

## THREE

# Making the Lazy Indian

What is an Indian? Between the lines, Burton Kewayosh, an Ojibwa, and Homer Barnett, an anthropologist (both quoted on the right), proposed similar definitions. Being an “Indian” means hunting and fishing and, perhaps, small-scale farming. If one engaged in large-scale farming and had a good house and a boat, then he “practically” ceased being an Indian. For all “practical” purposes, these activities turned an Indian into a white. Real Indians did not “work.”<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter, I look at why we know so little about the history of Aboriginal Peoples after the time of European settlement and, particularly, why we do not know about the history of aboriginal work. The answer to these questions lies in the two quotes to the right. It lies in the definition of “Indian” as “outside the workforce.” Many have gone further, adding a pejorative twist to this: “Indians” have been defined as lazy. Once this definition was established, the idea of aboriginal work seemed like an oxymoron, and so a history of it was not pursued. This chapter looks at how Aboriginal Peoples came to be defined as “lazy” in the first place, and then it looks at how the process of “laz-i-fying” Indians came to be forgotten.

### Making Indians

When Captain George Vancouver explored Burrard Inlet in 1792 and called the indigenous people he met “Indians,” he placed them in a category already familiar to Europeans.<sup>2</sup> With this naming, the indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast were classified with all the Aboriginal Peoples of North America, South America, and Central America, not to mention, thanks to the famous, if disoriented, navigator Christopher Columbus, the inhabitants of India. Physical (phenotypical) differences had something to do with this racial classification. The people Vancouver encountered on the Northwest Coast did have certain physical features that were different from those of him and his crew.

Yet, the phenotypical features of the people did not cry out for those people to be defined as Indians. Indigenous peoples of the Americas had a vast range of skin colours and facial features. The earliest European explorers

Up until the time when I was a boy we were still Indians. We lived by hunting and fishing and small farming.

Burton Kewayosh, from the 1961 CBC radio program, *The Way of the Indian*

Tommy Paul ... was the most prosperous man on the West Saanich Reserve owning a good house, a gas boat, cultivated fields and some livestock ... Practically he was a white man.

Homer Barnett, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia*, 1955



Tommy Paul, early 1930s

◀ Detail of *Amerigo Vespucci Discovers America* (see p. 32)

A late sixteenth-century engraving from Jan Van der Straet's *Amerigo Vespucci Discovers America*. The name "Indian" had less to do with "racial" features of Aboriginal People and more to do with the relationship Europeans wanted to have with them.



to the northwest coast of North America, Juan Perez and James Cook, thought that the "whiteness of [their] skin appeared almost equal to that of Europeans."<sup>3</sup> If physical characteristics had been the main criterion for racial categorization, then some of these Northwest Coast peoples could have easily fit into Asian or European categories. But racial definition does not depend on physical differences.<sup>4</sup> The category "Indian" had less to do with phenotypical features than it did with the relationship Europeans wished to have with Aboriginal Peoples. "Indian" was a useful category for occupants of newly encountered lands.

For Columbus the word "Indian" meant "inhabitant of India" and did not have the racial implications it had for Cook or Vancouver three hundred years later. In Columbus' time the word "race" did not exist in common parlance. As a concept it emerged in the sixteenth century, growing out of a folk category associated with inherited traits observed in animal breeding. By the eighteenth century, the word had spread into all European languages and had been expanded to include inheritable traits in humans. By the time of Vancouver's voyage, scientists had adopted these folk categories and divided human beings into "scientific" categories or races.<sup>5</sup>

The most influential among these scientists was Carl Linnaeus, who worked out a system through which he could classify all living things according to certain visible criteria. When it came to classifying humankind, he brought his knowledge of heredity together with descriptions of seafarers returning from distant regions of the world. In his historic *System*

*Naturae* of 1758, Linnaeus proposed that *homo sapiens* fell into six varieties, including monsters (i.e., dwarfs and giants), wild men, Africans, Americans (Indians), Asiatics, and Europeans.<sup>6</sup>

Linnaeus, like other classifiers of his time, associated phenotypical features with social characteristics. He described the American Indian as copper-coloured, with straight, black hair and thick, wide nostrils, along with a scanty beard. This racial type was also socially obstinate, content, and free. Asiatics were melancholy, rigid, severe, haughty, and covetous. Africans were phlegmatic, relaxed, crafty, indolent, and negligent. By contrast, Europeans were sanguine, gentle, acute, and inventive. Systems of governance were also linked to racial type. Asiatics were governed by opinions, Africans by caprice, and Americans (Indians) by custom. Europeans alone were defined as “governed by laws.”<sup>7</sup>

Linnaeus had defined the American Indians as “obstinate and care-free” and the African race as “indolent,” but the negative typing of non-Europeans blurred when one was in the field. In fact, wherever Europeans met indigenous populations, their conclusions were strikingly similar to those of Linnaeus. The Hottentots of South Africa were rebuked for their “idleness and sloth,” the indigenous peoples of the Philippines for laziness and filth.<sup>8</sup> Nothing, it was said, could rouse the native South Americans from “indolent habits and indifference.”<sup>9</sup> The most authoritative observers reported that “indolence pervades all classes of the Egyptians.”<sup>10</sup> The Fijians’ “mental apathy, laziness and improvidence” was said to “arise from their climate, their diet and their communal institutions.”<sup>11</sup> Likewise, the early visitors to the Northwest Coast were unanimous in their condemnation of Indians as indolent or lazy.<sup>12</sup> Robert Brown, who studied the Aboriginal Peoples of British Columbia in the 1860s, summarized the general attitude in his encyclopaedic 1871 *Races of Mankind*: “the Central Africans, like all barbarous or savage people, are a lazy race.”<sup>13</sup> Lazy, it seems, was part of the imperial definition of the “other,” and Aboriginal Peoples were certainly other.

The idea of aboriginal laziness was contrasted to “industriousness” and “hard work,” which was supposed to characterize European nations. Yet, this contrast breaks down at every level. First, European aristocrats often complained about the laziness of European peasants and workers, so clearly this did not distinguish Aboriginal People from Europeans. Even in BC progressive citizens were constantly complaining about the lack of industry and laziness of the small white farmer. What “lazy” really meant to these upper-class commentators was not willing to work like indentured serfs paying due deference to the “lords” who needed serving. As industry replaced agriculture in Europe, the more regulated and intensified work of

factory labourers replaced indentured farm labour as the standard for work. Laziness came to mean unwilling to work for fourteen hours a day at routine factory labour under quasi-military discipline for subsistence pay.<sup>14</sup> Second, the very aristocrats who were not satisfied at the level of industry displayed by their indentured serfs defined themselves by the fact that they did absolutely no work. In Europe, idleness was a marker of upper-class status.

What constitutes appropriate labour evolved historically as an interpretive endeavour to understand human social organization. However, it also became a tool that could be deployed against non-Western peoples.<sup>15</sup> Indigenous people had to be defined as lazy and unproductive because then and only then could Europeans invoke the religious or philosophic justification for occupying their territories and displacing them. Europeans resorted to their “labour theory of value,” crystallized by John Locke and Emmerich de Vattel in the mid-eighteenth century, which accorded ownership of land to those who removed it “from a state of nature” and improved it. European colonists had to overlook the different agriculture, mariculture, and silviculture practices of indigenous peoples to characterize the non-European world as “in a state of nature.”<sup>16</sup> They also had to characterize the productive activities of indigenous civilizations as “not labour” in order to declare America “unowned” and available for the taking. So, aboriginal labour was framed as existing outside the economy.

### **Laziness and Leisure**

When fur traders followed explorers, they inherited the definition of the Indian as lazy and extended it into a dominant stereotype, despite the abundant evidence of Aboriginal People being productively occupied. In his 1825 tour of inspection, George Simpson, governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company, declared the Indians of the Columbia River Valley to be “indolent and lazy to the extreme.” John McLeod thought the northern Okanagan people “an indolent and improvident Set,” and in 1839 Dugald McTavish described the Chinook as most miserable “owing to their laziness.”<sup>17</sup>

Not that the fur traders observed Aboriginal People doing nothing. In salmon season or bulb and berry season Aboriginal People worked from dawn to dusk. Fur trader Gabriel Franchère offered a contrary view of the Columbia River people: “They possess, to an eminent degree, the qualities *opposed* to indolence, improvidence, and stupidity; the chiefs, above all, are distinguished for their good sense and intelligence. Generally speaking they have a ready intellect and a tenacious memory.”<sup>18</sup> As Mary Black-Rogers points out, “indolence” to the fur traders did not mean someone who did little, rather it was “an attribute of those who show[ed] independence of the fur trade.” Indians were *indolent*, according to the fur traders, because

they had little need for European goods (and so chose not to hunt furs extensively) and because they enjoyed long periods of leisure between food gathering seasons.<sup>19</sup> This use of the term “indolent,” meaning a lack of interest in participating in a European form of labour subordination and refusing to exchange subsistence activities for accumulation, coincided with Linnaeus’s racial categorization of Indians as “content and free.”<sup>20</sup>

Even leisure, which Aboriginal People seemed to enjoy in abundance, was an important part of the economy. Leisure time spent in storytelling, lounging, gambling, and travelling to pay social visits was not the wasted time it seemed to the Europeans. In an economy in which trade was interpersonal, food was shared communally, spiritual and practical knowledge was transmitted through stories, and community economic activities required consensus, so-called leisure time was, in fact, essential economic time. In a culture in which the spiritual and economic were not separable, time spent on spirit quests, salmon ceremonies, prayer, and appeasing unhappy spirits was vital to the economy.<sup>21</sup>

While the officers of the fur trade, the literate observers who kept tabs on Aboriginal People, spent most of their days between the semi-annual coming and going of brigades in idleness, elders in the aboriginal communities warned against wasting time.<sup>22</sup> Aboriginal cultures in British Columbia existed in an economy of reciprocity: everyone was expected to contribute in accordance with their abilities and place in society. In such cultures the lazy were a liability for a large extended family and were disparaged and even shunned. Homer Barnett, in his ethnography of the Coast Salish, noted that “children were impressed with the importance of industry and ambition from an early age. Laziness was the worst of all faults.” The Saanich called lazy people *swiwalas* as opposed to *qémat*, or poor men (i.e., commoners without canoes or other property). The Comox just called them bad people.<sup>23</sup> Edna Bobb explained that the worst people among the Stó:lō were *su:met*, or lazy people. To the Athapascan-speaking Ulkatcho Carrier people “the ideal person was one who was not lazy, who hunted all the time and was enterprising in trade. Even children ... were openly criticized for ‘playing too much.’” Someone who was lazy and had to ask food from others was called a “dried fish slave” among the Tlingit of the Alaskan panhandle.<sup>24</sup>

By contrast, the accumulation of wealth goods was highly valued among the Northwest Coast peoples. In the Coast Salish languages the word for “to become rich” and “to become a leader” was the same. *Si?ém?* meant leader, rich, and important. But one did not get rich just by one’s own initiative. One needed the assistance of spirit helpers. Successful labouring and its resultant wealth was an affirmation that the spiritual beings who

### Civilization Equals Labour

The naturally indolent character of too many men of Indian blood disposes them to accept offers to farm on shares, which fostering their disinclination for constant labor admits of their subsisting, although miserably, while leading a life of idleness. This engenders habits opposed to temperate and virtuous living ... No true civilization can prevail apart from labor.

William Spragge, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 1865

### Among the Salish

One kind of person only, of any class, was despised, and individuals in this category might crop up in any family. They were the “lazy men,” the worthless ones who were without ambition or self respect.

Homer Barnett, *Coast Salish of British Columbia*, 1955

ensured good hunting, fishing, or harvesting were being honoured and were satisfied. One's physical labour and spiritual power were intertwined.<sup>25</sup>

The European observations about work and laziness remind us that defining race is about making boundaries, drawing lines, erecting fences, and then declaring what is on the other side of the fence to be “beyond the pale.” Racial boundaries, like fences, need to be maintained, and so ideas of race and racial characteristics are constantly being updated, reinforced, and redefined. Named in the eighteenth century by Vancouver, and re-named and remade many times since, the category “Indian” as applied in what is now British Columbia was not so much a matter of mistaken identity on the part of Christopher Columbus as it was a created identity – one that has been recreated by successive waves of newcomers.<sup>26</sup>

It is no coincidence that the term “race” and the ideology of racial hierarchies, which puts “whites” at the top of the list, developed during the era of European colonial expansion. The same year that Linnaeus published his *System Naturae*, 1758, Emmerich de Vattel published his *Law of Nations*, in which he argued that those who choose to avoid labour, choosing instead to hunt and fish, have “no reason to complain if other nations, more industrious and too closely confined, come to take possession of a part of those lands.” A century later such thinking was used to justify the insatiable appetite of the new colonists to British Columbia: those whom the Stó:lō called *Xwelitem* – “the hungry people.” The settlers agreed that “the indolent, contented savage, must give place to the bustling [sic] sons of civilization & Toil.”<sup>27</sup> So long as “Indians” were defined as “lazy” or “vanishing” (preferably both), their displacement by the virile, enterprising white race was seen as legitimate.

### Vanishing Indians

Understanding “Indian” as a category created by Europeans, with attached meanings like indolence and inferiority, makes sense of historical evidence that is otherwise quite contradictory. How also might you reconcile evidence like that in Charles Forbes' 1862 guide to Vancouver Island, which states that “[Indian] labour cannot be depended on, and with one or two slight exceptions at present forms no point of consideration in the labour market” with that of a principal Vancouver Island newspaper, the *Victoria Gazette*, which complained in May 1860 that, “among the numerous drawbacks from which our Colony suffers, is that of the superabundance of Indian labor, to the extent of almost entirely excluding the white working man?”<sup>28</sup>

What are we to make of the fact that in 1867, in his guide to the colony, A.A. Harvey describes Aboriginal People as “valueless in the labour market,” while in 1875 Attorney General George Walkem wrote: “In the present

### Rightly Appropriated

According to the strict rule of international law, territory occupied by a barbarous or wholly uncivilized people may be rightly appropriated by a civilized or Christian nation.

*British Columbian*, June 1, 1869

infancy of British Columbia, the Indians of this class have proved invaluable in the settled portions of this province”? What do we make of Chief Justice Begbie’s 1885 assessment of BC Indians as “a race of laborious independent workers”?<sup>29</sup>

Sometimes one commentator made contradictory statements about the same aboriginal groups during the same time period. For example, in his 1849 report, surveyor W.C. Grant wrote of the Aboriginal People on southern Vancouver Island: “Those who are able to work are all anxious to be employed. They are very quick at receiving instruction and many of them ... were tolerably good hands with the axe and the spade.” A short time later, on 8 August 1851, Grant commented in a letter to William Brodie that the natives on southern Vancouver Island are “as useless as they are harmless.” Two years later he apparently reversed himself, writing that the same people, “with the proper superintendence are capable of being made very useful. They all live by fishing but take kindly to any kind of rough agricultural employment.”<sup>30</sup>

We might dismiss this as one man’s schizophrenia if it were not for the fact that it is a relatively common pattern. Robert Brown, the ethnographer mentioned above, described the Somenos, a subgroup of the Cowichan, as “a very lazy set ... only caring to work if they get high wages,” while a few pages later he states: “to judge them as you see them loafing about the white settlements is like judging a man by the coat on his back.” In 1861 the *Victoria Colonist* described the Indians’ “habits of indolence, roaming propensities, and natural repugnance for manual labour,” but in 1860 it had noted “that most of the laboring work done about town is performed by Indians.” In 1860 and 1862 its editorials complained that white men could not get work because Aboriginal People were doing it all.<sup>31</sup>

If European observers knew that “Indians” were lazy by definition, yet saw them working everywhere in the colony “with a surprising degree of industry,” the result was bound to be a certain amount of contradictory commentary.<sup>32</sup> This is particularly true when aboriginal “industry” took forms that were not in keeping with European notions of time, discipline, and subordination. Aboriginal People’s way of entering the paid workforce – generally for short periods – and their reasons for quitting (often to engage in cultural or subsistence work) frustrated Europeans and became further proof of Indian laziness. This underlies the sentiments of Indian Agent W.H. Lomas, who noted: “In the towns of Victoria and Nanaimo individual instances occur where young Indians have learned trades, and are on many subjects as shrewd as the average white man but unfortunately, their intelligence is only superficial, and the true Indian often appears through a coating of veneer.”<sup>33</sup>



Sketch of Chief Kakalata of the Somenos, a group that explorer Robert Brown described as “a very lazy set”

### It's Anglo-Saxon Bone That We Want

The [type] of "bone, muscle and intellect" that is required here differs materially from the Indian or African. It is Caucasian – Anglo-Saxon bone ... that we want.

*British Colonist*, February 19, 1861

Aboriginal People were often contrasted with Chinese immigrants, who were usually described as more industrious. Investigation of these characterizations suggests an explanation for the comparison. The Chinese in 1880s British Columbia were a true "landless proletariat": they either worked or they starved. But for Aboriginal People, paid work was still a supplement to a rich subsistence base. Much of the Lekwungen's "earnings" were "saved" for potlatch goods. If wages fell to a near subsistence level, it was not worthwhile for Aboriginal People to work. But the Chinese immigrants had no choice.

Beyond price, there were other reasons for the popularity of Chinese labour. Chinese domestic servants were willing to "live in" and be on-call all the time, whereas aboriginal domestics preferred to live in their own homes. Moreover, as one observer testified to a Royal Commission on Chinese immigration, it was more prestigious to have an oriental houseboy than an aboriginal one. The "exotic" status of the Chinese may also account for the partial displacement of aboriginal women by Chinese women in Victoria's red light district.<sup>34</sup>

Drawing showing former *British Colonist* editor Amor de Cosmos' support for a petition to prevent Chinese railway labour (*Canadian Illustrated News*, April 21, 1879)





Employers often gave a third reason for employing the Chinese: their supposed reliability relative to Aboriginal People. Some employers, such as cannery owner Charles Todd, characterized Aboriginal People as “short-sighted and unreasonable. Even after their advances they come down late, giving excuses that their hay took time, or something like that.”<sup>35</sup> Later, the trade magazine *Lumberman and Contractor* repeatedly claimed that the forest industry needed oriental labour because “Indians” were too ready to quit to go to a potlatch. By contrast, “Chinamen,” the magazine said, would find a replacement if they themselves could not come to work.<sup>36</sup> From an employer’s point of view, Chinese labourers probably *were* more reliable and easier to discipline than were Aboriginal People because they were more dependent on wage labour. Aboriginal People were more independent and were engaged in an alternative economic system, which affected their availability for paid work.

Yet, in evaluating this evidence offered by contemporary observers, we have to appreciate that the Chinese were “racialized” as much as were Indians. The positive assessments of Chinese came in the context of employers arguing that they were necessary as cheap labour. Arguing that Aboriginal People were unreliable and that they could not do the job was also a tactic to ensure the Chinese would be admitted and that the overall labour force would be large enough to keep wages down. Commentators who had no interest in employing Chinese often branded them as “lazy” and “thieving,” using the same derogatory terms directed at Aboriginal People. Other commentators used the reputed industriousness and thriftiness of the Chinese as reason to exclude them, since whites could not compete. The real problem with Chinese and aboriginal labour was that it was not White labour.<sup>37</sup>

We know so little about the history of aboriginal labour because Indians were defined “as [of] no account in the labour force” and so are overlooked in discussions of the labour that occurred in the colony/province. A classic example of this oversight concerns the historical accounts of the origins of industrial sawmilling in British Columbia. Most of these are based on the written recollections of observers like R.C. Mayne, whose 1862 travel account reported that the first industrial sawmill in the west coast colonies had “been erected in a most solid fashion by English labourers ... Seventy white men [were] employed at and about the premises.” This is the accepted account of employment at the first “factory” in the colonies – the largest industrial sawmill on the west coast of North America. Given the low number of “white men” in the colony, Mayne’s figure for employment seems more credible than that of Reverend Matthew MacFie, who, in his *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, mentioned two to three hundred hands employed at the same Alberni mill. It is Mayne’s figures that are

### As for the Mills

As for the mills, they are principally worked by Indians, half-breeds, Chinese and Japs who are paid 75 Cents to 1.00/day .... Indians who work in logging camps, sawmills, or on board boats, etc, being strong and active, obtain about the same wage as white men.

R.E. Gosnell, *Year Book of British Columbia and Manual of Provincial Information for 1897*

used in the histories of the forest industries in British Columbia.<sup>38</sup> Yet Mayne's and MacFie's figures are reconciled by artist Frederick Whympier, who, in an obscure book about his travels in Alaska, noted that when he visited Alberni "two hundred workmen representing a dozen nationalities, and, including among the number, Kanakas from the Sandwich Islands, and Indians and half-breeds of many tribes – were busily engaged in the mill and neighbourhood."<sup>39</sup>

Whympier's exceptional recollection suggests that many historical accounts, like Mayne's, count only "white" men when they mention the number of "men" employed. The history of aboriginal workers is not known because they were not counted. This observation is important enough – in that it reinserts Aboriginal People into the capitalist labour force – but its importance goes beyond that. It ought to recast the entire way we think about historic aboriginal/non-aboriginal relations. Historian Martin Robin, using the standard accounts, thought that "it was not merely shrinking numbers of the 'vanishing Red Men' which accounted for the low participation of Indians in the new industrial system. By inclination and habit, the Indian did not fit the new industrial mode."<sup>40</sup> But, if Whympier is to be believed, Aboriginal People were part of the new industrial system from the moment it arrived on the British Columbia coast. It was Mayne who, by writing only about *white* labour, "vanished" the aboriginal and Hawaiian (Kanaka) workers, who accounted for over half the workforce.

Of course, Aboriginal Peoples are not the only ones given little, or partial, attention in these historical sources. Other non-white ethnic groups, women, and workers in general are also difficult to find. As a result, historians interested in these "peoples without histories" have turned to what are called "routinely generated" sources, such as censuses, parish records, tax rolls, directories, court records, and voters' lists. These records were systematically collected for routine purposes and often include groups not much mentioned by elite observers.

However, even here, Aboriginal Peoples have been vanished more effectively than most. Legally and racially defined as "other," Aboriginal Peoples are absent from many sources commonly used by social historians. The predecessor to the federal census, the "Blue Books" (the annual statistical registers of the colonies) annually enumerated the "White Race," the "Coloured Race" (i.e., Blacks and Hawaiians), and the "Chinese Race" but not Aboriginal Peoples. The federal census of 1871 used the Blue Book figures and set the population of British Columbia at 10,586, mentioning in a footnote that "no account is taken of the Aboriginal People, details of which are wanting."<sup>41</sup> In fact, the invisible Aboriginal Peoples outnumbered non-Aboriginal Peoples by more than two to one in the new province.

The first federal census of British Columbia, conducted in 1881, made little effort to gather more than the numbers of Aboriginal Peoples and, even then, underestimated the population.<sup>42</sup> Most enumerators just wrote “Indian” in the space provided for names and either made no entry under occupation or took little care with this category, making whole nations “fishermen” and others “hunters.” The next census, in 1891, though more carefully collected, did not ask about ethnic origin, so it is impossible to generalize from it about aboriginal work. The 1901 decennial census put Aboriginal People on a special schedule, so they were not asked the questions about employment that appear on the regular schedules. As late as 1951, census takers categorized Indians living on reserves as “neither employed nor unemployed,” and so they do not appear in census employment tables.

Aboriginal Peoples and the federal government sometimes shared the same ideas about work. In 1915 Chief John of the Ulkatcho band in British Columbia did not count Kapoose and Kahoose as band members because “they were Ulkatcho Indians but lived after the manner of the white people.”<sup>43</sup> Where routinely generated sources did touch on the lives of Aboriginal People, they established a set of categories that reflected the values of the information collectors rather than those of the Aboriginal People. Enumerators had no choice but to record aboriginal households in categories that were suited to Euro-American society, even though Aboriginal People organized themselves according to very different family structures.<sup>44</sup>

If we cannot find out much about aboriginal work from the census – the standard source for social historians – what about other routinely generated sources? Prohibited from voting, Aboriginal People do not appear on provincial voters’ lists until after 1949, and they do not appear on federal lists until 1960. Exempt from taxation, they do not appear on tax rolls. Like other marginal groups, they were barely touched by directory compilers until well into the twentieth century. Aboriginal People were intermittently evangelized, but church records are spotty and, like many other sources, inconsistent in their use of variant spellings of both aboriginal and adopted European names.

Like the archival sources for sawmilling, the annual statistical reports of the British Columbia Department of Mines have used their own sleights of hand to make Aboriginal People vanish. The annual statistics divided the number of gold miners into only two categories: white and Chinese. As a result, histories of mining have centred around these two cultural groups, despite the fact that other sources reveal that there were hundreds and perhaps thousands of aboriginal gold miners.<sup>45</sup>

### Count Them, Then Get Their Land

We had considerable trouble with the Indians making them understand what we were doing ... Chief supposed our mission was to find out how many of them there were and then the government would do away with them to get their land.

Fred Greer, enumerator, Department of Agriculture, June 29, 1892

### Employing the Indians

A large quantity of coal may at any time be got there [near Beaver Cove] by employing the Indians, who are numerous and ... by no means averse to such employment ... On one occasion when we employed them for that purpose, they brought in upwards of ninety tons in a few days, which they dug with hatchets and other inconvenient implements and there is no doubt that with the proper excavating tools they would have done the work much more expeditiously.

James Douglas and Peter S. Ogden to J.A. Duntze, September 7, 1846



James Douglas, Chief Factor of Fort Victoria and later governor of Vancouver Island and British Columbia

This vanishing act was even more profound when it came to coal mining. Alongside categories for white and Chinese coal miners, annual reports do have a category for Indians, but it disappears in the mid-1880s despite a continuing aboriginal presence. Moreover, the reports caution us that the figures do not include miners' helpers. Other sources reveal that miners' helpers were disproportionately made up of Chinese and Aboriginal People.<sup>46</sup>

This is partly why the only history of coal mining on the coast declares that the opening of the first mine at Fort Rupert marked a new stage in BC history. The author, Eric Newsome, wrote: "With the digging of coal the Indians had become irrelevant." A re-examination of the primary documents reveals a different story. *All* of the coal mined at Fort Rupert, over 3,600 tons in three years, was mined by Aboriginal People. Though there were imported Scottish miners at Fort Rupert who unsuccessfully explored for new seams, they did "not raise one square inch of coal." In 1858, when the centre of mining had moved to Nanaimo, the *Victoria Gazette* reported: "There are some thirty or forty miners, mostly Indians, constantly employed in getting out the coal, and the lead has now been worked a quarter of a mile." Moreover, other evidence tells us that Aboriginal People continued working in the mines well into the twentieth century.<sup>47</sup> All these examples tell us that the historical record is suspect and that documenting aboriginal labour is more than a matter of recounting, it is a matter of recasting the entire history of the region.

### Forgetting and Remembering

The work of historians involves creating an account of the past based on evidence that exists in the present. For the reasons laid out above, much of the surviving historical evidence completely misses the record of aboriginal work. Historians like Eric Newsome, Martin Robin, Robin Fisher, and others have, with few exceptions, taken the absences in the record at face value and have unwittingly turned these omissions, and along with them the "lazy Indian" stereotype, into historical fact. First white settlers and then historians erased Indians, either by leaving them out of their accounts or by placing them on the margins, where they were barely visible. The "red men" have not vanished from the historical landscape: they have *been* vanished.

When historians write about BC Aboriginal Peoples, they generally use one of three broad storylines, or metanarratives and each has contributed in its own way to disappearing the history of aboriginal workers. One of the earliest and most enduring of these presented "Indians" as unassimil-

able and, thus, as obstacles to economic development, or “progress.” This perspective, although found in early twentieth-century Canadian texts, is best exemplified in the work of an American, Frederick Jackson Turner. His “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” argues that the destruction of indigenous peoples is part of the trial by fire from which a new nation and a new people would be born.<sup>48</sup> There is a “progressive” variant of this argument: Aboriginal Peoples should exchange their “primitive existence” for “civilization” under the guiding hand of the missionary, teacher, or government agent. Although now out of fashion in the scholarly world, these ideas still have wide currency, and, as recently as 1991, formed the basis for a major legal decision that rejected aboriginal land claims.<sup>49</sup>

A second metanarrative is sometimes summed up in the phrase “fatal impact.” Trade and contact between an avaricious European world and an (often romanticized) aboriginal culture resulted in the destruction of the latter. This is usually accounted for by superior European technology, aboriginal passivity, and the inherently static nature of “primitive society.” This is often a thinly veiled critique of a capitalist society that has flattened indigenous cultures that have stood in its path. Often this metanarrative devalues contemporary aboriginal society as being only the “debris” of an idyllic aboriginal past. Both versions portray Aboriginal Peoples as victims of superior force and deny them a role in the making of their own history.<sup>50</sup>

The third metanarrative is more subtle. Best known in British Columbia from Robin Fisher’s work, it considers the period following first contact as one of cultural effervescence. This is sometimes called the “enrichment thesis” because Aboriginal Peoples, who, it is argued, had a great deal of control over the fur trade, were able to choose the aspects of the immigrant culture they wished to adopt and, thereby, enrich their own culture. This narrative restores agency to Aboriginal Peoples but only temporarily. The fatal impact of European settlement, it seems, was not averted, only delayed:

The fur trade had stimulated Indian culture by adding to Indian wealth and therefore to the scope of Indian creativity. Settlement on the other hand, often had the effect of subtracting from Indian wealth and this tended to stultify Indians ... The Indians had been able to mould the fur trade to their benefit, but settlement was not malleable; it was unyielding and aggressive. It imposed its demands on Indians without compromise.<sup>51</sup>

Settlement, not contact, marked the demise of aboriginal culture and history.

### Historical Genocide

It frequently happens that the historian, though he professes more humanity than the trapper, mountain man or gold digger ... really exhibits and practices a similar inhumanity ... wielding a pen instead of a rifle.

Henry David Thoreau, journal entry,  
February 3, 1859

All three metanarratives have certain features in common. First, they see aboriginal-white relations as marked by a distinct turning point, either at contact or at the beginning of settlement. Second, they describe the process of colonialism and the expansion of a capitalist economy as relatively uniform across space and among Aboriginal Peoples. Third, they all exclude Aboriginal Peoples from history after this turning point. Finally, they have based their theorizing exclusively on white observations.

There have been several attempts to challenge these metanarratives by focusing on the involvement of Aboriginal People in the workforce. Sarah Carter's work, *Lost Harvests*, found that Aboriginal Peoples on the Canadian Prairies actively turned to farming when their buffalo-based economy declined. Carter's evidence suggests that aboriginal farmers were doing well relative to their non-aboriginal neighbours until the latter complained about unfair competition from "state-supported Indians." Responding to this pressure, the federal government prevented Aboriginal People from becoming commercial farmers and encouraged them to take up subsistence farming – a policy that led to long-term poverty. Carter concluded that government policy rather than aboriginal culture was the major factor in accounting for the economic marginalization of Aboriginal Peoples. This finding is echoed in Leo Waisberg and Tim Holzkamm's study of the Ojibwa in northwest Ontario and Ellice Gonzalez' study of the Mi'kmaq.<sup>52</sup> I take up the argument that Indians were "made unemployed" by government policy in Chapters 7 and 8.

Kenneth Coates's look at aboriginal/non-aboriginal relations in the Yukon Territory, *Best Left as Indians*, highlights cultural differences between Aboriginal Peoples and immigrants. He concludes that what is often thought to be "a marginal place" in the "white" economy was, in some respects, preferred by Aboriginal Yukoners. "The Natives' lack of interest in the aggressive, acquisitive materialism of the industrial world ensured that few accepted the discipline and control of the non-Native work place." Like elsewhere, "laziness" was a feature of not being a full-time wage worker. Participating in a subsistence economy and occasionally making seasonal incursions into wage labour permitted Aboriginal Yukoners to maintain important elements of their culture. At the same time, Coates shows how aboriginal choices were severely circumscribed. Their "tangential and peripheral" role may have been a positive choice on their part; however, given the "racial economic barriers barring them from work in the white man's world," there was not much to choose from, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>53</sup>

Frank Tough's economic history of northern Manitoba between 1870 and 1930 argues that Aboriginal Peoples had little choice but to accept the

dependent role left them by the incursions of capitalism and state welfare policy. He calls for more attention to the structure of markets and modes of production as well as to the extraction of surplus value on the part of interests external to the region.<sup>54</sup>

In British Columbia, the main challenge to the thesis that Aboriginal Peoples were marginalized with the coming of industrial capitalism is Rolf Knight's *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930*. What is most refreshing about Knight's work is that it breaks free of the sources that had circumscribed scholarship in this field and found that oral accounts by Aboriginal People were full of references to work.<sup>55</sup> Knight's sources suggested that aboriginal labourers may have entered the industrial economy in large numbers and that wage labour might have been an important source of income for Aboriginal People as late as the Great Depression. Characterizing his own work as an "informal study," he admits to its preliminary nature: "It will be evident that much of the data for a complete labour history of Indian people in British Columbia is missing here. The present account raises more questions than it answers."<sup>56</sup> Knight did succeed in his goal of opening new avenues of inquiry that have since been followed by scholars of BC and adjacent territories. Few, however, have followed his lead in examining anything other than archival sources.

By rejecting the assumption, sometimes stated and sometimes implied, that "ongoing traditional values and attitudes somehow limit Indian job capacities," Knight stressed aboriginal similarities with other labourers and opened a debate that has been joined by Alicja Muszynski, Evelyn Pinkerton, and Dianne Newell. While Knight took pains to emphasize the similarity of aboriginal and non-aboriginal workers,<sup>57</sup> Muszynski's and Pinkerton's studies of aboriginal fishers and fish processing labourers stressed the differences. In Pinkerton's words, "Work rhythms and work discipline in a pre-industrial society organized by kin obligations and authority of the chief differ, of course, from rhythms of industrial production ... Moreover, the safety net offered by Indian communities and by the Indian's ability to rely on traditional subsistence did not create the most favourable conditions for the development of a highly disciplined capitalist workforce."<sup>58</sup>

According to Muszynski and Pinkerton, Aboriginal People were first incorporated into the industrial labour force, at least in the fish processing industry, because their subsistence economy meant that they could be paid less than immigrants. The cheap price of aboriginal labour was essential to early enterprises, but, ultimately, the subsistence economy allowed Aboriginal People the independence to reject capitalist work discipline. Since Aboriginal People could not be exploited as much as other labourers,

### Indian Loggers Were ... Loggers

Whatever ... distinct cultural traditions they maintained, Indian loggers were loggers, Indian longshoremen were longshoremen, Indian cannery workers were cannery workers.

Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work*, 1978



White sawyer captured in Haida argillite carving

employers replaced them with more tractable Chinese and Japanese immigrants. Their argument raises interesting questions, but its conclusion does not entirely square with the evidence that aboriginal women remained vital to the fish processing industry until the 1950s, when most of the plants closed. This evidence is limited to a sampling of published reports. Dianne Newell delves into the unpublished correspondence of the canners as well as documents of the Department of Fisheries and the Department of Indian Affairs. She argues that Aboriginal People actively joined the capitalist economy through their work in the fishing industry and that the state bears the primary responsibility for their displacement – an argument supported by Douglas Harris.<sup>59</sup>

Richard Mackie provides the best evidence that the division between a fur trade economy and a wage economy was imposed by historians. He documents the participation of Aboriginal People in a wide range of paid labour for the Hudson's Bay Company, including construction, fishing and fish preserving, logging, sawmilling, mining, ice harvesting, cranberry harvesting, and so on. They were also employed as ploughmen, messengers, sailors, shepherds, and shearers – all this alongside their work in the fur trade.<sup>60</sup>

These studies of different places, times, and circumstances point to a history of aboriginal work-for-pay, but they come to a variety of conclusions. Might the different conclusions in these regional studies be a feature of different indigenous social structures? To answer this question we must extend our idea of history back before the arrival of Europeans, remembering that different Aboriginal Peoples will likely have different histories of work.

With the exception of Knight's work, the histories mentioned rely primarily on non-aboriginal statements about Aboriginal Peoples' reasons for going to work, for how they conducted themselves at work, and for quitting work. What histories would have been written had we asked Aboriginal People?

If we listen to aboriginal voices, some of the apparent contradictions dissolve. Aboriginal People did not choose to be loggers or Indians, modern or traditional, spiritual or materialistic; rather, they experienced these aspects of their lives within an integrated whole. Aboriginal People made choices after considering the full range of subsistence resources, wage work, and state payments available to them. Aboriginal voices, which are interspersed throughout this book, suggest to me that Aboriginal Peoples constructed their own, distinctive "moditional" economy. They alternated work and leisure but were no "lazier" than were immigrants.



Europeans had to call “Indians” lazy in order to legitimate the occupation of their land. The colonizers seized on the different way that indigenous people worked – periods of hard work followed by periods of leisure – and the fact that many quit when they had accumulated what they needed from wage work as proof of their preconceptions. When it came to counting aboriginal work, the awkward fit between the preconceptions and the abundant evidence of aboriginal workers must have contributed to the gaping absence of Aboriginal People from the census and other key records. This constructed gap in the historical record allows the “lazy” stereotype to persist and be resurrected as a comfortable explanation for aboriginal poverty today and as an argument against modern treaties or any form of “redress” for the earlier displacement.

Integrating aboriginal voices with non-aboriginal voices turns history into dialogue.<sup>61</sup> In acknowledging competing narratives, definitions, and worldviews, history becomes a transformative process that can help rematerialize Aboriginal Peoples who have been disappeared from our history. In the process, the historical conversation becomes more complete, comprehensible, and lively.

- this further in Lutz, "Relating to the Country." See Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002); Douglas C. Harris, *Fish Law and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2001); Paul Nadasdy, *Hunters and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003); Harkin, *The Heiltsuks*.
- 35 Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony*, 19-24; Stuart Hall employs a variant of Gramsci's concept of hegemony that is close to this. In Hall, hegemonic power is negotiated between the subject, whose identity remains fluid, and dominant society, itself unstable and constantly shifting. See Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, 2 (1996): 123-27.
- 36 Roy Miki, "Unclassified Subjects: Question Marking 'Japanese Canadian' Identity," paper presented to the Making History: Constructing Race conference, University of Victoria, 1998; M. Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Renato Rosaldo, "Foreword," in Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, xv; Kirin Narayan, "How Native Is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" *American Anthropologist* 95, 3 (1993): 673, 681; Nicholas Thomas, "'Partial Texts': Representation, Colonialism and Agency in Pacific History," *Journal of Pacific History* 25, 2 (1990): 139-58. Christopher Bracken makes this point in an interesting way in *The Potlatch Papers: A Colonial Case History* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1997).
- 37 Clifford Geertz, "Thick Descriptions: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 13.
- 38 Bakhtin in Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 109.
- 39 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Post-colonial Studies Reader*, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffer, 24-28 (New York: Routledge, 1995).
- 40 Rey Chow, "Where Have All the Natives Gone?" in *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*, ed. A. Bammer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 130-34; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The New Historicism: Political Commitment and the Postmodern Critic," in *Post-colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (London: Routledge, 1990), 158.
- 41 Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817," in *Europe and Its Others: Proceedings of the Essex Conference of the Sociology of Literature*, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, Margaret Iverson, Diana Loxley (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985), 89-106; Benita Parry, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse," *Oxford Literary Review* 9, 1-2 (1987): 27-58. For critiques of hybridity, see A.S. Caglar, "Hyphenated Identities and the Limits of Culture," in *The Politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe: Racism, Identity and Community*, ed. T. Modood and P. Werbner, 169-85 (London: Zed Books, 1997); R.J.C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995).
- 42 Jean François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).
- 43 The phrase is from Chow, "Where Have All the Natives Gone?" 133.
- 44 Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 360.
- 45 "Exotopy" (literally, "finding oneself outside") is Todorov's translation of Bakhtin's *vnenakhodimost*. See Bakhtin in Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 30, 109.

### Chapter 3: Making the Lazy Indian

- 1 One can find other references, going back to the mid-nineteenth century, that make the same point. Robin Fisher quotes Admiral Arthur Cochrane, who, in 1874, made the following comment about the industrious Metlakatla Indians: "I say these are not Indians. These are white men." See Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1977; reprinted 1992), 134; W.H. Lomas, in Canada, Legislative Assembly, "Department of Indian Affairs Annual Report" (DIAR), *Canada Sessional Papers* (Ottawa: Canada, 1887): 105-7.
- 2 George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1798; reprint ed. W. Kaye Lamb, London: Hakluyt Society, 1984), 236.
- 3 See, for example, John Scouler, "Observations of the Indigenous Tribes of the N.W. Coast of America," *Journal*

- of the Royal Geographical Society of London II (1841): 218; James Cook, *Captain Cook's Voyages of Discovery*, ed. John Barrow (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1967), 347; Herbert K. Beales, trans., *Juan Perez in the Northwest Coast: Six Documents of His Expedition in 1774* (Oregon: Oregon Historical Society, 1989), 78.
- 4 Phenotypical differences are not prerequisites for racial differentiation. One only has to look at the English/Irish conflict during Vancouver's own lifetime or, more recently, the Nazi persecution of Jews. For a fuller examination of this, see John Lutz, "Making 'Indians' in British Columbia: Power, Race and the Importance of Place," in *Power and Place in the North American West*, ed. Richard White and John Findlay (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 61-86.
  - 5 Agnes Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1993), 36-72; Robert Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the North American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage, 1978), 3-22; Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982).
  - 6 For a provocative discussion of the role of explorers and travellers in "creating" the rest of the world for Europeans, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 32.
  - 7 Carl Linnaeus, *Systema Naturae*, quoted in Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 32.
  - 8 Renato Rosaldo, "Utter Savages of Scientific Value," in *Politics and History in Band Societies*, ed. E. Leacock and Richard Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 319; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 45.
  - 9 Gaspar Mollien, *Travels in the Republic of Columbia in the Years 1822-23* (London: C. Knight, 1824), 57, quoted in Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 151.
  - 10 Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 109.
  - 11 Nicholas Thomas, "Sanitation and Seeing: The Creation of State Power in Early Colonial Fiji," *Comparative Studies of Society and History* 32 (1990): 156.
  - 12 For examples, see Cook, *Captain Cook's Voyages of Discovery*, 350; Alexander Walker, *An Account of a Voyage to the North West Coast of America in 1785 and 1786*, ed. Robin Fisher and J.M. Bumsted (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1982), 84.
  - 13 Brown was one of the earliest ethnographers to work in British Columbia. See Robert Brown, *The Races of Mankind: Being a Popular Description of the Characteristics, Manners and Customs of the Principal Varieties of the Human Family* (London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, Belle Savage Works, 1873), 3:31 (emphasis mine).
  - 14 Ruth W. Sandwell, "Negotiating Rural: Policy and Practice in the Settlement of Saltspring Island, 1859-91," in *Beyond the City Limits*, ed. R. Sandwell (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 83-101; M. Hunt, "Racism, Imperialism, and the Traveler's Gaze in Eighteenth Century England," *Journal of British Studies* 32 (1993): 333-57.
  - 15 Elizabeth Povinelli, *Labor's Lot: The Power, History and Culture of Aboriginal Action* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1993), 6.
  - 16 Aboriginal Americans depended partly or largely on agricultural production in eastern and central North America down through Central and South America when Europeans arrived. On the northwest coast of America, one could find evidence of agriculture if one looked, but it was not as apparent as elsewhere on the continent. For northwest coast agriculture, see Brenda Beckwith, "'The Queen Root of This Clime': Ethnobotanical Investigations of Blue Camas (*Camassia leichtlinii*, *C. quamash*; Liliaceae) and Its Landscapes on Southern Vancouver Island, British Columbia" PhD diss., Department of Biology, University of Victoria, 2004; for mariculture, see Judith Williams, *Clam Gardens: Aboriginal Mariculture on Canada's West Coast* (Vancouver: New Star, 2006), and N. Alexander Easton, "The Archaeology of Straits Salish Reef Netting: Past and Future Research Strategies," *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* 24, 2 (1990): 161-77; for silviculture, see Robert Boyd, ed., *Indians, Fire, and the Land in the Pacific Northwest* (Corvallis: Oregon State University, 1999), and C. Cwynar, "Fire and the Forest History of the North Cascade Range," *Ecology* 68, 4 (1987): 791-802.
  - 17 Simpson quoted in Frederick Merk, ed., *Fur Trade and Empire; George Simpson's Journal Entitled Remarks Connected with the Fur Trade in the Course of a Voyage from York Factory to Fort George and back to York Factory 1824-25* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968); Dugald McTavish in G.P.T.

- Glazebrook, ed., *The Hargrave Correspondence* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1938), 307-8. McLeod quoted in Elizabeth Vibert, *Traders' Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1801-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 125-26.
- 18 Gabriel Franchère, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America, in the Years 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814, or, The First American Settlement on the Pacific*, trans. and ed. J.V. Huntington (New York: Redfield, 1854), 261 (emphasis mine).
- 19 Mary Black Rogers, "Varieties of 'Starving': Semantics and Survival in the Subarctic Fur Trade, 1750-1850," *Ethnohistory* 33, 4 (1986): 353-83; Vibert, *Traders' Tales*, 120-31.
- 20 There is evidence that this meaning of indolent also became widespread in other colonies. See, for example, M. Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 56.
- 21 A thoughtful discussion of the importance of leisure as economic time can be found in Povinelli, *Labor's Lot*, 185-92.
- 22 The traders' journals show that they only actually traded furs a fraction of the year, that they complained of boredom and had little actual work. A fictional description of traders' lives based on actual accounts may be found in Fred Stenson, *The Trade* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2000).
- 23 Barnett, *Coast Salish*, 87, 248.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 141; Edna Bobb from an interview with Keith Carlson, contained in Carlson, personal communication, October 2004; Irving Goldman, "The Alkatcho Carrier of British Columbia," *Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes*, ed. R. Linton (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1963), 370, 383; Frederica de Laguna, *Under Mount Saint Elias: The History and Culture of the Yakutat Tlingit* (Washington: Smithsonian, 1972). See also Chapter 4.
- 25 Barnett, *Coast Salish*, 243-45; Wayne Suttles, *Economic Life of the Coast Salish of Haro and Rosario Straits* (New York: Garland, 1974), 169-73.
- 26 Brian Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and US Indian Policy* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1982); Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*; Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 1992).
- 27 Emmerich de Vattel, *The Law of Nations: Or, Principles of the Law of Nature: Applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns* (1758; reprinted Philadelphia: T. & J.W. Johnson, 1861), 36-37; *British Columbian*, June 1, 1869; quote from BCA, James Bell to John Thompson, February 27, 1859, add mss 412, Box 8, File 5.
- 28 Charles Forbes, *Vancouver Island: Its Resources and Capabilities as a Colony* (Victoria: Colony of Vancouver Island, 1862), 25; *Gazette*, May 18, 1860, 3.
- 29 A.A. Harvey, *A Statistical Account of British Columbia* (Ottawa: G.E. Desbarats, 1867), 9; George A. Walkem, Attorney General, August 17, 1875, in British Columbia, *Papers Connected with the Indian Land Question* (Victoria: R. Wolfenden, 1875; reprinted 1987); Matthew Baillie Begbie, Bench Books, November 17, 1885, cited in David Williams, *The Man for a New Country* (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1972), 13: 102.
- 30 W.C. Grant, "Report on Vancouver Island," BCA, A/B/20/G76.; W.C. Grant in William Carew Hazlitt, *British Columbia and Vancouver Island* (London: G. Routledge, 1858), 179; James E. Hendrickson, ed., "Two Letters From Walter Colquhoun Grant," *BC Studies* 26 (1975): 13.
- 31 Robert Brown, *Robert Brown and the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition*, ed. John Hayman (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989), 47 and 52; *British Colonist*, 5 June and 23 October 1860, 19 February 1861, and 17 June 1862.
- 32 The quote is from Governor James Douglas, commenting on aboriginal coal miners at Nanaimo, in Great Britain, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, Vancouver Island, 1846-1867 (CO) 305/3, 10199, 12345, Douglas to Pakington, August 28, 1852; also CO 305/3, 933, November 11, 1852.
- 33 W.H. Lomas, in DIAR, 1887, 105-7.
- 34 Dorothy Blakey-Smith, ed., *The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken*, by J.S. Helmcken (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1975), 187; Arthur Bunster, testifying to the Select Committee on Oriental Immigration, 1879, cited in James Morton, *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains: The Chinese in British Columbia* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1974), 69. In 1885, the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration conducted what appears to be a very

- thorough census of Chinese in British Columbia, identifying towns in which even only one or two Chinese lived, and it counted seventy Chinese prostitutes. See Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, no. 54a, appendix C.
- 35 Commission on the Salmon Fishing Industry in BC 1902, 14th sess., BCA, GR 213, evidence of C.F. Todd, quoted in Dianne Newell, *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 84.
- 36 *Lumberman and Contractor*, quoted in Morton, *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains*, 201.
- 37 See the comments in the Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, in Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, no. 54a. A description of the racialization of Chinese in British Columbia may be found in Kay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991). A detailed history of the relationship between whites and Asians may be found in Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989).
- 38 The Alberni mill, costing \$120,000 to build and eventually capable of cutting 100,000 feet of lumber per day, commenced operation in 1861. The following accounts ignore the aboriginal workers in the first mill and ignore or underplay their subsequent involvement in the industry: W. Kaye Lamb, "Early Lumbering on Vancouver Island, I and II," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 2 (1938): 31-53 and 95-144; Myrtle Bergen, *Tough Timber: The Loggers of British Columbia – Their Story* (Toronto: Progress, 1966; reprinted Vancouver: Elgin, 1979); Thomas Cox, *Mills and Markets: A History of the Pacific Coast Lumber Industry to 1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974); G.W. Taylor, *Timber: History of the Forest Industry in British Columbia* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1975); James Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody and the Bumptious Captain Stamp: The Lives and Times of Vancouver's Lumber Pioneers* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1977); Ed Gould, *Logging: British Columbia's Logging History* (North Vancouver: Hancock, 1975); Jan Peterson, *The Albernis* (Lantzville, BC: Oolichan, 1992).
- 39 Matthew MacFie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia* (London: Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1865), 51.
- R.C. Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island* (London: John Murray, 1862), 228; Frederick Whympier, *Travel and Adventure in Alaska* (London: J. Murray, 1868), 68. Whympier adds that Sproat was "a large employer of native as well as white labour ... at his sawmill settlement of Alberni" (37). And Sproat himself speaks of when he "first employed Indians at Alberni." See G.M. Sproat, *The Nootka: Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* (London: Smith, Elder, 1868; reprinted Victoria: Sono Nis, 1989), 40. One could make the same case for the Burrard Inlet mills.
- 40 Martin Robin, *The Rush for Spoils: The Company Province, 1871-1933* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972) 30. See also Paul Phillips, "Confederation and the Economy of British Columbia," *British Columbia and Confederation*, ed. W. George Shelton (Victoria: University of Victoria, 1967), 59.
- 41 Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada* (1871) (Ottawa: Canada, 1871-1971), 4: 376-77.
- 42 An example of the under-enumeration is suggested by observers' reports that in 1881 the streets of Victoria thronged with Indians, while the census showed only 71 Indian men and 144 Indian women in the city. See Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager, *The 1881 Canadian Census: Vancouver Island* (Victoria: Public History Group, 1990). For other estimates of under-enumeration, see Robert Galois and Cole Harris, "Recalibrating Society: The Population Geography of British Columbia in 1881," *Canadian Geographer* 38, 1 (1994): 37-53.
- 43 Meeting at Fort Fraser, McKenna-McBride Commission, BCA, MS 1056, box 1, June 7, 1915.
- 44 *Census of Canada* (1951), 4: 14. See Nancy Shoemaker, "The Census as Civilizer: American Indian Household Structure in the 1900 and 1910 US Censuses," *Historical Methods* 25, 1 (1992): 6.
- 45 British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines* (Victoria: British Columbia, 1874-1920); T.A. Rickard, "Indian Participation in the Gold Discoveries," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 2 (1938): 3-18; Dan Marshall, "Rickard Revisited: Native 'Participation' in the Gold Discoveries of British Columbia," *Native Studies Review* 11, 1 (1996): 91-99. A discussion of aboriginal gold miners is taken up in Chapter 6.
- 46 See Chapter 6.

- 47 “Irrelevant” quote from Eric Newsome, *The Coal Coast: History of Coal Mining in British Columbia* (Victoria: Orca, 1989), 33; Lynne Bowen, *Boss Whistle: The Coal Miners of Vancouver Island Remember* (Lantzville, BC: Oolichan, 1982) does not mention Aboriginal People at all. On the Scottish miners not raising any coal, see Hendrickson, “Two Letters,” 12; “Trip Up the Fraser,” *Victoria Gazette*, July 21, 1858, 2.
- 48 Turner first read this paper in 1893, and it was published in his collection of essays, *The Frontier in American History in 1920* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962). See also Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973). For BC variants, see H.H. Bancroft, *History of British Columbia, 1792-1887* (San Francisco: History, 1887); F.W. Howay and E.O.S. Scholefield, *British Columbia from the Earliest Times to the Present* (Vancouver: S.J. Clarke, 1913).
- 49 In his April 1991 decision on one of the largest land claim cases in Canadian legal history, *Delgamuukw v. BC*, Justice McEachern took this position in denying the claim. See the special issue of *BC Studies* (Anthropology and History in the Courts) 95 (1992), particularly Robin Ridington’s “Fieldwork in Courtroom 53,” for a discussion of how the judge used the work of historians and anthropologists. See also Dara Culhane, *The Pleasure of the Crown: Anthropology, Law, and First Nations* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1998).
- 50 If all aboriginal/non-aboriginal encounters were only variations on the same theme, then how do we explain, for example, why the Haida survived and the Beothuk did not? See Michael Harkin, “Dialogues of History: Transformation and Change in Heiltsuk Culture” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1988), 24; Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 10. A recent example of this perspective can be found in Peter Carstens, *The Queen’s People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion and Accommodation among the Okanagan of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).
- 51 Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, III, 211. The enrichment thesis originated with Joyce Wike’s doctoral dissertation, written at Columbia University. The thesis was published in her “Problems in Fur Trade Analyses: The Northwest Coast,” *American Anthropologist* 60, 1 (1958): 1086-101. See also Wilson Duff, *The Indian History of British Columbia: The Impact of the White Man* (Victoria: Provincial Museum, 1964); Rennie Warburton and Stephen Scott, “The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia,” *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 5, 1 (1985): 27-46.
- 52 Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990). For a more contemporary analysis see also Helen Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992); Leo Waisberg and Tim Holzkamm, “‘A Tendency to Discourage Them from Cultivating’: Ojibwa Agriculture and Indian Affairs Administration in Northwest Ontario,” *Ethnohistory* 40, 2 (1993): 175-211; Ellice B. Gonzalez, *Changing Economic Roles for Micmac Men and Women: An Ethnohistorical Analysis* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1981).
- 53 Kenneth Coates, *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991) 49, 52, 56, 64-65, 69.
- 54 Frank Tough, *As Their Natural Resources Fail: Native People and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996).
- 55 Knight’s book, which I first read three decades ago, planted the seeds that resulted in this book. See Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930* (Vancouver: New Star, 1978). It was reissued, slightly revised, in 1996.
- 56 Knight, *Indians at Work*, 189. Fisher, in his 1992 re-issue of *Contact and Conflict*, flays Knight for his use of “impressionistic evidence and isolated examples” as well as for his lack of “systematic or statistical analyses” (19). Ironically, Fisher’s own work relies on similar “impressionistic” evidence, offering no statistics in support of its position.
- 57 Knight, *Indians at Work*, 10, 22.
- 58 Alicja Muszynski, “Class Formation and Class Consciousness: The Making of Shoreworkers in the BC Fishing Industry,” *Studies in Political Economy* 20 (1986): 85-116;

- Muszynski, "Major Processors to 1940 and the Early Labour Force: Historical Notes," in *Uncommon Property: The Fishing and Fish Processing Industries in British Columbia*, ed. Patricia Marchak, Neil Guppy, and John McMullan (Toronto: Methuen, 1987), 46-65; Muszynski, "Race and Gender: Structural Determinants in the Formation of BC's Salmon Canning Labour Forces," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* (1988): 110. I find these earlier works more helpful than her more theory-driven *Cheap Wage Labour: Race and Gender in the Fisheries of British Columbia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996). Quote from Evelyn Pinkerton, "Competition among BC Fish-Processing Firms," in Marchak, Guppy, and McMullan, *Uncommon Property*, 256.
- 59 Pinkerton, "Competition among BC Fish-Processing Firms," 261; Pinkerton notes that some cannery owners preferred Indian labour even when other cheap sources of labour were available. Other evidence shows that aboriginal women continued to constitute the main labour force in rural canneries until technological change and economic consolidation closed these institutions in the 1950s. See Newell, *Tangled Webs*; Douglas C. Harris, *Fish Law and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). See Chapter 6.
- 60 Richard Mackie, *Trading beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific, 1793-1843* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997); and Richard Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital: The Economy of Vancouver Island, 1849-1858" (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1984).
- 61 Michael Harkin, *The Heiltsuks: Dialogues of Culture and History on the Northwest Coast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emmerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas, 1981), 25-30, 427.
- Chapter 4: The Lekwungen**
- 1 Originally called the *British Colonist*, "British" was dropped in 1893 so that colonists of all origins could find themselves reflected in the paper.
- 2 W.H. Lomas, in Canada, Legislative Assembly, "Department of Indian Affairs Annual Report" (DIAR), *Canada Sessional Papers* (Ottawa: Canada, 1882), 160-62; William Fraser Tolmie to Sir Alexander Campbell, Federal Minister of Justice, August 21, 1883, BCA, A E Or3 C15.
- 3 Aziz found an earned income of \$31,385 in a survey of 80 members of the 156-member labour force. I have extrapolated his sample, which was supposed to be representative, in order to estimate the total income of the Indian labour force (\$61,201) and divided by the total south island Indian population of 1,075. The 1881 figure of \$15,000 has been inflated in accordance with the wholesale price indexes in Table K33 of F.H. Leachy, ed., *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 2nd ed. (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1983), to its value in 1969 dollars (\$61,118). Divided by the 1881 south island population of 661, this yields a per capita income of \$92.46. The real 1969 income could have been 40 percent higher before it would have exceeded the 1881 value. Moreover, we know that the 1881 figure only accounts for one of the income sources, so the total 1881 income was undoubtedly higher. See Salim Akhtar Aziz, "Selected Aspects of Cultural Change among Amerindians: A Case Study of Southeast Vancouver Island" (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1970), 33-35.
- 4 John Kendrick, *The Men with Wooden Feet* (Toronto: NC, 1986), 17-18. These acts of possession have been analyzed by Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1690* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- 5 The Mitchell Bay Aboriginal People on San Juan Island claim descent from the Lekwungen, who had villages at Open Bay on Henry Island and at Taleqamus Bay, Garrison Bay, and Wescott Bay, all of which are on San Juan Island. See Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of the Pacific Northwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 133, and Map 3.2.
- 6 Henry R. Wagner, *Spanish Explorations in the Strait of Juan de Fuca* (New York: AMS, 1933), 206. It is possible that the Lekwungen saw the vessel the *Washington* in 1789, when Robert Gray entered the strait for fifty miles before "finding he did not meet with encouragement as a trader" and turned back. Gray was looking for sea otter pelts, which were not found in the Straits of Juan de Fuca. See George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1798; reprint ed. W. Kaye