript{45} On the twenty-eighth of July the same steamer navigated the Harrison River and the Harrison Lake.\textsuperscript{46} From this time onward river steamers dominated the transportation pattern of British Columbia just as they had dominated most of San Francisco's hinterland in the previous decade. Indeed, the steamers which were found on the Fraser were mostly American even when they ran under the British flag and were based on Victoria.\textsuperscript{47}

III. THE WAGON ROAD ERA

The development of steamer transportation in British Columbia, though revolutionary when compared with the canoes of the fur trade period, was no more than an extension of developments in the Far West of the United States. But with the arrival of the Royal Engineers in the early part of 1859, a new phase of transportation was initiated. These one

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{44}British Columbian, May 4, 1864.
\item \textsuperscript{45}F. W. Howay, \textit{History of British Columbia}, p. 32.
\item \textsuperscript{46}Daily Victoria Gazette, July 28, 1858.
\item \textsuperscript{47}E. W. Wright (ed.), \textit{Lewis and Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest}, pp. 82, 98.
\end{itemize}
hundred and fifty men were hand-picked technicians, chosen by the Colonial Secretary from a larger group of volunteers. They were chosen for their abilities to survey, map, operate printing machinery, and construct roads. They brought to British Columbia the very best of the technical abilities of mid-nineteenth century industrial England. Their lasting imprint was the Cariboo Wagon Road which became famous throughout the whole of the Far West Mining Frontier.

The Engineers brought wagon road transportation to British Columbia: first the Harrison-Lillooet Road, then the Hope-Similkameen Road, and finally the Yale-Cariboo Road from Yale to a point halfway between Clinton and Barkerville (Fig. 5). The Cariboo Road was built under the direction of Walter Moberly who anticipated an early railway link with Eastern Canada, and the route for such a railway was in his mind as he planned the route for the wagon road. The Cariboo Road was extended to Barkerville, and the road from Cache Creek to Savona Ferry was built by men who had learned the art of road construction from the Engineers (Fig. 5). Frequently, when the new road coincided with an old trail, there was insufficient space to build an eighteen foot road or the gradient of the trail was unsuitable. Consequently

---

substantial re-routing was essential. 49

The Cariboo Road was finished in 1865 and, in that year, 1600 tons of freight were carried over the Road to supply the mining communities around Barkerville. 50 A mule train system of transportation would have been quite inadequate for such a demand, for 130 mule trains, or 4,000 animals, would have been needed to move this amount of freight. By 1872 the peak of gold production in the Cariboo had passed but there was still sufficient mining activity to maintain a regular service, every three days, of a mule or ox wagon from Yale to Barkerville. 51

The problems of transportation in British Columbia in the early 1860's were greatly increased as a result of the development of an effective International Boundary. This Boundary was legally established in 1846, but the modest commercial demands of the succeeding twelve years were unable to make permanent changes. The natural grain of the terrain facilitated travel in north and south directions and traffic continued to flow in these directions until the beginning of the Fraser Gold Rush. With the large influx of Americans in

49 Royal Engineers Map of August, 1861.

50 O. O. Winther, The Old Oregon Country, p. 216; British Columbian, January 17, 1866.

51 A. C. Anderson, "The Dominion at the West," 1872, p. 63.
the gold rushes, and the associated risk of American annexation of British Columbia, it became necessary to establish east-west transportation routes north of the International Boundary which could compete with north-south routes. The preservation of British influence in the Pacific Northwest justified the high cost of constructing these new east-west routes. Thus the high costs and the difficulties of building a wagon road through the Fraser Canyon were accepted on the grounds that the road was vital to the economic autonomy of British Columbia and Vancouver Island.

The fundamental differences between the needs of pack animals and the terrain requirements of wagons led to the construction of wagon roads in new locations. The pack trails were narrow and, because of the need of natural fodder for the animals, they were often established close to meadows and prairies even when better routes were available elsewhere. The wagon roads, because they had to carry larger and heavier loads, were wider, and the availability of fodder at road houses made it unnecessary to route them via meadows and prairies. Furthermore, wagons could not be taken up the steep slopes frequently used by the animal trains. Consequently, all of the wagon roads of the 1860's were built in new locations and the routes of the pre-existing brigade trails were bypassed (Fig. 5). These
wagon roads represented large capital investments and so they were relatively permanent. Settlements grew up along their routes, and these settlements in turn determined the paths of subsequent transportation systems and their associated settlements.
CHAPTER VI

SUPPLY ROUTES AND SETTLEMENT

I. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUPPLY ROUTES

At the beginning of the first gold rush two areas felt the impact of the movements of people and goods, the pre-existing settlements such as Victoria, Fort Langley, Fort Hope, Fort Yale, and the mines such as Hill's Bar and Boston Bar. But within a very short period of time some of these places were being bypassed as the mining interest shifted to new locations and as new systems of administration and transportation were established. The inauguration of steamer services as far as Yale terminated Fort Langley's function as the head of river navigation. When, in 1859, New Westminster was made the capital city of the new Colony the decline of Fort Langley further accelerated. A similar process of decline occurred around Fort Hope at the beginning of 1859 as mining activities moved upstream.

Other places because of their location and function fared differently. Victoria, because it was a free port, and because it was started earlier, retained its position as chief trading centre for the mines. New Westminster became the centre of administration for the independent Colony of British Columbia, and it also became the trans-shipment
point for ocean-river traffic. Yale, especially after the opening of the Cariboo wagon road, served as the river-road trans-shipment point for most of British Columbia's supplies in the 1860's.

The pattern of population growth and decline was evident in many settlements throughout the period of the gold rushes. Many mining camps expanded rapidly only to be abandoned while other settlements, in those areas which could survive conditions of a changing technology of transportation, experienced steady and enduring growth. By 1865 a stable pattern of service centres and transportation routes had evolved. These expressed the functional relations between San Francisco, Victoria, and New Westminster: by steamer between Victoria, New Westminster, and Yale, and by wagon along the Cariboo road (Fig. 6). The populations of Victoria, New Westminster, and Yale for 1871 and 1885 are shown in Table V. 52 Throughout this period of time Victoria remained the largest city on Vancouver Island and New Westminster and Yale, in that order, the two largest centres on the Mainland. Thus the hierarchy of size of the service centres established

during the gold rushes persisted through the ensuing twenty years.

Figure 6. Hierarchy of Service Centres, 1865.

II. SUPPLY ROUTES AND COMMERCIAL CENTRES

In 1857, Victoria consisted of only six houses grouped around a single wharf at the site of the present harbour, while the Company's Fort was located on the northeast side of the harbour. The main anchorage for ships was four miles west of Victoria, at Esquimalt, and a road connected this place with Victoria. Esquimalt was the headquarters of the British North Pacific Fleet. It had a large hospital, and it was the residence of several officials of the Colony of Vancouver Island. Its population was about equal to that of

TABLE V

POPULATIONS OF VICTORIA, NEW WESTMINSTER, AND YALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>3,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Westminster</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Westminster</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yale</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yale</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>600*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Exclusive of railway workers.
Victoria, and R. C. Mayne considered it to be preferable to Victoria as the site of a commercial town.

With the discovery of gold, however, all new activity was concentrated around the existing administrative and commercial centre—the Fort. Victoria reaped the benefits of Douglas' instructions which insisted that all persons proceeding to the British Columbia mines must first obtain a gold mining licence in Victoria, and then travel by ships operating under a Hudson's Bay Company charter from Victoria to the Fraser River. Newcomers therefore had no alternative but to make Victoria their first objective. The arrival of these people sustained a land boom while their licence fees provided public capital. At one time the Company safe in Victoria had as much as two million dollars in safe keeping.  

It was clear to the newcomers that every large mining area had its central "city," and that Victoria might well become the San Francisco of the Fraser. Accordingly, in 1858, land speculation occurred on a large scale in Victoria and, at times, it rivalled the rush to the gold mines as the

---

54 Papers Relative to the Affairs of British Columbia, Part I, p. 12.

On the 21st of June the Hudson's Bay Company put 6400 acres of land on the market. Lots measured 60 feet by 120 feet, and were sold at first for 25 dollars, then 75, then 100 when a further 1200 lots were put on the market . . . A similar demand for land prevailed in some other places in Vancouver's Island; the universal expectation, of course, being that much of the gold to be discovered would find its way thither.

Some of these lots sold within a few days for amounts as high as two thousand dollars. Commercial activities soon contributed to the rapid growth of the City as many San Francisco firms established branch houses there. Over two hundred buildings went up in the course of two months to house these branch firms. 57

By October most of the Californians had returned, and Victoria was left with a residue of some three thousand new residents. By the end of 1859 many of these had drifted away and, thereafter, population fluctuated from year to year, expanding up to six thousand in 1863, then declining to three thousand once more in 1866. This population total was maintained until 1871. 58 But even in the most prosperous years

56 Chamber's Journal, September 18, 1858, p. 185.
58 Pacific Coast Business Directories, 1863 and 1867; Victoria Directories, 1863 and 1871; Census of Canada, 1871.
of 1862 and 1863, when gold production was at its highest, F. E. Walden points out that there was little permanent investment in Victoria.  

Victoria was never destined to emulate San Francisco or indeed Portland. It had a smaller hinterland than either of these two American cities, and this hinterland was shared with New Westminster. Furthermore, the established position of San Francisco as a manufacturing centre, at the time of the first British Columbia gold rush, determined Victoria's role as a distributing centre. The population figures listed in Table VI show the erratic growth of New Westminster and Victoria as compared with the steady growth of San Francisco and Portland.

New Westminster was selected in February of 1859 as the site for a new capital to replace Fort Langley, which had been the capital since the formation of the new Colony in the previous November. This site was chosen by Colonel Moody, the officer in charge of the Royal Engineers, and consequently military considerations were pre-eminent. Fort Langley was on the south side of the River, and therefore was considered

59 Walden, op. cit., p. 47.

60 R. H. Brown, Historical Geography of the United States; Portland: Its History and Builders, p. 240; Pacific Coast Business Directory, 1867.
TABLE VI

POPULATIONS OF SAN FRANCISCO, PORTLAND, VICTORIA, AND NEW WESTMINSTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>Portland</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>New Westminster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
vulnerable in the event of an American attack on British Columbia. It was also situated on defenceless low ground. In contrast, the north shore site of New Westminster, with its steep slopes and thick forest cover, was seen as an ideal military position although its conditions of terrain and vegetation were far from suitable for agricultural settlement. Moody's enthusiasm reflects his reasoning in relation to the new capital.  

It is a most important spot. It is positively marvellous how singularly it is formed for the site of a large town (not a small one) to be defended against any foreign aggression. It is not adapted for a small military position. . . . The features are too extensive for that. It is a case of detached Earthworks and intrenched Camps. A military man would delight in it. . . . Woods felled points outwards--marshes inundated--muzzles of a few guns staring you in the face just where you thought yourself most secure.

Moody, in his choice of the new capital, had in mind more than a fortified site to resist American invasions. He also wanted a variety of supply routes connecting New Westminster with other places, to be used in the event of the Fraser River not being available. His field notes of 1859 indicate that he even envisaged a canal between the south shore of the Fraser at New Westminster and Mud Bay, a railway link extending eastward across Canada, and a road directly

---

northward toward Burrard Inlet. These plans increased the
land speculation which occurred around Burrard Inlet, Mud
Bay, and the general environs of New Westminster (Fig. 7)
and they also encouraged the development of New Westminster
as the principal commercial centre on the Mainland in pre-
ference to Fort Langley, the traditional commercial centre
on the Fraser.

New Westminster, however, grew only modestly. The
problem of clearing the tree cover was particularly hazard-
ous as Mayne has pointed out.63

The work of clearing the bush has been the great
drawback to the progress of New Westminster. Dr. Campbell
and I went to examine a part a little north of where the
town stands, and so thick was the bush that it took us
two hours to force our way in rather less than a mile and
a half.

In spite of these clearing difficulties, the first
sales of town lots were substantial. On two days of June
1859, 310 out of a possible 318 lots were sold at an average
price of $300 per lot.64 In the ensuing few years, the pur-
chase of large acreages in the immediate hinterland of the
new city assumed enormous proportions (Fig. 7). Newcomers

62 R. C. Moody, Manuscript, Provincial Archives, Victoria.
63 Mayne, op. cit., p. 142.
64 Papers Relative to the Affairs of British Columbia, Part III, p. 16.
were still speculating on another San Francisco of the North in spite of the limited growth of Victoria since 1858. Some of the highest officials of the Colony participated in these speculations. Lot books of the period show the following names against purchases around Burrard Inlet: Captain John Palliser, Colonel R. C. Moody, Major G. H. Foster, Attorney-General Cary, and Admiral Baynes.65 F. W. Laing says of these entries:66

It is quite evident that land speculation was the motive, largely, for the acquisition of land in the vicinity of New Westminster, the Capital of the Colony, and the acquisition of land on Burrard Inlet, English Bay, and False Creek.

New Westminster had 250 people in 1860, 1200 in 1863, and 600 in 1866 and in 1871.67 It was smaller than Victoria but larger than Yale. The hierarchy of size reflected the commercial importance of each place for the number of business establishments in Victoria in 1866 was 230, whereas New Westminster had 80, and Yale 40.68 Most of these establishments dealt with essential supplies and services—food stores,


67 W. E. Ireland, New Westminster: The Royal City.

68 Pacific Coast Business Directory, 1867.
hotels and boarding houses, mining equipment stores, and legal offices.

III. SUPPLY ROUTES AND THE BEGINNINGS OF RURAL SETTLEMENT

While land interest near the commercial centres was motivated by the expectation of a rapid increase in land values, land interest elsewhere was stimulated by the presence of transportation routes leading to the mines (Fig. 7). The most frequently used routes experienced the highest degree of interest and so the Lower Fraser Valley received as many land claims as the rest of British Columbia, during the period of the gold rushes, in spite of the fact that contemporary writers regarded the Lower Fraser Valley as quite inferior to the interior of the Colony in terms of suitability for agriculture. 69

Prior to the gold rushes the only non-Indian settlement in the Lower Fraser Valley were the two Hudson's Bay Company forts at Langley and Hope (Fig. 7). Fort Hope was typical of forts throughout British Columbia. It had been established in 1849 and carried a complement of less than a dozen men. 70 In addition to trading in furs, it provided for

69 Mayne, op. cit., p. 371.
70 M. Ormsby, British Columbia: A History, p. 70.
some of the food requirements of the men by means of local small-scale farming of such crops as oats, barley, potatoes, green vegetables.\textsuperscript{71} Mayne's report outlines a typical Hudson's Bay Company fort.\textsuperscript{72}

All Hudson's Bay posts are much alike. . . . They are built usually in the form of a square . . . of about a hundred yards. . . . This space is picketed in with logs . . . 15 to 20 feet high. . . . In two of the corners is usually reared a high wooden bastion . . . each bastion carrying six small guns, six or twelve pounders. Inside the pickets are six houses—four for residence, one for the Indian trading store, and one for storing the furs.

Fort Langley on the other hand was not typical of forts generally and stood in sharp contrast to Fort Hope. Farming and salmon fishing had become the main occupation of the Hudson's Bay Company men, and the fur trade had been relegated to second place. The arable acreage had been extended southward toward Langley Prairie where a minimum of clearing was required, and a variety of products for export was being produced. In 1842, 750 bushels of wheat, 500 bushels of oats, and 600 bushels of peas were harvested.\textsuperscript{73} Smaller quantities of beef, pork, and butter were also produced.

\textsuperscript{71}F. W. Howay, \textit{British Columbia}, p. 589; R. C. Mayne, \textit{British Columbia and Vancouver Island}, p. 385.

\textsuperscript{72}Mayne, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 117-118.

\textsuperscript{73}O. O. Winther, \textit{The Old Oregon Country}, p. 68.
Fort Langley's farming activities had a substantial influence on later settlement. The surveys conducted in that area were modified by the location of the farmlands (Fig. 1). Lots 21 and 22 of group 2, the Langley Prairie extensions of the Hudson's Bay Company farms, as well as several smaller lots near the River at McMillan Island, can clearly be identified as irregularly shaped units in an otherwise regular matrix (Fig. 1). Furthermore, the initial purchasers and pioneers of land in this area were retired Company men and they settled alongside the Company farms.

The first legal provision for settlement in the Lower Fraser Valley beyond the establishment of these two forts and their associated lands was the survey and auction of land to British subjects in Lulu Island, Pitt Meadows, and Burrard Peninsula in October 1859. The system of survey employed by the Royal Engineers was the block and range. The blocks measured three miles square and each block was divided into 36 sections. In order to reduce the costs of surveying only the areas required for immediate sale were surveyed. After 1870 when a general system of six mile townships was adopted for the whole of the Lower Fraser Valley, the areas covered by the block and range system were retained in their original form (Fig. 1).

The price of the newly surveyed land was high, $2.50
per acre, in keeping with the British Colonial policy of raising revenue locally through the sale of land. Consequently sales were slow throughout November and December of 1859, and Governor Douglas became increasingly apprehensive over the lack of revenue. By January of 1860 financial pressure forced him to reduce the price to $1 per acre, the lowest price ever permitted by the Colonial office. Sales increased considerably as a result of the price reduction but the total revenue was still far below the amount needed.

Accordingly Governor Douglas took an unprecedented step and opened unsurveyed lands to the general public. Never before in the history of British Colonial Administration had unsurveyed lands been made available to the public. Under the new regulations anyone could pre-empt 160 acres on payment of a registration fee of $2 provided the land was occupied immediately. There was the option for every such pre-emptor of the purchase of an unlimited amount of additional land on payment of a first installment of half the price of the land, that is 50 cents per acre. One hundred and sixty dollars worth of improvements had to be carried out on the basic 160 acres, the full price of $160 paid, and an official survey conducted before the title to the land was given. Some people were able to take advantage of administrative weaknesses and evade the responsibility for improvements. How-
ever, the unique circumstances which required both a certificate of improvements from the Magistrate, plus the survey which followed the certificate of improvements, served to act as a double check against widespread evasion of improvements. Consequently the majority of the original pre-emptions represented areas of land improvement.

The pre-emptions recorded between 1859 and 1863 were numerically equal to half the pre-emptions recorded between 1864 and 1884, both in the Lower Fraser Valley and in British Columbia as a whole.\(^4\) The years 1859 to 1863 were also the years of strongest gold interest so gold and land interests appeared at the same time. Thus, contrary to the commonly held view that land interest in British Columbia occurred later than that of gold, when gold interest was high, land interest was high, and when gold interest waned, as happened after 1866, land interest waned. These characteristics are evident in the Lower Fraser Valley, the main focus of land interest from 1859 to 1884 (Fig. 7). The pre-emptions for two five-year periods are shown (Fig. 7), the first period coinciding with the time of increasing gold interest, and the second with the time of waning gold interest. The years

---

Fig. 7
LOWER FRASER VALLEY PRE-EMPTIONS

Legend
- 5 Pre-emptions 1859-63
- 5 Pre-emptions 1867-71

Provincial Archives, Victoria

A.M.C.
1864 to 1866 are omitted in order to distinguish the two periods. The total number of pre-emptions in the earlier period was approximately double that of the later period. Furthermore, the early pre-emptions are closely related to the routes to the mines whereas those of 1867-71 reflect the increasing interest in areas away from the gold mine transportation routes. Each one of these pre-emptions represented an individual pre-emptor's name, and the average size of holding was 160 acres.

The land pre-empted and improved between 1859 and 1871 formed the basis of many of the communities which emerged in the Lower Fraser Valley for, in 1871, two-thirds of those who lived in rural communities were located in Ladner, Chilliwack, Langley, Lulu Island, Sumas, and Mud Bay—all places which formed early concentrations of pre-emptions (Figs. 7, 1 and Table VII). Two of these places, Lulu Island and Chilliwack, were the main agricultural centres in 1871. The average rate of growth for these places from 1871 to 1884 was equal to the rate of growth for the Lower Fraser Valley generally (Table VII).

The development of settlement on Vancouver Island and the beginnings of both urban and rural settlement elsewhere in the 1860's were governed by location relative to the main

---

75 British Columbia Directories, 1871 and 1886.
TABLE VII

POPULATIONS OF PRINCIPAL RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE LOWER FRASER VALLEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>1871 Population</th>
<th>1885 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ladner</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilliwack</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langley</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lulu Island</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumas</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mud Bay</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
transportation routes to the mines. Victoria and New Westminster both grew as a result of the mining population and mining supplies which passed through them. Land purchases in the period 1859-1866 occurred almost exclusively along the routes to the mines. In the Lower Fraser Valley, which was the principal focus of land purchases and pre-emptions, land and gold interests were concurrent, and the unusual legal circumstances which secured widespread improvement of land led to the establishment of small but permanent communities.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The gold rushes of the period 1858 to 1866 established settlement in British Columbia. Gold acted as a catalyst, repeatedly, to initiate and accelerate change. The sudden formation of the new Colony of British Columbia, the un­ timely death of the fur-trade, and the world-wide publicity given to British Columbia within a few months of the first gold rush were all symptoms of accelerated change. If there had not been a series of gold rushes, British Columbia would probably have followed the pattern of settlement characteristic of the rest of Western Canada where agricultural communities evolved in the wake of the trans-continental railway. Under these circumstances the first areas to be settled would have been in the eastern part of the Province, and the rate of settlement would have been very much slower. The trans-continental railway could not have reached British Columbia before 1880, so that the gold rushes gave an impetus to settlement a generation before it would otherwise have been expected.

The conclusions which may be drawn from the settlement of British Columbia between the years 1858 and 1885 fall into two categories. In the first place there are local
factors which relate to the unique characteristics of British Columbia. Political autonomy and economic dependence upon the United States were pre-eminent among these factors. Proximity to the United States and remoteness from Britain increased the degree of economic dependence. Remoteness from Britain also hampered the administration of the Colony while local physical problems made the cost of political independence very high. In the second place British Columbia manifested many of the generic attributes of gold rushes. The lasting impact of gold occurred in the major service areas rather than in the mining areas while the framework of future settlement was established by the transportation routes developed to meet the needs of the mines.

I. LOCAL FACTORS

The overwhelming majority of the immigrants who poured into British Columbia in 1858 were American. Their experience in California made for rapid exploitation of the Fraser mines, but the gold they mined poured into San Francisco's coffers and strengthened the American economy rather than the youthful Canadian economy. Moreover British Columbia became part of San Francisco's hinterland and, as W. N. Sage wrote: 76

76 W. N. Sage, "The Why and Wherefore of British
The omnipresence of the Great Republic was a factor of vital importance to British Columbia. San Francisco was the metropolis of the Pacific Coast... letters from British Columbia to the outside world, including the British Isles, were sent to San Francisco... Post offices in British Columbia had to keep a supply of American stamps.

The Victoria Gazette complained of the attractive power of San Francisco as the first wave of miners receded from the Colony:??

The proximity of California to this Colony has been productive of many serious drawbacks to its rapid growth. Discouraged men in the Golden State in 1849 were unable generally to pay their passage back to the point whence they came... Here however it costs so little in time and money to reach the country from which the bulk of our population migrated that the most trifling causes are sufficient to set an exodus on foot.

The effect of proximity to the United States was heightened by the immense distance from Britain. Few British officials had ever visited British Columbia and considerable ignorance of its physical conditions prevailed.?? Yet the British Colonial office controlled the economy of the new Colony, and land policy and loan policy were two items of administration which were jealously controlled from London. P. F. Palmer points out the detrimental effects of these two

Victoria Gazette, October 7, 1858.

Chamber's Journal, September 25, 1858.
policies in the 1860's: 79

Colonial land policy (with its "sufficient" price which was fine for Eastern Canada with no gold, or Australia with no contiguous competitor for land) had a profound effect on the fiscal history of B.C. The slow settlement of the mainland made the early introduction of a direct tax on land impossible. . . . Only by a reduction in the price of land considerably below the price of contiguous American land could any real impetus have been given to settlement in British Columbia, since, other things being equal, Americans preferred to establish themselves under their own flag. . . . The loan policy contributed to the detrimental effect of the land policy . . . in 1867 Seymour wanted to negotiate a loan of $250,000. The request was peremptorily refused.

British policy insisted that colonies be self-supporting economically, providing locally for all administrative and service costs. This policy was quite effective in the Colony of Vancouver Island, where services were minimal and where the administrative structure was extremely simple. When the Colony of British Columbia was established, and when soldiers, sailors, and a new host of Colonial officials had to be paid out of local funds, an altogether new situation arose. When, additionally, new roads had to be cut through the coastal mountain barrier, to control the economy of the Colony, the cost of political independence became very high indeed. 80


80 A. Harvey, A Statistical Account of British Columbia, Ottawa, 1867.
II. GENERIC ATTRIBUTES

In spite of the problems of political autonomy and American exploitation of the mines, gold secured many of the enduring characteristics of gold rushes. In the first place world-wide publicity was quickly established for a hitherto unknown area, as W. K. Lamb has pointed out.  

The discovery of gold first brought the mainland to the attention of the world. Nootka Sound episode and the Colony of Vancouver Island made Vancouver Island somewhat familiar, but the mainland was completely unknown territory.

In the second place, although gold mining was ephemeral it created administrative and supply centres around which a nucleus of resident population gathered. This nucleus of commercial centres and rural communities, though small, proved to be the core around which later settlement and development occurred.

**Commercial Centres**: Victoria, New Westminster, and Yale competed for a trade area barely one-twentieth that of San Francisco, and their size and the scope of their economic activities were, accordingly, modest throughout the period of the gold rushes. Nevertheless, these centres set

---

a pattern for subsequent developments. In 1871, and again in 1885, in spite of the steady decrease in gold production, their commercial activities were greater than ever and, with the exception of the coal mining centre at Nanaimo, they remained the largest concentrations of population in the Province. Today, Victoria and New Westminster are the second and third cities, respectively, of British Columbia.

Transportation Routes. The wagon road emerged as a new system of transportation in the 1860's in sharp contrast to the foot and pack trails which provided access for the fur traders. The technical requirements of the wagon roads differed markedly from the earlier systems of land communication and so their locations rarely coincided with those of the older trails. The new settlements which appeared during the mining booms were located near the wagon roads, and so subsequent transportation systems, in following the existing settlements, followed the routes of the wagon roads. All the main links between the Lower Mainland and the rest of British Columbia and of Canada follow one or more of the wagon roads established in the 1860's. The two trans-Canada railroads follow the canyon road. The Trans-Canada Highway follows the old Cariboo Road to Cache Creek and then follows

82F. W. Howay, History of British Columbia, p. 397.
the Cache Creek-Savona wagon road. The Pacific Great Eastern Railway follows the Harrison-Lillooet wagon road for 70 miles south from Clinton while the Hope-Princeton Highway follows the old Similkameen wagon road for 30 miles east from Hope (Fig. 5).

Rural Occupance. The purchase of country lands along the main transportation routes was an absorbing interest when the gold rushes were at their peak, and was of lesser interest when gold interest waned. The scale of gold-land rushes was much more extensive than has hitherto been recognized, for the number of pre-emptions taken out in the five years of greatest gold excitement was equal to half the number of pre-emptions in the succeeding twenty years. Frequently it has been assumed that gold miners turned to land only when there was no gold to mine. Indeed the picture of land occupancy which emerges is a very different one from that of the traditional pioneer settler in the West. In the Lower Fraser Valley, for example, within the confines of an area of less than 1000 square miles, and over a period of less than a dozen years, trading, mining, and agriculture shared equally in the economic life of the area. Those who arrived in the

Gold rushes were substantially influenced by economic opportunities other than gold. Furthermore, the pre­
emptions which, at first, only represented areas of improved land with occasional pockets of agriculture had a profound influence on the location of many present-day communities (Figs. 7 and 1).

The new populations established in the Lower Fraser Valley and in the Cariboo each represented twenty per cent of the total population of British Columbia at the end of the period of the gold rushes (Fig. 8). In succeeding decades, as gold mining declined, the proportion of the total population in the Lower Fraser Valley continued to increase while that of the Cariboo dropped substantially. The proportion of the total population on Vancouver Island also dropped substantially as the temporary advantages it held during the gold rushes came to an end.

Most of the changes which occurred in the settlement of British Columbia as a result of the gold rushes were completed within a short period of time. By 1866 the main patterns of transportation and population distribution were established and the succeeding two decades added little to these patterns. The next big change was to await the arrival of the railway, and the expansion of the forest industries which accompanied the coming of the railway. But the co-
Fig. 8
BRITISH COLUMBIA: POPULATIONS OF SELECTED AREAS, 1857, 1870, 1961
oordination of urban centres, rural communities, and transportation routes had already been established, and it is to the first sequence of occupancy by American miners and British officials and engineers that the major outline of the settlement pattern of British Columbia owes its present form. Gold initiated a pattern which was confirmed by the subsequent construction of the trans-continental railway, the growth of the forest industries, and the development of agriculture.
A. BOOKS


_____. History of California. San Francisco, 1890.


_____ *The Fraser River Mines.* Victoria: Provincial Archives, 1926.


*Portland, Its History and Builders.* Chicago: J. Gaston, 1911.


B. CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTS


------. The Dominion at the West. Victoria, 1872.


Census of Canada, 1871, 1881.

Field Notes and Early Legal Survey Maps, Legal Surveys Division, Department of Lands and Forests, Victoria, British Columbia.


Harvey, A. A Statistical Account of British Columbia. Ottawa, 1867.

Hittel, J. S. Resources of California. San Francisco, 1863.

Land Registry Early Records, New Westminster.


Macfie, M. Vancouver Island and British Columbia. London: Longmans, 1865.

Map Collection, National Archives, Ottawa.


Pre-emption Records, Government Agent's Vault, New Westminster.

Pre-emption Records, Government Agent's Vault, Vancouver.

Royal Engineers Maps, Map Collection. Provincial Archives, Victoria.


Waddington, A. The Fraser Mines Vindicated. Victoria, 1858.
C. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

Absolute Fees Books, New Westminster.


Clark, A. H. "The Coordinates of Historical Geography." (paper read at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Syracuse, 1964.)


Farley, A. L. Historical Cartography of British Columbia, University Microfilm, 1960.


Lot Books, New Westminster.


D. PERIODICALS

British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Victoria Provincial Archives, 1958.


E. NEWSPAPERS

**British Colonist**, December 11, 1858.

**British Columbian**, February 13, 1861 and August 27, 1870.

**Cariboo Sentinel**, June 6, 1865.

**Northern Light**, July 3, 1858.


**Victoria Gazette**, July 28, 1858.