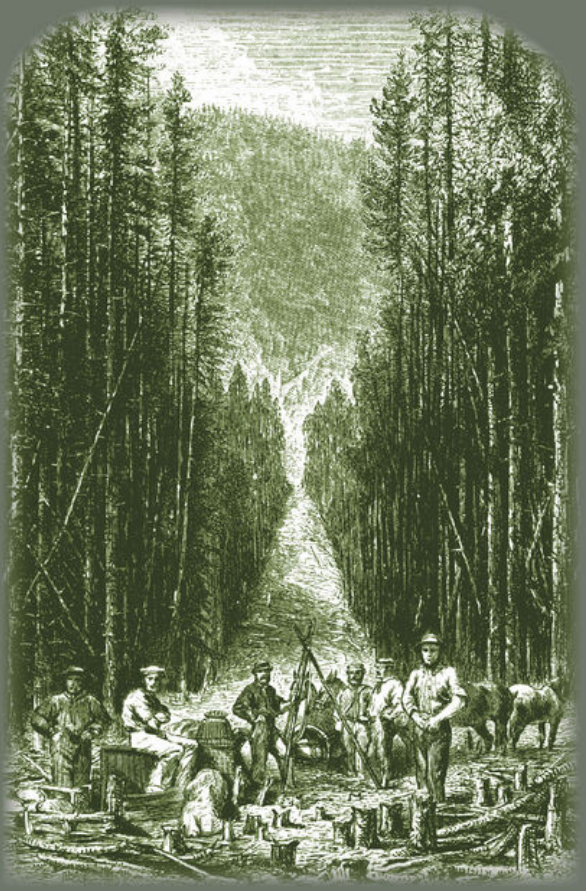
Landscapes and Social Transformations on the Northwest Coast

Colonial Encounters in the Fraser Valley



Jeff Oliver

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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF COLONIALISM IN NATIVE NORTH AMERICA

Landscapes and Social Transformations on the Northwest Coast

Colonial Encounters in the Fraser Valley

Jeff Oliver

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Foreword

Colonialism studies in archaeology are beginning to flourish and mature. The series The Archaeology of Colonialism in Native North America is a timely project that reflects the developing emphasis in archaeology on the complex character of colonialism in Indigenous North America. An increasing theoretical and methodological focus on the complexities of the colonial experience—the myriad strategies and experiences of both the descendant and colonial communities—allows archaeology to illuminate the specifics and generalities of these interactions and transformations. We are beginning to understand colonialism in ways that surpass a simple model of encounter and event and grapple with its entire scope.

This series is dedicated to documenting in detail the contingent nature of colonialism—the multifaceted interactions of people and their material, social, and intellectual worlds. Our primary goal is to highlight research that illuminates the colonial histories of particular cultural contexts and reveals broader insights concerning the processes, patterns, and impacts of colonialism. One of the most fascinating and fruitful aspects of this work is a fresh interest in the role of Native North Americans in the processes of colonialism. Archaeologists have become willing to engage in dialogue that positions Native people at the center of cultural change and persistence.

The series represents research that stresses in particular the connectedness of the precolonial and colonial—studies recognizing that colonial change did not occur in a cultural vacuum and that change is based on local conditions and historical trajectories seated in precolonial cultural forms. This way of looking at cultural transformation gives archaeology a model for evaluating how the prehistoric may differ from the historical and ethnological. Much of archaeological reasoning about the model building of the past is directly related to ethnographic structures of historical and present-day cultures. Given that colonialism has restructured what we observe, a full appreciation and accounting of the complex mechanisms and outcomes of the colonial process are essential to our interpretation of the material record.

—Liam Frink and Aubrey Cannon

Acknowledgments

This book is in considerable part a synthesis of my PhD thesis, undertaken at the Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield. The present work has been a long time in gestation and writing, and I have many people to thank. First, I would like to express gratitude to Aubrey Cannon and Liam Frink for inviting me to contribute to their series The Archaeology of Colonialism in Native North America. Aubrey's constructive comments on an earlier draft were particularly helpful. I am also grateful to my examiners, Chris Gosden and Peter Jordan, for their encouragement to craft my research into a book. Regarding the text's final production, Allyson Carter and the helpful staff at the University of Arizona Press guided me through the initial stages, and Mary Ann McHugh did a superb job of manuscript editing.

At Sheffield I would like to thank my supervisors and members of the department, who have made my experience in the United Kingdom incredibly stimulating. Since my arrival in 2000, Mark Edmonds, now at York, has been an invaluable source of inspiration, helping me think through many of the arguments presented here. My advisor, John Moreland, and good friends Tim Neal and Krysti Damilati have all greatly influenced my ideas and have commented on the text at various stages of writing. Others I have had the good fortune to rub shoulders with include Michele Forte, Bob Johnston, and John Barrett, who provided inspiration and support, as well as Anna Badcock, Jim Symonds, and Glyn Davies of ARCUS, who gave me both an interesting and flexible job during the final stages of writing.

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presented here. Two anonymous peer reviewers also offered very useful and encouraging comments that helped sharpen the final product.

I conducted research in both Canada and Britain. In Sheffield I was fortunate to stumble across the little-known Centre for British and Canadian Studies. When I had exhausted the university library, I was able to count on the British Library's extensive Canadian holdings. In British Columbia I am grateful to the librarians and archival staff at Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia Special Collections, British Columbia Archives and Records Service, Surrey Archives, Vancouver Archives, and the archives of the Stó:lō Nation. Particular thanks are reserved for Kelley Harms, formerly of the Chilliwack Archives, for sharing his lunch table and his interest in my project.

Last but not least, I would like to thank (all four of) my parents and family back home, who believed in me from start to finish; their supportive presence behind the scenes helps more than they probably know. Particular mention must also go to my brother Ryan for lending his time and his 4x4 to help with field survey.

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A Note on Orthography

For the sake of continuity I have adopted the orthography in usage in Carlson (2001a) for all Coast Salish, Halkomelem proper names. However, where quoting directly from other sources, when equivalent names could not be found, or where confusion may arise through maintaining adherence to the above, I have followed the orthographic conventions found in other sources.

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1

Introduction

From the window of the plane, the Fraser Valley appears as a great funnel enclosed by mountains. In the east at Hope it begins, a narrow sliver of green farmland on either side of the river, in places only one or two kilometers wide. Flying west past the town of Chilliwack, one sees the valley expand into a quilt of mixed land use—arable, pasture, and sprawling urban development, all set within a geometric grid that spans the space between the mountains. At Abbotsford the valley widens to perhaps fifteen or sixteen kilometers; the mountains on its southern flank fall away, and the ramrod-straight ditch that is the American border hems in the patchwork of intensive agriculture.

The tiny cars racing to Vancouver along the straight and narrow Trans-Canada Highway and much else that I see from the plane reminds me of a motto for our times: you can't stop progress. Having lived away from the valley for over nine years in Britain, I am from my vantage point in the sky introduced to an uninterrupted view of the valley's most recent transformations. New shopping malls mushroom in former green fields around the city of Langley, and new industrial parks and bypasses have apparently eaten their way into places where hobby farms and stands of deciduous forest once thrived. As we approach the Vancouver International Airport on the estuary of the Fraser River, the scale of change takes sharper focus. To the south the neighborhoods and shopping centers covering the slopes of the Semiahmoo Peninsula, my childhood home, have spread downward from their hilltop perch, absorbing the agricultural land reserves of the Nicomekel Valley; suburb begets suburb.

Suspending this bird's-eye view for just a moment and thinking back in my mind's eye, I can recall another view of the valley that belies this sense of prominent development and that resonates more strongly with a different temporality. In parts of the glacial uplands, one can still find original

frame-built farmhouses surrounded by groves of weary fruit trees, slouching barns, and fence lines in desperate need of a coat of stain. And near the river's mouth, the keen observer will make out the disintegrating skeletons of former salmon canneries whose wooden pilings still haunt the riverbank. There are other reminders as well. Perhaps the most poignant examples are the place names of the land's first inhabitants. Toponyms like Semiahmoo and Nicomekel, although current words, still hint at an earlier Native geography echoed in the names of the many Indian reservations that dot the land. These relics evoke images of a time very different from today, the "time of the longhouses" (Wells 1987) when, it has been said, the land's first people lived in harmonious equilibrium with nature, before the violent transformations brought about by the white man.

These images of the past lie in some tension to the view from my aerial platform. They have a fleeting quality: fading memories of an almost forgotten, distant summer displaced by the immediate tangible realities of concrete, asphalt, and glass. If there is a perception that is dominant and that seeks to envelop this place, then it is surely the sweeping and uncompromised view sustained from my window in the sky. Ushering aside questions of nostalgia, it boldly speaks of the triumph of humanity over nature, and the triumph of progress over the past, symbolized by the march of the strip malls and the urban tendril across the landscape. The disjuncture produced by these competing views of the Fraser Valley, which are caricatures to be sure, may seem to be overly simplistic, yet it still encapsulates an important premise about the history of this place, as well as providing considerable supporting foundation for this book.

The Big Picture

Where do these images come from and, more importantly, what are their implications? They resonate because they belong to a larger set of symbols that, through dramatization and repeated use, participates in a coherent set of principles about the founding of the West (see Bowden 1992; Cosgrove 1984; Furniss 1997; Wylie 1993), one that is inextricably tied to the history of colonialism. Reproduced in popular culture, the tourist industry, and academia, the rhetoric of colonial discourse describes how British Columbia was carved from wilderness between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries—both on paper, as a series of lines and place names on the map, and on the ground, as an environment transformed through the physical labors of Europeans. According to geographer Richard Ruggles,

"The 'Canadian West' is a recent entity in geographic terminology, since it did not begin to take definite form until into the nineteenth century, as agricultural, forestry, and mining populations began to diffuse through the area" (1971:235). Ruggles' observation reflects wider historical and geographical opinion, a grand narrative providing partial assumptions that account for the divergence between the two images above. It is also a suitable point of departure for the present work.

If we are to start with the big picture, then history begins approximately where Ruggles indicates, with Europe's interest in the West as an untapped resource, a landscape rich with opportunity. Despite an awareness of Native historical continuity—millennia of Aboriginal precedence—Ruggles, following broader consensus, suggests that the courageous acts of Europeans made the Canadian West, a history that reads largely as a protracted process of human impact on the environment (Slotkin 1985). This included drawing boundary lines, felling the forests for agriculture or timber, mining the land for gold and other minerals, as well as building model towns; in general terms, inscribing, molding, and harnessing nature for an emerging capitalist marketplace. Significantly, the story hinges on the dynamic qualities of the colonizers, explorers, and settlers—the catalysts of change who imposed their will on a landscape largely viewed as an objectified backdrop or static surface, transforming it from primordial slumber into an outpost of civilization and industry.

Theoretically, this view of the transformation of the western wilderness is consistent with core-periphery models. Discussing European colonization in terms of world-systems theory, Eric Wolf (1982:23) was among the first to argue that this kind of top-down model of social transformation privileges historical developments at the core, which are then transposed and amplified at the periphery. The most famous example, in the context of the North American West, is Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis. Turner argued that the history of the United States could be distilled to a series of developments whereby the march of progress eroded the line between wilderness and civilization. Accompanying physical changes in the land, Turner "saw in the West a social evolution from hunter to fur trader to cattle raiser to farmer to merchant and manufacturer" (Cronon et al. 1993:6–7): in other words, a process that involved the continual recession of the frontier and the accompanying frontier ways of life as European civilization pushed ever westward (Furniss 1997:10).

What are the consequences of these assumptions, and how have they framed our understanding of colonial history and environmental change? Such a model of history downplays the creative capacity of the periphery as

a simple receiver of dynamic output. Because the line has been drawn so distinctly between core and periphery, colonizer and colonized, metropole and frontier, civilization and wilderness, we tend to view colonial cultures and their relationships to the landscape in objectified, coarse-grained, monolithic, and dichotomized terms (Cronon et al. 1993; Gosden 2001, 2004; Lightfoot and Martinez 1995; Murray 2004a). Europeans are labeled first and foremost settlers and colonizers, united in their desire to harness the landscape. Natives are, likewise, conceptualized as a self-evident and transparent group, one that either succumbed to conflict and disease or, bending under colonial pressure, was inexorably branded the colonized.

Associated with the Native is the inverse of the first image, the landscape of progress. Whereas the places conquered by the newcomers seemed to anticipate the future, the Aboriginal landscape consistently looked to the past—a past that not only revealed little evidence of historical change but that also seemed to recede further as the present claimed more and more of its living descendents. This is because any sense of agency in this narrative, the key ingredient for historical change, is attributed to industrious settlers who imposed their will on a previously existing but essentially primordial space. Unlike societies with their own unique histories of social and cultural transformation (the Stone Age societies of Europe, for example), the original inhabitants become precursors of Western society, which through its own history (understood mainly in terms of materially productive advancements) had already developed "civilized" cultures based on technology, politics, and the ideals of law and order (Gosden 1999:2; Trigger 1989:119). And while it was rarely completely erased by colonial discourse and its underlying story of progress, the Native, like nature, was an entity to be disciplined, forced to submit to the newly emerging capitalist landscape and its colonial power brokers.

As I will argue throughout this book, the big picture and the discourses sustaining it encourage investigations of the past on a scale that generalizes about the ways in which Natives and newcomers engaged and perceived the historical landscape. Much of our attention within fields as diverse as history, geography, and archaeology has focused on the settlement frontier as a geographic surface or container, analyzed predominantly in terms of its capacity for productive capital investments—logging, ranching, or agriculture, for instance. Such an emphasis has rendered history largely in terms of a self-legitimating colonial project to subdue nature (Demeritt 1995:29; Sandwell 1999a). Offering general support for the aphorism that history is written by conquerors, our attempts to represent the prehistory of the Northwest Coast echo the progressive logic of colonial narratives,

and much of our research on Aboriginal land use has fallen in line with broader arguments about human evolution, technological development, and increasing cultural complexity. Common ground in our approaches is forged in a disembodied and abstract view of the profoundly multifaceted nature of human-environment relationships, where the landscape is reduced to an obstacle to be overcome, an index of social advancement. What characterizes this view of history are not the place-specific details but, rather, the tendency of these processes to be reproduced in generalized ways across the continent again and again (Cronon et al. 1993), compressing the richness and many textures of history into a rather predictable plotline. A view of social change grounded in principles of materialist production and a command of the broader issues such as capitalism and world-systems theory may facilitate our understanding of long-term historical transformations, yet attempting to read the permutations of place through such broad frames of reference can often result in oversimplified patterns homogenized across time and space, reducing more complex issues to black-and-white caricatures.

The big picture suggests a historical landscape viewed in terms of simple surfaces, monolithic oppositions, and macro-scales of analysis. It implies a somewhat narrowed, stilted, or archetypal view of the diverse ways in which people used and perceived the landscape in the colonial past. Like the apparently unrestricted view from the air, the story of the Fraser Valley and its relationship with the larger world may be at times more a caricature than a reflection of reality. From a lofty height, the forest canopy appears an undifferentiated mantle of wilderness, but the view from the ground can be something altogether different.

The Scope of the Present Work

Instead of accepting the broad brushstrokes of colonial history at face value, I want to entertain a view of the landscape that engages the social experiences of people living in the past, individuals as well as larger social groups. History viewed from this perspective tends to present a more ambiguous and messy picture, exposing a canvas of false starts, interruptions, and uncertainty, suggesting an altogether more human dialogue between peoples and places. Academic or literary writing about the past of any place would do well to bear in mind that landscapes are not just static, given, or objective things. Registered by the senses, they are also subjective and become real in the interpretive context of human experience.

Places may be close-grained, worked-upon, and lived-in, or abstract, distant, and imagined (Bender 1993:1). They can be interpreted and understood through their actual physical embodiment in the material world (Edmonds 1999a:9; Tuan 1990:10) or through their representation as texts or visual images, objects of consumption in material culture. Different views are to be expected across the variables of time and space, as the qualities of landscape emerge through the particular ways in which they are embraced and inhabited (Thomas 1996:87; Thrift 2000). Significantly, because both purposeful and unintended actions bring landscapes into focus, landscapes may become sites of tension to be negotiated, where certain interests may subvert those of others.

In considering the temporality of the landscape (Ingold 1993), we must also recognize how routine action, as well as challenges to the status quo, can help inform a landscape's meaning over time, meaning that is always tied to other places and other histories (Barrett 1999; Cronon 1993:44–45). As writer Margaret Atwood (1972:134) elegantly observes, "Part of where you are is where you've been." No landscape ever stays the same, despite efforts to convey the impression of stasis through myths. Rather than seeing landscapes as static monoliths, we should emphasize their movement as historically contingent processes, their refusal to be fixed in time (Pred 1984). Following an emerging axiom in landscape research,[1] I see the landscape as both outcome and medium of social interaction. In other words, "Human interventions are not done so much *to* the landscape as *with* it, and what is done affects what can be done" (Bender 2002:S104).

With these ideas in mind, I propose a less conventional *social* history of the Fraser Valley, a history viewed through the differential qualities of place, according to the ways that social life became integrated within its material folds. Concentrating on the period between 1792 and 1918, the following chapters examine how Natives and newcomers appropriated and transformed the landscape during the first century or so of cultural contact. While this period witnessed routine forms of interaction with the land, such as practices of Aboriginal landscape management, it also witnessed material transformations of a magnitude that fundamentally changed the social fabric, altering the manner in which people related to the landscape, to each other, and to the wider world. In less than a century the landscape was changed from a place of varied ecology dominated by Douglas fir, woodland trails, and cultivated openings to one defined by fields, logging scars, and property boundaries. The pace and scale of change, which are profound for newcomers and Natives alike, present a unique opportunity for understanding how changes in the land were constitutive of transformations in the social geography of the region and beyond.

Given that this period was shaped by the appropriation of people and places into expanding networks of domination and representation, it is perhaps needless to stress the thematic importance of colonialism in this book. Although colonization—the course of stamping order upon environments and populations, molding them to reflect the values of a dominant power—features as an important subject, my aims are much broader than this. Drawing inspiration from the notion that cultural contact with the material world can also be viewed as a creative phenomenon (see Gosden 2004; Sluyter 2001), I emphasize that colonization exists side by side with the generation of nascent and sometimes unwieldy social forms. The language of colonial discourse tends to hamstring our ability to think beyond the more monolithic categories of this period. One way we can begin to get away from the baggage of language like "frontier" and "metropole" or "colonizer" and "colonized," and the core-periphery oppositions these conjure, is to adopt Mary Louise Pratt's (1992) notion of the contact zone, which reminds us that social exchanges are interfaces, not one-sided affairs. This concept implies the possibility of give and take, providing a heuristic for new categories of meaning informed by the particular character with which people imbued the changing social and material dimensions of the landscape.

This is partly an issue of scale. Scale matters from both a methodological standpoint, in terms of the analytical frames we deploy, and a historical standpoint, in terms of the past social arenas that such questioning targets. Geographers have traditionally concentrated on broader-scale spatial histories, whereas anthropologists and archaeologists have tended to focus on the politics of place (Gosden 1994:79, 1999:153). Of course, there are no rigid boundaries here, and in recent years the lines have begun to blur (see, for example, Brealey 2002; Burnett 2000; Clayton 2000; Strang 1997; Thomas 2003). However, by tacking back and forth between the nitty-gritty details of local experience and larger-scale social formations, particularly the way these are enmeshed within the politics of landscape, I attempt to shed some light on the ambiguity of historical encounters.

Many of the interactions I discuss involve less a clash of cultures or even cultural exchange than the mundane character of relationships with the material world. Different forms of landscape interaction, such as the colonization of natural places by newcomers and Native peoples alike (whether in the clearing of land for farms or the appropriation of forest for productive materials), generated interesting, often unintended social categories that refuse to be neatly framed by the big picture. These relationships, which we overlooked for the most part in our eagerness to explain wider questions of social and environmental change, were nevertheless socially consequential

to people living in the past. Indeed, it is by interrogating the very ordinary practices occurring in the material world that we may shed light on broader historical processes.

To be sure, many of my starting propositions are not new ones. Even in studies of the Northwest, we are beginning to witness a healthy new injection of historically-based work on the colonial period that emphasizes its multiple and often contested points of view (see, for example, Carlson 2001a; Clayton 2000; Harris 2002; Loo 1996; Sandwell 1999a). This book parts company with a number of others in two significant ways. First, it provides a long view of historical change in the Valley, beginning prior to the establishment of the colony of British Columbia, where more conventional histories of colonialism begin. This perspective allows me to investigate issues of continuity and change in the social landscape, which might not otherwise be possible, and it helps deconstruct the less useful labels of pre-contact and post-contact (Lightfoot 1995). Second, this book explicitly adopts a material culture approach (Buchli 2002a; Gosden 1999:152–178; Miller 1987; 2002), allowing me to discuss how a diverse range of artifacts—from historical maps and survey monuments to oral narratives and successional forests—worked as active frames of reference through which an often contested history unfolded.

I have from the outset assumed an approach more encompassing than "dirt archaeology," a term that describes the more traditional side of the discipline. Because the physical environment of the Fraser Valley has changed so drastically from the first century of contact, with very little in the way of *in situ* archaeology, most of my digging occurred in the archives for sources that shed light on the history of the past physical conditions of the environment and the different ways that human history intervened in its transformation. Although aspects of the built environment such as architectural features have played an important role, greater emphasis has been accorded mobile artifacts, features and representations that often go unquestioned but that I believe can tell us about the varied lives of people and their entanglements with places. This approach allows a stronger sense of the various issues that came to characterize inhabitation over what is, from a more human-centered geography, a relatively long time period.

Revealing the more monolithic strands of colonial discourse, including the ways they may be embedded in the agendas of academic research, involves picking at the weave of the fabric, unraveling the relationships that make it appear seamless. Of course, this project does not entail privileging the local at the expense of wider social significances but demands instead a balanced approach. If the imposed geographies of the colonial period contributed to

a reworking of Aboriginal ties to place, they also created the conditions for various forms of resistance, fragmentation, and recombination, not only among Native groups but among newcomers themselves. In this sense, as Chris Gosden (2004) cogently argues, colonialism can be seen as having a "particular grip" on people and unanticipated effects on the way that places, histories, and identities are constructed. The task at hand, then, is to get closer to the landscape.

2

Setting the Scene

This chapter paints a rough picture of the geographical and historical context of the Fraser Valley. I begin with a brief discussion of its physical and cultural attributes within the wider geography of the Northwest Coast. Having established a geographical baseline, I then briefly describe the cultural history of the region from pre-contact times to around the end of World War I. The goal of this chapter is not to present a comprehensive account. Rather, drawing from widely cited sources, I want to sketch the historical geography of the region indicative of a particular view of the past that enjoys considerable purchase in academic and popular consciousness. This descriptive background establishes a point of comparison and departure for the chapters that follow.

The lower Fraser Valley is located in the extreme southwest corner of British Columbia, Canada's most western province. Around 140 kilometers long and 30 kilometers in breadth at its widest point, the valley stretches westward from the town of Hope, in the shadow of the Cascade Mountains, to the city of Richmond on Lulu Island, located at its delta (fig. 2.1). As a whole, it constitutes the major part of the Lower Mainland, a region that, as generally defined, comprises much of the Georgia Depression and extends from the Sunshine Coast all the way to Hope.

Geologically speaking, the Fraser Valley is an eastern extension of the coastal trough separating Vancouver Island from the North American continent. Interrupting the contiguity of the coastal mountains, it affords the only large area of reasonably flat terrain along the mainland coast (Forward 1987:6). While relatively low lying to undulating, its surface is studded by glacial uplands, giant moraines deposited by the glacier that occupied the valley during the Pleistocene (Schaepe 2001a). In a few places, isolated conifer-crowned peaks such as Burnaby Mountain and Sumas Mountain pierce its gentle to undulating aspect. Beyond the valley to the north and east are

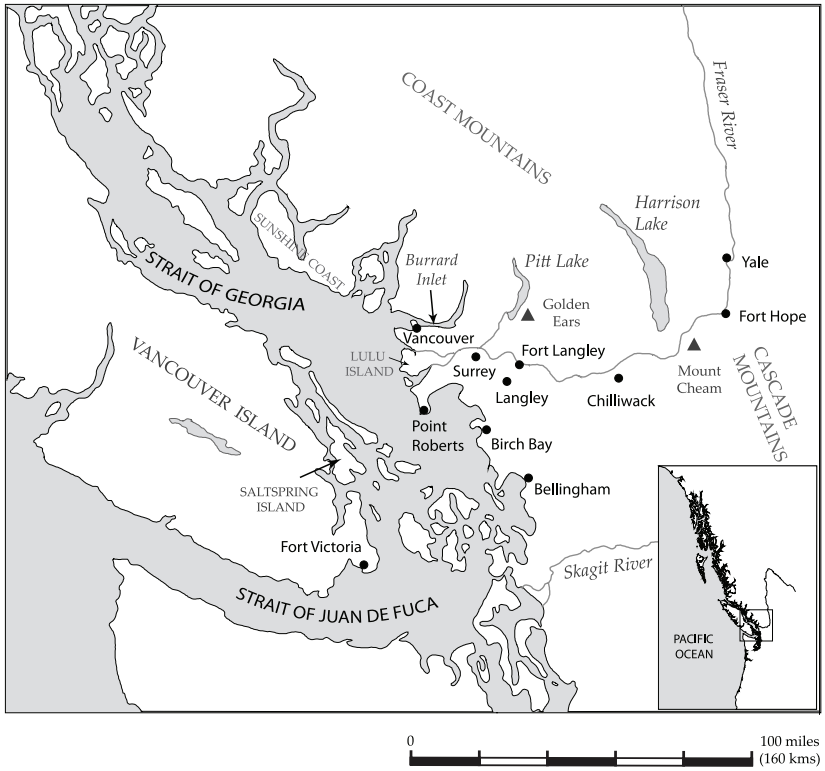


FIGURE 2.1. The Lower Fraser Valley, the Strait of Georgia, Vancouver Island, and contiguous parts of the coast.

high mountains. To the north lies the Coast Range stretching to Alaska. Prominent among this evergreen-clad granite is the double peak of Mount Blanchard or Golden Ears; at 1500 meters it stands sentinel over the confluence of the Pitt and Fraser rivers. To the east is the northern terminus of the Cascade Range, which continues southward into Washington State. At this point Mount Cheam stands at over 2000 meters, guarding the eastern terminus of the valley. Snowcapped in winter, the mountains are a formidable barrier to human and animal alike.

Churning its way slowly through the center of the valley is the Fraser River. Having cut its way from the Rocky Mountains through the rugged interior plateau and the mountains lining the coast, the valley represents the final leg of this journey before the Fraser's swirling sediment-laden waters empty into the Strait of Georgia. Since the early Holocene, these waters have deposited rich alluvium along its banks and bottomlands, building up the

Fraser Valley as one of the few fertile agricultural regions in Canada west of the Rocky Mountains.

From an ecological point of view, the valley is part of the coastal belt of tall coniferous forest stretching from northern California to Alaska. Influenced by the rain shadow effect of Vancouver Island, it is markedly dryer than the temperate climate that typifies the rest of the coast. Well-marked summers and a dry period of varying intensity produce a natural vegetation of mixed forest dominated by Douglas fir growing to elevations of 450 meters. Other species include western red cedar, grand fir, lodgepole pine, flowering dogwood, and big leaf maple, though due to modern land use, much of its forest cover has disappeared (Edgell 1987:91, 101).

Overlying these physical characteristics, we find the present cultural landscape. Hemmed in by the steep faces of the Coastal Range, the modern city of Vancouver is centered on a peninsula between Burrard Inlet to the north and the Fraser River delta to the south. From this urban center of smart concrete and glass high-rises, suburban satellites spill southward onto the river delta and spread eastward toward Hope, a sprawl organized on the principle of a grid that covers the valley from mountain to tidewater. Ribbons of industrial development and commuter sanctuaries vie for space with an ever-decreasing amount of arable bottomlands and pasture-covered uplands. To the south and east, away from the din of the sprawling city, a more rural life maintains a cautious toehold in the face of this development. On the Sumas Prairie, fields of corn, dairy pasture, and cole crops are ordered by a geometric pattern of cavernous drainage ditches overlooked by dilapidated old barns and silos. And in the uplands of south Langley, grids of hobby farms fronted by small fenced fields and backed by woodlots of alder, maple, Douglas fir, and cedar are still in evidence.

The Pre-Contact Human Geography

People have lived along the southern coast of British Columbia for at least 10,000 years since migrating southward from the Bering land bridge during the early Holocene. In the Fraser Valley the earliest human occupation has been found at the Glenrose Cannery site and has been dated to about 8500 years BP (Matson and Coupland 1995:70). But rather than recount that complicated and contested story,[1] I begin at an imaginary point of pre-arrival based on what indigenous society and culture were probably like immediately before the impacts of colonization.

Ethnographic and historical evidence shows that the Fraser Valley lay at the center of a human geography dominated by a group anthropologists call

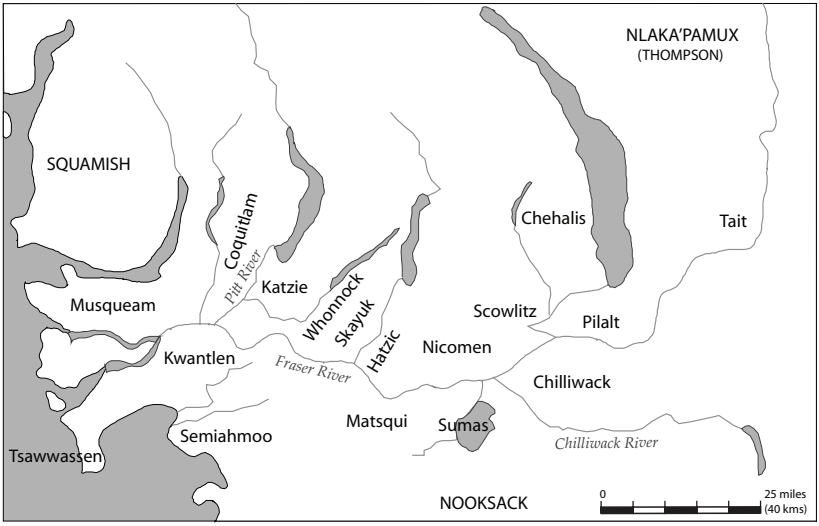


FIGURE 2.2. Tribal areas in the lower Fraser Valley around the time of European contact. (Adapted from Duff 1952:30)

the Coast Salish, a subdivision of peoples speaking languages belonging to the Salishan language family. Traditionally focused on Puget Sound in the south and the Strait of Georgia in the north (Barnett 1975; Suttles 1990), the Coast Salish were separated along lines of language and further organized around kinship and tribal affiliations. Bearing in mind that smallpox seriously crippled Native populations in the late eighteenth century and that even early trading contacts altered the composition and location of some pre-contact groups, we can nevertheless outline a tentative pre-contact cultural geography of the region (fig. 2.2).

Outside the Fraser Valley, languages such as Squamish, Nooksack, and Straits Salish were spoken, but within the valley the Halkomelem language dominated, with the population divided between upriver and downriver dialects. A general consensus exists that, beginning with the Tait in the east and traveling to the Musqueam in the extreme west, between fifteen to twenty tribal groupings lived in the valley, whose social life centered on winter village sites (Duff 1952:19–24; Suttles 1990). While smaller groups like the Scowlitz were limited to a single riverfront village site, some of the larger tribes such as the Chilliwack and Kwantlen seasonally occupied two or more villages. The Fraser River, providing a common focus as fishery and highway for intergroup exchange, was considered an open pathway like the ocean and the principal means by which valley tribes interacted with both neighbors and groups

beyond (Carlson 2001b:24; Duff 1952:16). Indeed, it is the common artery of the river that continues to unite many Halkomelem descendant communities, who commonly refer to themselves today as the Stó:lō (River People).

The building block of the tribes was the household, which lived together throughout much of the year (Duff 1997:24). Composed of several related conjugal families, the household formed an important unit of social and economic cooperation. Winter village sites comprised one or more households, each occupying a single cedar-built shed-roof house of post-and-beam design with removable plank walls. Longhouses averaged 6 to 18 meters in width and 12 to 36 meters in length, although some were much larger. When Simon Fraser descended the lower Fraser in 1808, he noted, for example, a single house at Matsqui occupied by multiple families that was 192 meters long and 18 meters wide (Carlson 1996a:89; Duff 1952:47–48). Around the period of contact, village populations could range from as small as a few dozen people, perhaps a single household, up to several hundred souls consisting of many households (Duff 1952:85). Before the smallpox epidemic of the 1780s, however, population densities were considerably higher.

Social organization in villages was drawn on lines of social status. High-ranking families and individuals were typically descendants of an extended founding family often subsuming several households and spoken for by respected elders. Lower-status people were those unable to form a coherent extended family of their own, and below them was a caste of slaves. Still, status was earned through respect and usually meant little in the way of coercive power (Carlson 1996a; Duff 1952:80–87; Harris 1997:69). At important social events, bestowing a new name or consecrating a new house, for example, wealthy families could increase their status through conspicuous displays of giving known as potlatches, social performances that tended to increase competitive gift giving among individuals who could afford to dispense their wealth.

While some functioned as cohesive units, tribes on the whole were relatively fluid entities, and although the concept has remained an important anthropological shorthand, the notion of the tribe among its members was often less meaningful in practical terms than previously thought (e.g., Boas 1894). The most important aspect of social identification seems to have been the extended family. Most people had relatives in other households, villages, and sometimes (particularly among high-status individuals) other tribes within and outside the valley through exogamous marriage patterns (Carlson 1996a; Carlson 2001b; Duff 1952:86–87).

Although tribal territories were sometimes invoked, they were only vaguely defined, as interest centered more on owned or commonly used

resource sites, fishing platforms, starchy root gardens, and other significant places associated with extended families (Barnett 1975:18). Land ownership through ancestral precedence may have been less well developed than in cultures on the north coast (Brealey 2002), yet ancestral places, landscapes where founding members of the extended family were thought to have entered the present world from the distant Myth Age, were respected, particularly among the better-established and high-ranking households that possessed oral charters handed down by their predecessors, reaffirming communal ties to place (Duff 1952:86; Carlson 1996a:89). Indeed, as we will see, the relationship between geography and history, mythical or otherwise, was a crucial linchpin in the politics of social relationships. Names, stories, origin myths, and other forms of knowledge, many of which had physical anchors in the landscape, provided a sense of visual authority for social norms laid down in language. Knowing your family history and its relationships to conspicuous named places could mean the difference between a noble birth and anonymity, as well as a host of other kinds of status.

Food resources dependant on the river partly influenced the seasonal round. When winter supplies diminished, households or smaller conjugal groups began to move to various procurement sites.[2] When green shoots pierced the soil and days grew longer, they traveled to spring fishing grounds to catch sturgeon and greasy eulachon, and to gathering places to collect thimble berries, salmon berries, and cow parsnip. In the late spring they celebrated the first salmon ceremony, an event that ritualized the first catch of the season and anticipated the larger spawning runs to come (Hill-Tout 1904:331; Jenness 1955:20; Suttles 1990:468). By the summer, groups from all around the region began to congregate with local relatives at fishing camps around the river's estuary (Harris 1997:73).

The late summer saw a shift in subsistence activities from the riverbank sloughs and the estuary to the churning waters of the Fraser Canyon around Yale and its major salmon runs. While some groups continued to fish the lower valley, anyone who had connections with kin upriver traveled to claim the use of owned fishing stations located on strategic rocks or built out over the foaming rapids. In this respect, kinship and social relations were just as important to the food quest as the resources and the technology available to exploit them. In the canyon they took turns catching the prized sockeye and other salmon species with dip nets. The fish were then processed by removing their heads and drying their flayed carcasses on wooden racks that exploited the warm winds rushing through the narrow confines of the river's pathway.

In September most people moved back to their villages to restock stores for the winter. In the autumn people harvested *wapato*, a starchy tuber, and

picked or traded for cranberries from the marshy lowlands. On the nearby mountainsides berry patches were collected and stored for the winter. This was also the main hunting season for deer, elk, and mountain goat, taken before the sodden cold forced communities back to the warmth of their winter villages.

The choreography of the annual round wound down in the late autumn and winter when households reaffirmed connections with kith and kin by reuniting at winter village sites. The cold season was largely devoted to various social activities and to maintaining and repairing equipment. Prominent among these occasions were storytelling and colorful winter dancing in which costumed dancers evoked spirit helpers to bring them power and knowledge (Hymes 1990). These ceremonies were mainly local as winter made travel more difficult, although some groups ventured farther to join gatherings that could last for several days.

In June of 1792 Natives fishing for eulachon (possibly of the Musqueam tribe) spotted the tall masts and rigging of a small flotilla of survey vessels engrossed in the charting of the coast. On other parts of the coast, Native peoples took first encounters with Europeans to be meetings with figures from the Myth Age (Clayton 2000; Wickwire 1994). Whether these Natives viewed the ships as apparitions or ancestors, we will never know. The masts belonged to the British corvette *Discovery* and its accompanying brig the *Chatham*, as well as the Spanish schooners *Sutil* and *Mexicana*, which had briefly joined forces to map the body of water separating Vancouver Island from the mainland. There is some debate as to whether Europeans had previously visited local Aboriginals. Undoubtedly, the Spanish had known something of these lands, as demonstrated by charts produced in the years prior (Hayes 1999:72–77). What is certain, however, is that the already complex history of the valley was about to take on influences that would transform it as nothing had before.

European Maritime Exploration

For Europeans, the history of the Northwest Coast begins with the history of exploration. Spurred by developments in science, the age of imperialism, and the emergence of global capitalism, the region symbolized one of the last blank spots on the world map of European consciousness. By the later part of the eighteenth century, Enlightenment philosophy had begun to influence how Europeans both thought about and represented the world. Speculation and hearsay gave way to new forms of constructing knowledge claims based

on scientific observation. Science proclaimed that an objective world existed beyond the blinders of culture and that rigorous quantitative measurement could reveal a universal and internal logic to the world. A progressive new order promised to emancipate humans from the shackles of superstition and break the chains of irrationality. The lens of empiricism aimed in effect to desocialize the world, to minimize the encumbering and distorting nature of culture and history (see Gregory 1994; Harvey 1990; Porter 2000; Pratt 1992).

The last quarter of the eighteenth century witnessed a concerted effort by European nation states armed with science to map the Northwest Coast. Responding to Russian interests in Alaska, Spanish exploration of the coast was directed north of its possessions in California to ensure domination of the Pacific; by 1774 Juan Perez sighted Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island. On the heels of the Spanish, the celebrated figure of James Cook, this time on his third voyage, made landfall at Nootka Sound in 1778 (Hayes 1999; Thomson 1966). Cook's voyage established Britain's claim to the coast but also instigated a period of private multinational commercial ventures hinging on the discovery of the lucrative sea-otter pelt. Obtained from local Native groups, the fur that fuelled the maritime fur trade brought considerable profit to merchants who could sell the pelts at markets in Shanghai (Clayton 2000; Fisher 1977).

In the 1780s the Spanish garrisoned a small fortified settlement at Nootka that served as an imperial toehold and provided for a time a center of operations for further exploration. Between 1790 and 1792 the Spanish sent a series of expeditions into the Strait of Juan de Fuca, establishing the presence of an inland body of water, the Canal de Nuestra Señora del Rosario (the Strait of Georgia), which included, although they did not realize it, the Fraser River estuary (Hayes 1999:72–73). With the Spanish seizure of English ships harboring at Nootka, the overlapping interests of Spain and Britain soon came to a head, defused only through the signing of the Nootka Sound Convention on October 28, 1790. The terms of the treaty forced Spain to curtail its northern ambitions and helped Britain make good on its territorial claims (Lamb 1984:26; Thomson 1966:176).

In order to secure its imperial and commercial rights, Britain sent George Vancouver, a former officer of Cook's 1778 voyage, aboard the *Discovery* to accept Spain's offer of restitution and to create a detailed hydrographical map of the coast's convoluted shoreline (Hayes 1999:85; Thomson 1966:176). Vancouver explored the length of the Pacific coast from what is now northern California to Alaska, including the coastline of the eponymous Vancouver Island and the adjacent mainland shore, which he named New Georgia in honor of the king. Completed in 1795, his survey was

considered one of the most meticulous hydrographical surveys of the eighteenth century (Lamb 1984).

The Terrestrial Fur Trade

While maritime traders continued to visit coastal waters, explorers of the terrestrial fur trade undertook the next phase of European intervention. The promise of new fur territories west of the Rocky Mountains beckoned. In 1793 Alexander Mackenzie traced a line from the Rockies west to the coast at Burke Inlet via New Caledonia and the upper reaches of the Fraser River, following a well-established Native trade route. But it was the comparatively unknown Simon Fraser who first descended the river to the coast in 1808, eventually crossing the path that Vancouver's expedition had taken a decade earlier (Lamb 1960). Although discovered, the region would not be described until sixteen years later when the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) exploration of the Fraser Valley more thoroughly documented a picture of its natural attributes.

Having absorbed in 1821 its old rival, the Northwest Company, the HBC sought to consolidate its position west of the Rocky Mountains—the Oregon Country—by undertaking the huge task of geographical organization, the reconfiguration of a largely unknown territory to make trade more profitable (Harris 1997:33). The success of the new Columbia Department depended largely on a system of communication for moving furs and supplies between the remote corners of the Cordilleran interior and the coast, using the length of the Columbia River, which emptied into the Pacific 400 kilometers south of the Fraser. Fur brigades annually moved furs collected at trade posts in the interior overland to the upper reaches of the Columbia, where they were then shipped to Fort George (and later Fort Vancouver) at the river's mouth. From there, furs were sent overseas to markets in China and London (Harris 1997:41).

In 1824, attempting to extend the reach of the Hudson's Bay Corporation interests, HBC employee James McMillan explored the lower Fraser Valley to assess its location for a post that could act as a magnet for regional trade (Elliot 1912; Maclachlan 1998:6–7; Merk 1931:75). The suitability of the valley was partly related to the usefulness of the Fraser as a navigable stream to the interior. Having found the location favorable, the river navigable (according to local advice), and the Natives apparently willing to do business, the company established Fort Langley in 1827, about a day's canoe journey upriver. Over the next three decades, the fort served as the principal trading hub of the region. Trading European goods for Native fur was not,

however, the only business. Soon after the trading post's establishment, following company policy elsewhere, land was cleared for potatoes, and later a farm was created on Langley Prairie.

Fort Langley never lived up to expectations as a fur mecca because beaver populations were quickly decimated and the river's navigability turned out to be wishful thinking, yet the post redeemed itself as a supplier of agricultural produce and locally caught salmon. Anticipating the westward expansion of the United States and the loss of the Columbia River, the Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Victoria on the southern tip of Vancouver Island in 1843, a settlement that would by 1849 become the capital of the first British colony on the coast. With the loss of Fort Vancouver to the south, Fort Langley took on a new role as a terminus for the fur brigades, a role realized through the establishment of a new fur brigade route to the interior anchored by satellite posts at Hope and Yale (Harris 1997).

The Colony of British Columbia and Settlement to 1918

In 1858 gold was discovered in the Fraser Canyon. With the publication of this event, the exclusive anti-settlement and trading rights agreement held by the Hudson's Bay Company north of the American border quickly disintegrated. Between March and August of that year, over 30,000 miners, most traveling from San Francisco via Victoria, descended upon the valley, destabilizing the equilibrium achieved in the previous decades. In August the mainland territory north of the 49th parallel was put under the direct authority of the Crown as the colony of British Columbia (Harris 1997:80). The establishment of the colony signaled the beginning of the end of the Fraser Valley as a largely Native place and the making of a predominately European one.

Within a matter of months a detachment of Royal Engineers arrived in the valley to establish a colonial infrastructure. Completely disregarding Native precedence in the valley, they laid out the first roads, town plans, and a cadastral system, helping to transform "empty" land for the anticipated tide of settlers. In addition, they provided the manpower and technology for the British Boundary Commission, surveying the international boundary line separating British from American spheres of influence (Woodward 1974:14). A site for the capital—New Westminster—was chosen on the thickly wooded banks of the Fraser. Encouraged by the population boom accompanying the gold fever, by 1861 "stump city" had 125 houses, shops, and offices, including an assay office, all cleaved from the forest and erected along the river's muddy banks (Cherrington 1992:104–105).

Although European settlement in the valley slowed following the collapse of the gold rush, settler society would eventually transform the valley's wilderness to productive ends. When established as a colony in 1858, British Columbia was mainly considered a wild gold-rush frontier where most stayed temporarily, lured by the temptation of striking it rich. Less than half a century later, however, large areas of the lower Fraser had been transformed to countryside and the valley boasted a population of over 10,000 people, mainly of European origin, although there were also significant numbers of Chinese and Japanese (Lai 1978; Siemens 1976a). As Cole Harris maintains, "In good part, the Ontarian pioneer landscape and experience were being recreated in the Lower Mainland." Family-based farms were carved out of forest, and log cabins gave way to frame houses (Harris 1997:89).

Opportunities for social advancement and economic independence made moving to a remote corner of the world more appealing. For some newcomers, relocating offered the chance of a new start, a migrant lifestyle in conjunction with the developing forest industry. Others would drift to the growing towns on Vancouver Island, Puget Sound, or to recently established mills in the interior to seek employment. In the Fraser Valley, in contrast to other parts of the colony with predominantly poor soils, settlement took on a more permanent character in the form of an agriculturally-based society. While forestry was a going concern from the mid-1860s until the early twentieth century, the valley became primarily defined by rural living and close-knit communities founded on family-owned farms.

Nineteenth-century administrators, journalists, and immigration officials believed that the bedrock of any stable society was a productive countryside made up of small-scale yeoman farmers (Sandwell 1999b:84). Hoping to attract a more respectable class of citizen, the Colonial Office instituted a plan that favored compact settlement on surveyed lands sold for a good price (Harris 1997:85). Although better land prices across the border scuttled the aspirations of a truly middle-class countryside, the land system eventually fostered permanent land-based settlement. For newcomers, acquiring property followed one of two routes. They could buy land already laid out, or they could preempt unsurveyed land, following the U.S. system. Preemption allowed settlers to occupy 160-acre parcels prior to survey and without prior payment. Once land had been cleared, fenced, built upon, or otherwise improved, tenure was transferred to the new owner (Cail 1974; Harris 1997:85; Sandwell 1999b:85). In theory, yoking an individual's labor to the improvement of single preemptions promoted the establishment of family-based homesteads and helped thwart the development of monopolies that could undermine settlement. At another level, the conditions of preemption

fit well with the ethos of agrarianism, the dominant ideological foundation that took hold in the valley.

Agrarian values are most commonly associated with the settlement of the American West. However, as word of the valley's productive potential spread, newcomers moved north across the international border and transplanted the rhetoric of agrarianism in the valley's fertile soils (Demeritt 1995). In opposition to the decadence, pollution, and moral bankruptcy of the city, agrarianism was instilled with the ideals of wholesome rural living. It lauded the enabling powers of agriculture and the distribution of land among yeoman farmers as a basis for self-determination and democracy. Gaining emphasis in frontier areas, it mythologized a subsistence lifestyle that pitted the hardy pioneer against the wilderness. Harnessing the chaos of nature and transforming it into productive agriculture reaped not only a living for the pioneer but also the rewards of social progress for the community (Demeritt 1995:42). Once, Christian concepts of morality stopped at the forest's edge, but by the nineteenth century making something useful of the forest's soil, timber, and mineral wealth became associated with redemption (Williams 1989:11–16).

Social respectability and progress were achieved primarily by establishing a farm (Harris 1997:86). Hued from the forest with axes and other expedient tools such as fire and even dynamite, farms were first established in proximity to the river on open prairies where land was easier to clear (Cherrington 1992:112–113; Siemens 1976b; Winter 1976). Later, when the best land was already taken, stump farms emerged on land cleared of massive conifers and dense undergrowth. If hired help could be acquired, the pace of attaining a productive lifestyle quickened, and in many cases neighbors were enlisted to help with barn raisings and land clearing (Cherrington 1992:152).

Successful homesteads became diversified producers serving the needs of family subsistence and local markets, which remained unspecialized until very late in the nineteenth century. As the land's agricultural potential was yet unknown, farmers experimented to determine the best forms of farming (Harris and Demeritt 1997:220). From the alluvial silts of the delta to the clay loam of the upper valley, garden root crops—including potatoes, onions, carrots, and swede—were grown for domestic consumption. A variety of cereals such as wheat, oats, and barley were also planted. In addition, apple, pear, and plum orchards provided cash crops to local markets. Most farms also owned several head of cattle, and some had pig and sheep (BCLA 1893). The landscape of farming was diversified, made up of specialized spaces of production that included infields, areas of pasture, woodlots, a barn, and the homestead itself (Demeritt 1995).

In the 1860s, echoing a pattern already developed in places like Seattle and Tacoma, industrial-scale logging and saw-milling operations helped to transform great swaths of old-growth forest, leaving extensive cutover areas of tangled brush, massive stumps, and slash. Until the turn of the century, logging was conducted exclusively on the Lower Mainland and the southeastern coastal plain of Vancouver Island, while saw milling focused on the shores of Burrard Inlet (Hardwick 1963). Initially, forest stands were exploited along shorelines where logs could be easily floated to mills. Later, felling activity moved to more inaccessible areas of the valley such as the uplands of Surrey. Here the industry witnessed the advent of mobile lumber camps, the use of skid roads and, eventually, steam-power and logging railways (Duffield 2001; Whitford and Craige 1917:94).

Road- and rail-building projects created new pathways of movement, opening the valley to the outside world. In 1865 the telegraph trail linked the United States with the interior of the colony via New Westminster. In 1874 a new route, the Yale Road, connected New Westminster with Chilliwack, Hope, and Yale, replacing the telegraph trail which had become overgrown. Conditions on these early routes were often poor, winter travel becoming almost impossible as terra firma turned into mud (Meyer 1976:73–77). Connecting eastern Canada with its new terminus at Port Moody, the Canadian Pacific Railway pushed its way through the valley in 1885 and was extended to the new settlement at Vancouver in 1886. A catalyst for change, the building of the railway north of the Fraser invited a new influx of settlers.

The almost wholesale appropriation of Native space disrupted and endangered traditional lifeways. To deal with the problem of Native settlement, James Douglas, during his term of office as governor in the 1860s, established a number of initially large Indian reserves along the Fraser River. Douglas felt that granting them enough land to live on would pacify their concerns about the unchecked acquisition of land by newcomers. Moreover, by allowing them to continue living in the valley alongside newcomers, it was hoped that they would take up agriculture and eventually integrate with settler society. Later thinking deemed this practice overly sympathetic to Native concerns, however, and with limited agricultural land to go around, Douglas's successors dramatically reduced the size of reserves (Duff 1997:86; Harris 2002:45–69; Tennant 1992:39–52). Their traditional ways of life seriously restricted, Native peoples turned to the new capitalist landscape for opportunities. Often they became wage earners in agriculture, logging, or the emerging commercial fishery (Lutz 2001). Divorced from their old habits, Native youth were reeducated in residential schools and were taught European technology and moral values

in expanding missions programs (Duff 1997:86–87; Harris 2002:269–270: Woods 2001).

By the turn of the twentieth century, the Fraser Valley had been utterly remade. There were 52,000 people in the valley, with half concentrated in Vancouver (Meyer 1976:77). Regular rail and steamboat services connected the port of Vancouver and the important market at New Westminster with growing farming communities. Rapidly exhausting local timber supplies, the forest industry was casting its eyes to virgin stands beyond. Agricultural development had created a patchwork grid of fields marked by fence lines. Roads, churches, schools, and community halls, conduits for a dense social network, helped reify the agrarian premises that came to define valley living (Demeritt 1995:42). As Harris suggests, over the course of relatively few years, "the area had passed through a remarkable transformation: from the local worlds of fishing, hunting, and gathering peoples to a modern corner of the world economy within the British empire and an emerging federal nation-state, the Dominion of Canada. A transition that in Europe took millennia, here took decades" (Harris 1997:68). No longer the domain of nature, in the eyes of colonists the land embodied a framework of new beginnings.

With the "facts" now laid out, the story of the valley takes on a more stable guise, and yet as I write this I am reminded that history is not just one story but rather is many, sometimes conflicting, strands told from different points of view and with particular purposes in mind (Sutton 1998:16). The changes in the land over this period were clearly significant, but interpreting them demands an awareness of details and nuances, the diverse ways in which people became entangled in transformations whose implications for creating histories, identities, and senses of place complicate the simplified sketch that I have provided here. It is the ambiguity of these transformations that forms the subject of debate in the chapters to follow.

3

Constructing an Aboriginal Landscape

> The overwhelming solitude and stillness of the shores, the monotony of the dark pines and cedars, of the channels and of the roaring cascades beget a longing for the sight of human work, of human habitation, that swallows the admiration of the magnificent scenery.
>
> —Franz Boas 1896:229

When traveling by canoe through the labyrinthine channels of coastal British Columbia to salvage something of its rapidly diminishing Indian culture, Boas described the loneliness and emptiness of the landscape, a place of awe-inspiring proportions, a stark contrast to the familiar order of civilized space. The idea of the coast as a region of wilderness par excellence is nothing new. Indeed, since the late eighteenth century, when Europeans began to visit its shoreline and to penetrate what was for them its unexplored interior, coastal viewing inspired sublime tropes mirroring the grandeur of its physical proportions (Tippett and Cole 1979). "Vast" were its mountain ranges, "interminable" were its forests, but significantly, the landscape revealed little in the way of human endeavor (fig. 3.1). Half a century later, anthropologist Phillip Drucker's gaze similarly framed and captured the landscape: "The woods, seen from the water, seem to form an impenetrable mantle over the irregular surface of the land. After one finally breaks through the luxurious growth along the margin, he finds himself in a dark gloomy moss-covered world. . . . It is scarcely to be wondered at, what with the ruggedness of the rockbound mountainous terrain and the dense tangle of vegetation, that the Native population for the most part frequented the woods but little" (Drucker 1951:8–9).

Even more recently, observers have described the landscape as "more a backdrop for Native life than a focus of it" (Wagner 1972:15). Indigenous populations, it was believed, were to be found in their settlements on the

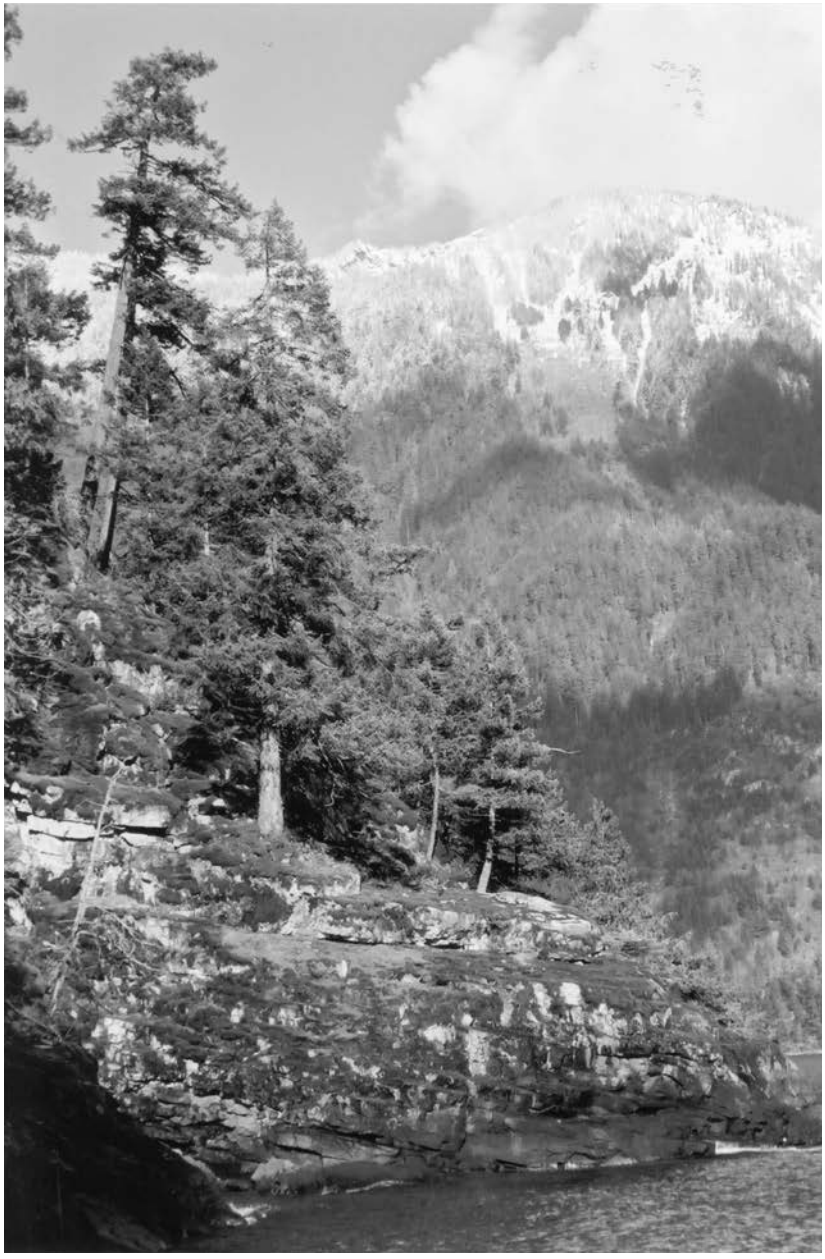


FIGURE 3.1. The Northwest Coast idealized as wilderness par excellence: Harrison Lake's shoreline, with the Coast Mountains in the background. (Photograph by the author)

coastal margins or along major rivers, mere oases of culture in an almost limitless wilderness. Geographer Phillip Wagner (1972:15), for example, has argued that it is completely "justified" to dispense with "detailed considerations" of the conditions inland because Natives "lived almost entirely on products of the sea itself, the strand and the immediately adjacent forest fringe." The landscape beyond the villages was dominated by ancient stands of old-growth forest, places held firmly in the clutches of nature, a view embraced by the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which saw Indigenous peoples as nature's "original conservationists . . . people so intimately bound to the land they . . . left no mark upon it" (White and Cronon 1988:417; see also Nicholas 1999). If human culture was synonymous with the visibility of human achievement, especially an ability to harness nature, then the coastal landscape revealed little evidence of such intelligent and creative industry.

This aesthetic frame remains prevalent in today's consumer world. A myriad of popular websites, glossy coffee-table books, and tourist memorabilia reproduce the idea of the Northwest Coast as forever primeval and untouched (see Crang 1997; Crawshaw and Urry 1997). References to past or present Indigenous inhabitation beyond the water's edge are relegated to the media's margins.[1] The origins of these often authentic responses are complex. As Bruce Braun (2002) persuasively argues, a convoluted history entangled with the agendas of different interest groups has influenced these perceptions of space. Over the last few decades this landscape has been as much a contested battleground for the forestry lobby and environmental activists as a source of artistic inspiration or recreational playground. Nevertheless, if we accept the grand narrative of first contact and European colonialism, the marginality of the landscape and its lack of human agency—in short, its domination by nature not culture—represent the region's most salient plotline.

While the wilderness aesthetic is prominent in other North American colonial experiences (Short 1991:6), this view does not stand unchallenged; varying and diverse conditions of knowledge determine how we see the world rather than any objective reality. Attempting to exchange one cultural filter for another, chapters 3, 4, and 5 sketch out the principal ways Indigenous peoples in the early period of contact engaged the landscape before settlement began to drastically reshape Aboriginal life. Evidence from the Fraser Valley and beyond provides a counterpoint to colonial discourse. Drawing on Coast Salish oral history and certain forms of environmental and archaeological research, we are beginning to question the myth of an empty land and reveal a portrait of an intensely humanized one. The picture that emerges is of a place socialized through history, a place where nature was lived in,

worked upon, and shaped in some ways not unlike the domestic landscapes of the Old World.

Before moving on, however, I must note another premise. As much as this chapter is about rethinking the relationship between Native peoples and the land—as it has been rendered by over two hundred years of print journalism—it is also about the process of writing landscapes. Who we are, our agendas, interests, and predispositions, significantly color the kinds of observations we make about the past and the stories we construct. This argument is not new but is important to recall because while a picture is developing that challenges many of the ethnocentrisms of colonialism, much of this rethinking is still very much rooted in the assumptions of colonial discourse, particularly an adherence to core-periphery models and a tendency to dismiss the active quality of the landscape and its implications for social reproduction. In demonstrating these points, this chapter, illustrating what the early period of contact might have actually looked like, presents a critical prelude to chapters 4 and 5, which apply theoretical critique to the social landscapes of the time.

The Landscape as a Metaphor for History

Boas was a product of Enlightenment education; it is entirely reasonable that his observations privileged vision over the other senses and unremarkable that his writing sometimes promoted the wilderness aesthetic. As a member of the American literati, he would have been influenced by evocative reproductions of frontier regions embodied in the sublime landscape paintings of Albert Bierstadt and Frederic E. Church among others (see Daniels 1993; Schama 1996). Where Boas differed from his contemporaries, however, was in his recognition that Native values operated within a very different cultural logic. In opposition to the more popular views of the time that defined human culture according to a unilineal scheme of evolutionary progress, he defined human cultures as unique entities to be understood on their own terms (Gosden 1999:26; Trigger 1989:151). Arguing against evolutionism, the ready-made laboratory of the coast with its varied human and physical geography suggested to Boas that cultures acquired an understanding of the world relative to their particular relationship with the environment (see Darnell 2000:43; Gosden 1999:45–46; Trigger 1989:152). Northwest Coast peoples did not see the same world as the Europeans, whose impressions of wilderness were responses particular to Western ways of seeing.

Spurred by Boas, cultural anthropology by the end of the nineteenth century had begun to challenge Western epistemological primacy, a response to

the perceived demise of Indigenous cultures in the face of colonialism, as well as a reaction against the belief that the progress of Western society was inevitable or even beneficial (Trigger 1989:150). More than taken-for-granted assumptions about European superiority were at stake here; the ascendancy of Enlightenment thinking with its emphasis on rationalism and objectivity was also being contested. Newcomers were compelled to momentarily suspend their assumptions as tensions arose between the perceived image of wilderness and the actual ways in which the landscape shaped the lives of Native peoples. In his travels across the fledgling province of British Columbia at the end of the nineteenth century, journalist Francis MacNab observed the extraordinary tradition prevalent among Aboriginals of investing the non-human world with cultural attributes. Whereas newcomers saw the forests as tangled, moss covered, and empty, the Indians, he noted, saw the "hidden life of a spirit in every stream or strange rock" (MacNab 1898:97).

Although the content of traditions varied greatly, the Northwest Coast peoples were united in the common belief that the landscape's physical form was tied directly to a period of ceaseless conflict and world building on a heroic scale. Contrary to the notion of a primeval slumber, a notion imposed by explorers and later settlers, the landscape in Aboriginal knowledge emerged from the maelstrom of a time before time, what anthropologists have collectively described as the Myth Age (Hymes 1990; Suttles 1990). To the Coast Salish, conspicuous places in the lower Fraser Valley were (and for some Stó:lō continue to be) imprinted with distant memories of the actions of mythological beings and provided coordinates tethering Halkomelem concepts of history and identity. According to oral traditions, the creation of the landscape was ordered around the events of Sxwôxwiyám (the Myth Age), when the world was chaotic and yet unformed. During this "time immemorial," non-human beings traveled the earth from place to place, leaving evidence of their actions as not only natural features and organisms but also present human lineages. The transformations of the Myth Age created a cosmological order, invested beings and places with certain saliencies, and established norms of cultural discourse for posterity.

Of course, our attempts to reconstruct and represent this incredibly complex cosmology present a serious challenge to the modern scholar, and criticism abounds concerning the use of oral traditions as a vehicle to achieve this, especially for very distant periods (e.g., Mason 2000). Still, attempts to reach a reasoned consensus about cultural values immediately prior to or during the early period of contact with European and Asian newcomers have been fruitful. Fortunately, the Northwest Coast's relatively rich ethnographic and historical writings seem to agree on a particular understanding of Native

cosmology, which is often unavailable in other areas (Echo-Hawk 2000). Nicholas Thomas (2003:xxxiv) argues that while it would be simplistic to suggest that oral traditions from the twentieth century were entirely true of the eighteenth, they are at least indicative of earlier cultural perceptions.

The Myth Age can be divided into two separate periods. In the Myth Age proper, dangerous monsters and beings in constant flux between animal and human forms inhabited the perpetually changing world. Powerful creatures molded the strange and ever-changing places where they dwelled. In this period, not only could animals talk, they could have intercourse and produce offspring with people, many of whom became the ancestors of the first family lineages to inhabit the present world. The second period is thought to have begun when the transformers—Xexá:ls—traveled through the world, changing shape-shifting creatures into landforms, animals and plants into their current form, and generally setting things in order for the people of the present age (Hymes 1990:593; Suttles 1990:466).

In 1890 Chief George Chehalis of the Chehalis people recounted to Boas the beginning of the age of transformations:

> Above Sk'tsâs [Harrison Lake], right in the mountains, lived Redheaded Woodpecker. His wives were Black Bear and Grizzly Bear. He had three sons and one daughter with Black Bear. Grizzly Bear had no children. . . . Then Grizzly Bear began quarrelling with her husband and finally killed him . . . the four children left their mother and together wandered up along the Fraser River towards the sunrise. When they had arrived at the sunrise, they walked into the sky and wandered towards the sunset. From there they turned back and wandered east once more. They had received the name Qals [Xexá:ls][2] and transformed everyone they met into stones or other things. (Boas 2002:92)

Traveling along different routes through the Fraser Valley and its adjacent tributaries, the transformers changed beings who opposed them, acted selfishly, or would better serve the world in other forms. At several places along the river, Xexá:ls fought with warriors and shamans, transforming them respectively into conspicuous rocks and outcrops. In one story, the transformers were crossing the lands of the Pilalt along the lower Chilliwack River when they met an old *seuwel* or witch. A noted shaman aware of their powers, she urinated in a small basket with the intention of using the liquid to possess them. Xexá:ls ridiculed her efforts, exclaiming, "You are a very poor sort of seuwel. I can do what I like with you. I will punish you by transforming you into a boulder and placing you in the stream" (Hill-Tout 1978:60).

Transformed to stone, both the seuwel and her receptacle may be seen at this very spot today.

At other places Xexá:ls used their powers to change Myth Age beings into recognizable creatures. At a village near New Westminster, they confronted an indolent family of beggars who furtively mocked them. In retribution for their impudence, they were changed into ravens and sentenced to an existence as scavengers (Jenness 1955:22). Xexá:ls also engaged in more monumental tasks of creation. A short distance from the coastline, for example, they anchored the former island of Tsawwassen to the bottom of the Strait of Georgia so that in time it would grow in size and join the mainland. Thus the world came to resemble its present order.

The Myth Age not only determined the creation of the non-human world, it also presaged the foundation of human lineages. Despite having worked only briefly in the Fraser Valley, Boas (1894) was probably the first to see the special taxonomic relationship different kin groups shared with their environment, their connections with particular totems[3] of animals, plants, landforms, and even mythical benefactors, all of which had been "set right" in the Myth Age. According to Boas, "The tribal traditions tell that Qals, the deity, met the ancestors of all these tribes and transformed them into certain plants or animals which generally abound near the site of the winter village" (1894:454).

Although Boas incorrectly assumed that each household formed a discrete tribal identity (Duff 1952:86), he nevertheless made the important observation that certain features in the landscape were associated with the origin stories of family lineages, providing a physical anchor or totemic geography that connected people in the present with their genealogical ancestors. For instance, the Pa'pk'um believed their ancestor Aiuwa'uQ was transformed into a mountain goat while atop nearby Lhílheqey (Mount Cheam). For the Pa'pk'um, this event explains why mountain goats abound on its alpine slopes (Boas 2002:106–107). Similarly, the Katzie, based at their winter village on the Fraser River, linked their own origins to a totemic geography surrounding Sam'é:ént (Sheridan Hill), a short distance to the north, where their benefactor Swaneset descended from the sky world to set things in order for their ancestors in the present world. His transformative deeds created a series of sloughs and rivers (fig. 3.2), altering the land so "it would provide them with an abundance of Indian potatoes, cranberries, and other foods" (Jenness 1955:12–13).

The world in its present form was no longer characterized by "mind and matter, animate and inanimate, human and natural, subject and object" (Harris 1997:75). Instead, relations between humans and the landscape were

FIGURE 3.2. A slough landscape near Pitt Lake. (Photograph by the author)

built on stories and connections defined in the Myth Age. In order to remember their beginnings, the elders passed down this knowledge from generation to generation as a means to distinguish their identity and *place* them in the wider history and geography of the contemporary world. Like inherited names and certain objects of material culture, oral histories were considered private property inextricable from kin lines (Barnett 1975:141). As Hill-Tout, who continued Boas's work in the valley argued, "This becomes clear from the care each sept [extended family] takes in preserving the family pedigrees and records which show that these groups claim independent and distinct origin" (1904:311).

Place names served to buttress Myth Age claims about the land, creating a mental map of geography, prosaic reminders of continuities from the time of world making. While many place names would have entered people's spatial consciousness on a more mundane level, imparting, for example, useful geographical and ecological distinctions important in wayfinding (see Johnson 2000; McHalsie 2001), a significant number evoked cognatic kinship ties (what Boas referred to as the tribe) insofar as people believed themselves to be associated with or possessed by a named place (Thornton 1997:297). Suttles has suggested that Katzie identity, for instance, was anchored to the eponymous place name of their winter village on the Fraser River. Boundaries between the Katzie and outsiders were reinforced by different knowledge of named summer villages and resource patches between the Fraser and Pitt

Lake, such as the sturgeon fishing grounds, and also by the names of landforms, caves, and rock outcrops created by Swaneset and Xexá:ls during the period of transformations (Suttles 1955:8–20). Many of these places were imbued with memories of Myth Age events and their residual power. As Stó:lō elder Elizabeth Phillips has observed, "These places are very important for us, those that know about them. They are something that is proof of our past" (quoted in Mohs 1994:184).

Th'exelis (Gritting His Teeth), a bedrock exposure with unusual shallow grooves perched fifteen meters above the river, illustrates these ideas. Located near modern-day Yale in the Fraser Canyon, this place was the site of a great Myth Age battle between the transformers and a powerful local shaman called Kwiyaxtel. During the melee each attempted to transform the other using various means. As Mohs explains, "Gritting his teeth, Xals [Xexá:ls] proceeded to scratch the rock upon which he was sitting with his thumbnail and with each scratch weakened his opponent. Eventually Kwiyaxtel was defeated and transformed into stone" (1994:194). The scratch marks remained as both a reminder for posterity and a medium joining those who knew the story in a common sense of identity. A place intimately linked with the cultural geography of canyon settlements (commonly known as the Tait), Th'exelis would have represented, in the words of Thornton, a "linguistic grafting of social bodies onto physical places" (1997:298): every time its name was spoken, geographical evocation merged people with place, separating those familiar with the story from outsiders.

Coast Salish cosmology permeated the landscape in other ways as well. In addition to particular place names, certain non-human beings encountered in the present world were integral to the cosmological order imposed by the Myth Age. While relationships with totemic ancestors were largely symbolic affiliations,[4] certain non-humans were considered equals endowed with an ego and a subjective perception like that of humans. Sentient beings existed in an animist system of reciprocity between humans and non-humans, a relationship perpetuated by a continuous exchange of ritual services based on the belief that humans owed a debt to non-human beings for food or materials (see Descola 1996:94; Mauzé 1998:240; Suttles 1981). Thus human action that caused death or injury to animate beings required compensation to stabilize the balance of relations.

Although its details varied from place to place, the first salmon ceremony, ritualizing the first catch in order to assure its timely arrival the following year, illustrates one of the most widely respected animist beliefs. After digging a long trench for a fire, each man would gently deposit a salmon on a rush mat beside a woman, who set it on a rack above the fire, sprinkling it

with ochre and the seeds of the Indian consumption plant. Once the women laid the cooked fish on the mats, people ate and then reverently gathered and returned all the bones to the river (Jenness 1955:20; see also Hill-Tout 1904:331; Suttles 1981:706; Suttles 1990:468).

In a landscape dominated by forests, trees too could be animate beings. Ethnographic research throughout the southern coast suggests a pervasive animist relationship with the all-important cedar. The use of cedar trees for wood and bark (as I discuss below) required a certain respect, and they were not felled at random. Chiseling into the trunk tested the wood's soundness, and planks for building were often taken from live standing trees. These economical practices ensured that labor was well spent, while also protecting the inner spirit of the tree. Bark strippers respected the cedar, taking only narrow strips and leaving enough bark around the trunk for the circulation of sap. When entire trees were cut down to build canoes, for example, different rituals were observed. Canoe makers would fast and pray in preparation for locating a suitable tree, to which they would offer gifts before felling (Mauzé 1998:241; Stryd and Feddema 1998; Turner 1998:38; Turner and Peacock 2005:123–124).

Coast Salish cosmology challenges representations of the Northwest Coast in colonial discourse. Contrary to its perceived status as an empty space, at best a background to Native life, the landscape for the Coast Salish read like a book; each mountain, river, and stone, to quote Keith Basso (1984:44), was like a "mnemonic peg" on which hung a story of the mythical past. A series of allegorical cues about the origins of the world and people's places in it, these stories offered the present age a sense of stability about the cosmos and knowledge about how to make one's way in the world.

A Modified Landscape

Boas's reasoning about the historical and geographical particularity of Indigenous cultures has long been eulogized. Less appreciated, however, was his recognition of the transformative power his subjects could wield over the land. In rereading his voluminous contributions to Northwest Coast anthropology, geographer Douglas Deur (1999, 2002, 2005) notes that Boas was well aware of the influence of Native groups in shaping certain plant communities. For example, he noted that the Kwakwaka'wakw on eastern Vancouver Island managed plots of estuarine plants that colonized the tidal flats. Harvested for their edible roots, they formed a stable source of dietary starch for many Northwest Coast peoples. As Deur asserts, "From Vancouver

Island northward . . . plots . . . were managed in a manner that can only be described as cultivation" (Deur 1999:142).

Still, Boas was certainly not the first to make such observations. Indeed, one hundred years earlier, some of the coast's earliest explorers noted a discrepancy between the perceived image of wilderness and the reality. After an excursion "back into the woods" near Port Discovery (at the mouth of Puget Sound), George Vancouver's botanist, Archibald Menzies, noted in his diary for the fourth of May 1792 that he "saw a number of the largest trees [almost certainly cedar] hollowd [*sic*] by fire into cavities fit to admit a person into." Menzies suggested some possible interpretations for the unusual features: They were "done by the Natives either to screen them from . . . animals they meant to ensnare or afford them a safe retreat from others in case of being pursued." Alternatively, he proposed, unaware of how close he was to the mark, "it may be the means they have of felling large trees for making their Canoes" (Menzies 1923:20–21).

Despite these random glimpses scattered throughout early writings on first encounters, for almost two hundred years the actions of the coast's first inhabitants were largely ignored. To return to Wagner's view, the landscape as an empty backdrop to social life reigned supreme, a way of seeing that resonated deeply with the European project to subdue, colonize, and settle North America (Butzer 1990; Cronon 1983; Denevan 1992; Dods 2002; White and Cronon 1988). William Cronon (1983), for example, has revealed how an implicit colonialist discourse helped legitimize the appropriation of land in the forests of New England. Colonists believed that the Native mobile pattern of residency, coupled with a lack of what they perceived to be productive forms of harnessing nature, entailed little in the way of proprietary rights. Furthermore, as massive outbreaks of introduced diseases such as smallpox took their toll on Indigenous populations, the empty land myth was easier to accept, especially as colonists pushed westward across the continent between 1750 and 1850 (Denevan 1992:379). Ironically, the suppression of wildfires by colonial administrations in the twentieth century actually encouraged the appearance of tangled wilderness as forest understories became congested with deadwood ordinarily cleared away by episodic wildfires (Dods 2002).

Recent investigations addressing the prehistory of land use on the Northwest Coast and other parts of the continent (e.g., Delcourt et al. 1998; Kaye and Swetnam 1999; Nicholas 1999) have begun to raise questions about the myths and caricatures perpetuated by the colonial encounter. Scientific examination of pollen and charcoal profiles, systematic study of archaeological and traditional-use surveys, and a renewed scrutiny of the ethnographic record have revealed that earlier perceptions were rooted in a kind of cultural

myopia and that the so-called wilderness was often in a state of "low intensity cultivation" (Deur 1999:139) or other form of alteration. This research has convincingly demonstrated that what newcomers took for unbridled nature was often in part a product of human intervention, commonly a result of resource procurement or landscape management practices, some of which may have dated to the early Holocene (Lepofsky 2004).

Fire was a ubiquitous tool for shaping the landscape. We are beginning to recognize that prior to contact, even in the relatively moist climate of the coast, fires were relatively common. The majority were linked to natural causes, yet people sometimes set or encouraged fires to influence the character of plant communities (Gottesfeld 1994; Lepofsky et al. 2005; Turner 1999). Establishing the nature of these past practices is difficult, although much can be inferred by drawing on different lines of evidence. Historical journal accounts and statements from Native informants indicate several reasons for starting fires. American surveyor Henry Custer observed the striking character of fire-modified landscapes in the late 1850s during his survey of the international boundary line east of the Fraser Valley in the Cascade Mountains:

> On this side of the stream we found the whole forest burned by late fires, ignited by persons lately encamped here. Smoke was still arising in all directions from numerous footlogs and trees ect. [*sic*]. Fires are very frequent during the sumer [*sic*] season in these Mountain forests and are often ignited purposely by some of the Indian . . . to clear the woods from underbrush & make travel easier. Once ignited, they generally burn the whole summer, and only the drenching rains of the fall are able to check their further spread. (Custer 1866:20)

Using fire to maintain an open understory enabled people to move more easily through the landscape and opened up routes of communication between different groups. Burning practices reduced the likelihood of uncontrollable wildfires while cleaning up the land (Barrett and Arno 1982; Turner 1999), a concept I will return to in chapter 4.

Recently burned areas also encouraged the growth of desirable foliage, attracting game and plant foods that thrived in a sun-drenched environment. Low-intensity fires that enriched the soil while impeding other vegetation were used to manage plant foods and ensure heavy crops. On dryer parts of the coast, such as the rain shadow along the eastern shore of Vancouver Island, a unique ecology of meadows and Garry oak parkland were sustained with regular episodes of landscape burning to promote the growth

of different species of camas, a meadow-adapted root food harvested with digging sticks (Turner 1999). According to formerly unpublished ethnographic notes, family-owned plots where plants grew in abundance could be marked with sticks, rocks, or even shallow ditches to keep others out (Suttles 2005:181–187).

Coastal groups also used fire as a management tool in places traditionally considered too moist to burn over. Complicating this picture of landscape interaction, multiple lines of evidence suggest that fire was also used to modify the vegetation of alpine and sub-alpine environments to encourage the growth of naturally occurring berry patches (Gottesfeld 1994; Lepofsky et al. 2005). Interviews with Coast Salish elders have established that berries gathered from the slopes of nearby mountains were an important food source, an activity that may have been combined with hunting, lithic procurement, and other high-elevation activities (Reimer 2000). Conspicuous acts of prescribed burning were employed to check the growth of hemlock trees and competing groundcover such as heather, as well as to dispatch pests that could potentially damage future harvests. Pruning was also used to curb the interference of unwanted vegetation at a more localized scale. Together these practices encouraged the growth of different species of blueberry that proliferated in the well-drained and slightly drier conditions of the sunny-facing slopes (Lepofsky et al. 2005:226). Palaeo-environmental data in the form of charcoal deposits and pollen from nearby lake cores, forest-age structures, and some features interpreted as berry-drying trenches have helped archaeologists ascertain the considerable continuity of practices that may have been carried out intermittently over the last two thousand years (Frank 2000; Lepofsky et al. 2005).

Other forms of cultivation were more labor intensive. Techniques that included weeding, mulching, tilling, and the application of fertilizer, such as fish entrails, kept family- and village-owned garden plots productive and free of competitors (Deur 2005:306; Lepofsky 2004). As mentioned previously, estuarine tidal flats were cultivated into neatly ordered plots of spring-bank clover and Pacific silverweed, sought for their starchy rhizomes. Frequently, these were grown alongside other root-bearing estuarine plants, including northern rice-root lily and Nootka lupin (Deur 1999, 2002, 2005). Along river valleys like the Fraser, low-lying marshy ground was colonized and worked in strips to encourage the growth of wapato, another important root that grew in sloughs and cranberry bogs. Family groups established individual claims for the season by clearing tracts several hundred feet long of competing vegetation. This task completed, the plants were left to mature until October or November when the fleshy bodies, as large as white potatoes,

were ready to be gathered. By the following year, new growth obscured the land and the cultivated ground reverted to common use (Suttles 1955:27).

The landscape was also shaped in other ways. Not simply a setting for the proverbial hunt, stands of cedar were systematically exploited for building and weaving materials. Today cedar trees in the coastal forest continue to preserve signs of Aboriginal logging and bark stripping (Moberly and Eldridge 1992), the sheer scale of which is, to my knowledge, unprecedented. Wood and bark from this "tree of life" (Stewart 1984) provided an unlimited source of workable fiber, the main building block of what is certainly one of the world's most remarkable wood- and bark-working cultures. The soft pliant inner bark of the red and yellow cedar was used to make clothing and basketry, a practice that endures in some contemporary Indigenous communities, while the long-lasting wood of red cedar—prized from both standing or felled trees—was used extensively for shelter (such as the southern shed-roof house), canoes, totem poles, and a variety of tools (Stewart 1984; Stryd and Feddema 1998:12; Turner 1998:36–37; Turner and Peacock 2005:123).

Direct evidence of prehistoric forest modification in the Fraser Valley is scarce, but there are ways of inferring support for these activities. Archaeological surveys from other parts of the coast suggest that cedar forests, where accessible, were well worked. For example, the Meares Island study on the west coast of Vancouver Island, which documented different kinds of tool marks and cultural scars consistent with logging and bark stripping, demonstrated the extensive Indigenous use of cedar (Stryd and Eldridge 1993). Despite the dominance of Douglas fir, the cedar was nonetheless well represented in the dryer climate of the valley (Edgell 1987:101). Given patterns of exploitation on other parts of the coast, cedar stands would also have arguably borne evidence of routine working. On this point, historical observations are more forthcoming. In a report to the Ethnological Society of London, Royal Engineer Charles Wilson commented on the enormous stumps of cedar that towered over the forest floor in parts of the valley. During the survey of the international boundary line, he recognized the tell-tale signs of stone chisel marks on the remains of old-growth trees, which he believed had been "felled many years ago" before the introduction of iron. Aptly describing the enigmatic features that archaeological surveys occasionally document in areas of old growth, Wilson thought the stumps had "somewhat the appearance of those gnawed through by the beaver, but not nearly so cleanly cut" (Wilson 1866:288).

Other signs of human use were inscribed in the land itself. Wooden fishing weirs and fish traps, for example, marked tributaries and tidal zones (Greene 2005), while stone-built lookouts and defensive features were created at stra-

tegic bends in the Fraser Canyon (Schaepe 2001b). Even more prevalent was a system of Fraser Valley pathways that arose from the seasonal movements of the annual round and connections formed among different groups, creating a latticework of travel corridors that expanded lines of communication beyond the river (Schaepe 2001c). Although the river remained the most important corridor for travel, pathways crisscrossed the landscape connecting settlements with gathering areas and other significant places, facilitating awareness of places far from the riverbank. Some pathways were conspicuous. Ethnographer Oliver Wells recorded the existence of an "age-old trail" that "cut a foot deep in the moss-covered floor of the forest" between the upper valley and Chilliwack Lake (1987:15). Others were more ephemeral but would still have been easily recognized because they were marked with blazed trees, the equivalent of road signs, and sometimes bark-stripped trees or cache pits, shallow cavities often dug for food storage. Pioneers were usually disparaging of such features, dismissing rough pathways as "Indian trails" (Draper 1941) or, worse, mere deer tracks. Because the realignment of the valley in colonial times has long since destroyed most pathways, their presumed locations are documented now only by historical sources and inferred from traditional lines of travel (Schaepe 2001c).

Writing Aboriginal Landscapes

In the introduction to this book, I suggested that the history of the West—the big picture of colonial discourse—relegated Natives to the margins of the historical stage, largely writing them out of the landscape. Their settlements along major rivers and the coastal fringe were visible enough, yet the landscape beyond the water's edge was considered, to reprise Wagner's comments, "more a backdrop for Native life than a focus of it" (1972:15). The evidence I have presented so far, however, paints a vastly different picture. Even if it fails to curtail more romantic perceptions of the coast traded on in popular literature, it makes its social place as wilderness "naturalized" less sustainable. Far from the primeval "hunting chase" of the Western gaze, we are now realizing how amazingly complex were the human-environment relationships that helped structure the social world (Ames 2005; Deur and Turner 2005).

Moreover, the wide geographic scale of environmental alterations and the unambiguous character of the archaeological and ethnographic evidence have forced us to rethink certain assumptions, such as the simple duality posited between hunter-gatherers and agricultural peoples and the presumed teleology connecting one to the other. At a more basic level, however, we have been

encouraged to recognize the Aboriginal landscape as an analytical distinction with the same credibility and historical weight attributed to peoples whose histories are written. (Would it not be unthinkable to separate the history of the English from the English landscape?) Significantly, this distinction has enabled the unraveling of colonial power structures. Providing much grist for the mill of decolonization, it has given voice to a tradition of land use and land ownership that undercuts the stereotypical view of Indigenous peoples with few vested interests away from the riverbank or shoreline.

At this point, however, we begin to encounter problems with the emerging narrative. In spite of having addressed earlier ethnocentric perceptions by putting people back into the landscape, our representations take a somewhat arbitrary line that does little to capture the complicated textures of social life. Rigidly categorizing the significance of place can all too easily limit understanding. As previously discussed, unyielding distinctions between sacred and profane, symbolic and mundane, or social and economic tend to drive wedges between different kinds of past human activity, generating shallow interpretations of landscape that belie the unpredictable and kaleidoscopic character of its inhabitation (Edmonds 1999a:8–9). Partly a product of very different disciplines and their preferred lines of questioning, these varied approaches to the landscape also reflect a broader philosophical dichotomy between history and science, particularism and generalization, event and process, and agency and structure (Williamson 2004:177).

It is important to remember that academic writing (my own included) is not divorced from its own agendas and the discourses in which it is situated (Shanks and Tilley 1987:105). Ironically, these distinctions seem to say more about us than people living in the past and continue to reflect many of the assumptions of colonialist writing (Williamson 2004). Principal among these is an implicit adherence to core-periphery models and the rather simplistic dichotomies they entail. While these models may be useful for understanding broad social and historical processes, such as a global view of market connectivity in the context of nineteenth-century capitalism, they inevitably caricaturize the periphery—the landscape—as a passive, primordial space dominated by its implied opposite, the insatiable dynamism of the colonial metropole. This position measures the history of the landscape by the force and vigor of colonizers who cultivated it as a reflection of their dominant agendas. The current interest in (re)constructing the Aboriginal landscape stems from many similar assumptions worth touching on here as a means of informing my intellectual tack in the following two chapters.

First, our interest in the historical and mythical dimensions of the Aboriginal landscape is actually much older than landscape studies would

presume. Of course, early writers were not concerned with the landscape as I have defined it but rather with salvaging place-specific details of belief systems popularly thought to be on the decline, a characterization that implied a clear distinction between the submissive colonial margins and the vibrant centers of colonial enterprise: London, Toronto, and, later, Vancouver. Ironically, while cultural anthropology successfully demonstrated the historical particularity of Northwest Coast peoples—in good part through recognizing the very different cultural takes on landscape vis-à-vis its mythical proportions—present understandings of this once dynamic and shifting place can acquire a certain flatness in ethnographic accounts.

A desire to record, collect, and control "at least part of their obscure history" (Boas 1887:428) before acculturation snuffed out this information resulted in a search for "canonical texts" (Darnell 2000:45–47), histories or myths yet untainted by modern interferences (see in particular Barnett 1975; Boas 1894; Duff 1997; Hill-Tout 1904; Jenness 1955; Wells 1987). Yet the desire to simplify and to control through description ultimately meant a process of distillation, as ethnologists were encouraged to produce a single "correct" version of each tribe's history and its ties to place (Clifford 1986). This objective persisted despite the fact that authoritative "tellings" were hard to come by when different informants, or even the same individual, offered different versions of the same story in different circumstances (e.g., Codere 1948; Duff 1952; Hymes 1985). Indeed, the perceived coherency of the tribe, its geographical associations, and its unwarranted historical prominence in the writing of Coast Salish ethnography are almost certainly a product of this distillation.

Extracting clean and unmediated traditions, then, became one of the main occupations of ethnographers as they sought to fix an ethnological map of different cultural traditions to the landscape. The map analogy suggests the situation of colonizers who must find their way around an unfamiliar landscape and are forced to compensate for lack of practical mastery by creating a static model (Bourdieu 1977:2). However, such a formulation of history, according to Marshall Sahlins, "proceeds more like Fenimore Cooper Indians, to use Elman Service's characterisation: each man as they walk single file along the trail, careful to step in the footprints of the one ahead so as to leave the impression of one giant Indian" (1987:37). The point here is that our scholarly writing has tended to emphasize the structural and systemic aspect of cultures without any real concern for the variability and texture of social relations at the scale of encounter (Hendon 2004:273). Our approach thus resembles a collecting mentality, more predisposed to the labeling and display of objects in glass cabinets than the understanding of how relations play out in the

contingency of social networks (see Gosden 1999:22). Colonial perceptions have worked to de-humanize the landscape, but our attempts to dispel these myths have to some degree replaced one spatial abstraction with another.

Second, questions arising from a different line of inquiry have reinvented and reframed the landscape. More recent efforts have focused on understanding the processes in prehistory that facilitated the social and cultural development of Native societies from what are commonly considered egalitarian roots to the culturally complex forms revealed in ethnography. Undermining earlier arguments that the landscape was little more than a surface facilitating the diffusion of people and ideas (e.g., Borden 1968) is the discovery that control of the natural world played a crucial role in the evolution of culture, particularly harnessing the seasonal availability of salmon (Ames and Maschner 1999; Matson and Coupland 1995; Suttles 1968; for a good review, see Ames 1994). With increased examination of environments beyond the water's edge, research has documented or explicitly theorized the multifaceted nature of prehistoric subsistence economies, which until recently has been largely dominated by arguments that stress riverine and maritime modes of production (e.g., Gottesfeld 1994; Lepofsky 2004; Martindale and Jurakic 2004; Prince 2001; Stryd and Eldridge 1993; Stryd and Feddema 1998; Turner 1998, 1999; see also papers in Deur and Turner 2005).

Characterizing these works as homogenous would be unfair, yet one can identify a central tenet that holds the culturally complex societies of the proto-historic period—those demonstrating institutionalized social hierarchies, sedentary villages with monumental architecture, and large populations—were significantly implicated in forms of environmental exploitation, particularly the control and intensification of resources. From this perspective, the landscape becomes important mainly as an index of production, the driver that fuels change in the social structure. In other words, the question of interest framing the landscape is "how did they finance complexity?" (Ames 2005:74).

This path of investigation, appropriate perhaps for general systemic models, does not greatly enable our understanding of how past communities inhabited and interpreted their worlds (Edmonds 1999b:485). Because the often declared priority is to seek generalizing models of social change, both the routine and exceptional qualities of past lives often slip through the cracks of this theoretical scaffolding. Emphasizing the landscape as a space of economic activity tends to obscure the varied ways in which landscapes were socially meaningful to those who inhabited them (Ingold 1993:152). Although we are right to view the landscape as a variable, our interpretations often reduce this variability to issues of dietary or medical value, risk buffering,

adaptation, and labor efficiency, concepts that speak little about human values. This is an important point because for all our knowledge about Indigenous land use practices, we have very little understanding of how the material culture of landscape management—ecological forms defined as a product of cultural intervention—and the social practices and work routines inscribed in such contexts helped reproduce, transform, or challenge past social orders.

On the history of archaeological research in Australia, Murray (2004b) remarks that the emerging story is a cumulative narrative of Native people harnessing the environment to create ever more complex cultural forms—a plotline that echoes the materialist history of the colonization of the Northwest Coast in the nineteenth century, a theme I will discuss in detail in chapter 8. The significant difference here is one of scale. The centers and figures of nineteenth-century colonial power had a global reach—London over the British Empire and, later, Victoria and Vancouver over British Columbia, for example. Similarly, but on a smaller scale, the central place of the village site on the Northwest Coast dominated a more circumscribed economic geography beyond its boundaries, forcing social life to subsist at the cultural oases of settlements where colonial discourse first located them. Social interaction was largely expressed and negotiated through the built environment of the iconic village site with its clutch of anthropological signifiers—totem poles, winter dances, big men, and potlatches, for instance—a historical approach that perpetuates a division between the social *place* of the village and worked *spaces* beyond.

Final Thoughts

Our attempts to rethink the popular historical perception of the Northwest Coast as one of North America's most rugged and untouched wildernesses have clearly met with some success. Contrary to tropes about the emptiness of its predominantly forested mantle, the Aboriginal landscape at the time of European contact was a place routinely trodden, inscribed through activity, and historically differentiated by its origins in the mythical past, a story that people could summon to navigate the social space of the present world. The social content of this landscape could be *read* as much as the enclosed and coppiced landscapes of old Europe. For the newcomer, however, the grammar was unfamiliar and thus frequently ignored (Dods 2002:487).

Still, as my preceding analysis suggests, assumptions grounded more in the historiography of European colonialism and its imperatives of control

than in the reflective, fine-grained, and dynamic nature of social life continue to construct the landscape. Strict divisions between the landscape of myth and the landscape of human alteration need to be recognized as arbitrary alignments. As Hirsch (1995:5) maintains, the problem with this form of binary categorization is that it makes polarized experience intrinsic to the landscape, obscuring the way that subjective views are continually reworked by relational concerns to enable new forms of meaning. The argument I develop in the next two chapters attempts to bridge this arbitrary bracketing by disbanding the conventional frame and approaching in the only way amenable to the mutable and multi-scalar character of social life: through the prism of encounter.

4

Beyond the Water's Edge

In the next two chapters I argue that the Aboriginal landscape should be seen not as a static backdrop to social life but as a medium for the creation of social worlds. From the character of the landscape, how it has been inhabited and shaped both materially and historically, we can infer other "ways of seeing." The values I emphasize are premised on the contingencies and affordances of encounter, how the concerns of situated groups and activities negotiated the meanings of the landscape, issues that relate directly to questions of social identity, relations of power, and who speaks for whom. While the analytical focus here is local, discussion is not circumscribed to particular locales; rather, I argue that meaning in the historical environment is always relational, always tied to other places and other scales of social activity.

In this chapter I examine the landscape histories of what others have referred to as the "archaeology of natural places" (Bradley 2000), beyond the conspicuous sites of settlement so crucial to the material culture of coastal peoples. In this context I show how the evidence of environmental modification and the shaping of plant communities in different parts of the Fraser Valley and beyond can be seen as indicators of not just subsistence intensification but of places with salient histories of use. Rather than impose the core-periphery imperatives an archaeology of natural places might necessitate, I attempt to demonstrate how this particular form of cultural appropriation, with its creation of patterning and ruptures in the land, may have been critical in negotiating and transforming past social worlds.[1]

Nature as a Social Artifact

Until very recently, archaeologies of Indigenous peoples have paid little attention to the human modification of landscapes and the shaping of ecologies as

social artifacts with symbolic import (Butler 1995; Head et al. 2002:176). Evidence in the form of charcoal lenses, pollen records, and forest structures, for instance, has largely been used to shed light on past environmental settings or to understand human impact on natural ecosystems. Less commonly has this material been viewed as a means for investigating environmental perceptions in the past (Butler 1995:16).

If evidence from history and anthropology is any indication, however, the human transformation of natural forms has never rendered the landscape a neutral backdrop. For example, in Georgian England carefully landscaped parks and sculpted gardens became symbols of polite society and power (Daniels 1988; Williamson 1995). Similar concerns with the visual character of gardens were imported to and developed independently in colonial America (Leone 1984). Even in colonial British Columbia, as I discuss in later chapters, the changing material character of the forest had a potent symbolic value. Gauging the import of modified landscapes in societies without written records is more difficult. Still, a number of studies are beginning to demonstrate that Indigenous peoples were highly attuned to the ways in which they shaped ecological structures and biogeography (Head et al. 2002; Gow 1995; Janowski 2003; Johnson 2000; Knight 1996). This research indicates an awareness of places historically modified by people as well as a keen sense of their temporality and their historical links to human practices.

Understanding how and why these kinds of places become meaningful partly hinges on how continuity or change in the landscape is acknowledged. The Northwest Coast evidenced different forms of transformation over time through both natural and human processes. Water erosion sculpted the mountainsides, making rivers and streams an important feature of the coast. The forests grew tall and old, rot set in, and wind (and occasionally fire) felled the giants, creating room for fresh growth. In certain places, such as the lower Fraser Valley, food-producing water meadows and mountainside berry patches lent the land a patchwork character: a managed and altered landscape that changed over time. Here a comprehensive network of trails pierced the understory and open meadows. Under the dark evergreen canopy were frequent signs of the felling of trees and their modification for bark and wood. Other places exhibited signs of burning and more aggressive transformations to clear undergrowth and to encourage browsing deer.

Making sense of these changes and their significance to people in the past is not an easy task. A palimpsest of temporally and spatially situated acts collapsed into the land itself is one way of interpreting their patterning. Ingold (1993, 2000) refers to this ensemble of related features as the "taskscape," a qualitative and heterogeneous array of landscape contexts that signify past

physical transformation. Wrought by human or natural processes, the peculiar character of the landscape resides in the ways it was used and embraced by others. Given that changes in the land were intertwined with routine practices of the annual round and that people may have returned to the same places, sometimes synchronizing their presence with others, they would likely have been attentive to the changing textures of the land and conscious of the practices and agencies that had helped engineer its shifting form. This appreciation was not passive; knowledgeable actors were themselves reactive agents who constructed new meanings in the process of their own dwelling (Ingold 1993:163).

The enduring or passing character of these changes over the space of lives or generations may signify social distinctions. Features that stand the test of time may suggest a sense of continuity with the past, whereas those that disappear may indicate ruptures. Material changes could represent past lives, identities, and other relationships (Thomas 1996:80). Patterns may not only signify particular meanings; rather, "there may be an entanglement of roles and values, as if different qualities . . . were pulled in and out of focus over time" (Edmonds 1999a:111). Material qualities of places, transformations in the land, and the practices that created change could either unite people or invoke the presence of sharp boundaries.

In the remainder of this chapter I examine these ideas by looking at two different case studies focused on the economic and social obligations of the seasonal round. The activities of the seasonal round are informative not only because they illustrate land use but also because they expose us to the landscapes of everyday practice, where both routine and extraordinary social relations can be observed.

Cedar Transformations

Through the late spring and summer—*temkw'ó:kw'es* (hot time)—groups from around the Strait of Georgia made their way into the forest to work cedar groves for wood and bark. The physical effects of their labor remain as distinctive visual reminders of the importance of wood in the monuments of Northwest Coast culture: the graceful dugout canoe, the ingenious shed-roof house, and the enigmatic house pole. In addition to these evocative wood artifacts derived from once ancient and magnificent trees, cedar was commonly exploited for bark.

Bark working was largely a task undertaken by women; the pliable inner bark of the cedar was used for making clothing, mats, masks, rattles, nets,

twine, blankets, towels, and rope, while the outer bark was valued for heavy-duty rope, fish traps, baskets, and fuel (Stewart 1984; Turner 1998:36–37; Stryd and Feddema 1998). Cedar stands that afforded the most suitable trees for stripping were returned to annually or every few years. The best trees were young with supple bark and few interfering branches, allowing ideally for long unbroken strips around seven meters but whose length could vary significantly (Stryd and Eldridge 1993:198). To remove the bark, an incision narrower than the width of the trunk was made at waist height, then pulled away from the base of the tree, exposing the living tissue of sapwood underneath. In response to this damage, trees produced large healing lobes that grew slowly over the edges of the scar. Older scars were evidenced by well-developed healing lobes, which eventually enveloped the scar and left little trace of its presence. This healing process could take decades or often hundreds of years (Stewart 1984; Stryd and Eldridge 1993).

The archaeology of forest utilization has provided us with some insight into the economic, geographical, and historical character of exploitation practices in the proto-historic forests of the Northwest Coast (Mobley and Eldridge 1992; Pegg 2000; Prince 2001; Stryd and Eldridge 1993; Stryd and Feddema 1998). Although spread out over wide areas, the heaviest stripping activity always clustered around places with the best trees, which in some cases were named. For example, T'ipiten, north of the Fraser Valley at the foot of the mountains on the western shore of Pitt Lake, translates as "a good place for gathering cedar bark" (Suttles 1955:18). And Sókw'ech, a small tributary stream located in the Fraser Canyon at Yale, means "cedar bark stream" (McHalsie 2001:148). Patterns of harvesting radiated from these places, creating tendrils of modification that followed pathways. In other places tree scars appeared as solitary or diffuse features in mixed stands of forest. What becomes clear in archaeological surveys is that bark-stripped trees were not necessarily close to settlements along the shoreline or river's edge. When good cedar stands were close at hand, their skin was sure to be prized, but people also traveled great distances, even into the mountains to attain bark, particularly from the yellow cedar used to make high-quality clothing. The Meares Island studies on the west coast of Vancouver Island revealed that although forest utilization was heaviest along the coast, considerable efforts were made to access bark from the interior area at elevations as high as 600 meters (Stryd and Eldridge 1993:200).

The spatial distribution of scars can tell us about strategies of bark harvesting, while ethnography reveals some of the more human aspects of this task. For example, Nancy Turner describes how bark stripping was typically associated with more enjoyable activities that turned a difficult and

time-consuming task into a social event. Singing may have eased the burden of work. One Haida song in particular roughly translates as "we want a long strip; go up high; go up high!" (Turner 1998:37). Others note the widespread animist relationship of Northwest Coast people and cedar trees, whose spirits were placated through ritualistic verse and supplicatory expressions to ensure a good supply of future resources (e.g., Mauzé 1998:241; Turner 1998:38; Turner and Peacock 2005:133).

These accounts do well to highlight the human scale of these practices but seem to avoid altogether the issue of landscape modification—the conspicuous signposts of tree scars themselves—maintaining, as I argued in the last chapter, a clear line between the materially productive landscape, evidenced in remains of bark stripping, and the arena of social relations. This would suggest that places prominently marked by human hands somehow escape the affective nature of sensory perceptions, effacing the possibility of dialectic between the historically worked landscape and routines of working. An awareness of cultural discourse, its symbols, taboos, and obligations, is clearly important. Yet failing to recognize how other forms of meaning become lodged in the land can result in interpretations that undervalue the improvisational character of social relations with the material world. These representations become thin, repetitive, and predictable, mental templates for beliefs and actions detached from the embodied world. The argument I develop below avoids such binaries and moves toward an understanding that dissolves distinctions between inner and outer worlds (cf. Ingold 1993:154).

Tree Scars as Social Boundaries

Not simply quarries where people gathered the raw substance of their material culture, groves of stripped trees could also come to symbolize the people who owned and worked them. While most were probably open to use by all, we know that certain kin groups controlled access to particular stands of cedar, with the most powerful owning the very finest. This not only gave them privileged access to resources, it may also have reinforced their identities on lines of social status, kinship, language, or dialect. Like other owned or maintained places in the land, such as camas beds or cranberry bogs (Suttles 1955:26; Turner et al. 2005:155–156), these areas were enmeshed in webs of family connections. Strangers were not permitted to use the trees without permission, so the same people tended to exploit the best gathering places over long periods.

The most remarkable aspect of these ostensibly mundane forest places was their ability to capture the imagination of those who worked the land.

Bark-strip scars are physical records, but as conspicuous objects they may also have been cues for memory and sources of metaphor. It is interesting to note that among archaeologists, the "stripping event"—the calendar date when the tree was harvested for bark, arrived at by counting tree rings—has become synonymous with bark-stripped scars themselves. However, rarely can archaeology pinpoint the dating of artifact manufacture to the timescale of Braudel's (1972) *histoire événementielle* (the history of events) as precisely as with bark-stripped trees. This is rather ironic because while scarred trees may be viewed as a static index of bark stripping, like events themselves, they may have been contested and interpreted in the past from more than one point of view, making history an ambiguous affair. As Sahlins (1987:27) argues, there is always a possible inversion between kinds of action and categories of relationships. Verbs can signify just as well as nouns, changing the structural order of meaning so that the significance of a thing can be illuminated from other angles. Our attention therefore should focus on the ways in which bark stripping and tree scars were fused with embodied routines of working; only through understanding the changing contexts of human engagement with patterns evident in the material world are we able to see something of how meaning can be transformed.

Good cedar stands were usually easily identified. Pathways leading to the trees could be well trodden and marked by carved blazes and other wayfinding devices. Scarred trees themselves stood out in stark contrast to the often muted tones of the forest floor. Due to their pale color, smooth texture, and height, they were visually prominent against the darker background of trees and understory of ferns and salal, making them in many situations ideal landmarks (fig. 4.1). As people returned to these places on a seasonal basis to repeat the tasks of seasons past, fresh trees were stripped, adding to the scale of the sites and engraving their history for all to see.[2]

Not every site had the same long history. Many indicated activities of more recent pasts. Signs of recent bark stripping may have raised issues for Native peoples about territorial rights and ways that respected the status quo, not dissimilar perhaps to the effect achieved by marking coastal garden plots (Suttles 1955, 2005; Turner et al. 2005). While Europeans often decried the lonely character of the forests, fresh scars and cut marks on the trees spoke to Natives of others: The forest was not an empty place. Who had stayed to gather bark? Were they kin from downriver? If the scars were fresh and the sap still running, perhaps they had missed meeting these people by only a few days.

FIGURE 4.1. A bark-stripped coastal cedar tree. (Photograph by Heather Pratt, collection of the author)

Analogues for the Ancestral Past

Other stands of worked trees displayed evidence of much older activity. Here veteran cedars may have stood as symbols of continuity and permanence in contrast to the relatively brief existence of humans. In European cultures trees have often been seen as metaphors for genealogical history (Davies 1988; Evans et al. 1999:251). As far as I am aware, this metaphor has not been directly observed in Northwest Coast cultures. Yet this view may have some currency when we consider that the Coast Salish, like their neighbors, believed that cedar trees were sentient beings. The progeny of an earlier Myth Age, cedar trees, many of which survive for over a thousand years, connected people in the present age and their place in the landscape (in terms of territory and kinship rights) with the events of the mythical past. The cedar's confident height may have reflected the age and strength of family lineages, as well as their continuity with perceived ancestors, its roots anchoring this network of kinship in the landscape. As Mauzé (1998:235–236) suggests, given the many life-sustaining properties that cedar trees possessed or were believed to have afforded, illustrated by the practice among some groups of placing afterbirth in the topmost limbs of a tree if they wanted a newborn to grow brave and courageous, it would not be surprising if they were also associated with the continuity of kinship lines.

That tree scars themselves can be seen as analogues to human generational time strengthens this speculative argument. Signatures of the presence of individuals from seasons past, scars may have been highly evocative of ancestors who once worked but no longer dwell in the land. Their presence was clearly marked by the very oldest scars, many of which were made hundreds of years before. As archaeological dating of bark-stripped trees on the coast confirms, older tree scars are not uncommonly one or two hundred years in age, with the earliest examples dating to the seventeenth century (Stryd and Eldridge 1993:216). Older scars generally belonged to the largest trees whose girths often exceeded that of many people and whose healing lobes matched their advanced age. These symbols of human presence were not regarded as static museum pieces; rather, the knowledge of how to prise strips of bark, forcibly raising or moving it, and the skilled practice of this activity were crucial. In this context, stripping bark may have been recognized as a performance connecting the living with generations past.

Modern Aboriginal communities claim a special attachment to these places. Haida carver Guujaaw suggests that they are memorials "to our ancestors who worked in the forest" that provided "a sense of communion with the old canoe makers" (Stryd and Feddema 1998:14). Similar sentiments have

been expressed by the Dakelh (Carrier) from the interior of British Columbia, who consider these trees sacred because they are evocative of genealogical kin (Joe Charlie, pers. comm. 2000; see also Mohs 1994:199). Such perceptions are not uncommon. While it might be argued that this way of seeing has more to do with the recent politics of an emerging pan-Aboriginal protest of what some see as the destruction of their cultural heritage, it nevertheless demonstrates the high visibility of these places, suggesting how human history implicated in the landscape can be remade to serve the agendas of people in the past.

Tending to the Land

Other places revealed more intensive management strategies. During the autumn—*temhilálxw* (time when the leaves fall)—when others harvested wapato crops and cranberry bogs near the river, many households made their way into the mountains to harvest patches of blueberry and black huckleberry. Berries were a vital source of food that could be eaten fresh or dried for the lean months ahead. Typically located on the lower south-facing slopes of the Coast and Cascade mountains, both above and below the tree line, these special places were nurtured and maintained like gardens. As Stó:lō informant Les Fraser recalled, there were "hardly any trees where the blueberries were" (Washbrook and Hallet 1997:4). Ethnographic sources indicate that kin groups from up and down the Fraser Valley gathered at the larger berry gardens late in the fall to work the patches and to hunt for game. Often family groups camped in common gatherings that could last anywhere between four days and four weeks (Duff 1952:73; Lepofsky et al. 2005:224). The late fall or spring after the harvest was marked by acts of burning the land to ensure there would be berries in years to come.

Interviews with elders capture a sense of the character of these places and of the practices that encouraged new crops and guarded against threatening pests. As one informant reminisced, "The old Indians ever since they started going there . . . every spring they would all climb up and burn the place down all over. Just burnt the whole, just like looking after a garden I guess. And then they go . . . next fall you have all them berries" (HA, quoted in Washbrook and Hallett 1997:4). Others have touched on the timing of these tasks and their importance to the harvest: "It was every third year they would burn the berries, burn the berry bushes right down. . . . Kill some of the beetles that used to get into them, into the berries (RG, quoted in Washbrook and Hallett 1997:5). Perched high above the Fraser Canyon north of Yale,

Syíyeqw (Burnt Mountain) or Qw'eywélh (Known for Berry Harvesting) (McHalsie 2001) exemplify toponyms indicating the uses of these places and their more fine-grained histories.

"There Were Special People Who Burned It"

Burning the land, while important to a good berry harvest, also symbolized and shaped social boundaries at different scales of social life. As burning was not practiced by just anyone, mountainside berry patches were also synonyms for those who possessed apposite skills and knowledge. More than any other form of landscape management, igniting a blaze on the mountainside and controlling the burn were tasks that bore great responsibility. As one elder confirmed, "There were special people who burned it, they know the weather, and they would go up and burn it just before it rained. And it had to rain, otherwise they'd burn the berry patch out" (LH, quoted in Washbrook and Hallett 1997:5).

Although requisite knowledge about the timing of the burn and the practical matters of fire control were probably taken for granted, people depended on these critical skills for an abundant harvest. Igniting and managing the blaze required both intelligence and expertise. It demanded a nuanced sense of ecological relations, the reactions of trees and bushes, and the successional nature of plant communities (Turner 1999:201). It also required a profound appreciation of the weather. Understanding the effects of wind and rain on the unpredictable contours of the mountainside was essential; the weather could be your greatest enemy, as well as your greatest friend. Recognizing the signs of seasonal change was essential to deciding when to burn. Once the fire was lit, the specialist bore the brunt of responsibility for an uncontrolled burn that could cause devastation to both berry patches and the surrounding forest. Memories from times past put this in sharper relief: "My father . . . used to clear some of the area that he wanted to burn. Clean all around it like a ring hey, so the fire won't go on the other side . . . he just wanted to burn just a certain area, and then that's what he did. And then, he had to wait till there's no breeze. . . . Even if you think there is no breeze, and you set a fire . . . that fire is just wild, it just goes" (AD, quoted in Washbrook and Hallett 1997:4).

Harvesting gardens was the work of households, but burning over the mountainside was the task of individuals. Social distinctions separating those who controlled the knowledge to burn from the uninitiated arose from these practices of modification. This knowledge translated into status, a respect

that transcended the achievement of physically taming the landscape and lent itself to forms of "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1977:41), which could be traded on in other contexts of interaction (Lepofsky et al. 2005:239). Still, we should be careful when making such attributions about identity. It does not follow that burning specialists were necessarily high-ranking individuals with the de rigueur accoutrements of material and symbolic wealth. Social status was a relational and shifting affair (Jenkins 1996) articulated in specific contexts where knowledge or material resources exerted forms of influence on others.

The role of the specialist in passing on his knowledge to younger generations cannot be overstated. Unique among activity-centered nodes, such as village sites or fishing grounds, a managed berry patch was a specific place where the role of teacher and student were implicated in the landscape itself. Here adherence to their contextually defined roles distinctly foregrounded identity, forms of ranking that were not necessarily resolved in the same way in other times and places, a dynamic that parallels Coast Salish society depicted in ethnography. For instance, among the Native groups of the upper valley, status was not necessarily derived from being high born, although this certainly helped. Status was linked instead to "personal qualities and abilities which were most highly regarded" (Duff 1952:80). Accordingly, aspects of personal identity were very much inscribed in topographies where individuals' skills were valued.

Respecting the Land, Respecting the Past

Related traditions of high-elevation management are found on other parts of the coast (e.g., Gottesfeld 1994; Turner 1999). Because this form of stewardship can be found in a variety of ecosystems, it "suggests that such practices are well integrated into the traditional ecological knowledge of coastal First Nations" (Lepofsky et al. 2005:218). Recent investigations of the prehistoric application of these methods to mountain landscapes by Dana Lepofsky and others (1996, 2005) not only confirm the recollections of elders but also suggest these practices exhibit significant continuity with the distant past. Charcoal collected from soil profiles in the Cascade Mountains east of the lower Fraser Valley, where burning is believed to have been conducted historically, and pollen-charcoal records from nearby lake sediments suggest a history of landscape management that dates to 2400 BP (Lepofsky 2005:239).

Surveys connected with this research indicate that former berry patches have become overgrown and difficult to identify since their abandonment

around the middle of the twentieth century. While evidence of landscape management is thin on the ground, successional growth displays a variable age structure in stark contrast to the more homogenous forests nearby. In these places second-growth trees of mountain hemlock display varied girths and heights clearly divergent from the same-age stands of the surrounding forest. This patchwork character is thought to indicate past localized areas of burning and, by deduction, former productive berrying grounds (Lepofsky et al. 1996).

Native elders consistently recall the open and cultivated feel of these places, commonly referring to them as gardens (Peacock and Turner 2000). Berrying grounds had an enduring quality like the well-used trails (Lepofsky et al. 1996:1) that connected them to the valley below. They would have shown clear signs of nurturing in clear contrast to the uncultivated ground of the forest nearby. A burn blackened the earth and the tree's base and roots but significantly exposed the land to sunlight. On lower slopes park-like forest stands allowed berry gardens to flourish in the understory, while above the tree line extensive and well-tended patches dominated alpine meadows.

Informant use of the term "garden" to describe the feel of these locales is revealing. A custom not uniquely related to dietary concerns or the never-ending food quest, keeping a garden may also have implied certain environmental values (Head et al. 2002:176; Johnston 2005). These principles are often taken for granted, however, and sometimes the underlying reasons for a tradition are not made explicit until the status quo changes. The abandonment of these practices by the middle of the last century is one such fault line that has helped expose the social significance of tending the land. In this context, memories of what berry patches used to be like are telling. Lillooet informant Baptiste Ritchie remarked: "[I]t seems the things that were eaten by our forefathers have disappeared from the places where they burned. It seems that already almost everything has disappeared . . . they have disappeared because the hills grew weedy and no-one seems to tend them, no one clears there as our forefathers did so thoroughly" (Swoboda 1971, quoted in Turner 1999:189–190). This is apparently not an idiosyncratic response. Indeed, earlier research on nineteenth-century Aboriginal fires in the northwestern United States reveals similar findings. Barrett and Arno (1982:649) note that fires were systematically set for the aesthetic value of "cleaning up refuse," not just to make hunting and travel more economical.

Seeing berry patches as a kind of European garden is clearly a linguistic borrowing from Western intellectual tradition and might be seen as evidence of how English and, more generally, European colonization have influenced Native culture since the nineteenth century. Still, the modern English

denotation, which distinguishes intensively cultivated land from wild nature, may not differ considerably from past Native peoples' conception of places cultivated and modified by humans, a position that resonates with certain linguistic structures. For example, we find Halkomelem words identifying plant species as invaders in a cultivated space: *sqə́lə́p* are "weeds" or "something bad or dirty in the ground," while *ć̓əsə́mələ̓p* seems to correspond literally to "weeds in garden" (Galloway 1993:581). What does appear to be different, and this is clearly implied by Ritchie, is the term "country," more akin to the way Aborigines in Australia understand this concept: a multi-dimensional place of people, animals, plants, the soil, and myths—critically, a place with both an origin and a future (Rose 1996:7–8). People had a fundamental responsibility to this place, almost as if it were a benevolent and sentient being. This notion is similar to what ethnographic sources suggest about Indigenous environmental values on the Northwest Coast in general (Turner and Peacock 2005:132–133) and among the Coast Salish in particular (Hill-Tout 1978:49). A distinction lies, however, in the clearly historically constituted nature of a relationship that situates people as knowing agents of a tradition of accountability to the land.

Colonial changes in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries resulted in the abandonment of Native burning practices that in some measure cultivated the forest, and Native peoples appear to have perceived the consequent unchecked growth of new forest as a kind of desocialisation. John Knight (1996) makes similar arguments about the forest plantations of highland Japan. Since World War II Japan's extensive conifer plantations have deteriorated due to a declining rural workforce and market downturn, resulting in many plantations taking on a wild character. This change from one forest type to another may be of little consequence to an outsider; however, Japanese foresters view this as a threat to a traditional way of life. As the landscape darkens, villages, crops, and cemeteries become susceptible to invading plants and animals. But even more important is the keen sense of loss for a tradition of maintaining the land passed on through the generations. Insofar as ethnographic accounts suggest pre-contact cultural values among coastal people, gardens and gardening may have represented the natural order of things. A cared-for landscape was a sign of respect, an aesthetic practice honoring past generations who worked the land as much as the land itself.

Changes over Time: Memories of Smallpox

Other more place-specific meanings may still be drawn from this example. The cessation of burning practices was part and parcel of the impacts of colonialism, but changes of similar importance can be inferred over one hundred years earlier. Between 1782 and 1783 a smallpox epidemic originating in Mexico hit the Strait of Georgia region, killing between two-thirds and three-quarters of the population (Boyd 1990; Harris 1997:18), a form of European contact that has received less attention than it deserves. Not only did it cripple kinship groupings, resulting in the abandonment of certain settlements, it would have significantly reduced Native abilities to tend the land[3] (Denevan 1992:379).

If the current physical conditions on the mountainside can be seen as a kind of visual palimpsest, with patches of successional growth standing as evidence of abandonment, then similar observations would certainly have been made in the past. The attention of anthropologists has recently turned to the ways that contemporary Indigenous communities are attuned to changes in biogeography. The Kelabit of Sarawak in Indonesia, for example, are well aware of human influence on the forest (Janowski 2003:35). In fact, many are able to determine how recently a forest has been cut and when it began to grow again because of their tactile knowledge of cultivation history and plant succession. For instance, "big" forests are made up of old trees and are likely to be visited by men for "wild" food and handicraft materials. On the other hand, "little" forests, made up of young second-growth trees, are recognized as places that had until recently been dominated by agriculture. A similar awareness of change has been noted among Australian Aborigines (Head et al. 2002). Places used historically as yam gardens are recognizable because of their undulating ground surface, a result of the characteristic holes from which yams are dug. The number of holes indicates the antiquity of a regularly used site, whereas a site that has remained unused for many years would have become overgrown.

Like fishing sites, berry gardens were tied to kinship networks. Hence, picking places were often tended by and associated with particular families. Even if these places were not owned as were hereditary fishing stations, household units did not randomly tend different berry gardens. Due to investments from seasons past, kin groups became associated with particular places. However, as populations became devastated, never to replace their pre-contact numbers again (at least not until well into the twentieth century), the management of these places would arguably have been seriously diminished, with many picking places abandoned and recolonized by new

growth. Gardens abandoned after smallpox would have looked similar to those deserted in the early twentieth century (as observed by Native elders above). Where they remained in seasonal use, people would have become intimately aware of adjacent former picking places slowly being recolonized by the forest.[4]

In this context, forest regeneration represented an abrupt desocialization, as I have argued above. Moreover, successional plant communities as a cultural artifact may have become a symbol for lives lost, even those of whole generations. The physical transformation of the landscape is associated with the memory of past activities and people, and if management practices are not maintained, these relationships will ultimately fade over time (Head et al. 2002:189).

Conclusions

In a world where rapid technological innovation, mass consumerism, and an omnipresent media bring news to our ever-expanding metropoles, one could be forgiven for privileging the city as the engine of social and historical change and viewing the rest of the world as a backwater or space to supply its excess. This chapter nevertheless questioned some of the assumptions we commonly attribute to peripheries, the spaces beyond settlement, arguing that they were highly consequential to the shaping of history and society.

My reading of the Aboriginal landscape purposefully moved beyond clichéd positions, the colonial caricature of the village site as the center of social life. Instead, I focused on the activities and landscapes of the annual round, contexts that created a variety of social distinctions. I have argued that we cannot extricate the mechanical aspects of subsistence practice from their social and historical qualities. The latter are important concerns, but they cannot be segregated from the ways that landscape was experienced, as they involve the creation of categories and distinctions in worlds that are themselves socially defined (Ingold 1980:120). Limitations on environmental data and ethnographic information prevent us from learning everything. If, however, we accept the premise that the material world and the social sphere are inseparable, then an archaeology of routine life provides a point of departure for exploring the social content of these places beyond the water's edge.

In the next chapter I continue the theme of encounter but shift tack to consider how the lived experience of the annual round helped negotiate the storied landscape of the mythical past as reproduced through the tellings of

oral history. Moving beyond the more localized readings of the lived world that I have dealt with in this chapter, I also explore how the wider world, especially European influences anticipating the colonial displacements of the nineteenth century, infringed upon and meshed with the landscape of the Aboriginal past.

5

Between Stories and the Landscape

Anthropology relies heavily on interview testimony to expose cultural saliencies, and research revealing the mythologies, dreams, and epic formulations of ritual sagas associated with different places in the Aboriginal landscape is no exception. During the 1960s, Oliver Wells, one of the Fraser Valley's most prominent historians of Native life, recorded on his reel-to-reel tape recorder dozens of interviews with Chilliwack and neighboring tribal elders. The stories were related under controlled conditions set apart from the landscape itself, usually under the roof of Well's family home at Edenbank farm, where his informants imparted the history of their peoples over cups of tea. Taped, transcribed, and later published after his untimely death, this collection offers an invaluable record of place-specific traditions, what he might have referred to nostalgically as the last vestiges of an authentic Indian life.

Wells's interview sessions provide a number of analogical insights on the process of legitimizing historical traditions. Of interest here is not only the content of the message but also the material conditions of the telling. Although Wells's informants narrated their stories in a farmhouse in an agricultural setting, hardly an authentic backdrop, the context of these occasions was not completely divorced from the geographically defined and performative quality of storytelling that would have prevailed a century earlier. These events had their own spatial and temporal anchoring that shifted people from the task of food procurement and other social obligations into an arena mediated by powerful tribal historians who served as arbiters of history. Recognizing that such events were often tied to structured social contexts raises questions about whether the storied landscape could change when the roles of narrator and audience were not so clearly defined.

We know from chapter 3 that tribal traditions were narrated for particular occasions and could vary with the message storytellers wanted to stress.

Moreover, I have suggested that ethnographic distillation has privileged particular versions of tribal history at the expense of others that may in retrospect have provided more singular views of Aboriginal history than those gleaned from other sources. Historians of all stripes face in varying degrees problems arising from fragmented evidence and generalizations. Yet arriving at an appreciation of the Aboriginal landscape is made all the more difficult by the fact that what evidence we do possess was largely assembled by those who wielded a certain degree of power. Returning to the assertion I weave throughout this book—the routine practices of everyday life gave considerable meaning to the landscape and its denizens (Borofsky 1987:136–138; Sahlins 1987:51–52)—we may find significant disjunctures between tribal discourse and ways of seeing created through the situated experience of place.

Drawing on a well-known Coast Salish origin tradition, this chapter contrasts the framing of the storied landscape as related by a respected tribal historian with how it might have been experienced in material terms through embodied practice on the ground. This allows us to examine the different conditions of production for Native history and identity, how they perpetuated a particular view of history and became entangled in the material world in sometimes ambiguous and unexpected ways. The issues I raise have further implications. It is sometimes said that the storied landscape is unchanging and sedimented "in place" (e.g., McHalsie 2001), but by considering landscapes' connections to other places and times, this chapter will also reveal how broader-scale processes and events transcending more local interaction networks informed oral traditions. This emphasis allows me to bridge the gap between the Aboriginal landscape and that which was mediated through contact with Europeans around the turn of the nineteenth century.

Spaces for Storytelling

Although stories were apparently common in every contour of the Aboriginal landscape, they were not necessarily consumables to be traded informally. Storytelling had a particular timing and spacing embedded in the wider context of the annual round. The warmer months of the year were devoted to tasks such as food getting and other subsistence requirements; the cold months were the time for gathering, reflection, and renewal. Marked by a return of household and conjugal groups from their dispersed summer and fall camps to the winter village, the cold season was commemorated by hosting social exchanges and breathing new life into old traditions. As Hymes (1990:593)

reminds us, fireside gatherings were the expected venues for the transmission of traditions (see also Lerman 1976:95). These were special places where the extended family became reacquainted with affinal ties and ancestors, where storytellers animated the past according to contemporary concerns.

Not just anyone could tell the stories. So great was this responsibility that the honor was accorded to only the most respected elders, who memorized and guarded this knowledge (Cruikshank 1997; Wells 1987). In the formalized context of longhouses, the storyteller's role as an intermediary of social organization helped distinguish insiders from outsiders, placing their descendents within the wider context of historical and geographical relations. Thus knowledge about the past and its concomitant ties to power flowed from the top down, from storytellers to everybody else.

At the fireside the storied landscape resounded with the histories of the most powerful family groups—*smelá:lh* or "worthy people," who knew their history (Carlson 1996a:89–91). For smelá:lh, who may have represented about half the Indigenous population, the landscape of the valley spoke of epic accounts of world building from the Myth Age and places where resources had been put at the disposal of the present world. It also spoke of the names they possessed legitimating these claims. Reified through the publication of ethnographies in the early twentieth century, tribal discourses naturalized the notion of the cognatic kin group as the appropriate marker of social distinction, a boundary dependent on a defined territory set down in the Myth Age. Of course, traditions have always served to naturalize power, since grand narratives, whether exhibited aurally or textually, tend to be controlled by those in charge (Tonkin 1992).

Accounts of the heroic deeds of certain descendants may work to diminish the exploits of society's less powerful, yet they do not necessarily suppress the production of alternative histories. Even the least respected in society created distinctions between themselves and the landscape, features as important to them as totemic geographies were to the plotlines of authority. Dominant histories may eulogize the Myth Age, extol the genealogies of powerful kin lines, or condemn acts of tribal transgression, but common folk, too, had stories to tell. They incessantly "talked story" about their scores of contemporary relations, relating not just mundane news but also what canons of value deemed significant (Sahlins 1987:51).

Interestingly, in marked contrast to the much discussed definition of the closed tribe, anthropologists have stressed the fluid and spatially diffuse nature of kinship relations whose social and economic ties frequently transcended any notion of the bounded local group (Duff 1952:95; Suttles 1955:14; 1968:65). As Suttles observes, one of the most interesting con-

tradictions of Coast Salish culture is the "breadth of social and ceremonial relationships that one small community may have with other communities" despite "the narrowness and intensity of its spiritual and economic relationship to its own small territory" (1955:14). In different arenas of social life, historical relationships developed between peoples and places that were enacted at more intimate scales of encounter. These included the experiences of *s'téxem* (worthless people), lower-status families, poor people, slaves, and others who had "forgotten their history" (Carlson 1996a:90).

Stalking the Storied Landscape

Attempts to trace the chatter that registers below the decibel of oral traditions involves unpacking the authority of particular narrations and the reifying ethnographic practices that unduly amplify their meanings. Anthropologists now commonly accept that oral traditions are not primordial structures or objects exterior to the interests and agendas of storytellers and their audiences, as Levi-Strauss influentially argued (Tonkin 1992:98). Work in this area has persuasively contended that the positionality of both narrators and audiences variously frames the meaning of stories (e.g., Basso 1984; Bierwert 1999; Cruikshank 1997; Hymes 1985; Tonkin 1992). Drawing from this body of scholarship, Basso's (1984) work on storytelling and Western Apache place names is particularly inspiring.

Similar to Northwest Coast tradition, place names in the Apache world are considered inseparable from the stories that give the landscape meaning, which the elders use to teach their people lessons about respectful living. As Basso maintains, the impact of the narrative does not end with the conclusion of the story but endures in discussion of places and their significance. Thus the storied landscape is said to "stalk" people who relate these messages to their own experiences. Consequently, places enter the life pathways of individuals in fluid and novel ways that may be quite different from their originally intended meanings.

Although Basso (1984:34) suggests that the meaning of myths and historical narratives commonly employed in teaching is often negotiated, this may say more about the disproportionate attention devoted to linguistic analysis than about the diverse range in which people engaged the storied landscape and drew meaning from it. The socially consequential nature of place is constructed not through language alone but also through phenomenological experience. As I argued in the last chapter, we cannot neatly isolate histories to which varied forms of environmental inhabitation give rise.

These tensions, and the identities they inform, are grounded in interaction occurring in different times and places at different scales of social existence. Consequently, the Aboriginal landscape and its mythical proportions gain legitimacy not only in the skillful narration of the storyteller that actively engaged listeners but also according to the creative ways stories intervened when people were out on the land.

"The Katzie Book of Genesis"

Members of the Katzie continue to live at the eponymous winter village sites (Q'éytsi'i) on the banks of the Fraser River. Prior to the massive colonial resettlements of the later nineteenth century, the Katzie's traditional territory could be found in the marshy lowlands and points of higher ground between the Fraser River in the south and Pitt Lake to the north. The antiquity of the winter village is disputed (Boas 1894; Duff 1952:24), but historical maritime charts firmly place the village at its current location by 1860, and it was likely located there shortly after the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Langley was established in 1827. By the 1880s the settlement was home to ten different households that maintained a total of eighteen longhouses on the site (Suttles 1955:8–10).

In 1936 a Katzie elder, Old Pierre (Thalhecten), told the longest and most comprehensive origin story ever recorded in Halkomelem to ethnographer Diamond Jenness (1955) (Bierwert 1999:75). Titled by Jenness "The Katzie Book of Genesis," this essentially sustained chronology of origins details how the present landscape is indebted to the works of the mythical ancestor Swaneset. There are commonalities between Old Pierre's telling and other Coast Salish origin stories, notably the presence of Xexá:ls, who continued the deeds of world making in the second half of the narrative. Still, because the tradition offered few details about events outside Katzie territory, Jenness viewed the story as a distinctly Katzie version of events, particularly the first part of the narrative in which the "benevolent" Swaneset created the landscape. Of primary interest here are Old Pierre's precise details about the origin of the storied landscape, beginning with the conspicuous feature of Sheridan Hill, which he describes as "that mountain you can see from the back of my house" (quoted in Jenness 1955:10).

According to Old Pierre, the world came into being when "He Who Dwells Above" sent Swaneset down from the sky world to Sam'é:ént (Sheridan Hill) to set things in order for the present age. Two other ancestor beings appeared in Katzie territory with Swaneset, yet the narrative is quick to dis-

miss their importance next to the deeds of Swaneset, who was the world builder. First, he cut the sloughs and rivers into the land for drainage, making it suitable for berries and roots to grow (Jenness 1955:12–13). After a sojourn to the sky world, Swaneset returned to the valley and decided to destroy Sheridan Hill, smashing it with a sling so that others could not ascend to the sky world from its lofty heights.

> [The Katzie ancestor] dispersed the people, and went to a place called Sts'alqas (sling) at the head of Sturgeon Slough. With the first boulder that [Swaneset] cast from his sling he knocked off the top of the [Sheridan Hill], hurling it into Pitt River, where it became a small island still known as [Tátmáthálem] (the chip). His second stone struck the side of the mountain, knocking off a fragment that became a hill, to-day called [Yi'ye] (the wrong side), because he had not intended to hurl it thither. The third stone missed the mountain altogether and fell near Siwash Island; it is the hill, 200 feet high, that we call [Th'ámth'ámqw'elá] (the level place that offers a good camping-ground). The fourth stone also missed and became the hill called Ti'cnəc (bay), just below Gillies' Quarry. The fifth stone struck Sheridan Hill half-way up its face and knocked the upper portion north of Addington Point, where it became the hill known as [Xwam'a'man] (the mark for generations to come). The sixth stone knocked away still another portion of the mountain, giving rise to a hill, north-east of the last one, known as [P'ena's] (derived from the middle). One stone he omitted to use; it still lies where he left it—a hill between Alouette River and Sturgeon Slough. (Old Pierre, quoted in Jenness 1955:16)

Although Xexá:ls would further change the landscape, Swaneset is clearly charged with the more Herculean effort of shaping its physical form. Metaphorically linking the constellation of place names with the actions of their ancestor, the story appears to offer an unambiguous connection between the mythical past and the present world, a view that Suttles (1955:8–11) suggests implicated Katzie identity in a shared use and perception of this space.

Despite the different context of narration, an interview at the behest of an ethnographer, the story is still indicative of a tradition that encouraged a common vision of cultural origins. Varying stories or versions of events likely vied for supremacy over time, aptly illustrating how historical truths are rhetorically constructed at particular historical moments. Crisca Bierwert demonstrates how the context of the telling of the Katzie Book of Genesis helped it achieve the status of a "preserved" and "true esoteric faith" of the Katzie people. In a revealing piece of narrative deconstruction, Bierwert's

(1999:77–83) parsing of the text reveals a series of language shifts and strategies of emphasis that enhance its legitimacy. For example, she observes how Old Pierre employs asides and judgment calls to clarify possible points of confusion and cast meaning in a particular light. She illustrates how Pierre establishes a sense of present-day documentation making the plotline more current and immediate when, for instance, he tells his audience that people transformed to stone have actually been seen in remembered time. Thus we can see how the narration links Swaneset's actions with the creation of places presently visible in the landscape, a strategy that regards them not as passive landmarks but rather as sources of material comfort for posterity. Elucidating the authorial voices in the text that slant, subvert, and highlight knowledge about the past, Bierwert concludes that "Pierre's is [only] a partial authority informed by a text that is larger than any one life, informed by a landscape and a history that is larger than any one text" (Bierwert 1999:83).

Bierwert's conclusions about the partiality of the Katzie genesis provide room for rethinking the storied landscape. Drawing on Basso's notion of how stories could stalk people in their everyday lives, I will explore how the view on the ground, where the mind's eye is set free to range the land, can rework the world ordered through storytelling. Examining varied forms of evidence, including elements of landscape survey, I attempt in what follows to shed light on how the complex mobilities of the Katzie annual round promoted particular ways of perceiving the environment that had important social consequences.

Between "The Katzie Book of Genesis" and the Landscape

Family groups venturing from the village to their traditional spring fishing grounds marked the end of winter, a time of replenishment that brought with it renewed dialogue between people and places. For the Sqawá:átselh, a household normally resident at the Katzie winter village, it would have been time to travel north to the sloughs at the outlet of Pitt Lake in the shadows of the Coast Mountains, where its members traditionally camped to catch white sturgeon (Suttles 1955:10). Between Q'éytsi'i and Pitt Lake were low-lying wetlands and a series of navigable channels that since prehistory afforded access to more remote parts of the valley north of the Fraser River (fig. 5.1). Cedar dugout canoes, probably the shovel-nosed variety suited to poling in rivers with shallow depth and narrow beam, provided conveyance for the household and their belongings (Suttles 1990:462). Canoe travel also presented a particular type of mobility well-suited to reflection.

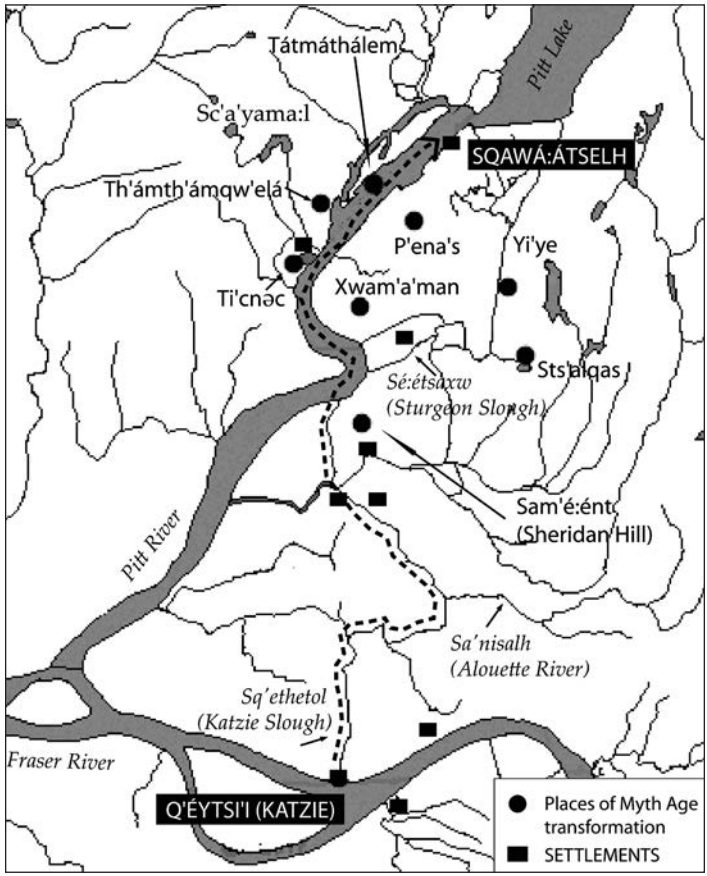


FIGURE 5.1. Katzie territory, an area of wetlands and navigable channels between the Fraser River and Pitt Lake. (Adapted from Suttles 1955:16)

Typically a day's journey, more if travel was punctuated by social visits, this trek would have been an important time to contemplate the places and activities that lay ahead: the sloughs where they would release trawl nets, the aquatic wapato root plots and cranberry bogs they would tend later in the season, and the animated atmosphere of negotiations surrounding the exchange of these goods when people from other places turned their attentions to this corner of the world (Burley 1980:64). This was also a time to consider the landscape and the stories it held. As the Sqawá:átselh poled north toward the lake along Katzie Slough (Sq'ethetol), a shortcut slicing between the central highlands of Pitt Meadows to the west and Maple Ridge to the east (Suttles 1955:10),

Old Pierre's story began to take physical shape, revealing itself to the travelers through its tangible embodiment in the landscape.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, European observers described this landscape as meadowland prone to flooding, sweeping "gracefully from the very edge of the river towards the distant line of forest and mountain" (Douglas, quoted in Collins 1975). Dominated by drained farmland, primarily pasture and cranberry operations, the contemporary landscape is a vastly different place from the wetlands described over a century and a half ago, yet its relative openness still provides clues about how one's vision might have been directed to and settled on places of importance. The undulating terrain, the defined river channels and sloughs, as well as the gentle rocking of the canoe, conditioned and enabled different ways of seeing. The storied landscape faded in and out of view with some features holding the eye for a time while others remained obscured.

Toward the mountains, evergreen-clad Sheridan Hill (Sam'é:ént) rose out of the marshlands (fig. 5.2). When not obscured by marsh grass or willow stands, it would have been visible for much of this journey. As depicted in the fireside telling, Sheridan Hill was at one time the tallest mountain in the world, assuming its present rounded shape with gentle eroded slopes only after Swaneset shattered it with his sling stones. For the accomplished traveler, however, it may have been more significant for its height above the floodplain, a beacon orienting household members in the wider landscape and reminding them of the distance still to travel. Significantly, even when high clouds veiled the surrounding mountains, reducing them to a muted backdrop—a common occurrence on this wet coastline—the stark outline of Sheridan Hill would have constituted a constant landmark of relatively low elevation.

A conduit through the marshlands from the Fraser River, Katzie Slough terminates at the westward flowing Alouette River (Sa'nisalh). At this point in the journey, canoes would have been carried downstream in the direction of the setting sun through a landscape marked by the annual cultivation of wapato, probably the work of different households (Spurgeon 2003:248). After a short passage of a few kilometers, the Sqawá:átselh would have left behind the more restricted waterways as they entered the wide Pitt River and continued their journey upstream. With Sheridan Hill visible to the east a short distance from the river bank, the hillock Xwam'a'man (The Mark for Generations to Come) likely began to command attention, an island clad in evergreens rising above the marsh, created when Swaneset's fifth stone took a colossal chunk out of Sheridan Hill (fig. 5.3).

Other topographical features vied for attention at this stage of the voyage: the mountain Sc'a'yama:l above Munro Creek, looming over the west bank

FIGURE 5.2. Sheridan Hill (Sam'é:ént). (Photograph by the author)

of the Pitt River, for example. Xwam'a'man and its hedge of trees were also close enough to afford a more intimate view. An outpost of dry land, particularly during the late spring when the surrounding lowlands were inundated, this place may have served as not only a material affirmation of historical truth but also a place to rest and gather supplies. Indeed, given the high incidence of woodworking artifacts found in this waterlogged environment, including celts, mauls, wedges, and hand abraders (Hammond 2006:12), it may have offered one of the most accessible places for bark stripping and wood prising. These materials would have been routinely required for making and repairing vital equipment such as fishing nets.

Farther north along the river, with Sheridan Hill at their stern and Xwam'a'man at their bow, travelers would see Sturgeon Slough (Sé:étsaxw), a place well regarded for sturgeon fishing where Swaneset found his sling stones, come into view on the eastern bank. Stories of the recent past extolled sturgeon as long as canoes captured there and divided among the best fishermen. It was also an important summer camp for a different Katzie household (Suttles 1955:10), and as intermarriage between households was common, the people who camped here may have been regarded as close kin, presenting an opportunity for interaction and dialogue before continuing to the lake. Upstream, P'ena's (Derived from the Middle), another low hill, emerged. Created by the sixth sling stone but much smaller than Xwam'a'man, its evergreen crown would have been just visible to the east,

FIGURE 5.3. Xwam'a'man (The Mark for Generations to Come). (Photograph by the author)

hovering over marsh grass that covered the flooded banks, a sign perhaps that the journey was nearing its end. Also at this point along the watery pathway, the soaring thousand-meter wooded ridge of Sc'a'yama:l may have garnered attention, the steep slopes of its evergreen mantle rising almost vertically from the opposite river bank, literally overshadowing testimony to Swaneset's world building and possibly invoking discussion about its own origins.

Near the headwaters to the lake and within sight of the household fishing grounds, the closing acts of Swaneset's endeavors might have been seen to conflict with the geographies germane to everyday life as these came to compete for attention. On the downstream side of what is today called Siwash Island sat the tiny islet of Tátmáthálem (The Chip), the remains of Sheridan Hill's former peak. And on the west bank of the river was Th'ámth'ámqw'elá (The Level Place that Offers a Good Camping-Ground), where the third stone came to lie. However, as Suttles's map and ethnographic notes clearly indicate, places and activities of greater consequence to the rhythms of life on the lake could also be found here. There was Shi:oy'lexwá, for example, a seeress Xexá:ls transformed into a prominent tree stump. She controlled the weather at this place, and people who wanted rain or sun approached her with requests and bestowed gifts of dried salmon.

There was also the old crabapple tree where the river met the lakeshore. People who ate its toxic fruit, it was said, would break wind until they died (Suttles 1955:19). Perhaps more significant to the journey's close was the promise of a new season on the lake and cooperative forms of labor that would bring people together in ways that cut across broader social distinctions. In addition to the renewal of relations with others who would come to fish, there were ritual observances to be paid to the sturgeon, which the Sqawá:átselh believed to be their *a'lix* (sister), anticipating the gender-specific chores of repairing set and trawl nets (Suttles 1955:21–22). All these activities pushed the storied landscape of world building aside, at least for a time.

Discussion

My *placing* of the details of sensorial experience are derived from an imperfect record; it is nevertheless possible to observe significant differences between the storied landscape as presented in oral history, what I have called tribal discourse, and the ways the landscape was experienced. This is because "cosmologies are not just abstract intellectual entities, but have practical consequences through informing peoples' actions and helping them to make sense of changing circumstances" (Gosden 1999:19). As Howard Morphy (1993, 1995) argues, the landscape is not simply a referent or signpost for past events. Rather, people assimilated knowledge about the past sedimented "in place" according to their subjective experience (Morphy 1995:189) that shaped how the landscape was seen. Storytellers at winter gatherings guided audiences' interpretations of the landscape, but on the ground people were exposed to variables beyond the storyteller's control, becoming in these contexts the authors of their own histories. At finer scales of resolution, this could give rise to very personal meanings, most of which are difficult if not impossible to uncover. However, looking at the social category of the household, which routinely lived and worked together, enables some firmer conclusions based on how these groups connected with and lived in certain places.

The pathways of the annual round may have been part of an inscribed household route that in itself offered a personal sense of belonging different from the authorized tribal history. Traveling from place to place in the course of this cycle was not a random process but a historically constituted act. Its rhythms were linked to the changing seasons, the routes followed and places visited in accordance with pathways laid down by genealogical ancestors. Given the tethered form of mobility practiced between winter

and summer settlements and the multiple locations visited along the way, it is not surprising that such journeys had symbolic dimensions. Pathways were not non-places. As Bender (2001) argues, landscapes-on-the-move and places-in-between could be as evocative as places with more formal histories and social rules. Travel along these sinuous lines through sloughs and along rivers had its own material quality insofar as it defined parameters of interaction between different scales of social grouping and the land.

Each household group residing at the Katzie winter village had a different seasonal pathway. The one I have attempted to sketch for the Sqawá:átselh not only reordered the events in the story but created a partial account of Swaneset's endeavors. Other named features, including the hills Yi'ye (The Wrong Side) and Sts'alqas (The Hill from which Swaneset Cast His Stones), lay outside of the sensorial boundaries of this conduit. A plan view of these movements might be expressed by a wandering line radiating out from the winter village, only to fall back on itself late in the year, signaling a return to the Fraser River. Other households, each with its own traditional pathways, engaged in similar activities so that the pattern on the map began to resemble the thin looping patterns of unraveled string, with the occasional knot tied at the places where people camped and came together for certain activities. In this way, varied and sinuous routes enabled situated readings of the storied landscape, unlike the metaphorical thick bold line of Elman Service's Fenimore Cooper Indians where everyone follows the same well-trodden pathway (Sahlins 1987:37). Enacted in the itineraries of households, the storied landscape existed not as static space "but as nodes in a matrix of movement" (Ingold 2000:219).

Social distinctions based on the embedded patterning of seasonal movements would have had a significant impact on house groups, which spent much of the year away from aggregated village life. Traversing the land from one place to the next, they internalized the events as revealed in Old Pierre's story in very different ways, reworking and reinventing the framework of the story. For those whose lives played out over this space, the storied landscape was at once familiar and different, and the patterning of movement would have become an important parameter for thinking about the landscape and its history (Snead 2002:757). Accordingly, identities became affiliated with different pathways, erecting social boundaries between insiders and outsiders. This is not to suggest that the annual round exclusively determined the character of interaction with the landscape. Momentous events could cause routine patterns to shift. Marriage, for example, usually but by no means rigidly patrilocal (Duff 1952:79; Suttles 1955:28), gave impetus to the splicing of lines of movement and the joining of others.

The intent here is not of course to savage the broader social boundaries the performance of storytelling mediated. While attempting to emphasize the openness and flexibility of the storied landscape, I am aware of its firmly grounded aspects that provided a sense of stability in times and places where it mattered. Agency, which facilitates the reworking of the social fabric, is not necessarily intentional or autonomous, so representations of the world are not inevitably grounded in personal desire. Because people are to a certain extent wedded to deeply embedded relations of social acceptability, limitations on how we see the world are only to be expected (Brück 2001:661). On this note, it should be mentioned that despite household seasonal patterns of movement negotiating the storied landscape in various ways, the striking feature of Sheridan Hill (Sam'é:ént), visible across much of the lowlands, appears to have been a conspicuous reference point common to the different household pathways during at least some part of the year. As the place where Swaneset came down from the sky world to make everything right for people of the present age, it may have been seen as a symbolic anchor for a broader sense of Katzie identity that reinforced the tribal discourse reproduced at winter gatherings.

The Katzie Book of Genesis demonstrates how and why histories that provided unambiguous evidence of the past—stories that "everybody knows" (Cruikshank 1997:59–60)—may have been construed and internalized in ways not entirely consistent with tribal history. Away from the more formal settings of the winter village, away from the times and places of storytelling in which a select few attempted to carefully reproduce the canon, other rhythms of movement created conditions for localized and situated understandings of place, giving rise to new interpretations of the prevailing social order.

The Aboriginal Landscape and the Wider World

So far in this chapter I have shown how history works in different social arenas and how various tensions and forces may intensify or minimize social boundaries. Pursuing this line of reasoning, we must also see stories like the Katzie Book of Genesis not as a corpus of knowledge unchanged from time immemorial but as a product of social transformations and historical recombinations that articulate local power struggles as well as broader-scale influences. The turn of the nineteenth century was a significant period of change on the Northwest Coast. Two influences in particular—contact with European fur traders and the communicable diseases that preceded their arrival—were catalysts of transformation likely without precedent in pre-contact times

(Carlson 1996b; Acheson 1995; Fisher 1977). By paying closer attention to the narrative details of the telling and by considering Suttles's (1955) own observations in addition to the accounts of fur traders, I suggest that the Katzie Book of Genesis may be a reworking of earlier traditions, masking more complex changes in the landscape itself.

Old Pierre's narration begins by identifying the different mythical ancestors that came down from the sky world and the named landmarks by which their descendent kin were known. There was Swaneset, who descended from the sky world at Sam'é:ént (Sheridan Hill), and his descendants who gathered below it at Sé:étsaxw (Sturgeon Slough). "He Who Dwells Above" also created two additional ancestors: Xwthepecten and Thalhecten. Xwthepecten was created at Ts'íxwt (Port Hammond), whose name according to Old Pierre no longer held any meaning for the Katzie (Jenness 1955:12). The origins of Pierre's household lie with the third ancestor, Thalhecten, who came down from the sky world at Sqawá:átselh (Pitt Lake), where he transformed his daughter into a sturgeon for the use of generations to come (Jenness 1955:12). Thalhecten's feats of world building are curiously few though and seem pedestrian in comparison with Swaneset's achievements.

Although the tradition recorded by Jenness mentions only three founding groups, all of which Swaneset eventually gathered together at the Katzie village, two decades later Suttles interviewed Old Pierre's son, Simon Pierre, who revealed no less than ten separate families who had settled together in eighteen different houses by the 1880s. In addition to the eponymous house groups of Sé:étsaxw (Sturgeon Slough), Ts'íxwt (Port Hammond) and Sqawá:átselh (Pitt Lake), Suttles (1955:10) recorded the names of the other seven (along with their summer camp sites):

> Ts'áyeam (Munro Creek)
> Spi'ltxw (On the North Alouette River, a short distance above its junction with the main stream)
> Sa'anesa'lh (On the Alouette at the mouth of the North Alouette)
> Axwa' n' sa'a'nasa':l (On the Alouette a half-mile above the mouth of the North Alouette)
> Spipxelmexw (On the hillside northeast of Katzie)
> T'tlê'natstan (On the hillside northeast of Katzie)
> Xwth'exth'exem (At the mouth of Yorkson Creek on the south bank of the Fraser)

According to Simon Pierre, the heads of these families were identified with the preceding toponyms, and most of them kept houses there during the

early summer and fall (Suttles 1955:10). Jenness, also noting this situation, speculated that the winter village was an amalgamation of at least two[1] and perhaps several communities that claimed separate eponyms (Jenness 1955:6). Importantly, however, in contrast to Swaneset, Thalhecten, and the little known Xwthepecten, The Katzie Book of Genesis makes no mention of the origins of these groups.

To shed light on the aggregate composition of the Katzie village during this time, as well as the conspicuous absence of mythical origins for seven other households, we turn our attention to broader changes in the social landscape that had occurred generations before, namely, the smallpox pandemic and the establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) outpost of Fort Langley. Using a number of sources, Suttles (1955:11–14) argues that the Katzie were actually of relatively recent antiquity, an inference based on two pieces of evidence. First, the origin tradition does not focus on the landscape around the Fraser; it concentrates instead on the geography to the north, on the sloughs and channels to the south of Pitt Lake. More importantly, no other ethnographic record of the village exists, and this part of the Fraser appears to have been claimed by the Kwantlen (Duff 1952:14), although the Katzie may have occupied this site during eulachon and sockeye fishing seasons, as alluded to in the origin story and documented ethnographically. This argument finds additional support in references to the Kutches in the 1828 Fort Langley Journal, almost certainly the Katzie, who were described as "a weak tribe up Pits River" (Duff 1952:24). Nevertheless, by about 1860, they were firmly established on the banks of the Fraser River (Suttles 1955:8).

Research has for some time now recognized the considerable impact of the fur trade on Native residency patterns. In the Fraser Valley, Native peoples took advantage of the new commerce, relocating their villages in order to engage in trade. Shortly after the establishment of Fort Langley, the Kwantlen, for example, moved up river and settled mainly at Kanaka Creek, across the river from the HBC post. When the fort was moved a few miles up stream in 1839, the Kwantlen also moved, relocating to a site on McMillan Island, a short paddle across the water (Duff 1952:23). Carlson (2001c), gathering evidence of village migrations throughout the valley, has recently confirmed this movement.

Trading opportunities were not the only factor influencing decisions to relocate. Smallpox infiltrated the Fraser Valley between 1782 and 1783, massively impacting population (Carlson 1996b; Harris 1997:19) and decimating entire villages. Survivors were often forced to abandon their settlements and take refuge with kin. Little evidence about settlement patterns within Katzie

territory prior to the outbreak of smallpox is available, yet catastrophic population loss appears to have encouraged a comprehensive resettlement of those groups that remained. Former winter settlements—almost certainly the same eponymous sites the individual Katzie households visited in summer and fall—were partially abandoned. By the time fur traders reached the valley in the early nineteenth century, only one or two villages had been established in Katzie territory, as documented in the Fort Langley Journal. This pattern was followed by a secondary migration to the north bank of the Fraser River most likely after 1830 when trading opportunities with the HBC at Fort Langley were established.

With the foundation of the village on the banks of the Fraser, the Katzie origin tradition appears to have mirrored another kind of social transformation. The narrative depiction of Swaneset as the unrivalled creator of the Katzie world may constitute a masking of the deeds and histories of other mythical ancestors held in great reverence by their own descendants. Apart from the ancestor Thalhecten, the totemic voices of other households are conspicuously absent, although a closer analysis suggests clues to their whereabouts. In a number of instances, Old Pierre disparages the existence of characters who apparently lacked intelligence, telling Jenness, for example, that when the ancestors came down from the sky world, "Xwthepecten and his group [of descendents] at Port Hammond were too foolish to contribute anything for the benefit of mankind after them." Similarly, he observes that "of the people that surrounded Thalhecten, some were so stupid that he made them serfs [s'téxem or worthless people] and divided them into three groups" (Jenness 1955:12). Who were these people? A compelling explanation suggests that they were the remnants of households decimated by smallpox, forced to seek shelter with more affluent relatives and other groups who had remained more or less solvent.

For kin groups and their histories, the repercussions of these events would have been devastating. High mortality rates would have threatened the ability of these groups, the primary units of socio-economic reproduction, to maintain their own oral traditions, totemic relationships, and other forms of inherited property. Communities that remained strong in these conditions—undoubtedly the descendants of Swaneset and probably those of Thalhecten at Pitt Lake—were able to promote their own traditions. Consequently, a larger, yet less populated, tribal territory appropriated the founding stories of what were once smaller and differentiated social groups (see Suttles 1955:12). In fact, much ethnographic work illustrates how institutionalizing an origin charter can reinforce social or political agendas among a heterogeneous group (see Tonkin 1992). This process may have occurred out of necessity, not as an

insidious form of reterritorialization, since many households would simply have had fewer resources available to them, including their own storytellers. Given these reduced conditions, it seems likely that by the time of village aggregation in the nineteenth century, those who had *forgotten* their history were encouraged by the more powerful in society to *remember* their particular version of events.

The argument elaborated here suggests that oral traditions are a form of history that cannot be read in a simple chronology, although their narrative structure may exhibit certain chronological elements (e.g., McLaren 2003). Moreover, efforts to interpret these narratives within a Western diachronic framework of temporality may damage our understanding of Native societies. Hymes (1990:593) maintains that aboriginal conceptions of time would be more appropriately understood as stretched out over space, comprising a core and a periphery rather than a strict linear sequence. The core represents the sphere of human activity and historical events; the periphery, social contexts where interaction with non-human beings occurred. Accordingly, extraordinary beings of often mythical proportions could be encountered in the periphery during winter dances, for example, or rites of puberty where frenzied initiates could interact with this liminal world. Following Morphy (1993:236), who posits a similar conception of temporality among Aborigines in Australia, I maintain that we should see myths not simply as evidence of spiritual continuity but as illustrations of the very ways in which this continuity is constructed (see also Bierwert 1999:83).

The Katzie Book of Genesis indicates a progressive sequence to Myth Age events that links the present and the past.[2] Yet the myth privileges certain spatial relationships while effacing or blurring historical details. For instance, the significance of totemic geography and its relationship with more powerful kin groups are emphasized over the disparate migration histories of different households to the banks of the Fraser River. In Old Pierre's telling, the establishment of the winter village happened early in the Myth Age when beings were still very much in a plastic state (Jenness 1955:16), whereas historical and ethnographic accounts, as indicated earlier, suggest a much more recent village coalescence. Indeed, "the very capacity of the system to mask history means that it has been able to accommodate change, in particular change in the groups that occupy the land and in the constitution of groups that are formed" (Morphy 1993:236).[3]

Conclusions

In the last two chapters I have argued that the Aboriginal landscape was not an abstract phenomenon divorced from the subjective experience of place but rather a medium through which social worlds were actively constructed. People mobilized the character of the landscape and its inhabitation to lend efficacy to histories and social identities that resolved themselves at different scales. These interactions spoke of connections between kin and ancestors, but they also spoke of differences whose implications promoted new perspectives on the prevailing social order, influencing Native culture to appropriate the world in novel ways.

This discussion must also be situated in the broader context of history, particularly European involvement on the coast and how different forms of contact shaped the social landscape. First contact with Europeans did not take the form of face-to-face encounter but of disease—devastating transmissions that in many places killed more people than they left unharmed. While it is commonly accepted that this pestilence greatly harmed Native culture (see Carlson 1996b), these events arguably had unintended consequences that also created the basis for new kinds of social categorization (Gosden 2004:86). As I argued in chapter 4, the loss of family members to disease affected people's ability to tend the land, imbuing the growth of successional forests with memories of more recent ancestors. Similarly, the consequences of smallpox and the advent of the fur trade reworked the social geography in material ways, giving rise to new conceptions of identity (Carlson 2001d).

Places and people existing on the so-called margins of civilization often evoke simplistic stereotypes, such as notions of timeless continuity and an inability to change without outside help. This is a common result of syntheses that attempt to generalize about the "Other." For many newcomers, Europe in general and Britain in particular represented the center of the world, a progressive and civilized nation that sought to stamp order on a far-flung "frontier" of the world untouched by history. I contend that conceptions of history are far more complex than this monolithic and, from a Native perspective, highly prejudiced view of the world suggests. Yet if we accept that the storied landscape was, unlike popular European caricatures, a contested place, then we must also consider whether European perceptions of the Northwest Coast and the Fraser Valley were actually as unified as they were made out to be. It is to this story that I now turn.

6

Ambiguity and Geographic Truths

The preceding three chapters examined some of the ways that Aboriginal peoples perceived, interacted with, and lived through the landscape during the interface of European contact. At this point I look at how Europeans viewed some of these same spaces of interaction and how their own interests emerged in the appropriation of the Fraser Valley. Chapters 6 and 7 examine how exploration and mapping constructed geographical knowledge, one of the earliest activities that legitimated the Northwest Coast in the "civilized" world. This chapter concentrates on the early period of mapping, beginning in 1792 when the valley and its adjacent lands were first placed on a chart and continuing to the middle of the nineteenth century when this area became an important place in the geography of the fur trade. Chapter 7 extends my analysis to the end of the century, when cadastral surveying helped define the Fraser Valley as a coherent and civilized space in the geography of the British Empire.

Native people formed ideas about their world through stories about the embodied experience of places and pathways that made up the annual round. Many of the first Europeans, in contrast, observed the landscape through the detached mode of the cartographer. Explorers fuelled by Enlightenment ideals attempted to redefine its topographies according to a rational and objective ordering of space. Using the technology of the map, explorers atomized the landscape to scale models that they brought home so others could see and understand from afar. Europeans came to know the Northwest Coast as a simple line on a map that was at once an image on a grand scale imbuing a previously unknown, uncertain place with a new sense of geographic fixity.

Continuing the line of inquiry I have developed in the previous chapters, I contend that the history of mapping does not reveal a monolithic practice or a compartmentalized way of understanding. David Harvey (1990:51)

recognizes the dangers of overstating the rigidity and stability of the Enlightenment tradition. Diverse experiences conditioned explorers; different interests colored their gaze; disparate social contexts informed their interpretations. Investigating the varied circumstances of map production and consumption affirms that geographic knowledge was not uniform; rather, truth was shaped by relationships that influenced how cartographic images became meaningful for different groups of consumers in both the Northwest and abroad. I argue that viewing exploration through the lens of conquest obscures its history since knowledge is relational and arises from agendas fashioned in the complex context of encounter.

Thinking through Maps

By the end of the eighteenth century, the image of a stable "North West" began to crystallize with its objectification on the map. In the European imagination it began to shed its hyperbolic associations with fairy-tale giants, fables of Jesso or Company Land, and the ethereal Strait of Anian.[1] Drawing on new scientific developments, the authority of the scale map was no longer contaminated by speculation, hearsay, or fiction (Boelhower 1988:477; Harvey 1980:164). Instead, its common Euclidian grammar allowed the geographical realities of the coast to be spoken of in familiar and confident terms.

The analytic eloquence of Enlightenment maps has provided historians with a window on the history of spatial relationships not often available in more conventional written sources (e.g., Seasholes 1988). Early maps of the Northwest Coast have taught scholars much about the age of exploration that pushed back the boundaries of terra incognita. Particularly outstanding are Albert Farley's contributions to the historical study of cartography in the region. Farley (1960) demonstrated that the map we take for granted today was actually derived from a painstaking two-pronged maritime and terrestrial assault (see also Ruggles 1971) and that only by the early part of the twentieth century was a tolerably accurate picture of the region available. Others have also affirmed the integral role of maps in the development of different regions. Gilmartin (1986:25), for example, has examined landmark maps, geographical benchmarks that enhanced the stability of different areas "until, gradually, the voids on the map were filled in." Still others have focused on what maps say about the men who pushed the limits of geographical knowledge in their respective times, a heroic roll call of explorers, among them Cook, Vancouver, Mackenzie, and Thompson, names forever etched in the chronicle of nation building (e.g., Thomson 1966).

Yet the culture of the map is even more complex. It has become apparent, as the work of Brian Harley reveals, that maps are not simply windows on the past of a place or historical objects *ex situ*; rather, cartography should be considered worthy of theoretical inquiry, in other words, "evidence in its own right" (Harley 1982:261). Harley's contributions to cartography cannot be overstated as he was one of the first to employ a deconstructionist critique to unpack maps' hidden agendas. Maps claim to be neutral statements that offer a transparent view of the world. Outwardly they immobilize the landscape so that one may select and synthesize moments of vision. But the act of mapping is often secretive, masking the author's intentions, revealing a world with little trace of its creator (Boelhower 1988:479). In this light, maps must also be understood as commentaries on social structure in the Foucauldian sense in that they may engineer or reify discourses of class and power (Harley 1992a:237).

Accepting the premise that maps select, influence, promote, and bias what they represent foregrounds their capacity to be manipulated for certain ends by the powerful in society (Harley 1988:278). Drawing on these insights, a postcolonial critique exposes mapmaking as a technology of appropriation that reinforced European agendas at the cost of Indigenous and other non-European interests (Boelhower 1988; Brealey 1995; Burnett 2000; Carter 1987; Clayton 2000; Edney 1997; Harley 1992b). In many cases this meant denying Native existence altogether or severely restricting their living conditions in lands claimed or occupied by Europeans. Wolf (1982) argues that self-regulated European expansion in the modern age silenced "the people without history" and devalued their own ways of knowing the world.

Agenda-laden maps from this period drew on ostensibly neutral science to advance emerging European territorial and commercial ambitions. Daniel Clayton (2000:204), for example, reveals how the maps of British explorers actively desocialized the landscape by theoretically distancing contact from cartography and forging an ostensibly objective link between exploration and empire. Clayton is influenced by Latour's (1987) thesis that maps rendered observations about the coast objective by making them mobile, stable, and combinable. Conveyed in the logic of Euclidian geometry and repetitive symbols, maps used a common grammar that enhanced the stability of its world representations, enabling useful knowledge about the world to be accumulated and compared. As mobile artifacts, they facilitated the movement of information about the geographical "margins" of the world back to European centers of power. At the Admiralty and the Colonial Office in London and other locations, maps could be combined to construct totalizing representations of the globe, a world discourse that could be consumed and

presided over from the comfort of the boardrooms of power. Imposing on the earth confining meridians and parallels, cartography can be seen as a metaphor for the greater processes of imperial fashioning and the colonization of the globe (Clayton 2000:195).

Focusing solely on the content of maps can, however, lead to oversimplification. In the grand narrative, maps of exploration represented a common project to discover and document knowledge about the frontiers of European experience. It is tempting in light of this shared project to infer a collective European identity for explorers: most were white men who used similar forms of technology and who were often directly or indirectly representatives of a Crown seeking imperial and commercial advantage. This subtext of collective identity is inherent in accounts emphasizing the progressive unveiling of the landscape. From this perspective, mapping becomes "a moral success story" (Wolf 1982:5), a way of bringing order to nature, and explorers become heroic conquerors working toward the common goal of subjugating a passive wilderness. Charges of oversimplification can even be levied at some of the more sophisticated deconstructive analyses that tend to focus exclusively on the power disparities between Europeans and subjugated peoples revealed in the hidden agendas of maps.

I maintain that the appropriating gaze of explorers did not produce a singular mode of representation (Gregory 1994:23; Thomas 2003) but a process very much complicated by other realities. Often a map's conditions of production and consumption disrupted its meaning (what went into its making, what was represented, and how it was interpreted). Here we can learn from Miller's (1987, 2002) work on material culture and mass consumption: that which is produced is not necessarily that which is consumed. Although maps may have suggested the fiction of an all-seeing eye, in society their circulation was uneven and their perceived meanings inconsistent. The social contexts facilitating the production of geographical knowledge and enabling or constraining its consumption are a vital and understudied part of Latour's (1987) thesis. In this chapter I consider the temporality of exploration and mapping around the lower Fraser River prior to the colonial period. Examining the contingent and embodied nature of mapping, the agendas of mapmakers, and the very different social contexts in which maps created knowledge, I suggest that the landscapes mapmakers portrayed were constituted by multiple and overlapping truths.

Mapping a British Coastline

Maritime exploration of the Northwest Coast dates to the latter half of the eighteenth century. If one can identify a catalyst for popularizing the idea of the coast in the wider European imagination, then it is surely James Cook's widely touted "discovery" of Nootka Sound in 1778 during his second navigation of the globe. However, not until 1792, with George Vancouver's mapping of the coast, was Britain's imperial appetite for geographical knowledge of the region set in motion. Entering what were the "supposed straits of De Fuca" on the evening of April 29, 1792 (Vancouver 1984:508), Vancouver began the execution of a survey that would take over three years to complete, an examination that Vancouver believed had been undertaken "with a degree of minuteness far exceeding the letter of my commission" (Lamb 1984:43) (fig. 6.1).

FIGURE 6.1. A detail from Vancouver's "chart shewing part of the coast of N.W. America" (1798). The "Gulph of Georgia" lies to the west of the Fraser Valley. (Courtesy of the University of British Columbia, Rare Books and Special Collections)

The expedition was expected to achieve multiple ends. Vancouver's instructions were to examine the coast of northwest America between the latitudes of 60° north and 30° south and to acquire "accurate information with respect to the nature and extent of any water-communication which may tend, in any considerable degree . . . between the north-west, and the country upon the opposite side of the continent" (Lamb 1984:41). He was also expected to chart the coastline, the bearing of currents and tides, the depths of the sea, the placement of shoals and rocks, and the physical nature of harbors and bays. Moreover, the expedition's chief surgeon and botanist, Archibald Menzies, was assigned the modest task of investigating "the whole of the Natural History of the countries," including the quality of the soil and climate with a view to settlement; the vegetation, mineral deposits, beasts, birds, and fish; and the manners and customs of the Natives (Lamb 1984:43–45).

The exploratory project was furthermore a means of securing Britain's imperial ambitions. In a fresh rereading of the early period of maritime exploration, Clayton (2000) persuasively argues that Vancouver's production of space was a far more insidious affair than the seemingly innocuous survey many scholars have imagined (e.g., Fisher and Johnston 1993). Clayton reads Vancouver's maps as an artifact and instrument of imperial design subverting the interests of not only the diverse Native cultures who considered the coast their home since time immemorial but also the traders and other imperial nations such as Spain.

Producing the Coast

As an instrument of Enlightenment science, Vancouver's survey of the coastline was considered unequalled and widely regarded as one of the most accurate maritime surveys of its time. The European portrayal of Vancouver depicts him heroically mastering the rugged shores of a largely unknown landscape (e.g., Thomson 1966:178). Grounded in more than just innate skill or superior technology, Vancouver's survey enabled a very particular rendering of the coast that relied on a style of encounter not necessarily shared by his contemporaries or successors. His survey turned the chaos of wilderness into stability, while its mapped inscription allowed his discoveries to be returned to Britain and incorporated in the geography of empire.

Vancouver possessed fewer and smaller vessels than Cook on his voyage. They were nevertheless equipped for years at sea, and the 330-ton ship *Discovery* was furnished with the latest technologies in maritime survey. Its ability to produce geographic accuracy was enhanced by an array of telescopes,

compasses, sextants, and chronometers. It was also fitted out with "upper works" built over the main deck, a "commodious" space that gave the crew's botanist, astronomer, and other "gentlemen" room to prepare their reports (Lamb 1984:33–36). Vancouver's ship was a scientific laboratory afloat, its decks gleaming with instruments of measurement and observation. Well stocked with provisions and prepared for almost any eventuality, the ships boasted a combined crew of 145 men. The escort of the 131-ton brig the *Chatham* (Lamb 1984:37), a contingent of Royal Marines, and the presence of cannons ensured the security of the survey and its freedom from troublesome Natives.[2] This combined apparatus afforded a suitably detached and insulated technology of seeing, allowing Vancouver's observations to fix an uncertain coast to the map with certainty.

Distinguished by the appearance of scientific accuracy and by coastal naming, Vancouver's map and accompanying journal legitimized his discoveries for Britain. Mapping required more than simple description; it demanded allusion to methodological discipline and a rhetorical construction of the survey's passage in order to legitimize the explorer's claims of geographical truth. As Burnett (2000:91–92) asserts, explicitly evoking scientific practices buttressed the fixity of places on the map and the explorers' authority as fixers. The disciplined use of instrumentation, allusion to scientific tropes, and visual representations of the land established an explorer's credentials. To support claims of precision, Vancouver's journal was awash with references to survey calculations that cast the heterogeneity of the coast in a Euclidian framework (Clayton 2000:197). For example, his crew took multiple astronomical readings from observation camps set up on shore designed to triangulate the angle of a bay or headland in relation to the sun (Vancouver 1984:531). To increase the chances of accuracy, astronomical readings taken by his officers were averaged to arrive at a conclusive total. And even more critical to the persuasion of his skeptics back home was Vancouver's detailed discussion of these techniques in writing that invoked each act to establish the rigor of his discoveries.

To enhance Britain's territorial claims, Vancouver branded the coast with a constellation of names that situated it in the cultural and imperial galaxy of the Crown (Clayton 2000:197). For instance, when surveying the sheltered waters of the inner coast south and west of the Fraser River estuary, he named the most prominent features after royalty: the mainland shore became New Georgia; the body of water between the islands and the mainland, The Gulf of Georgia (now Georgia Strait). Some landmarks, including Point Roberts, Howe's Sound, and Burrard's Canal (now Burrard Inlet), were named after celebrated members of the Admiralty and others, such as Puget's

Sound and Mt. Baker, after distinguished officers in the crew. Certain places were named for their distinctive physical character, such as Birch Bay for its deciduous canopy contrasting with the surrounding coastline of "pines of immense dimensions" (Menzies 1923:63). Other locations evoked the particular events of their discovery: Possession Sound, for example, was the site where Vancouver claimed the region for Britain.

The symbolic power of naming is considerable. More than simple geographic tags, names attempt to appropriate the land in ways that privilege the mapmaker's viewpoint (Strang 1997:217). Vancouver's journals indicate common contact with local Native groups, yet questions about geography, toponomy, and history were rarely posed during these interactions; rather, the land was recast in British terms, according to British interests. In this context, naming was an exercise in suppressing the Aboriginal landscape—its myriad of historical and ancestral relationships—emphasizing instead the moment of discovery and "cultural territorialization" (Boelhower 1988:492; Carter 1987:14).

Consuming the Coast

Clayton's work is important for its understanding of the abstract scale at which the Northwest Coast was constructed and how this construction was mobilized by the interests of the state and emerging networks of global capital. By clarifying its uncertainties and ambiguities on the map, Vancouver rendered the land mobile, stable, and combinable (Clayton 2000:182–183), a unified geography that eschewed regional variation and could be analyzed from afar. Britain's territorial ambitions were augmented and supported with a constellation of named points that identified and naturalized the line of the coast as an extension of empire. The geography of the coast, which served British interests from a distance, could be viewed as "a set of geographical co-ordinates and trade statistics that revealed the boundaries of European knowledge and the pulse of European capital" (Clayton 2000:180).

This point is worth pursuing in more detail because the consumption of this image influenced beliefs about the dominance of European values. Vancouver's authoring of the coast was not relegated only to charts possessed by those in the boardrooms of power. His journal of the voyage, like the journals of his officers, was a rich source of information. Such accounts were usually retrospective, written not as the voyage happened but at the end of the day or even days after particular events. Back in England, Vancouver labored away in the quiet village of Petersham, polishing descriptions that would eventually constitute a book chronicling

this monumental enterprise (Fisher and Johnston 1993:11). Reproduced in three quarto volumes and a folio atlas complete with scale charts and lithographs of sketches (Lamb 1984:240–243), the published work would became an important lens through which others could appreciate the New World (Hayes 1999:8).

Published posthumously in 1798, *A Voyage of Discovery* featured an image of the coast that enjoyed appeal beyond the circumscribed sphere of the Admiralty, quickly becoming a subject of interest among a growing literate middle class and even a medium whose consumption allowed them to distinguish themselves from the untutored masses (Collins 1995:84; Porter 2000:74–76; see also Miller 1987:136). Once in print, it elicited immediate commentary in a number of journals. The *Naval Chronicle*, for example, commented that *A Voyage* ranked highly among publications considered naval classics by professional men. Although not every review was as laudatory, the work attracted a wide readership. Subsequently translated and published in German, Danish, Swedish, French, and Russian (Fisher and Johnston 1993:13; Lamb 1984:243–245), Vancouver's chronicle provided a material and textual frame in which the Northwest Coast was reproduced.

An educated officer of the Royal Navy, Vancouver described the coast in more than prosaic terms; his writing painted elaborate metaphorical canvases for the mind's eye. As Maria Tippet and Douglas Cole note, explorers "viewed landscape through eyes conditioned by European taste"[3] (1979:26). According to the aesthetic ideals of Romanticism, popular among society's so-called better half, landscapes fell into one of two extremes: Cultivated, bounded, and harmoniously gradualist landscapes were considered picturesque and beautiful, and because they were knowable and could be held or contained by the eye, they evoked a sense of calm. At the opposite end of the spectrum, wild and rugged landscapes were considered sublime. In stark contrast to cultivated settings, their vastness was unbounded, awe-inspiring, and even frightening, beyond the imagination's capacity to comprehend (cf. Darby 2000:53).

Eighteenth-century ideas of beauty were readily manifest on the coast of Washington State (Tippet and Cole 1979). Upon arrival at Port Discovery, the voyage's first significant landfall in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Vancouver wrote that the officers' "attention was immediately called to a landscape, almost as enchantingly beautiful as the most elegantly finished pleasure grounds in Europe" (Vancouver 1984:513):

> The country before us exhibited every thing that bounteous nature could be expected to draw into one point of view. . . . I could not possibly

> believe that any uncultivated country had ever been discovered exhibiting so rich a picture. The land which interrupted the horizon between the N.W. and the northern quarter . . . was bounded by a ridge of snowy mountains. . . . Between us and this snowy range, the land . . . rose here in a very gentle ascent, and was well covered with a variety of stately forest trees. These however, did not conceal the whole face of the country in one uninterrupted wilderness, but pleasingly clothed its eminences, and chequered the vallies [*sic*]; presenting, in many directions, extensive spaces that wore the appearance of having been cleared by art. A picture so pleasing could not fail to call to our remembrance certain delightful and beloved situations in Old England. (Vancouver 1984:515)

Ample evidence, of which Vancouver was almost certainly ignorant, suggests that this scene was, at least in part, the result of Aboriginal modification using fire, as I have described in chapter 5 (see also Turner 1999). Of greater importance, however, is how Vancouver's gaze rhetorically desocialized the Aboriginal landscape and recategorized it in the language of the picturesque, not unlike Rousseau's celebration of the noble savage who lived in harmony with nature instead of controlling it.

North of Puget's Sound, the journal records a very different landscape where "the mountains rose directly from the sea, creating steep cliffs around deep inlets. No longer were there gently ascending hills chequered with varied woodlands, but only conifer-clad mountains rising precipitously above the snowline" (Tippet and Cole 1979:16). In Vancouver's direct words, a new "snowy barrier . . . whose frigid summit" ushered forth "dissolving snow in foaming torrents [that] rushed down the sides and chasm of its rugged surface, exhibiting altogether a sublime, though gloomy spectacle" (Vancouver 1984:583). This snowy barrier defined a forbidding boundary, and for much of the remaining three years of the voyage, his writing featured the ominous peaks, dark mountain shadows, and daunting vastness of the land.

Compared to the more explicit acts of domination associated with cartographic displacement, the language of Romanticism appears a benign and sentimental attachment to place without the subversive elements of survey. Still, Vancouver's descriptions recast the landscape on a level of abstraction sympathetic to the discourse of the map. His written synopses tended to efface the footprints of the voyage, erasing contact with Natives and reducing the landscape to pure physical description. Aesthetic conventions that encoded the landscape in the discourse of upper- and middle-class values made it eminently knowable and possessable (Pratt 1992:33–39), transforming terra incognita into an overtly British space.

At the same time Vancouver's journal and map did much to conceal the complex histories and geographies of the Coast Salish. Among the varied scales of social existence in the Fraser Valley, the map reduced the landscape to a solitary line, part of a much longer line that (for Europeans) brought geographic certainty to a coastline formerly in doubt. Even the narrative account reduced the valley to purely abstract terms: "intermediate space . . . occupied by very low land, apparently a swampy flat, that retires several miles, before the country rises to meet the rugged snowy mountains" (Vancouver 1984:580). Despite the face-to-face encounters of resident Native groups and Vancouver's crew, the valley was distinguished only to fill a void on the map. Vancouver's final act of displacement was naming its most conspicuous headlands Point Roberts and Point Grey in honor of acquaintances in the navy: Roberts, an officer serving on the Discovery, and Captain George Grey (Vancouver 1984:578, 580).

The broader interests and objectives of the empire cannot entirely explain Vancouver's reworking of the coast. I agree with Clayton's claim that the captain's grand empirical endeavor was not the objective enterprise it has been made out to be. Regardless of the technologies that facilitated a scientific way of seeing, his and his officers' observations were conditioned by the contingencies of the voyage, subjective responses hinted at not only in certain place names but also in the general tone of the journal. Desolation Sound, for example, was admittedly named for its gloomy character, which "afforded not a single prospect that was pleasing to the eye" (Vancouver, quoted in Clayton 2000:190–204). Moreover, as Clayton notes, Vancouver's writing late in the voyage, which paints a more brooding and depressing landscape than that of earlier entries, belies the simple categories of landscape aesthetics. His perceptions tainted by the monumentality of the survey and the demoralizing nature of the land, Vancouver was by the end of the third survey season ready to quit "these remote and uncouth parts" (Vancouver, quoted in Clayton 2000:198).

What is most important to take from this discussion is Vancouver's indisputable achievement in bringing a form of geographic truth to the context of consumption. In effect, the "North West" as a geographical category acquired real meaning in Europe because the emergence of a particularly influential image coincided with its territorial representation (Boelhower 1988; Edney 1997:3). As Clayton argues, Vancouver's geography prefigured the coast as an abstract region connected to the wider world and created a framework that imperial and commercial interests were able to draw upon to further their agendas, a process that "embellished and redefined the space of appropriation that Vancouver had fashioned" (2000:204).

Vancouver's celebrated map undoubtedly influenced subsequent mapping both on the coast and in the unknown interior, yet the situation at this time was likely more complicated than Clayton's assertions imply. The assumption that the map became an accepted truth firmly held in the imperial clutches of Britain is questionable. Moreover, it has been hastily accepted that, with the coast as beachhead and baseline, subsequent expeditions could simply anchor themselves to Vancouver's survey, extend their appropriating gaze inland, and repeat the process so successfully engineered on the coast. As I have suggested above, however, geographical truths could vary considerably, and the process of mapping was not aligned exclusively with the goal to remake the world. On the production side, different agendas, experiences, and technologies of observation shaped the creation of maps. On the consumption side, varied social networks resulted in unequal access to this knowledge.

Vancouver's geography became entangled with distinct imperial processes in Britain and Europe, but the impact of this mapping was more ambiguous at the local scale of social life. In the next sections I analyze how others negotiated Vancouver's stabilization of the coast as imperial space. In particular, I want to illustrate how coastal mapping was not always a cumulative, uncontested process;[4] intervening factors in different contexts could challenge the image of stability consumed abroad.

From Space to Place: Putting Fraser's Geography on the Map

While Vancouver's map of the coast held the interests of certain groups in Europe, the unexplored region between the Pacific and the Rocky Mountains quickly became an object of commercial ambition for the fur trade. One of the most celebrated explorations of this period is Simon Fraser's 1808 expedition down the eponymous Fraser River. Previously discovered during Alexander Mackenzie's westward traverse over the Rocky Mountains, the northern reaches of the river appeared in a published summary map of North American discoveries up to 1801, a map that included Vancouver's survey of the coast. Having seen the river on this summary map, which mistakenly took it to be the headwaters of Vancouver's Columbia River, Fraser's expedition attempted to complete the unfinished picture. In tracing its headwaters to the Pacific by canoe, Fraser and a group of twenty-four voyageurs attempted to establish its viability as a trade corridor and assess the region for its fur potential.

Fraser's aims were not entirely dissimilar to those of Vancouver. Although his instructions were simply for a reconnaissance of the country and not a

detailed survey, Fraser, like any good geographer, bestowed landmarks along the course of his voyage with names and coordinates (Burnett 2000:177). Dutifully recorded in his journal, these would later be used to legitimate his passage, bolster his reputation, and make the land intelligible for his employers, the Northwest Company. Nearing the halfway point of their journey, the voyageurs observed "a considerable river flowing from the right," which they named Shaw's River (Bridge River) in honor of a company partner (Fraser 1960:79). Farther downstream, drawing near the Fraser Canyon, they approached another important fork whose impressive size inspired the name "Thomson's [Thompson's] River" after the considerable achievements of fellow "Nor'Wester" David Thompson (Fraser 1960:88).

The agendas of the fur trade dictated the kinds of detail that explorers recorded. Elizabeth Vibert (1997:97) argues that fur traders were guided first and foremost by commercial views of the land, a view that aptly describes Fraser's own appraisals. Primarily interested in its fur-bearing potential, Fraser made hurried notations when the land appeared to be "well stocked with animals" (Fraser 1960:65) or other exploitable resources. For instance, in an area "upon which the Carriers . . . live," they found "a fine country abounding with plenty of animals such as orignals [moose], Red Deer, Carriboux [caribou], [and] Beaver" (Fraser 1960:73). Fraser occasionally engaged in more aesthetic modes of writing often intended to impress potential publishers back home (Vibert 1997:98), but his prosaic descriptions point more toward a utilitarian agenda.

What separates Fraser's accounts from and sharply contrasts with Vancouver's chronicle is his constant attentiveness to "the Indians." Indigenous peoples in Vancouver's mapping were largely relegated to the margins of the page, but this was notably not the case with fur traders. Given his vested interest in maximizing profit margins, Fraser would have negotiated and reached agreements with Natives routinely during the course of his business. Indeed, the fur empires of the West were built largely on cooperative networks established with Indigenous groups, so Fraser's regular remarks on their presence, as well as their cultural affiliations, were not surprising. Various constituencies were recognized in Fraser's mapping, but even more interesting is how his geographic truth about the voyage from New Caledonia to the Pacific was received in different social contexts. For some, it was regarded alongside maps such as those of Vancouver as a means of filling in terra incognita, encompassing it within the civilizing fold of the empire. But for others, it completely compromised the Enlightenment ideal of empirical objectivity.

A Landscape of Peril and Uncertain Navigation

Fraser's exploration was one of the most difficult and dangerous journeys on record, and historians have often portrayed him in a heroic light. John Cherrington (1992:36–39) likens his narrative to a Homeric odyssey, emphasizing the adventurous and exciting aspect of his descent down the river to tidewater. Others, however, have viewed his exploits with a more critical eye. Commenting on the dearth of European place names that the expedition conferred, W. Kay Lamb, Fraser's journal editor, concedes that the voyage was anything but a "triumphal progress" through the unknown (Lamb 1960:27). Lamb's remarks should be read within the critique of scholarship that has viewed exploration monolithically as a process of civilizing the wilds. Fraser was no less of a technical surveyor than Vancouver, but his mapping, unlike Vancouver's, was informed by a different mode of encounter. Lamb indicates some of the voyage's key conditions that impinged upon the experience of the journey: "uncertainty about the attitude of the Indians along the river, and a total lack of information about its course and character" (1960:25). These were very real material differences that placed the expedition on a completely different footing.

Fraser's goal was to obtain a tolerably accurate picture of the river and its environs. Early into the expedition, however, his journal entries appear to relinquish the confident, conquering gaze and convey a more subjective and anxious geography mediated by the voyage itself. In contrast to the relative predictability of rivers east of the Rocky Mountains, the erratic nature of the watercourse quickly became a matter of concern. In many places, the river was "turbulent," full of "whirlpools" and "cascades" that were certain to "swallow up or over power" their canoes (Fraser 1960:67–68), conditions that increased his apprehension, making him obsessed with "knowledge of the country below" (Fraser 1960:66) (fig. 6.2). Fraser was forced to enlist Native help to locate impending torrents. At a village of the "Atnah nation," he "inquired repeatedly" for a slave reported to have intimate knowledge of the river's course to the south. Spreading out oilcloths "for the ground of a chart," Fraser urged him to "sketch the country towards the sea," a drawing that plainly confirmed "the badness of the navigation," obliging them to leave the canoes and much baggage (Fraser 1960:66). Farther down the river, the local inhabitants reported similar conditions, in one place "a dreadful chain of difficulties apparently insurmountable" (Fraser 1960:76).

Fraser was fortunate to prevail upon Natives to embark with the voyageurs as pilots or guides on land. Local assistance was forthcoming for a number of reasons, not simply because of Native curiosity about the newcomers.

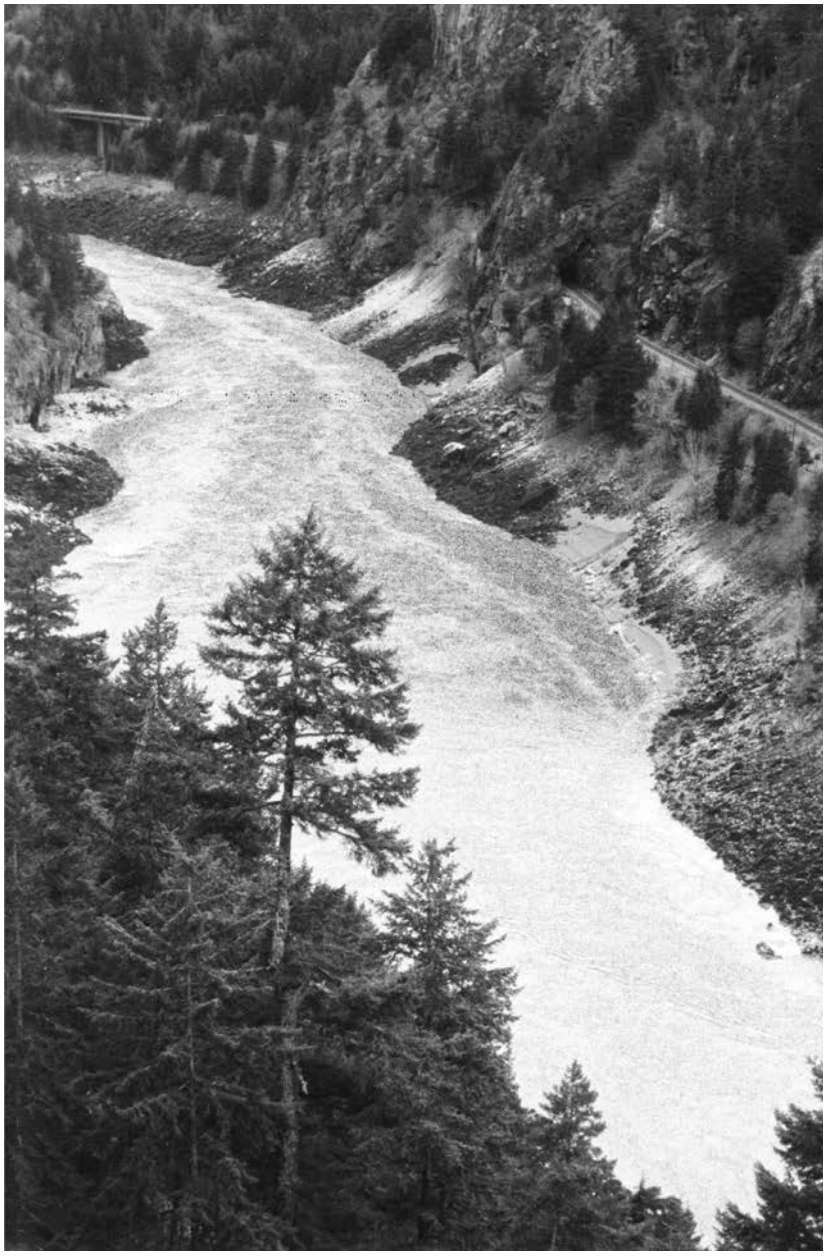


FIGURE 6.2. Turbulent waters winding their way through the Fraser Canyon. (Photograph by the author)

Sometimes help was secured due to a desire to trade or the promise of such prospects with future trade posts. Associations with the newcomers may also have been considered prestigious among their own people. Either way, Aboriginal knowledge of numerous portages was largely responsible for helping the voyageurs steer clear of the river's physical dangers. Despite Native assistance, Fraser was far from comfortable with his circumstances. Being "in a strange Country, surrounded with dangers, and difficulties, among numberless tribes of savages, who never saw the face of a white man" made their position "critical and highly unpleasant" (Fraser 1960:81–82).

The latter leg of Fraser's journey is perhaps the most revealing as the voyageurs, unlike Vancouver, fell increasingly into relations with a landscape they could do little to control. The lower course of the river that threaded its way through the Fraser Canyon was heavily concentrated with Indigenous settlements and crosscut by numerous political boundaries (see Harris 1997:106–107). Moreover, the severe angles of the gorge stirred the power of the current to ferocious levels. As much of the river's course was impassable, Fraser's men became ever more indebted to the guides who accompanied them along well-worn trails snaking along the shoulders of the canyon.

> I cannot find words to describe our situation at times. We had to pass where no human being should venture. Yet in those places there is a regular footpath impressed, or rather indented, by frequent travelling upon the very rocks. And besides this, steps which are formed like a ladder, or the shrouds of a ship, by poles with twigs and withes, suspended from the top to the foot of precipice, and fastened at both ends to stones and trees, furnished a safe and convenient passage to the Natives—but we, who had not the advantages of their experience, were often in imminent danger, when obliged to follow their example. (Fraser 1960:96)

Rather than blazing a trail or mapping an uncharted wilderness, the Canadiens were led by hand along pathways of an Aboriginal geography that preceded their encounter. One cannot help but notice how the dynamics of exploration had changed in this context. Significantly, the Native guides were not simply passive facilitators in the background but actively *guided* the newcomers through a landscape entirely their own.

In one canyon village where the voyageurs were invited to spend the night, Fraser wrote that there "were upward of five hundred souls" who "flocked about us" (Fraser 1960:94). Although he remarked that they were well treated, Fraser and his expedition, having set out as *observers* in an effort to size up the lay of the land from arm's length, had become the *observed*.

Reaching the lower valley, but without their own canoes, further exacerbated the situation as the expedition had to rely on the good will of the locals to ferry them downriver. That the local guides were ever present is suggested by Fraser's apparent reluctance to give conspicuous landmarks European names, favoring instead Aboriginal toponyms. At a camp near the entrance of the Fraser Valley, his journal declares "the name of the place is Spazum [Spuzzum]" (Fraser 1960:97). The following day, paddling toward the center of the valley, they noted a conspicuous verdure-clad mountain protruding from the alluvial lowlands. Fraser described it as "a round Mountain a head [*sic*], which the Natives call Shemotch [Sumas Mountain]" (Fraser 1960:102).

It is highly probable, as Wickwire (1994) demonstrates by drawing on oral traditions, that Native groups were well aware of the voyageurs' presence long before they were seen. In many cases, they not only prepared for their arrival in material terms but also rationalized their existence by placing them among the pantheon of Myth Age figures responsible for the creation of the world. A short distance from modern-day Yale, local Natives, who mistook Fraser and his men for non-human beings, identified a place Fraser translated as "the bad rock." Here they were shown some "indented marks" on stone, in all likelihood the place known as Th'exelis, where Xexá:ls defeated local medicine man Kwiyaxtel, as discussed in chapter 3. While Fraser gleaned little from the story, its implications are important: The roles of interpretation had been reversed. No longer in a position to authoritatively capture geographic truth, the expedition had ceded the description and framing of the landscape to their guides.

As they approached the lowlands adjacent to the river's mouth, encounters with the Natives dominated Fraser's journal entries and gave new meaning to the events of their passage and the outcomes of the voyage. In a revealing footnote to the transcribed journal, Lamb notes that Fraser's description along the course of the lower river is so vague that discerning with certainty the features he identifies is difficult (Fraser 1960:101). Lamb's point is well taken. During the few days spent in the valley, overwhelming Native curiosity, thievery, and other provocative actions became considerable distractions. Having attracted so much attention, Fraser found it difficult to take precise geographic observations, as his time was exhausted appeasing and negotiating with the numerous local groups who jostled for his attention. In one place the "Indians . . . were surprised at seeing men different from Indians and [were] extremely disagreeable to us through their curiosity and attention" (Fraser 1960:101–102). To make matters worse, serious problems developed at the river estuary, where they found themselves in the midst of a

dispute between people from the river mouth at "Misquiame [Musqueam]" and groups from upriver. It was here, however, that Fraser finally "came in sight of a gulph or bay of the sea [the Strait of Georgia]," what "the Indians called Pas-hil-roe" (Fraser 1960:105).

On June 2, 1808, he arrived at the coast, having traveled a tumultuous thirty-six days and five hundred miles. It is unclear from Fraser's account whether he knew their position in relation to Vancouver's survey of the coast, but his disappointment at "not seeing the main ocean" suggests that he was not in possession of a copy of Vancouver's chart (which according to his latitude would explain why the ocean was to the west of "Quadra and Vancouvers Island"). It is certain, however, that a hasty astronomical calculation (recorded in the journal a day later) established their latitude as 49° and that the river could not be the Columbia, which lay much farther south (Fraser 1960:109). While the sight of salt water must have given Fraser some relief, he was forced to make a quick retreat as the "Misquiame" began making threatening advances "howling like so many wolves, and brandishing their war clubs" (Fraser 1960:105–106).

During the hurried return upriver, the journal completely loses sight of the physical landscape, dwelling solely on the actions of certain locals who were "fixed upon [their] destruction" (Fraser 1960:107). At one point, "surrounded by upwards of 700 barbarians," Fraser remarked "that our situation might really be considered as critical." Making their escape in a large borrowed canoe, they were pursued by an angry mob (1960:110). Relinquishing his role as pursuer of knowledge, Fraser—the pursued—made his retreat back to New Caledonia, retracing the route that had brought them to the coast.

Putting Fraser's River in Perspective

For years afterward, the Northwest Company considered the expedition a useless enterprise as it exposed the fact that long sections of the river were simply impassable. Consequently, Fraser's exploits "won him little fame and less reward" (Lamb 1960:39). Not until 1813 were these feats awarded some sense of geographical fixity with their placement on David Thompson's *Map of the North West Territory of the Province of Canada*, a synopsis of all available geographical information collected between 1792 and 1812. Using the astronomical calculations provided by Fraser's second-in-command, John Stuart, Thompson situated Fraser's River emptying into the Strait of Georgia between Point Roberts and Point Grey, where two decades earlier Vancouver had briefly anchored. Produced by a trader for the fur trade, Thompson's map stressed the connectivity of river systems as trade corridors over all other

features. Objectifying Fraser's River on the map did not, however, guarantee the projection of a transparent image of the world, a process William Boelhower (1988) calls "cartographic semiosis." Fraser's narrative wove a much more ambiguous geography, and, attached to Thompson's map, the river informed a significant disjuncture of knowledge between different contexts of consumption.

Thompson's map remained unpublished but was proudly displayed in the boardroom of the Northwest Company's Fort William headquarters.[5] However, an earlier version of the map that lacked Stuart's astronomical calculations was circulated and copied without permission, becoming a prime source of other maps for over twenty years (Hayes 1999:105) and, more importantly, a form of material culture that engaged a detached public opinion from abroad. A summary map of North America drawn in 1817, titled *A Map of America* and attributed to William McGillivray, was yet another reproduction. An indiscriminate copy of Thompson's earlier map, it depicted a far more exaggerated geography of Fraser's River with numerous meanders, seemingly reflecting Fraser's experience of the tumultuous rapids rather than the confident line of Stuart's astronomical readings. In addition, McGillivray's map included the entirely fictitious Caledonia River, running parallel to the east of Fraser's River but dipping down below the 49th parallel (based on Thompson's earlier interpretation of Native reports).

The respected Arrowsmith firm, one of the best mapmakers in London, published McGillivray's map. Purchased by the Admiralty in quantity, Arrowsmith maps and charts were also positively received and copied in Europe (Verner 1988:51). Considering its central location in Soho Square, it presumably provided an important outlet for the dissemination of knowledge to a clientele of educated middle-class consumers interested in the imperial margins. The map added a dimension of geographic certainty to economic and political agendas, not unlike Vancouver's survey of the coast. Notably, as Clayton (2000:208–210) argues, it helped construct an image of the Northwest that proved useful for British and American negotiators working on the resolution of the international boundary. At this scale of detached consumption, reality was equated with what was on the map and, together with Vancouver's earlier coastal survey, enabled a level of abstraction that facilitated agendas from afar.

Yet at a more localized scale, within the social networks of traders themselves, McGillivray's map was received with far more ambivalence. A veteran of expeditions in the West who was appointed governor of the Hudson's Bay Company fur empire after its merger with the Northwest Company in 1821, George Simpson had "examined with much attention" the different maps of

the "Country," including almost certainly the McGillivray map. Appalled by their inaccuracy, he described them as having been "introduced and disposed as suited the fancy and taste of the Draftsmen and some of the writers" who "have had the effrontery to gull the public with the produce of their own fertile imaginations" (quoted in Merk 1931:112).

But even Thompson's 1813 portrayal of Fraser's River was apparently not to be trusted entirely. Although Simpson would later base his own sketch of the region on Thompson's map, Fraser's exploration of the river was compromised by his failure to achieve a sense of empirical credibility. Most importantly, unlike Vancouver, he failed to buttress his mapping with allusions to scientific accuracy. According to Simpson, "Messrs Frazer & Stewart descended to the Sea but were so much alarmed on account of the numbers of Indians they saw that they did not take time to . . . examine the state of the Navigation or even to determine its situation" (Merk 1931:74). Many traders had a "dread of Fraser's River" (Rich 1941:32), which they associated with "treacherous and ill disposed savages" (Merk 1931:74). For years afterward, the exact location of the river lay in doubt.[6] Circulating in the social networks of traders, Fraser's narrative destabilized geographic truth at the scale of the local. In its reification of the landscape's wilder, indomitable aspects, it constructed a realm of subjectivity and anxiety that resisted European domination.

Traders' Geographies: The Global and the Local

With a monopoly on the interior west of the Rocky Mountains, by 1821 the Hudson's Bay Company began to look toward the Northwest Coast, to the Strait of Georgia, and once again to the outlet of Fraser's River. Here, according to Natives, the soil was "fertile," the climate "salubrious," the rivers "periodically filled with immense shoals of salmon," and "wood animals" "numerous." But most importantly, fur trading was said to be highly profitable, which made this a desirable location for a principal depot (Merk 1931:73–74). Eager to add the "riches of this Country" to the company's portfolio and to identify a possible communicable river with the company's posts in New Caledonia, Simpson undertook measures to reveal its true conditions. "Indian reports" suggested that the river fell on the "Strait or Sound that divides Vancouver's Island from the mainland near about Burrard's Canal."[7] Not willing to trust the territorial maps, Simpson in November of 1824 dispatched Chief Trader James McMillan and a company of thirty-six to establish the river's position while assessing its resources and the possibil-

ity of opening a "friendly intercourse with the Natives" (Merk 1931:75; see also Maclachlan 1998:6–7; Ruggles 1991:90; Work 1912).

Commercial Truths

McMillan's survey was something of a watershed that demystified the region as a breeding ground for hostile savages and ascertained its geography, which now appeared to promise commercial opportunity. Approaching by canoe from the Gulf of Georgia (Georgia Strait), McMillan demonstrated that the Natives were peaceful and willing to trade and that the land was productively situated for the establishment of a trading post. Moreover, the survey provided a geographical point of reference for Fraser's River by anchoring its outlet to a landmark "he recognized by Vancouver's chart which was in his possession" (Merk 1931:116). Described by company clerk John Work as a point of land projecting far out into the sea, it was proclaimed to be the same as Vancouver's Point Roberts (Work 1912:217–223). McMillan's resulting map once again fulfilled the ambition of a rational ordering of space, subverting Fraser's narrative and rendering the land in empirical terms that could be assessed from a distance.

Regrettably, McMillan's reconnaissance sketch of the Fraser Valley has been lost (Hayes 1999:7), but fortunately, we can glean something of its import through the journal of John Work, whose observations serve as an annotation to the survey. Work's prosaic and detailed entries systematically recorded and ordered the land first and foremost, like the accounts of other traders, in terms of its fur potential. McMillan's route took them from tidewater up Nicomekel River, by portage to the Salmon River, and then downstream to Fraser's River. All along this route, Work consistently made note of the tell-tale "marks of a great many industrious beaver," signs such as chewed willow, birch, and alder stumps, as well as evidence of beaver lodges and dams that colonized the marshy banks (Work 1912:218–219).

Fraser's expedition was little more than reconnoiter, but the long-term presence planned by the Hudson's Bay Company required a detailed knowledge of the land's vegetable and mineral productions. Cutting through the center of a large plain (Langley Prairie), Work commented on the land's fertility, suggesting that the soil was "very rich," its value indicated by the remains of a "luxurious crop of fern and grass." And along the banks of the Salmon River, he saw "a fine meadow which is covered with the withered remains of a fine crop of hay" (Work 1912:218–219). Work's nomenclature is telling. His choice of words like "crop" and his persistent monitoring of soil and vegetation suggest a view to agricultural production, a vital factor when establishing a post expected to be largely self-reliant.

The expedition was also intended to establish communication with the Indigenous population. This was conducted largely on friendly terms, and the "Indians" were apparently "highly pleased" to learn of HBC plans for a trading post at some point along the river. Work was careful to note in particular the kinds of European trade goods that had penetrated the region. At one place they found "some fine European articles in traffic" acquired from tribes in the interior, at another a "new blanket, two guns, a pair of trousers and a few other European articles, some of them very old and worn out" (Work 1912:220–221). More than just a passing curiosity, European artifacts were scrutinized with an appraiser's eye, indicative of the Hudson's Bay Company ambitions to exploit new commercial opportunities—blankets and iron in exchange for fur.

Whereas Fraser's account of the river featured constant interaction and negotiation with local Native groups, Work's journal relegates them largely to the background with descriptions of their physical appearance, for example, and disparaging comments about their "miserable habitations," despite the fact that winter villages would have been occupied and bustling with activity. Although this kind of response was not uncommon for the time, I would also suggest that with geographic uncertainty resolved and cartographic support for Fraser's River, the business of facilitating commercial advantage was able to resume course and take priority.

Traders' views tended to reduce a heterogeneous environment to largely commercial concerns, and George Simpson's enthusiastic report—written after the fact at Fort George, the headquarters of the Columbia Department—is an exemplar of this kind of reduction. Simpson extracted from McMillan's discovery a purely commoditized and static space ripe for exploitation.

> The Channel which divides Vancouver's Island from the Main land they found studed [*sic*] with Islands which afford a safe and well sheltered navigation for any Craft. The shores of the Main land they found densely peopled the Natives being collected in Villages . . . they learned that the Country abounded with Deer and that Beaver were numerous on all the small Streams with which it is so much intersected, and this report was fully confirmed by their own observation as wherever they landed they found traces of large and fur bearing animals. (quoted in Merk 1931:114)

Despite his detached prose, Work's journal maintains a certain narrative quality of description. Simpson's account, on the other hand, is a synoptic mapping, a necessary reduction that—apart from rhetorical embellishments

confirming this knowledge had been secured with their own eyes (and firmly located on a map)—erases the context of exploration (Boelhower 1988; Edney 1997; Fabian 2001) and defines the land according to key variables compatible with and digestible at the scale of the continental fur trade. His intended audience—the "Honourable Committee," the HBC's directorship in London—could then mobilize this dispassionate and rational ordering of space for future planning.

Mapping the Local

It is tempting to think about Simpson's account as a kind of a panoptic gaze that reached out and possessed from afar, a natural extension of Vancouver's chart, which unambiguously tied Fraser's River to the coast. In light of the British imperial agenda that sought dominion over landscapes, it can be argued that the HBC's presence in the Fraser Valley invoked and embellished Vancouver's framework, helping to both expand and redefine the space of imperial appropriation. After all, commercial interests necessitated a firm understanding of local geography, and a loose affiliation with empire bolstered legitimacy relative to rival powers, particularly the western ambitions of the United States. In fact, although the Hudson's Bay Company was not directly under Britain's control, it was given the authority to act on behalf of its interests, "to preserve the Peace and good Government of that part of North America" (Harris 1997:33). While we cannot readily divorce traders' activities from the agendas of empire, we must still tread carefully here. The HBC employed the rhetoric of empire when it suited its goals, as in the case of official correspondence, but this formal language, as I will show, was not necessarily practical at the scale of day-to-day encounters in, for instance, traders' mappings.

Unlike Vancouver's more insulated construction of the coast, the mapping of the Langley District at the scale of local encounter took on meanings that respected a more localized and hybrid vernacular. McMillan's survey shed a favorable light on the valley's potential as the center of a new fur province. In 1827 under the protection of the guns of the schooner *Cadboro* (Maclachlan 1998:12), the wooden palisade of Fort Langley, named after HBC director Thomas Langley, was erected on the south bank of the river about twenty-five miles from its mouth. As a new trade hub, it immediately became a going concern among local Coast Salish, prompting a general shift in settlement patterns up and down the valley. Early reports affirmed the region's productivity and the willingness of the locals to trade, but once Fort Langley was firmly established in the valley, reality set in, tempering perceptions of unlimited bounty (Vibert 1997:89).

Early fur returns were one of the first indications that the land would not meet initial expectations. Profit margins were considered poor, and Natives demanded higher prices than the Company was prepared to pay. In an effort to increase productivity, trapping forays sought direct access to beaver colonies, thereby cutting out the costly bartering procedure—a strategy that failed to make any real difference as it was difficult to find dams to trap "not likely to be molested by the Natives" (Maclachlan 1998:98). In 1830 Chief Trader Archibald McDonald summed up the situation in his annual correspondence, attributing the post's failures to competition elsewhere and the generally "unproductive nature of much of the Country itself" (Maclachlan 1998:218). Stiff competition from maritime traders, mainly ships from Boston, and the comparatively rapid decimation of the local beaver population meant that Fort Langley would never be the center of a lucrative fur province. In later years the post reinvented itself largely as an exporter of salmon and agricultural goods. Nevertheless, inducement to profit margins invariably meant the fostering of a new pragmatism, beginning with closer understanding of the Native political and economic landscape.

Interestingly, as McDonald's report outlined the post's failures, it also implied a new responsiveness to local conditions. Whereas the initial myopic mapping of the valley emphasized geographic abstraction at the expense of Aboriginal primacy, McDonald paid far greater attention to the diverse cultural geography of the district, demonstrated by his detailed overview of the Native population so as to "arrive at something near the number of men inhabiting that space" (Maclachlan 1998:219–220). This document constitutes an exhaustive register of over fifty distinct groups, what McDonald considered tribes living in the fur district. On the Fraser River itself, he listed the ascending order of settlements as one proceeded upstream from the fort: Quaitlines, Smaise, Tchulwhyooks, Pellauts, Skam and Swatch, Honellaque, Kakumlutch, Whuaquum, Hutlehunssens, Tetton, etc. And in addition to approximate adult male populations, in many instances he gave names of local chiefs.

One way of interpreting this research is as a means of monitoring the local population, a tacit form of surveillance. As Harris argues, the Hudson's Bay Company was primarily concerned with commercial capitalism revolving around able management, order, and property. As smooth running of its trading network enhanced profit margins, it did everything in its power to avoid irregularity and uncertainty. To protect commercial linkages, the company attempted to assert itself as a dominant force, a position that in Maclachlan's words "was rapidly and firmly established" (1998:17). Dominance was initially achieved by the construction of forts, what Harris

(1997:39) calls "power containers." Analogous to the borderland castles of Europe, they operated to affirm control over the local region. When Native transgressions undermined its solvency, the HBC could usually depend upon intimidation to get its way. In 1828, for example, a force of sixty men from Fort Vancouver traveled north to the Strait of Juan de Fuca to avenge a murder attributed to the Clallam. In the end, at least two families were killed and several villages torched (Harris 1997:54). Such violent measures provided a firm platform for conducting trade on the company's terms. In this respect, McDonald's register may have reflected an interest in preempting instability or insurrection by maintaining names and numbers of groups who were potential threats.

I favor a view of interaction as a give-and-take exchange, more symbiotic than one-sided. Although peaceful order may at times have been maintained by the threat of violence, this focus overshadows trader-Native relations at the scale of day-to-day interaction, particularly those connections made outside of the protective palisade. Because traders were necessarily dependent upon their hosts, relationships were usually less hostile here than on settlement frontiers (Maclachlan 1998:17). While men like McDonald never forgot that Natives were "savages," on another level traders looked for ways to mitigate hostilities, which in the early years were ever present. Indeed, the official post journal from this period, as well as McDonald's own correspondence, frequently alludes to their tenuous position. As McDonald himself stated, "The Indian Population in this part of the World is very great, and were it not for the continual variance among themselves, especially the Warlike Tribes, [it] would have been extremely dangerous to a handful of whites" (Maclachlan 1998:219), and at worst it could have caused "total ruin or abandonment of the Establishment" (McDonald 2001:82–83).

From this point of view, the naming of tribes may reflect a more conciliatory position, an attempt to become familiar with local cultures—a far more ameliorating response than the imperialist rhetoric that homogenized and dehumanized Natives as undifferentiated Others (Pratt 1992:52). McDonald's report certainly reflects an economic agenda insofar as it calculates projected fur returns. Nevertheless, possessing knowledge of your clients not only bettered trade relations, it also helped increase mutual respect while regulating and maintaining political détente. In areas where the HBC exercised little control, negotiations were particularly tense, exemplified by the company's exploration and mapping of the area between the lower valley and the interior plateau, a region still largely unknown to Europeans.

With political dealings foreshadowing American territorial expansion to the south and the settlement of an international boundary, Fort Langley

became destined for a new role. In 1846 employee Alexander Caulfield Anderson began surveying mountain passes between the lower Fraser and the interior plateau for a new fur brigade trail to replace the loss of the Columbia River route which had become part of the United States. Requiring a corridor for the movement of furs from its interior forts to the coast, as well as a means for resupply, Fort Langley would become the new transshipment point. Anderson's sketch of the region is an impressive artifact. Produced in 1849 from a series of surveys, it offered a detailed schematic of potential brigade routes via rivers, portages, and mountain pathways from the lower Fraser to the interior (figs. 6.3a and 6.3b).

Carlson (2001d) maintains that its optics framed a European view of the landscape, indicated by Anderson's primary focus on landmarks useful for navigating around the incredible obstacles that nature presented. More specifically, Carlson argues that the selective inclusion of Aboriginal settlements alongside geographical features suggests the degree to which Anderson viewed Natives as "natural features of a non-civilised landscape" (Carlson 2001e:128). Indeed, if Anderson's journal accounts are representative of the author's attitudes, he was not one to forego an opportunity to disparage the Indian or to impose on the chaotic unknown the facade of civility. For instance, he named a small lake east of the Fraser Valley in the Cascade Mountains Council's Punch Bowl in honor of the HBC's directorship (Anderson 1878:72), also a useful strategy for gaining social leverage among his peers. But, as we will see, these were not the only concerns that informed Anderson's map.

A fairly uniform category of representational practices appears to capture "European mapping" for Carlson. Yet considering this map's context of production and spheres of consumption, it is possible, I contend, to uncover more nuanced meanings here. Anderson, like other traders, was forced to rely heavily on the local knowledge of his guides to make "discoveries." In his penetration of the Cascade Mountains "through a tract of country . . . practically unknown" (Anderson 1878:51), he candidly commented on their familiarity with the landscape, its names, textures, and connectivity with other places. For example, observing "a stream issuing from a cut on the right," he wrote: "The Indians call it Simal-â-ouch, or Sim-all-â-ow, and say that it falls, as nearly as I can ascertain, somewhere in the vicinity of Bellingham Bay, but as I am little acquainted with that locality, I can not identify it. I was at first inclined to set it down as the Skatchett river, and am still in doubt on the point" (Anderson 1878:69).

Similar to Vancouver, Anderson applied the empirical method: insisting on seeing before placing his findings on the map. However, unlike the mariner

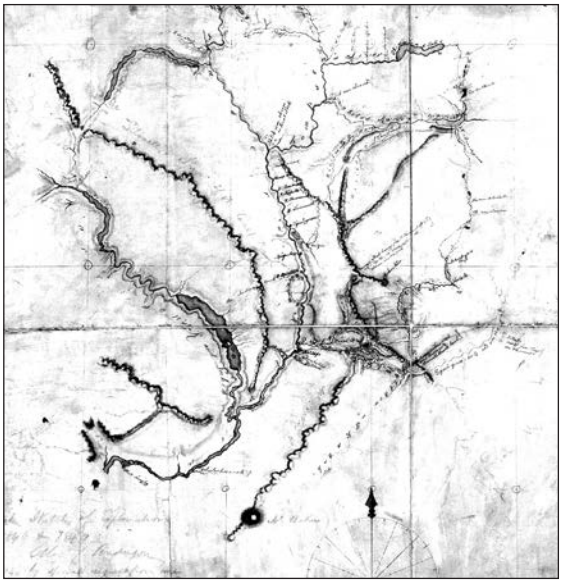


FIGURE 6.3A. A summary of possible brigade routes between the Fraser Valley and Fort Kamloops, 1846–1849, drawn by A. C. Anderson. (Courtesy of British Columbia Archives and Records Service)

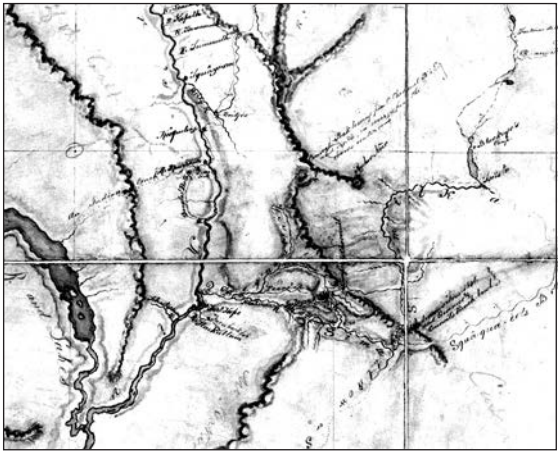


FIGURE 6.3B. A detail from a summary map showing Native place names in the Fraser Canyon.

assigning British names to the landscape from his floating laboratory, Anderson frequently sought out local place names and recorded them using his own phonetic orthography. For example, he sketched the mouths of secondary rivers R. Lzaehoose, R. Kapath, R. Tzewamma and placed the villages of Skaoose, Tquayowm, Kequeloose, and Spuzzzum along its length (see also Anderson 1878:83). However, he identified villages on the map with conventional silhouette ideograms in the style of a gabled-roof house, a symbol more evocative of European settlements than the local pit-house villages. Anderson's journal indicates that he observed more Native settlements than he recorded on his map. Still, the fact that he distinguished many of them using local toponymy suggests some degree of engagement with Aboriginal culture markedly absent in the work of the more detached cartographer.

Perhaps the most striking degree of engagement with local culture could be observed in marriage alliances forged between traders and Natives, often a means of securing economic relationships that also addressed the need for emotional bonds experienced by employees who spent many years away from home.[8] While not all approved of these unions, they nevertheless created contexts that helped forge common ground. Unlike later colonial land surveys that dismissed Indigenous settlements with the ubiquitous and homogenizing label "Indian Village," a strategy that devalued Native identity, Anderson's geography suggests at the very least an awareness of the possibility of certain affinities with Natives and a tacit acceptance of their history. Although an often unacknowledged tactic, establishing good terms with Natives provided windows on local knowledge facilitating commerce.

Produced for the needs of the fur brigade, Anderson's hand-drawn map became the roadmap for the favored route via Kequeloose and Nicola Lake. Initially two or possibly three copies (one of which was for Simpson) in addition to the original circulated (Ruggles 1991:94) within the relatively close networks of the western fur trade. Not until a decade later would the map be hurriedly appropriated to meet the demands of a new global interest in the region—gold. By that time, however, other maps and other forms of mapping had begun to change the Fraser Valley's relationship with the wider world.

Mapping the Landscape: The Local and the Global

The history of cartography has tended to portray exploration and mapmaking as part of a unified and linear exercise that pressed the boundaries of terra incognita. This view often assumed that all exploration was concerned with the same enterprise: civilizing the unknown physical world by representing

it as a scale model. Historians have rarely looked critically at the relationship between the human world and object histories surrounding the production and consumption of maps, more abstract contexts that are easy to downplay in favor of the concrete detail offered by cartographic sources. Focusing on surface complexity, the progression of geographical knowledge encouraged by a chronology of exploration maps may lull one into accepting the very discourse that makes maps such powerful tools of social persuasion. While explorers may at times have seen their actions on a global scale heralding the advance of civilization and knowledge, both mapping and reading maps from the perspectives of differently situated interest groups were complex acts that defy monolithic interpretations.

Although Vancouver, Fraser, and explorers of the Hudson's Bay Company all sought to control space through their maps, they are so dissimilar in the symbols they employ and the relationships they infer that we can only properly understand them in context. Vancouver's de-contextualized chart of the coast, imbued with scientific rhetoric and imperial overtones, was enabled by the very insularity of his voyage. The size and power of his survey vessels afforded him a comfortable distance, while his array of instruments, gentlemen observers, and scientific method allowed him to manage the chaos of the coast. Erasing his own time and experiences, he transformed his narrative encounter into empirical knowledge. Back in Britain, for the Admiralty, the Colonial Office, and later the middle-class public, Vancouver's authoritative line signified the very idea of the "North West" well into the nineteenth century. It situated the coast in a global scheme that emanated from the power center of Britain, remaking the world in its own image. Indeed, as I have shown, Vancouver's chart of the coast became incorporated into smaller-scale summary maps of the continent that influenced decisions about how the landscape could be harnessed to facilitate commerce. Still, this global reach was not to prevail in all contexts.

In contrast, Simon Fraser's reconnaissance of the Fraser River and the maps of its lower course produced by HBC traders had to contend with very different conditions. Limited resources and the often unpredictable physical character of the landscape shaped the kind of maps that could be made. As time was often short, equipment limited, and physical obstacles almost insurmountable, good scientific practice (and its rhetoric) was sometimes difficult to achieve. For example, Stuart, Fraser's appointed navigator, could not hope to compete with the multiple astronomical readings taken by Vancouver and his crew. Stuart was fortunate to take observations when and where he could, in circumstances more like a military reconnoiter than an exhaustive hydrographical survey. Interestingly, Stuart's readings were tolerably

accurate. Indeed, Thompson's *Map of the North West Territory of the Province of Canada* (1814) depicted Fraser's River with an accuracy that would have been considered admirable among cartographers, but because Fraser's journey failed to establish its validity by alluding to good scientific method, it was unable to persuade within fur trade circles until tied to McMillan's survey map of 1824.

More critically, I have argued that a deeply embedded Aboriginal landscape mediated traders' mappings, reflecting to some degree shared interests and limitations. Mapping the land was contingent upon circumstances on the ground and could reflect the tacit acknowledgement of the Aboriginal Other. As Harley argues, there is a danger in assuming that Indians were "the unresponding victims of the map" (1992a:527). In contrast to Vancouver's detached imperial geography of displacement, Fraser's mapping of the river and later HBC surveys were caught up in a complex political and cultural balancing act informed as much by Aboriginal power and primacy as by traders' commercial interests. Far from imposing Enlightenment truth, frontier areas such as the Langley District cultivated something close to coexistence between European and Native traditions (Cronon et al. 1993:10).

Traders' maps depended in large part on Native intervention. Indeed, many of the maps from this period and earlier explicitly made use of information from Indigenous sources (Harvey 1980:33). Outside of the HBC's main corridors of communication, geographic knowledge was almost exclusively drawn from Aboriginal reports. Even the most intrepid accounts through the most virgin of landscapes were either led by Natives or were aided by their advice.[9] For Aboriginals this was a place objectified by their own conditions of knowledge, a place inherited from the ancestors and realized in the routines of their lives. Traders were generally forced to accept Native space, or at least its terms of reference, whether they liked it or not. As newcomers in a foreign and potentially hostile land, traders were keen to establish friendly relations. This was less accord than a tacit acceptance of the control Aboriginals potentially exercised. Still, understanding and using local knowledge had its advantages as it allowed traders to "see" far beyond the rugged mountains and thick forest mantle, facilitating knowledge of travel corridors and new fur territories.

The influence Natives wielded in this matter cannot be overstated. Before a region was properly explored, traders had little option but to take their word, and when Natives were not inclined to cooperate with traders, their "guidance" could be deliberately misleading. During the exploration of the valley in 1824, for example, McMillan believed his party had gained valuable information from their Native informants about the condition of the Fraser

River, suggesting it to be "a fine large bold stream and not barred by dangerous rapids or falls" (Merk 1931:117). But as Merk (1931:117) indicates, this information could not have been more erroneous, demonstrating the ambiguity of Fraser's account of the canyon in trader social networks (a narrative that avoided any allusions to geographic fixity) and also suggesting that McMillan's survey was intentionally deceived (Ruggles 1991:90). Natives may have imparted misinformation so as not to discourage the establishment of a trading post that hoped to use the river as its principal route, or, alternatively, this may have been a dubious ploy to disrupt European commercial ambitions. Whatever the reason, until the Hudson's Bay Company descended the river, this time with HBC Governor Simpson himself in 1828, Natives remained the sole keepers of the Fraser River's secrets, both its uncharted contours and its treacherous conditions.

Mapping was, of course, not shaped exclusively by Indigenous agendas, and traders appear in some measure to have shared certain conceptualizations of the landscape with Natives. Despite significant epistemological and ontological divergences, they had little difficulty in translating the physical nature of the landscape into a common language. Europeans sometimes copied maps drawn in sand and other mediums for their own use. I have already remarked on the relative ease with which Fraser was able to interpret the oil-cloth map of the river course drawn by the Atnah-nation slave (Fraser 1960:66). They shared an interest in establishing linear pathways or vectors between particular places in the landscape. Native space was largely defined as a series of pathways between significant nodal points in the landscape (Ingold 1986:148–149). Traders were typically interested in establishing lines of communication between fur territories or trading posts.[10]

A comparison of maps suggests some common ground in the way the landscape was experienced. Evidence from a number of places in western North America, including southwestern British Columbia (Brealey 2002:40; Boxberger and Schaepe 2001:125), indicates that Native maps tended to manipulate physical space according to embodied encounter: in arduous journeys, pathways were depicted by tortured zigzags or exaggerated distances, whereas unhindered travel was represented by compressing space. Remarkably a similar convention appears in Anderson's own representation of the Lillooet River, one of the routes explored to connect the interior with the coast. Modern maps indicate the Lillooet as a relatively straight line, yet Anderson's emphasizes bends in the river as sheer zigzags. Looking at his journal account provides the answer: at these points rapids engulfed the river. Informed by experiential logic, his cartography has little to recommend it as a representation of Enlightenment principles, but as an artifact that respected

the intensity of the journey, as Native accounts would surely have done, its significance should not be underestimated (Belyea 1992:272).

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed an interesting tension between local conditions and global ideals. Following Jon Holtzman (2004), I suggest that the normally subservient relationship between the local and the global in the context of mapping needs to be reassessed. According to Enlightenment epistemology, the local is naturally subsumed by the global, in the same way that periphery is related to center or the colonial margins were attached to the imperial metropole (Cronon et al. 1993:10). The local in such a relationship is seen to manifest in miniature the ideals of the global. However, as I have shown, Enlightenment science failed to shape the world into a form that could be eminently knowable and possessable. Early European influences such as smallpox and the fur trade shaped to some degree the Aboriginal landscape, but explorers did not impose geography. Study of the politics of encounter reveals that geographical truths were realized at local scales of interaction. In other words, traders produced situated and hybrid creations, a locally constructed version of a global ideal, which in effect subverted that ideal for more place-centered concerns (Holtzman 2004:77).

Of course, Vancouver's encounter was not more objective. Nevertheless, by maintaining a sense of distance from his subject, real or invented, by playing by the rules of cartographic abstraction that sought to minimize narrative encounter, he reduced the interference of human subjectivity in his representation of the coast. On the other hand, the maps of traders spoke of far more ambiguous places, the product of exchanges that seemed to "write back" from the imperial margins (Bender 1999; Clayton 2000). I argue that there is therefore a considerable messiness in the ways geographical knowledge was created and acknowledged.

Once appropriated by centers of consumption sufficiently distant from the politics of encounter, the meaning of local mappings could be transformed, making the regime of the unwavering line as an objective representation of the margins of the civilized world easier to accept. These issues become more important with the establishment of the Northwest as an outpost of the British Empire. The founding of the Colony of Vancouver Island (1849) and the Colony of British Columbia (1858) helped bring about a new unified vision of the landscape. Only after this process of incorporation can we begin to speak decisively about the Fraser Valley as a proper noun. Increasingly caught up in the growing web of colonial power and in the imagination of a growing population of literate consumers, maps became an influential voice in the construction of a stable colonial society.

7

Toward the Colonization of Opinion

> The minute exploration of the extraordinary archipelago by Vancouver, in the years 1791–93, has given us maps the accuracy of which under the circumstances has excited the admiration of succeeding navigators.
>
> —A. C. Anderson, *The Dominion at the West* (1872:6)

Whereas traders' maps were rife with ambiguity, survey and mapmaking by the vanguard of empire during the second half of the nineteenth century constructed the landscape in assured terms that inspired confidence. With the events of 1858 in particular, the Fraser River advanced beyond the relatively bounded geographies of the Georgia Strait and Puget Sound, entering a much wider world. In the spring of that year, at least 20,000 miners, chiefly Americans, entered the mouth of the river and made for the gold strikes reported in the Fraser Canyon (Harris 1997:80). In the words of historian Frederic Howay, "The magnetic lure of the gold drew into the amorphous territory called New Caledonia a horde of reckless fortune-hunters, 'from the world's four corners blown'" (1910:1). Perceptions of place, which had largely fallen within the scope of Coast Salish populations and a few traders, were now appropriated by a broader geographical discourse that firmly situated the valley and its environs on Vancouver's map, ingraining them in an ever-widening European imagination.

In this chapter I argue that the distance between global agendas and local interests, reflected in the maps of traders and Natives, dramatically decreased in the second half of the nineteenth century, the inverse in effect of the scenario described in chapter 6. With the founding of the colony of British Columbia, land survey and the representation of geographic truths found in cartography and forms of literature prefigured the perception of the landscape as a series of nested categories that reflected the interests of Europeans. I suggest that the material practices of surveyors and the rhetoric of mapping

helped reify the idea of the colony and later the Fraser Valley as concepts that could be objectified and possessed in the mind far before becoming physical realities on the ground.

Land of "Enormous Wealth" and "Vast Fields for Enterprise"

As early as 1856 the Hudson's Bay Company had learned through Native informants that gold could be found in the fur territory. With news of the first strikes made in the Fraser Canyon, British Columbia began to acquire a global audience. The discovery of gold fields opened a new vista on this previously far-flung corner of the world as it entered the consciousness of people in America, Europe, China, and elsewhere. But word of mouth alone was not enough to catapult this frontier to the world stage. The channels of transmission were unreliable, digressing easily into rumor; the message required broader reaching and more persuasive media. Bridging the divide between fact and fiction, mass-produced, mass-circulated, and mass-consumed forms of literature helped reach an audience beyond the narrow circles of the Colonial Office, the Admiralty, and middle-class intellectuals (Lilley 2002:69; Said 1994).

Marshalling first-hand accounts and the rhetoric of science, the material culture of maps and guidebooks erased ambiguity and authoritatively filled in the geography of the Northwest (Lewis 1988; Morphy 1993:213–15). Aided by a revolution in printing technology that included the introduction of the steam-driven printing press, literature could be produced quickly and cheaply (Anderson 1991:2). Growing literacy and access to education in the Victorian world meant that knowledge was disseminated widely across social classes (Mitch 1992). Collapsing distance and connecting social networks, new kinds of transportation from steamships to the U.S. coast-to-coast railway facilitated this process. In this new interconnected world, news of British Columbia's "pay dirt" was reified and circulated, making locally produced knowledge a global commodity.

News of strikes in the British territory first flowed quickly south and captured the public imagination in California, where the previous gold rush of 1849 had all but fizzled out. Spurred initially by entrepreneurial publishers in San Francisco (Spittle 1988:194), expedient guide maps and pamphlets of the gold region featured a region of capitalist opportunity. Compared with the relatively subdued and settled parts of the continent, this place was still fresh and ripe for exploitation (Runte 1976:48–49). Judging by the number of additions to the original, Alfred Waddington's *A Correct Map of the Northern Coal & Gold Regions Comprehending Frazer River* (at least four

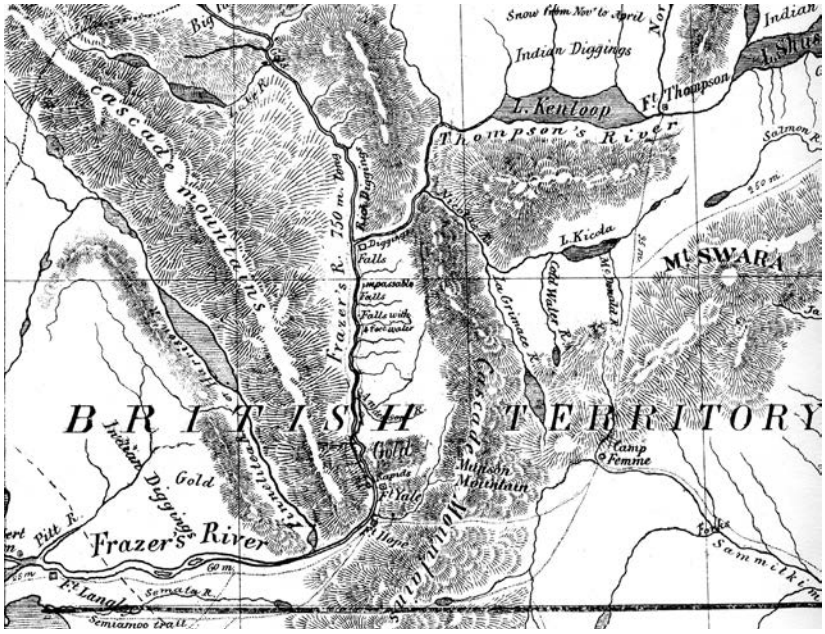


FIGURE 7.1. A detail from Alfred Waddington's map of the northern coal and gold regions surrounding the Fraser River, 1858. (Courtesy of the University of British Columbia, Rare Books and Special Collections)

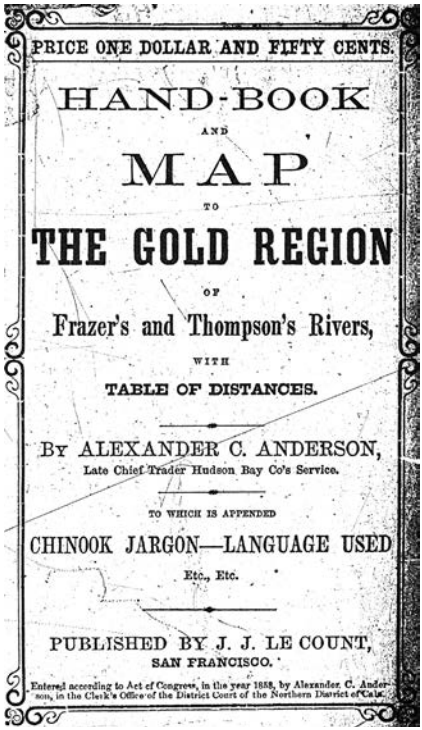
were published during April and May of 1858) was among the first to make an impact on wider perceptions (fig. 7.1). A speedily devised small-scale sketch, it roughly depicted Vancouver's coastline, the approximate lines of major rivers including the Fraser, and simplified mountain ranges rendered in hachuring.

Promising "carefully compiled" information, "from the latest Data & personal Observation," it liberally sprinkled "observed" (but more likely imagined) gold-bearing seams and "Indian Diggings" along the length of the Fraser and its tributaries. The promise of gold extended as far south as the Fraser Valley astride the Pitt River and as far north and east as Kenloop (Kamloops Lake) and Schuswap (Shuswap Lake) over halfway to the Rocky Mountains. If this was not enough incitement to envision a region of mineral wealth and capitalist opportunity, revised editions by Waddington followed that included new information and corrections. By the fourth edition, "British Territory" was filled in with dubiously positioned mountain ranges and rivers. It displayed a rash of newly reported diggings and gold regions stressing the map's central import.

Interestingly, the first gold map whose authority derived from actual experience of the region was not produced by gold miners but by HBC explorers. In fact, depicting the geography of the newly minted colony was at first largely a matter of co-opting and transcribing older maps. On the heels of Waddington, HBC employee A. C. Anderson used his detailed knowledge of the rugged mountains between the lower Fraser and the gold strikes in the canyon for profit. Employing the sketch map he had produced for the fur brigades in 1849 in conjunction with San Francisco publisher J. J. Lecount, he produced a comprehensive guidebook and map of the territory (Anderson 1858:2) (figs. 7.2a and 7.2b). Pandering less overtly to frenzied opportunists, it sold itself more as a faithful navigational aid to the diggings via the river mouth and Fort Langley or, alternatively, overland by means of the Columbia River. A number of other interests capitalized on Anderson's published guide and incorporated his information into their own versions. Apparently, Waddington's later editions hurriedly augmented his maps with Anderson's knowledge of the Fraser River and its surroundings. The Arrowsmith firm of London also borrowed heavily from Anderson to publish its own map: *Sketch, Showing the different Routes of Communication with the Gold Region on Fraser River* (1859). In keeping with the spirit of Waddington's map, the Arrowsmith version traced gold-bearing streams in brilliant yellow as if the Fraser ran with gold.

The map at right exemplifies the process of transcribing local knowledge into a form made meaningful beyond the geographies of the fur trade. As we saw in chapter 6, for over a decade Anderson's *Sketch of Exploration* (1849) was used in a restricted network of local traders working mainly between the coast and the interior. As I have argued earlier, Anderson's map hinted at a degree of cultural coexistence and political détente between traders and Natives, which was sometimes reflected in place names. But by 1858 his geography had acquired an abundance of other meanings. With the discovery of gold, it became an indispensable guide for thousands of prospectors who flocked to the recently established colony. The consumers of these adapted publications had little (if any) knowledge of the complex conditions of their original creation. Divorced from the politics of place that affirmed Native primacy, place names were preserved out of context, and the maintenance of Indigenous toponyms in later maps was arguably a form of appropriation for different reasons (Harley 1992b:530).

Whereas place names for the Hudson's Bay Company were implicated in a cultural give-and-take, they functioned for miners and investors as little more than expedient geographical tags, as good as any other for navigating the wilderness. The gap in cartography between the local and the global elided


PRICE ONE DOLLAR AND FIFTY CENTS.

HAND-BOOK

AND

MAP

TO

THE GOLD REGION

OF

Frazer's and Thompson's Rivers,

WITH

TABLE OF DISTANCES.

BY ALEXANDER C. ANDERSON,

Late Chief Trader Hudson Bay Co's Service.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED

CHINOOK JARGON—LANGUAGE USED

Etc., Etc.

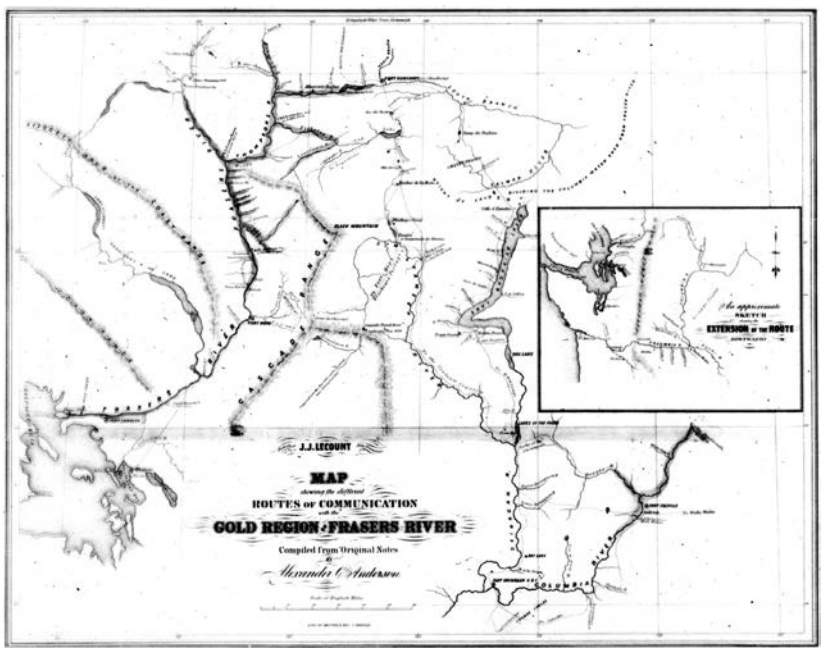
PUBLISHED BY J. J. LE COUNT,

SAN FRANCISCO.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858, by Alexander C. Anderson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Northern District of Calif.

FIGURE 7.2A. The cover of A. C. Anderson's handbook and map of the gold region of Fraser's and Thompson's River. (Courtesy of the University of British Columbia, Rare Books and Special Collections)

FIGURE 7.2B. A. C. Anderson's redrawn map, illustrating the various routes of communication with the gold region on Fraser's River. (Courtesy of the University of British Columbia, Rare Books and Special Collections)



into a singular new frame, a globalized knowledge legitimized by European ways of seeing. Indeed, as miners descended upon the canyon in 1858 and 1859, the balance between Native and newcomer unquestionably tipped in the latter's favor. In the emerging social landscape, the sheer number of new arrivals overwhelmed a poorly understood and little respected Aboriginal history. The seasonal round was unceremoniously disrupted. New economies of wage labor drew Natives from older routines (Harris 1997:110), and the meanings behind the old names inscribed by traders were often forgotten.

Of course, reports of bounty could also be challenged. After only a year of activity, the lauded gold region came under serious scrutiny. By September of that year, a letter written by prospector Charles Major appearing in the Toronto *Daily Globe* (1860) suggested that "the country is not what it was represented to be" and that in "truth the mines are falling off very fast . . . you may say used up." Major painted a picture of destitute gold seekers, many with no shoes, others with "small pieces of shirt and trowsers [*sic*] . . . pinned together with small sharp sticks. They had nothing to eat . . . and not one cent in money." He also suggested that reports praising the soil's productivity were as false as the claims of gold; in short, British Columbia "could never be a *place*, because there is nothing to support it" (Reid 1941:229–230; emphasis in original). Other accounts were also unfavorable. Highlighting the hardships of the endeavor, the *New Westminster Times* (1860) detailed the "immense labour" required before reaching "the pay streak" that was sometimes twenty feet in depth and then "the difficulty to know whether it is worth the trouble of washing." Clearly, the ambivalence with which the gold region was perceived could significantly alter its broader reception. Still, whether positive or negative, the nuances of locality became lost in the prevailing consumed image and in a polarized debate about the land's productivity.

In 1861 the world's attention again focused on the colony, following new gold strikes on the upper reaches of Fraser River and the Cariboo region. Communicated in maps and published narrative accounts, the second wave of excitement had a greater impact on the colonial metropole (e.g., Johnson 1872; Guillod 1955). In London the *Times* ran advertisements and "glowing" letters extolling the "enormous wealth in gold mines, and the new and vast fields for enterprise offered to the emigrant upon its shores" (Johnson 1872:1). The renewed activity was far from the confines of the lower Fraser, yet publications from the period are interesting in that they reflect and reify how the colony as a place was becoming sedimented in the European collective consciousness. Notably, Epner's map, *Gold Regions in British Columbia* (1862), confirmed that a geography echoing the activity of miners themselves was largely replacing Native toponyms in the canyon. The map's most

arresting feature is its linear construction of the Fraser, as if it presented a highway from coast to interior. Exact distances (or allusions to them) are labeled between gold-mining bars and an emerging network of settlements and roadhouses with mainly English place names, an illusory reflection of a controlled predictable space not dissimilar to the highway atlases of Britain and eastern North America. Defining the landscape's identity in familiar terms made it easier for the European consciousness to assimilate (Harley 1992b:531).

Making British Columbia: From Local to Global Networks

Using European values to represent the landscape was not necessarily enough to persuade onlookers of its imperial connections. As part of British North America, a distinct identity was required, one that spoke of the power of empire, enlightened ideals, and the progress of civilization. In 1849 the colony of Vancouver Island was established as a symbol and toehold of British intentions in the Northwest (Clayton 2000:226). By 1858, with American miners flooding the mainland, an act of empire was invoked again. Fearing the loss of the region to the spirit of American expansion, the colony of British Columbia was founded to contain U.S. ambitions south of the agreed 49th parallel. The task of creating a rudimentary infrastructure for the fledgling colony was assigned to a contingent of Royal Engineers, an elite military corps dispatched from Britain. In the words of the Colonial Secretary, they were instructed to "conquer nature . . . so that all nations will . . . gaze on gardens and cornfields . . . first carved from the wilderness" (Lytton 1858).

Initially considered a token line of defense against expansionist neighbors, the sappers were welcome arrivals, although their main military employment involved acting as peacekeepers in the often hostile relations between Natives and the burgeoning population of miners. Their primary role, however, was to construct a system of roads and boundaries that would serve impending colonial settlement (Howay 1910; Woodward 1974). The first contingent to arrive was the British North American Boundary Commission, charged with establishing the position of the 49th parallel opposite its American counterpart by hacking a surveyed line between Crown and U.S. possessions. The main body of engineers began the process of land survey including cadastral survey, town planning, road making, and trail cutting. In addition, they produced the first official maps of the colony, drafted and printed on their lithographic press beginning in 1861 (Spittle 1988; Woodward 1976). After disbandment in 1863, the majority of the corps decided to settle and take up

land. Many remained employed by the Department of Lands and Works as surveyors for the colony and later for the province of British Columbia once it had joined the Dominion of Canada in 1871 (Woodward 1974).

In contrast to the largely opportunistic and overtly propaganda-laden maps of the gold rush, the Royal Engineers introduced a new era of surveying and mapmaking in the contact zone. Building on Vancouver's chart of the coast, they attempted to define the Northwest in terms that would once and for all finalize its geography by harmonizing the landscape in a number of overlapping discourses. To stem debate over Britain's legitimacy on the coast, the Royal Engineers set about inscribing the landscape with signs and symbols of its unequivocal ownership. To facilitate this process while gaining an absolute perspective on this vast and largely unknown space, surveys sought to reveal the landscape in its physical totality. By placing the variability of geography under the lens of scientific classification, its heterogeneity was transformed into a range of types, reducing landscape to land—a commodity that could be bought and sold.

An Imperial Vision

Surveys conducted by the Royal Engineers were principally of two kinds: land and route. Land surveys divided up pockets of level or fertile land along the Fraser River into saleable lots for impending settlement. The first land surveys took place along the lower Fraser River. Armed with theodolites, compasses, and survey chains, the Royal Engineers set out to carve town sites from the wilderness. In 1859 New Westminster, the capital of the mainland colony, was located at a defensible position on the north bank of the river. Laid out as a rectilinear grid, its form embodied classical lines of order and proportion. Complete with typical urban features of Victorian planning, its design included markets, public squares, arcades, terraces, and formal gardens (Harris 1997:81). In relatively rapid succession, other town sites followed. At Yale and Hope, rectilinear grids were laid out adjacent to the HBC posts, where shanty settlements attracted by the gold rush economy had already sprung up. The town site of Douglas was placed at the head of Little Harrison Lake, and in 1860 Lytton and Lillooet were surveyed north of the Fraser Canyon (Woodward 1974:18).

Route surveys, on the other hand, were used to assess terrain for the building of roads and trails between principal points. Route and reconnaissance surveys were conducted in the lower valley and between there and significant points along the Fraser River, above Hope, and elsewhere in the interior (Woodward 1974:18). In 1859, for example, the land between New

Westminster and Burrard Inlet was surveyed to make a trail that would connect the new capital with a suitable saltwater port allowing for alternative military access and opening the land to cadastral survey and settlement (Harris 1982:14). The Royal Navy also participated in reconnaissance. In the same year Royal Navy Lieutenant R. C. Mayne was instructed by the governor to travel "up the Fraser River, to make a running survey of those parts . . . occupied by miners, and to report upon it generally" (Mayne 1862:79).

Once completed, survey information was compiled to make scale maps including large-scale town plans and small-scale maps that illustrated the routes of explorers and surrounding regions. Juxtaposed with the towering forests of the lower Fraser or the mountains in the interior, evidence of the sapper's work on the ground was rather ephemeral, manifested by survey posts, property lines, and trails cut through the most "vexatious" of thickets (Cherrington 1992:103). However, branding this work with selective geographical nomenclature, such as boundaries, roads, trails, and toponyms, increased the legitimacy of the aspiring colony, identifying surveys on the ground with cartographic symbols that conveyed Britain's power over the landscape.

The earliest decisive cartographic images of British Columbia as colony were drafted and photographically reduced at the Royal Engineer's camp at New Westminster (Woodward 1976:31). For example, *Map of a Portion of British Columbia Compiled From the Surveys & Explorations of the Royal Navy and Royal Engineers* (1859) weaves together place names of embryonic settlements, surveyed routes of exploration, and the international boundary line into a unified tableau subordinate to empire. With a bold red line and prominent capital letters, the Boundary of British North America is depicted along the 49th parallel, providing a natural frame for the colony. Its preeminent feature, the exploration routes of respected officers Lieutenant Palmer and Lieutenant Mayne are coded in color. Penetrating the mountainous interior, their route surveys stitch points on the map together, such as Fort Kamloops and Fort Berens—a post never completed consisting of little more than a clearing. These surveys tie places in the interior to the coast, in effect bridging and uniting the two regions. In bold italics the surveyed colonial town sites of New Westminster, Derby (probably named after the Earl of Derby),[1] Douglas (after the first governor of the colony), Ft. Hope, and Lytton (after the head of the Colonial Office) are prominently marked.

Conspicuously absent for the most part are the numerous Native villages that punctuated the line of the river. Symptomatic of this erasure of locality is the naming of the imaginary town site of Carnarvon, located at the confluence of the Harrison and Fraser rivers. Here at the site of an Indian village known as Scowlitz—a place occupied or used by Native groups over the

last 3000 years (Lepofsky et al. 2000)—Governor Douglas performed a ceremonial flag raising and toasted the health of the future settlement. As if to confirm its existence, the name Carnarvon was carved in letters on an "Indian hut" (*New Westminster Times*, December 10, 1860).

Town plans could succeed, however, in bringing to life settlements that were often little more than rough clearings or a few hastily erected buildings. The first plan of this series was the town site of New Westminster (Woodward 1976:31). The physical position of the new capital gave it a commanding view of the river, and the imposition of deliberate symmetry, despite the steeply sloping topography, can be seen as a symbol of human dominion over the wilderness (Home 1997:11). Following colonial practice elsewhere, the rectilinear grid was used in all town sites laid out by the corps, Douglas and Yale being typical examples. Variation on this theme is evident though in the town plan of Fort Hope (1861). Crosscut by radial axes emitting from a central circus, its street plan seemed to embrace the gaze of the imperial metropole, not unlike many of the great city plans of the nineteenth century that integrated the eye of state surveillance, notably the archetypes of Haussman's Paris and Washington, D.C. (see Cosgrove 1989:129–130; Leone and Little 1993). Incongruously included alongside its bold geometric plan are detailed views of Native longhouses, as well as the structures of the old trading post itself (for the original survey, see Turner 1859). As Carlson (2001e:128) notes in a later edition of the Fort Hope map, these features are made to appear insignificant and anachronistic against the modern plan, inconveniences that would soon be swept aside with the growth of colonial society.

Significantly, maps did not remain the exclusive possessions of military or colonial administrators, a form of situated knowledge in the hands of a few, but entered public circulation in the colony and in Britain itself. With the emergence of mass consumption, Britain's imperial agenda became a global commodity (Latour 1987; Miller 1987). As early as 1860, maps made by the Royal Engineers were being sent to London, two of which were eventually printed by the Topographical Depot of the War Office (Woodward 1976:31). The Arrowsmith firm made some available to the public, *Map of a Portion of British Columbia*, for example, compiled in the colony in 1859 and published for sale at their Sloane Square office that same year. Moreover, by 1861 the Royal Engineers had begun to employ a lithographic press purchased from London and shipped to the colony to disseminate recent surveys. Between 1861 and 1866, some forty different map sheets based on original survey work were produced at the camp. Period newspapers advertised their sale, typically for somewhere between fifty cents and a dollar fifty in New Westminster and Victoria. Only a few of these copies remain yet have been

found in libraries as distant as San Francisco and London (Spittle 1988:197; Woodward 1976:31).

As we saw in chapter 6, maps of the region produced in the Northwest prior to the founding of the colony were largely consumed in the local social networks of traders. Although the Hudson's Bay Company passed on some of its own maps to publishers like the Arrowsmith firm, their relatively small geographic scale likely had little symbolic effect as tools of geographical appropriation beyond that which Vancouver's map of the coast had achieved over a half-century before.[2] Maps of the new colony became common possessions among prospective settlers, miners, and investors. Town plans, for instance, were typically used for cadastral purposes, while route maps were essential to gold seekers. In particular, Lieutenant Palmer's exploration of the Cariboo goldfields became so popular that the reports were serialized in the New Westminster *Columbian* (Spittle 1988:197).

By presenting a bird's-eye view of the landscape, maps afforded an unobstructed gaze of the earth's surface and the illusion of being everywhere at once (Haraway 1991). Seeing the colony on the map gave it a social efficacy above and beyond the view from the ground. As Royal Engineers Commander Colonel Moody once remarked, "Considering that such practical Skill & Neatness is only an ordinary example in this office [the maps demonstrate] in the rough [the] beginning of a distant colony" (quoted in Spittle 1988:197). No longer just a *wild* coastline claimed by Britain, the map constructed a *stable* image of a colony and possession subsumed under the rubric of empire that invited the consumer to partake in the new "territorial status quo" (Harley 1988:282).

Masters of All They Surveyed

This title of Graham Burnett's (2000) study of exploration and survey in British Guyana also superbly summarizes the process of mapping and making the colony of British Columbia. Creating a stable and compelling colony required more than its placement on the map; it required a firm knowledge of its geographical extent, a clear understanding of its distances, heights, and undulations. In short, it required the construction of a rational geography. To achieve these ends, survey and mapmaking drew upon a suite of techniques. Equally important as good instruments and methods were allusions to sound methodological practice and to the surveyors' authority as qualified *fixers*. To bolster claims of accuracy and silence potential critics, surveyors relied on performances appropriate to scientific investigation and images imbued with scientific rhetoric (Burnett 2000:91–92). Moreover, as rational professionals, they perceived

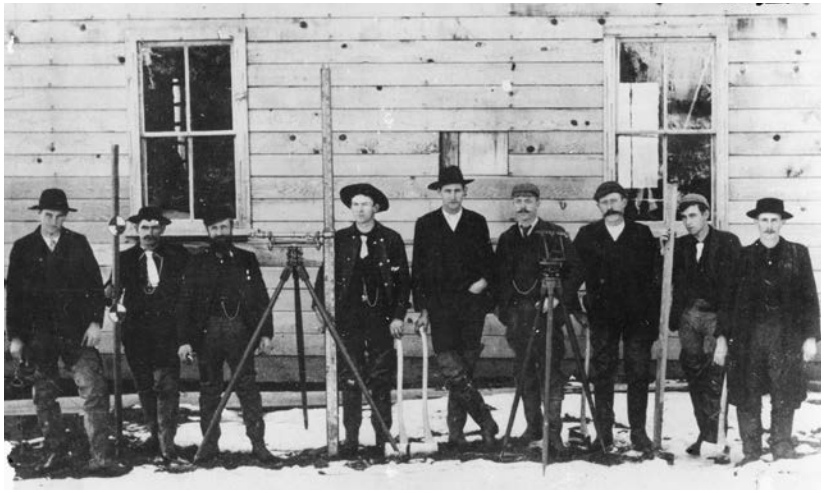


FIGURE 7.3. A colonial survey party circa 1870. (Courtesy of Chilliwack Archives, P. 1484)

many to be social inferiors, not only Indians but also other Europeans who failed to live up to their high empirical standards. Drawing on their knowledge and use of scientific practice, they constructed themselves as a bourgeois, civilizing precursor of middle-class values (Edney 1997:33) (fig. 7.3).

This period of mapping was not simply an extension of fur trader surveys. Military surveyors, who sought to rework geographic truth and distance themselves from earlier cartographic traditions, were often derisive of the Hudson's Bay Company and their inadequate maps. Many surveyors considered the landscape neglected by and largely unknown to traders. For example, Lieutenant R. C. Mayne, involved with establishing the water boundary between British and American territory, complained of the lack of an "accurate chart of the channels in dispute between [Vancouver] island and the main shore" and lamented that "the position and extent of the group of islands [in the gulf] were very imperfectly known." In the published account of his experiences, he chastised masters of the local HBC vessels for the very "meagre" information they were able to give (Mayne 1862:10–13). This was not an isolated perception. Henry Custer, a U.S. Army surveyor working on the international boundary, noted in a report that "as a general thing the information received from officers of the Hudson bay company was very meagre and scanty; and it is almost incredible how little information of the Country they possessed even of the nearest vicinity of their forts, aside from their usual lines of communication" (1866:22).

In other contexts they defined the traders nostalgically but anachronistically in contrast to their own modern agendas. In one account R. C. Mayne described the fur trader as "having gone from England, or more frequently Scotland, as boys of fourteen or sixteen" and having "lived ever since in the wild, never seeing any of their white fellow-creatures" (Mayne 1862:116). On the passing of this institution, he remarked: "It was not without regret that I missed seeing the Fur Brigade. It is one of those old institutions of this wild country, which must give way before the approach of civilisation. The time will come—soon perhaps—when such a sign as a train of some 200 horses, laden with fur-packages, winding their way through the rough mountain-passes of British Columbia, will be unfamiliar as that of canoes upon its rivers" (Mayne 1862:124). In the face of sweeping changes, the culture of traders could readily be likened to that of Natives, a backward way of life that would inevitably succumb to modern practices.

Even those of a suitably civilized pedigree could be subject to marginalization when perceived as impeding the quest for scientific truth. As John Spittle (1988) notes, the first chief justice of the colony, Matthew Begbie, included mapmaking in his extra-judicial activities, regularly sending reconnaissance sketches and topographical reports to Colonel Moody to assist the scientific gentlemen at their camp. Begbie's practice of making astronomical observations with a pocket sextant, however, caused the sappers to cringe. With latitudes out by as much as six miles and longitude by as much as eighteen, his gross calculations were considered antithetical to their precision endeavors (Spittle 1988:196).

The Royal Engineers and their successors created a particular kind of geography. Contemptuous of the comparatively subjective HBC creations, professional surveyors employed the logic of systematic signs and practices that allowed the landscape to be reproduced at an exactly uniform scale across every inch of the map's surface (Harvey 1980:9–10). Modern mapping thus purported to project a world unfiltered by human subjectivity. Although functional in its presentation of information for the purposes of classification, its adherence to convention homogenized variability in the landscape, reducing the idiosyncrasies of place to the "representation of types" (Strang 1997:226).

The technological developments of geodetic triangulation and topographical survey were essential methods in the surveyor's arsenal of geographic persuasion. Scale maps traditionally relied on methods adopted from maritime navigators that derived geographic certainty from astronomical observations of latitude and longitude at a few important places. This method was nonetheless famously flawed. Longitude was assessed with chronometers—notoriously

unreliable instruments that could compromise accurate positioning[3] (Edney 1997:18). By the middle of the nineteenth century, the problem was solved with the systematic science of triangulation.

Triangulation worked by joining the tops of hills or tall buildings into a baseline, a long chain of triangles, or a network of interlocking triangles. By measuring the interior of two angles in each triangle plus the distance of one side assessed carefully on the ground, distances could be calculated using trigonometry. Finally, triangulation was used to work out the geodesy of the baseline, the science of assessing the shape of the earth's surface along traverses such as the international boundary. Calculating the length or arc of the baseline and the difference in latitude or longitude (depending on whether the baseline was oriented north to south or east to west), the surveyor came up with two independent values that could be directly compared, yielding one degree of arc along the continental mantle (Edney 1997:19–20).

Thus an ostensibly objective representation of the landscape required a suitable vantage point, as places without clear sight lines could not be integrated into an orientating framework (Carter 1987:51). In the colony of Vancouver Island, for example, surveyor Joseph Pemberton used hills that offered an unobstructed view over woodlands and meadow to create the first scale maps of areas around the settlement of Victoria (Pemberton 1860). On the mainland, however, it was the Coast and Cascade mountain ranges that afforded the best views. From their lofty heights, surveyors found that the confusion of terra incognita fell into place, presenting itself as it existed to the naked eye. In 1859, during the course of the international boundary survey in the Cascade Mountains east of the Fraser Valley, American surveyor Henry Custer commented on the accuracy that mountain peaks provided for creating a scale map:

> The reconaissances made by me were based upon a sistem of triangulation points for which the numerous & sharply defined peaks gave an excellent opportunity. No pains were spared to make these points as numerous and as corect as the nature of the work demanded & as the nature of my geodeatic instruments permitted it. Numerous ascentions to heigh points gave me an opportunity to test the corectness of these points in many ways & to continually increase their number. It enabled me to study the nature of the country & conections of the features of the different portions of it so thoroughly that, in my later reconaissances, guides could be entirely dispensed with & to range effectively & correctly together [with] the different isolated sketches [*sic*]. (Custer 1866:2)

Custer's surveys in this rugged terrain were some of the first to untangle the complex nature and "almost ferocius [*sic*] wildness" of these peaks. Grueling climbs through heavily forested slopes were rewarded by "fine & extensive [views] to all directions of the compass" (Custer 1866:12). In this context ascent to the summit was itself a performative conquest metaphorically and literally linked to mastery of the land. Custer's endeavors are clearly associated with colonial power, a form of discovery that entailed the conversion of local knowledge into European knowledge. This kind of mastery was predicated on a disassociated observer presiding over all that was seen from atop a mountain (Pratt 1992:202–204). The following comment by Custer strikingly captures the surveyor's confidence in his ability to expose the landscape in its pure physicality, laying it bare as no previous survey had. From the height of a mountaintop, Custer noted that "excellent bearings . . . can be taken. To the SE, a vast sea of peaks, ridges, & valleys is observable, apparently thrown about in utter confusion. But by closer study, the features *explain themselves*" (1866:44; emphasis added): the landscape's pure and unmediated form would reveal itself if viewed from the "correct" angle.

If conquering the heights of mountains strengthened methodological practice, then the act of inscription on the map confirmed the apparent transparency of these empirical observations. Using notes derived from field surveys, maps produced by the Royal Engineers and the Royal Navy purported to depict the landscape in all of its natural diversity. In *Fraser River and Burrard Inlet* (1860) (fig.7.4), a hydrographical survey by the naval survey vessel *Plumper*, the art of mapmaking is deployed to represent the various features of topography. Hills and mountains are deliberately reproduced using hachuring and shadowing; soundings mark river and salt water depths; and standardized symbols of pine trees and marsh grass cover much of the lowlands, offering the viewer a consummate projection of the land's physical character. Of particular interest are emerging European settlements boldly depicted using place names and uniform symbols to represent buildings. New Westminster and the Military Establishment of the Royal Engineers are marked, as are Derby and the HBC Co. Station.

This survey of the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet is interesting when considering the emerging discourse of geographic truth, for it indicates almost nothing of the very complex cultural geography of the Native world. Take, for instance, Sheridan Hill, discussed in chapter 5. The map reveals the practiced hand of the draftsman who delineated its contours with hachuring, yet there is no reference to Sam'é:ént or the history of Katzie origins. Regardless of the reasons underlying these omissions, their effects are palpable, especially given the Aboriginal population density of the lower valley—where Natives

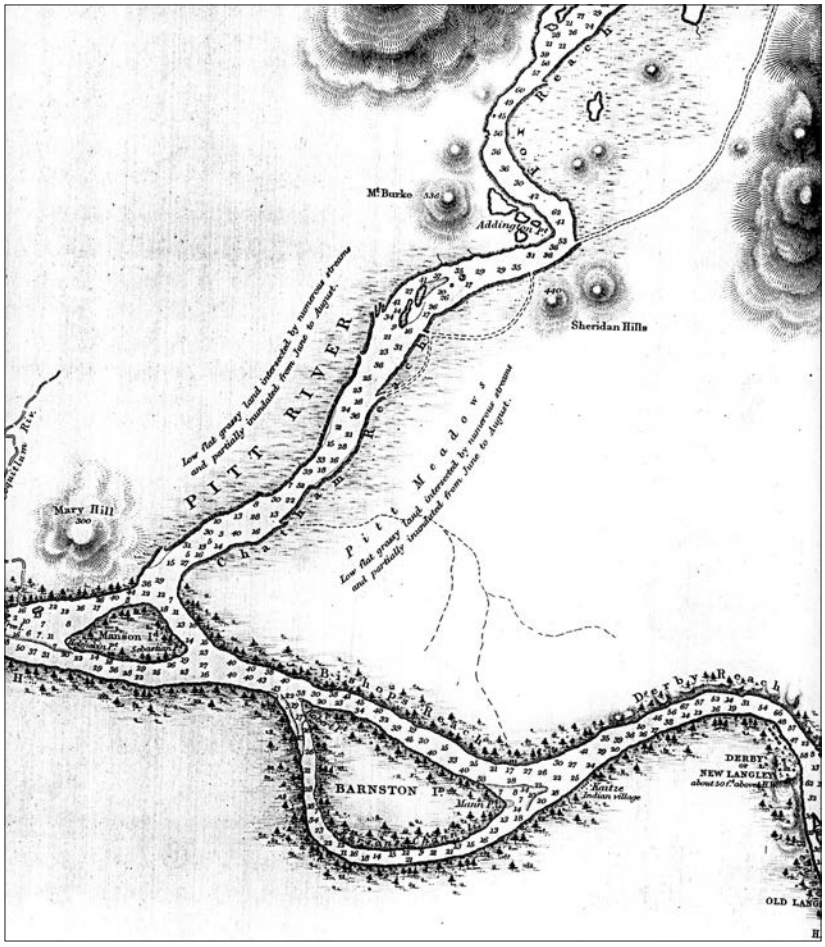


FIGURE 7.4. A detail from a Royal Navy map of the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet, 1860. (Courtesy of the University of British Columbia, Rare Books and Special Collections)

outnumbered whites everywhere except in places like New Westminster and Yale. Yet only three of more than a dozen major Native villages are marked on the map. From a Eurocentric viewpoint, historical indicators are reserved for European settlement: Old Langley is clearly illustrated, as is the First Establishment on the River, which housed the valley's first settler (no more of a structure than a simple log cabin). Here the rational gaze of the surveyor relegated Indigenous culture to features of the non-civilized landscape (Carlson 2001e:128). In this case, the symbol of the pine tree

appears to subsume Native presence, cloaking the valley in a robe of apparent emptiness.

To further buttress the pretense of geographical precision, mapmakers cited additional technical support for their claims. Because a truth claim by a single individual is easier to discredit, whenever possible published maps of this period drew upon multiple sources of observation by distinguished authorities (Latour 1987:62). For example, *British Columbia, New Westminster to Lillooet* (1861), a route map conveying several interior positions takten astronomically and the latest hydrographical information along the coast (Spittle 1988:202), made plain its credentials[4] by citing them in the bottom left-hand corner: "The positions marked have been astronomically determined by Lieut. Palmer & Corpl. Leech, R. E. Vancouver Island, the Gulf of Georgia & part of Fraser River are from Surveys by Capt. Richards, R. N. and the officers of H.M.S. Plumper. Longitude of New Westminster, 122°. 53'. 19" West. From a series of Observations by Capt. Parsons & Corpl. Leech, Royl Engineers. Magnetic Variation at New Westminster (1860) 22°. 30'E. Associating a map with a string of previous empirical surveys conducted by respected men of science and imperial authority presents what Latour (1987) calls a "trial of strength," a means of silencing detractors' charges of scientific inaccuracy and advancing a single vision of geographical truth. In this way, maps remind us that the identity of observers could be as important as the objects of observation in the construction of geographical truth.

Cartography established its legitimacy tautologically: the map authenticating the land and the land authenticating the map. On the hilltop above the new capital of New Westminster, Lieutenant R. C. Mayne confidently observed how the mapped region before him revealed itself as an objective image: "The view of the Fraser from the camp is very pleasing. On the left, over Pitt Lake rise the beautiful peaks known as the Golden Ears; to the right of these, the valley of the Fraser can be traced almost as far as Fort Hope; while in the foreground, looking over the building of the rising town, level land stretches away into American territory beyond the boundary-line, as far almost as Admiralty Inlet and Puget Sound" (Mayne 1862:89). Land surveyors engaged in a twofold methodological act that produced ostensibly unequivocal results. By classifying geographical minutiae as conventional signs and then reducing these features to the scale of the map intelligible in the agendas of its new masters, the vanguard of empire depicted a thoroughly charted landscape as though no stone had been left unturned.

Defining the Fraser Valley

So far I have dealt with practices of survey and mapmaking that influenced the perception of a British colony and a place objectified through the totalizing gaze of scale maps. I now want to turn to strategies implicated in the construction of the landscape as an alienable commodity and the Fraser Valley as an unquestioned geographical category. Based on Lockean principles,[5] colonial policy aimed to transform what was considered wilderness into a productive landscape of private landholders, the purported social and economic base of a civilized society. To facilitate the distribution of Crown land among an anticipated market of settlers and investors, a cadastral system based on a geometric grid helped "organize, control, and record the settlement of 'empty' lands" (Kain 2002:11). Surveying land into bounded plots created a further level of cartographic truth, one that was perhaps the ultimate vehicle of appropriation and (re)territorialization. Not only did it physically reinforce spatial relations, its mapped projections were legally binding, legitimizing ties between newcomers and the land while undermining Aboriginal claims (Kain 2002:22). Moreover, cadastral surveys created an intellectual scaffolding that shaped the perception of the landscape as both a means of productive potential and a reflection of social progress.

Of all imperial possessions west of the Rocky Mountains, the Fraser Valley saw the earliest land surveys of British mainland territory. Between 1858 and 1890, most of the valley was carved up into a cadastre (North et al. 1977:45). Loosely embodying class-based rural settlement in Britain, the land policy of the Colonial Office initially favored compact settlement, selling land at a good price to prevent the impoverishment of the countryside and to maintain a landed society. Cheaper land values south of the border, however, forced the colony to adopt the American system of preemption. This increased the availability of land by allowing settlers to take up claims prior to survey, alleviating initial costs until payment and title to the preemption were secured on the condition that the land would be significantly improved (Cail 1974:9–13; Harris 1997:85).

In the early years of land survey, variably sized district lots and a number of different systems were used in the valley. However in 1873, following the example in the United States, a more permanent solution was found in the Township and Range System (Taylor 1975:43; see also Johnson 1990:135). This system divided the valley into six-mile square blocks, each subdivided into thirty-six sections of one-mile square. Blocks were hung on meridians running north to south, with baselines and correction lines running east to west (Cail 1974:62; Taylor 1975:15–18; Thomson 1967:51). By 1874 most

townships between the estuary and Chilliwack had been laid out and awaited settlement (Taylor 1975:17). With minor variations the Township and Range System remains the framework for landholding to the present day.

Surveying land dominated by tall trees and thick underbrush required a way of making survey lines visibly stand out. By cutting a clear line of sight through underbrush and blazing nearby trees with an axe, surveyors were able to rough out the line of their traverse. Additionally, trails were cut along the exterior lines of townships, enabling access for settlers to assess the quality of the soil (Fannin, quoted in BCLA *Sessional Papers* 1876:4). The placing along survey lines of landmarks—such as corner, section, and half-section posts planted two feet into the ground—aided settlers in visually registering land divisions and working out preemptions within this framework. Above ground, posts were squared with three-inch faces. Below ground, they were set on charcoal, crockery, or broken glass to impede rot and confirm their location if displaced. Corners were demarcated by clearly carving nearby "bearing trees" with range, township, and section numbers. If suitable trees were unavailable, quadrangular trenches were dug in which memorials such as marked stones and charcoal were placed (Cail 1974:62; Taylor 1975:43; Thomson 1967:51).

Survey provided a practical means of dividing up the land for settlement, but we must not overlook its role as an arbiter of power in settler society, one of the most important examples of which was the authorization of Indian reserves. Extending policy used in the colony of Vancouver Island, the colonial administration favored the exclusion of the Native population from colonial society (at least until they had become suitably "civilized"). Crosscutting older forms of land tenure, the survey of reserves undermined Aboriginal land tenure by enforcing a new geography of apartheid. The Royal Engineers surveyed the first Indian reserves in the valley in 1861. To enforce these boundaries, surveyors made certain that the lines were "well cut and defined," in some cases as "good as trails." Deeply scored posts were sunk into the corners of each reserve, and the Indians were made acutely aware of blazed trees and other natural features marking boundaries (Launders, quoted in BCLA *PCILQ* 1875:217). Although reserve boundaries were not always respected, a matter I return to later, the act of surveying and its landmarks reinforced the new territorial status quo.

Land surveying had a more profound performative quality for those who participated directly in this territorialization. Witnessing and being seen to witness the act of survey fostered credibility for the reordering of the land. Of course, this process depended on the presence of others, a population to observe the measurement and staking out of property boundaries, which by

the 1870s, when the bulk of cadastral survey was occurring, would have been possible in places of colonial settlement. The rehearsed choreography of a disciplined troop of men wielding scientific instruments was a visual and resonant display, instances of which can be traced back as early as 1875 when surveyor William Ralph was commissioned to survey preemptions in the areas of Chilliwack and Sumas. Ralph (1875) duly followed the prescribed system of establishing property boundaries, and his survey notes describe in detail the physical progress and social involvement of such a task. Of interest here is the fact that settlers were not just passive onlookers; his notes speak volumes about the importance of the survey being visually confirmed. Once posts were set, each landowner inspected the survey lines to ensure agreement, and the witnessing landowners signed their names in a meticulously-kept register to erase any lingering doubt. Closing the gap between cadastre and survey marker, this final act of inscription directed any questions of ownership to the evidence provided by their mutually referential relationship.

Surveying helped physically and symbolically construct a landscape that could be possessed by newcomers, a geography it infused with terms of reference commensurate with the ideals of capitalism. Capitalist values were already well accepted among European newcomers, and cadastral maps reinforced the perception of land as an alienable object. In 1886 the Dominion government issued a detailed series of large-scale township plans in areas within the newly formed railway belt (fig. 7.5). Illustrating property lines and section numbers, these maps also coded the land according to soil quality, vegetation cover, major hydrographical features, and areas of swamp and prairie, defining the land by its economic productivity. Moreover, the names of landowners were scrawled on property holdings, which were firmly marked out in plan views of homesteads and fence lines. Articulated in this way, maps suggested that land was equivalent and exchangeable (Harley 1988:282; Strang 1997:226). In fact, the rules of preemption, by legally requiring that preemptors improve their claims to obtain them, expressly encouraged landowners to treat their holdings as a commodity (Sandwell 1999b:85). No longer inhibited by the disorienting characteristics of wilderness, the new spatial geometry anticipated the enabling powers of agriculture and its rewards of social improvement.

Critically, survey maps were displayed in public places, such as the Land Offices in Victoria and New Westminster, where land grants and land sales were registered.[6] Even if these images were not readily accessible, most settlers owned a legally binding sketch of their own land survey (Harris 2002:76). Consumers of these images were instilled with a sense of authority and confidence that the land between the mountains and the gulf was under-

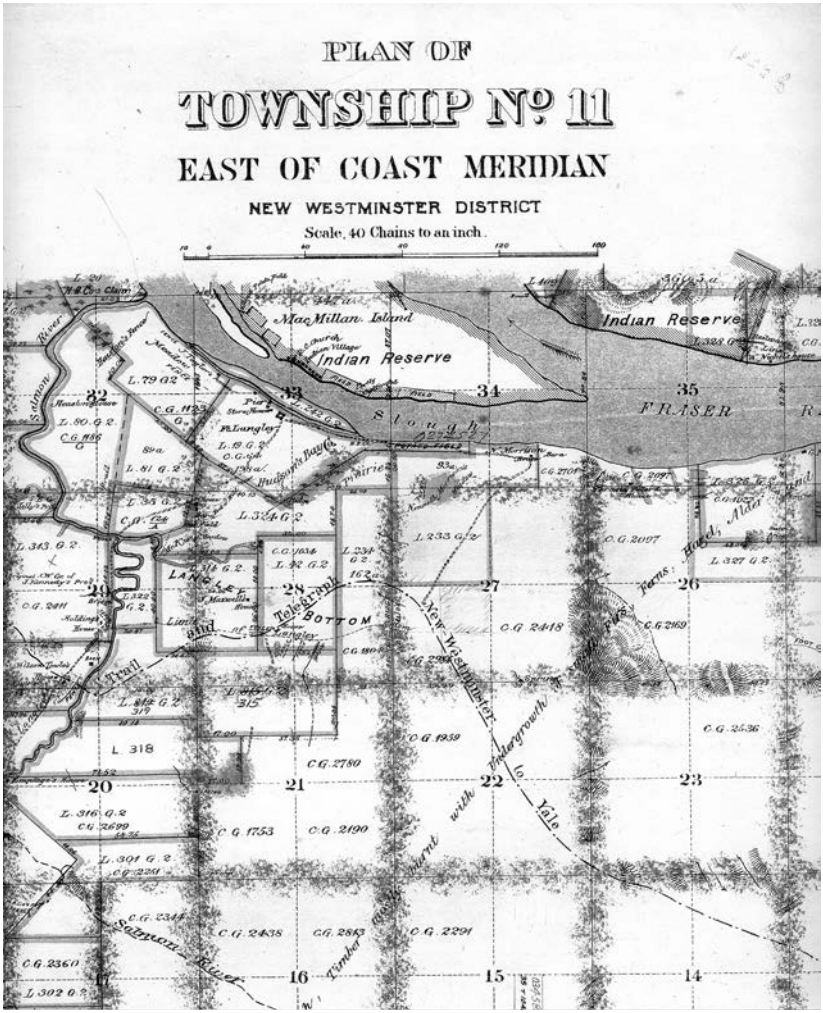


FIGURE 7.5. A detail from a plan of Township 11 in the central Fraser Valley, drawn by the Department of the Interior, Technical Branch, Ottawa, July 12, 1886. (Courtesy of the Land Title and Survey Authority of British Columbia)

written by the colonial state and the rule of law. For landowners, "the presence of their property clearly identified on a map . . . confirmed their stake in the new nation . . . etching the cadastre into the public mind" (Kain and Baigent 1992:307). The following statement in a late nineteenth-century newspaper illustrates the power of survey: "Already a section of a mile square has been surveyed which is merely an extension of the lines of the adjoining Provincial

survey. This is to be used as a guide and the claims will be laid off as the pioneers staked them as near as true lines will permit. About a week hence our settlers will be able to get the first legal grip on their respective claims" (*Chilliwack Progress*, August 27, 1891).

In historian and land surveyor W. A. Taylor's words, "There is nothing like a little surveying to create the illusion of ownership" (1975:1). Moreover, the fact that geographical knowledge was extended year after year, filling in the blank spaces on the map, supported the belief that survey and mapping were directly linked to the progress of civilization. As one local newspaper suggested, recent government surveys in the Fraser Valley "wonderfully assisted newcomers in selecting locations for settlement" (*Mainland Guardian*, January 13, 1877). Donna Haraway (1991:189) asserts that the "god trick" of the mapped image allowed the observer to see everything from nowhere, facilitating vision across the valley and beyond the giant trees "fringing the river like a gigantic hedge" (Dawson 1989:10), transforming in effect what was seen on the map into reality.

Indeed, as Kenneth Brealey (1995) compellingly argues, due to the extensive publication of maps, Native rights in the valley were conceptually "mapped out" of the land and out of the minds of pioneers who (re) settled[7] the valley. Largely effaced within small- and medium-scale maps of the colony (as I have discussed above), their existence was "mapped into" and naturalized within the newly engineered spaces of Indian reserves at the scale of the cadastre survey. The placement of reserves was published both in local newspapers and in three different conspicuous locations in each colonial district (BCLA *PCILQ* 1875:182). For newcomers these maps corralled the image of the roaming Indian, affirming unequivocally the Native's sequestered place in the colonial world.

Survey notes and reports published with the public readership in mind bolstered popular impressions. Land surveyors, for example, were instructed to note soil conditions, types of vegetation, presence of water, and other information useful for settlers who might be purchasing land sight-unseen (North et al. 1977:45). More general reports were also commissioned. For example, John Fannin's *Report of Exploration* (BCLA *Sessional Papers* 1876) on behalf of the provincial government was intended to help prospective settlers locate the best land in the Fraser Valley. Additionally, A. C. Anderson's *The Dominion at the West* (1872), a government prize essay published in the new provincial capital of Victoria, provided an aerial view or Icarian perspective (Burnett 2000:176) of the landscape, a tabula rasa that eschewed any reference to Aboriginal presence while drawing broad conclusions about the productive capacities of the embryonic post-confederation province.

In drafting the geography of the lower Fraser, surveyors and their maps carved a place—the Fraser Valley—out of the wilderness space of British Columbia. We need only to return to the experience of the Hudson's Bay Company traders in the early nineteenth century to see how life on the riverbank constituted a very different sense of place. As I suggested in the last chapter, traders saw the landscape more in terms of nodal points strung out along travel routes and rivers. Geographical relationships relied on the linearity of the river, and the landscape beyond its course was simply "the back Country" (Maclachlan 1998:110). During the gold rush years (1858–1866), when the eponymous river served as a corridor for countless miners on route to the bonanza in the interior, the valley from the decks of paddle steamers was undifferentiated space, apart from its gentle angles, a wilderness little different from the rest of the colony. Many saw it simply as "a flat country with trees growing down to the water's edge" (Guillod 1955:231). English miner and writer R. Byron Johnson described it as "not particularly entertaining; as, owing to the denseness of the woods on the banks, we could gain no view of the country" (1872:58).

By the turn of the century, however, the colony had gained a sense of internal differentiation through the material histories of its settlers. Booster literature in London, for example, unambiguously heralded the Fraser Valley as a place of "opportunities" "both for the investor and settler" (Boam 1912:288). Space once empty was soon filled in with a rigid framework of regular property boundaries. Survey laid the land bare and cast it as rational, geometric, and at the same time eminently familiar. Survey practices obscured the older Native cultural geography by imposing a homogenized cadastre that constituted the seeds for a history of another kind. From the view of cartography, the making of the cadastre constructed the Fraser Valley as a civilized toehold, reifying the yet abstract and empty spaces beyond its own boundaries.

Drawing on Foucault's arguments about surveillance and control of the body, Harris (1997:101) contends that by 1881 the land system acted like a "disciplinary appendage," with its sprouting fence lines, zones of exclusion, and landowner "watchmen" empowered by the state. Natives were no longer able to use the land in traditional ways, and property owners could depend upon the support of the new colonial regime to protect their interests. Harris addresses the physical shaping of the valley by colonists over time (a topic I address in detail in the following chapters), but clearly Europeans could possess the idea of the colony and the Fraser Valley, specifically, from a distance before they ever arrived, whether the source for their perceptions was the *Manchester Guardian* or the Land Office in New Westminster. As Paul Carter observes, "The survey, with its triple artillery of map, sketches and journal,

FIGURE 7.6. A remnant section of the Douglas Road. Begun in 1858, it connected the Fraser Valley via Harrison Lake to the gold diggings around the Fraser Canyon. The road also extended colonial power into the interior, and its placement on maps allowed travelers to grasp the landscape from a distance. (Photograph by the author)

was a strategy for translating space into a conceivable object, an object that the mind could possess long before the lowing herds" (1987:113) (fig. 7.6).

Toward the Colonization of Opinion

A series of significant transformations characterized the first century of intensive European efforts to map the Northwest. Explorers, traders, miners, and surveyors inhabited and responded to the landscape in different ways. Vancouver's mapping of the coastline and the traders' interior explorations of New Caledonia were informed by diverse agendas and embodied experiences. Moreover, maps as objects were constrained by varied social networks with differing access to geographical knowledge. Thus, while Vancouver's map helped an emerging middle class in Britain visualize the trappings of a new colonial possession, traders' maps facilitated pathways of commerce dependant on skillful political and cultural negotiations, a context more symbiotic with traditions of locality.

So what was the significance of the vanguard of empire for the contact zone? During the second half of the nineteenth century, scientific survey

methods and the circulation of geographical knowledge in cartographic and literary media encouraged the collapse of more situated ways of seeing. Through surveyors' manipulation and control of geographic knowledge, locality was refigured in the new global discourse of its colonial occupiers and molded into a coherent image. Mass-produced printing and other changes in technology, along with more efficient transportation connections such as rail and steamship, brought previously circumscribed spaces of production to consumers across Europe and North America. In this context, which was enhanced by ever-increasing literacy rates, the idea of British Columbia and the Fraser Valley was put forward for the civilized world.

With the arrival of the Royal Engineers, the landscape was surveyed and inscribed on maps with symbols and place names that quashed ambiguity and plainly identified a British colony. Where there was wilderness, these men established the infrastructure for settlements, roads, town plans, and the international boundary, surveys that reflected Anglo-Saxon values and subsumed land firmly under the rubric of empire. As part of this process, surveyors sought to map the land in its totality, reducing heterogeneity to a restricted range of types represented transparently on the scale map. Significantly, through allusion to scientific practice and related authoritative identities as qualified fixers, the dissemination and domination of geographic truth were realized (Burnett 2000:91–92; Edney 1997:33). Finally, the imposition of the cadastral survey tamed the landscape and prefigured its capacity to be harnessed for economic production. For newcomers, good land meant improved agricultural land, and creating a framework of survey lines that corresponded with maps of land division was the first step in transforming what was perceived to be unproductive wilderness into civilization and a new progressive order.

Survey practices provided a frame for conceiving of and possessing the Fraser Valley. They served to disrupt and devour the idiosyncrasies of locality, indelibly influencing the shape and feel of the predictable and familiar cultural landscape that would develop. This powerful combination of practices and material effects had considerable consequences for the social history of the area. Natives were virtually excluded from colonial society, and the new geography of capitalism profoundly impacted the physical nature of the valley. However, the narrative of progress, which depended on its ostensible objectivity, falters when we consider how it obscures ways of seeing inconsistent with the seemingly all-pervasive gaze of cartography. Experience did not always support the insistent objectivity of the map, and it is toward these histories that we now turn.

8

The Paradox of Progress

Lhílheqey (Mount Cheam) is a mountain overlooking the eastern Fraser Valley. For the Coast Salish living near its base, it is significant for its undulating and monolithic profile that resembles a family of human forms: a mother surrounded by her sons and daughters, their heads and shoulders silhouetted against the sky. Transformed by Xexá:ls during the Myth Age, the stone family stand as sentinels looming over alluvial bottomlands (Wells 1987:61). In 1873, after a rugged ascent spanning five hours, explorer John Fannin found a treeless crest atop the mountain. Looking west, he saw that it revealed "perhaps the most extended view to be had on the lower Fraser" (BCLA *Sessional Papers* 1876:7). Oblivious to the "Indian stories" that animated the rock but taken with the excellent panorama it afforded, he duly called it Discovery Mountain, of which he wrote:

> From here the river can be traced through all its windings, eighty miles to the Gulf; and looks still and motionless in the distance. New Westminster can be seen with the naked eye, and every settlement along the river can be readily distinguished. Sumas and Chilliwhack, the former seventeen, the later twelve miles away, appear almost at our feet. Here also can be seen, in the country between Chilliwhack and Cheam, new openings made by recent settlers; looking upon which, as new signs of awakening prosperity, the imagination wanders into the future when these green plains shall be dotted with herds, and the tangled growth of forest which now covers the virgin soil of the uplands, shall yield to the hand of hardy industry, and fields of waving corn will take its place; when the eye from this point will rest on many a hamlet; and the sound of human voices, and human industry, will fill the spaces where now is silence and solitude. (BCLA *Sessional Papers* 1876:7)

Like the rhetoric of the cadastral map, Fannin's bird's-eye prediction heralded a story of social and economic progress in which wilderness would eventually yield to the dogged determination of settler society. Modernity was just around the corner; it was only a matter of time.

Fannin's grasp of colonial ambitions was more than mere speculation. Accounts of this period persuasively argue that the latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed progress the likes of which had not been seen since the coming of the white man. In the previous chapter I suggested that the practice and rhetoric of survey and mapmaking initially mediated knowledge of and control over the landscape, but the new status quo soon became evident in the land itself. In the Fraser Valley, boundaries and roads were cut and rivers harnessed as a new land system reconfigured how people used and perceived the environment.

In short, what was commonly seen as wilderness was tamed and settled by migrants who largely attempted to recreate the land-based society of rural Britain. Over the timescale of less than a lifetime, the valley passed through remarkable transformations, changes that in Europe took thousands of years. By the turn of the century, the landscape was remodeled along class lines and reshaped by agrarian values. Where "interminable" tracts of forest once stood, prosperous farms and logging scars emerged, transforming the landscape into a veritable patchwork of industry (Demeritt 1995). From this perspective, colonization supported a history of long-term progress. Settlers arrived and struggled with the land, but eventually the forests were felled, rivers stemmed, and crops planted. Farmhouses replaced log cabins, and dispersed settlement gave way to the growth of towns, replaced in turn by cities and the technological conveniences of civilized life.

Such a view of temporal change determines how we commonly view this period, but reducing the scales of analysis reveals again a far more complex state of affairs. Both the nature and degree of change can be interpreted differently when seen through the lens of settler society living in and working the land. Investigating the gap between the history of progress often underlying colonial histories of environmental change and the material effects of geographical change on the ground, I argue that the seemingly straightforward progressive ideal could sometimes be muddled and contradictory. In what follows, I exchange distance for intimacy, the omniscient god's-eye view projected by maps for a more local and subjective approach to history—an approach that explores how emerging communities perceived changes in the land through the medium of their own lives and works. Concentrating on the latter half of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries, I suggest that the decisive architecture the land system attempted to establish

was at times antithetical to a unitary vision of progress and that we must balance the premise of a colonial discourse with the different ways in which it became enmeshed and refigured in varied contexts of inhabitation.

Environmental Change and the Idea of Progress

> When the people of Langley could see the right-of-way being cleared on the north side of the Fraser, the last vestige of doubt in the minds of reasoning men as to the future greatness and prosperity of the country utterly vanished.
>
> —Alexander Dunn 1913, quoted in Cherrington 1992:177

If there is a single idea that unites the history of environmental change in the Canadian West, then it is surely the narrative of conquest and impending improvement. Drawing on a series of powerfully condensed frontier symbols, these persuasive accounts describe a landscape transformed from the wild and primeval haunt of Natives and a few traders to a place disciplined by modern desires. From the perspective of the present, we tend to frame this transition in terms of an objectified history, a history of chronological facts charting the development of colonial society as it remade the natural landscape into a cultural one.

Published essays were one of the earliest sources of this kind of writing, often providing background in guidebooks produced by explorers and others motivated by profit or prestige. Anderson's *The Dominion at the West* (1872), for example, is representative of a body of literature that combined the history of exploration and settlement with practical information and cautionary advice for prospective settlers. More academic treatments of colonial history by establishment scholars were soon to follow with comprehensive resumes of "fact," such as R. E. Gosnell's *Year Book of British Columbia* (1897) and Judge Howay's *British Columbia: The Making of a Province* (1928) (see also Howay and Scholefield 1914), providing weighty tomes of "careful consideration." Naturally, the history of the Fraser Valley had to wait until it was constructed by the map and subdued by axe and plow. Gibbard's *Early History of the Fraser Valley, 1808–1885* (1937) offers the earliest detailed treatment of the history of settlement and landscape transformation. This tradition of writing has been carried forward in local history studies that have sought to flesh out the place-specific details of settlement in the valley (e.g., Cook 1979; Perry 1984; Ramsay 1975; Waite 1977), with Cherrington's *The Fraser Valley: A History* (1992) offering a more contemporary overview. Never explicitly engaging the landscape as an object of theoretical inquiry, such works have tended to

share a common approach in framing the landscape as a passive stage for the cast of settlers and administrators who would reshape and improve it.

To better grasp some of the pertinent concepts here, I focus on two particular collections of essays devoted explicitly to the history of landscape change. *Lower Fraser Valley: Evolution of a Cultural Landscape*, edited by Alfred Siemens (1976c), and *Vancouver and Its Region*, edited by Graeme Wynn and Timothy Oke (1992), examine the history of environmental transformation, threading together the events and conditions that forged the cultural landscape of the late twentieth century. With broad strokes, Siemens (1976b) identifies a mix of causal factors—among them climate, topography, soil quality, culture, and accidents of history—that together constituted the backbone of colonial settlement patterns. Gold, agricultural land, and other resources were important draws enticing settlers. Quick to establish themselves, boomtowns with the allure of gold mining were also quick to suffer decline when the pay dirt ran out. Like the settlement of Douglas on Little Harrison Lake, many became ghost towns, yet despite economic downturns, some—Victoria, New Westminster, and Yale, for example—would become hubs that further stimulated the development of agricultural centers on the alluvial bottomlands of the valley (Siemens 1976b).

More focused treatments consider the impediments that retarded and punctuated the process of taming and colonizing the valley. Winter (1976), for example, discusses the development of agriculture, examining the different problems faced by newcomers establishing farms. Among the most daunting obstacles to settlement were the massive task of clearing land and the annual "freshets," or flooding of the Fraser. The worst occurred in 1878 and 1894, with the later floods inundating large parts of the valley and submerging the lowland part of the delta under two feet of water (Winter 1976:110). As on other parts of the continent, clearing forest was a constant. So much dense forest covered the land that felling trees, pulling stumps, and clearing brush consumed extensive time. With cedar and fir not uncommonly fifteen and even twenty feet in diameter, clearing areas of forest could take a lifetime. Winter describes settlers who soldiered on in the face of these challenges, continuing to preempt, improve, and extend their hold over the valley with a "transcending and long-lived courage" (1976:110).

Others have considered the place-specific histories of settler interventions on the landscape. Wynn (1992) examines the rise of Vancouver, chronicling the urban growth of the city limits from around 1870 to the middle of the twentieth century. Beginning with Vancouver's historic heart at Hastings sawmill, his discussion reveals the impact of city growth on the surrounding countryside, illustrating the causes of the "evolving spatial and architectural

form of the developing urban region" (Wynn 1992:71). In a "relentless rhythm," river shanties sprouted like weeds only to be replaced by business and residential districts. The "march of urban expansion" eventually created pockets of development on all the adjacent waterways—either side of Burrard Inlet, around False Creek, Lulu Island, and all along the Fraser River. The key to the city's rapid sprawl, outpacing many other colonial cities, was a swiftly developing transportation network. By 1891 Vancouver's streetcars boasted twenty kilometers of track, with sixty-four more added in the next eighteen years, a system augmented by interurban rail service to outlying communities and later of course by the automobile. By 1914 the city and its suburban tentacles spread over 30 square miles of land (Wynn 1992:72).

Dwelling in greater detail on the social and economic history of early settlement between 1820 and 1881, Harris (1992) emphasizes the different interests of colonial groups and their various forms of settlement from fur-trader fort to homesteads to lumber camps. He exposes how British middle-class values were implicated in the laying out and development of the early capital at New Westminster: concern for private land holding and the productive harnessing of nature but also the aesthetic appreciation of land through the creation of gardens. Harris is careful to note that settlement did not advance constantly but was punctuated by economic setbacks. Markets depended on a population that grew very slowly on land difficult to make productive and largely marginal to other coastal centers such as Victoria or San Francisco.

Nevertheless, the struggles presented by distance and projects of improvement were apparently overcome by a collective belief in an area envisioned as a foundation of a new beginning: according to Harris, "always, the idea of progress was in the air" (1992:57). What these accounts share is the view of history as progress, an advancing tide of civilization. And, as this metaphor suggests, flow and change are inevitable, although uneven ridges of sand and tidal pools on the beach may momentarily restrain an incoming tide. At this point I unpack some of the assumptions underlying such notions of history.

Unpacking Colonialist Histories

Progress is the idea that civilization has moved, is moving, and will continue to move in a desirable direction (Bury 1955:2). Drawing on developments in Enlightenment thinking, technology, and the distribution of capital through widening social classes, it is often defined as an ever-increasing beneficial condition of society. For example, insofar as it brought the world to a growing

number of Europeans, the voyage of the *Beagle* symbolized historical journeys that saw the West come into contact with exotic cultures subsequently categorized into taxonomies that served the interests of Europeans (Giddens 1984:238). Material progress was defined in the nineteenth century by the powers of steam, as well as by the revolutionizing potentialities of coal. As Bury (1955:325) observes, those born at the beginning of the century had, before the age of thirty, seen the illumination of towns and houses by gas, the rapid development of steam navigation, and the opening of the first railway.

During the colonization of North America, progress assumed a different hue. Firmly connected with material changes in the land that improved the natural environment for farming and other forms of productive investment, it increasingly became associated with the ability to dominate the natural world (Ekirch 1969:13). Here progress turned on the degree to which the perceived margins of the civilized world were appropriated and articulated in the capitalist marketplace as settlers moved across the continent from east to west (Cosgrove 1984:5). Thus North American colonial history and the idea of progress are inextricably linked.

Following a narrative pattern common to colonial histories in different parts of the globe, the story of environmental change in British Columbia rests largely on two assumptions. First, our plotlines tend to be couched in terms of an impact thesis in which an objectified and united community of newcomers intentionally pits the dynamics, technology, and the heroic character of settler society against an essentially passive wilderness for the betterment of civilization. Drawing on a narrow view of human agency, this conceptual approach reduces environmental transformations to purposeful acts that benefit settler society as a whole. At best, nature is considered an obstacle to be surmounted; at worst, a simple surface for the playing out of colonial desires (Edmonds 1999b:485).

Second, it is almost impossible to think about the narrative of Western history without the image of an all-embracing "world growth story" (Gellner 1964) or "ascending plotline" (Cronon 1992; see also Paynter 2002), where change is registered along a progressive chronological timescale.[1] Such a storyline typically selects from and synthesizes past activity in order to prophesy about the future, construing historical change in terms of a persistent, upward development that, except for its occasional regressions, is generally accepted as being positive for society (Bury 1955:5). Moreover, because this narrative is almost always told from the privileged perspective of hindsight, historians can readily detach themselves from the entirety of past events and emphasize those most consistent with the ascending momentum of temporal change. Accordingly, we tend to construe historical actors as bound by the

expectations of the authorial present as if, for example, a past collective consciousness informed the finished project of the civilized Fraser Valley. Here again, as discussed in previous chapters, we encounter the positionality of the author as mediator of history.

We are still very much the heirs of this fact-wielding colonial tradition, on the surface an uncontroversial chronicle of heroic moments when the land was transformed and wrested from the primeval clutches of nature. Postcolonial critique has taught us, however, to look for cracks in accounts that explicitly or implicitly present themselves as transparent windows on the past of a place. Growing and increasingly varied postcolonial approaches that shed light on sub-altern groups and ways of seeing displaced in Eurocentric traditions often challenge efforts to force a global narrative on the permutations of place. In the case of the colonial Northwest, the facts of materialist expansion aspired to and to some degree achieved the status of dominant narrative.

In other words, history was ostensibly registered as materially productive advancements. Increasing numbers of more productive farms and expanding systems of better transportation, followed by a larger and more diverse set of markets, became the focus of temporal change. In this rising narrative, the final scene, the settlers' victory over nature, is set in contrast to the opening "struggles of the soil" (Cronon 1992:1354):

> The theme was a familiar one in the development of New World towns. From the plains of Missouri to the streets of Melbourne, contemporaries marvelled at the replacement of wilderness by civilization, but in Vancouver, as in few places before, this process ran across space with astonishing speed. . . . East and west across the narrow funnel of relatively flat land flanking the Fraser River, the change of seventy years had created a strikingly new landscape. Much of the forest that dominated the area in the late nineteenth century had fallen to loggers, fires, and settlers. (Wynn 1992:72–78)

These chronicles chart the modification of the landscape from an unaltered state to an improved, civilized, and productive condition, a teleological approach in which history lurches ceaselessly forward in a single direction[2] (Giddens 1984:242; Shanks and Tilley 1987:147). One need only consult current residents in the Valley, the majority of whom will confirm this logic: where there is no evidence of productive pioneering exploits, there is no history.

A second criticism focuses on the binary categories of colonizer and colonized, objectifications of the historical groups who peopled the landscape

that disregard the often fluid social boundaries of inhabitation (Gosden 2001:242; 2004:18–20), an issue I address more explicitly later. For now suffice it to say that the identities of European and Native groups, and their interactions in the landscape, were far more complex than these labels suggest. Colonists were not simply bearers of progress, nor were Native peoples simply passive recipients of it; rather, identities were constituted by hybrid connections informed by blurred and ambiguous realities. Yet despite the flaws and problems duly noted in the grand narrative of progress, we cannot dismiss the concept altogether: deeply rooted in the colonial process and the emerging capitalist mode of production, such idealism informed the ways in which many valued land (Cosgrove 1984:4–5).

Indeed, in a review of historical change in the valley, productive materialist expansion is forefront: the dark mantle of forests was hewn by the axe, tamed, and transformed into a bountiful and aesthetic countryside; settler populations were sustained by local agricultural output; and capital and social betterment was more evenly distributed. Focusing on the grand narrative, however, tends to efface settler consciousness, the production of more situated attitudes and stories about living in the land. As a growing critical voice on the history of the region suggests, this approach places too much emphasis on top-down processes and grand historical phases governed largely by the significance of resources for emerging commodity markets (Demeritt 1995; Sandwell 1999c; Stadfeld 1999).

In line with this analysis and the questions I have raised above, we must ask whether the effects of colonization and environmental change were uniformly beneficial or felt in different ways. And critically, was the landscape itself read simply as an inert object, important only in terms of its productive potential? At this point I move from the privileged view of authorial hindsight to the view from the ground, where settler experience at the local scale of encounter was divorced from the "god trick" of time travel and its homogenizing view. In a more contextual account of colonial history that suggests how things could sometimes be otherwise, I consider how environmental transformations could be caught up in a complex of negotiations that questions the tyranny of progress.

The Paradox of Progress

Threading evidence together from the perspective on the ground can "cut reality in different ways" (Gosden 1994:140) and suggest a far less tidy history to the process of environmental change. In particular, the material

effects or active quality of landscape change in many places contradicted the natural order of things and cast doubt on categories commonly assumed to have been continuous and stable. A series of ideals and expectations influencing forms of settlement informed pioneering. High on this list, as I mentioned at the beginning of this book, was the newcomer's vision of social and economic progress, a lifestyle dependent on improving land for agriculture. The expectations and the realities of settlement were, however, often two different things.

Routine activities were not always conducive to more contemplative views of change, appreciated in rare spare moments when people were able to take a step back from the everyday tasks of life. Day-to-day living tends to overshadow longer-term frames of reference (Gosden 1994:17). I am concerned here not with abstract chronological time but, rather, with what may be called phenomenological time, a form of temporality not measured in years but with "intensity, events, drama, and endeavour" (Strang 1997:14). Experiential time involves an individual's subjective experience of the world. It does not simply pass, as we say, but acquires meaning from the particular human interaction with the material world that makes it our own (Tuan 1971:181). In the varied ways that people experience the world and construct temporalities, we can discern disjunctures between notions of history and progress.

The process of material improvement—mundane activities like clearing trees and brush, planting gardens, or delimiting land for property and roads—created conditions that could challenge more abstract notions of chronological time. Instead of viewing history as a deliberate series of intentional improvements, the following discussion adopts a more reflexive understanding of human-landscape interactions that influenced social actors in often unanticipated ways. In particular, I address the *active* qualities of the forest ecology (Butler 1995; Head et al. 2002:176). Recalling my earlier argument about working the land, I suggest that these activities constituted varied forms of social identification. Although often assumed to be a mere background for the playing out of colonial desires, the forest was imbued with its own agency (Jones and Cloke 2003). When we consider the many material effects of surveying and other types of forest modification experienced by differently situated social actors, the forest in certain contexts arguably served as a counter agent to progress.

Surveying a Living Landscape

Although cadastral surveys helped settlers visualize the emerging colonial order, evidence from the history of land survey suggests an untidy process

that did not follow a narrow trajectory. While earlier land measurement and cartography conveyed control and predictability, more accurate methods challenged the stability and materiality of these truths. Despite its assurance of cartographic authority, the practice of surveying could produce uncertain results. The Royal Engineers, for instance, were popularly viewed as harbingers of progress, described by *The Emigrant Soldiers' Gazette* as "skilful" and "intelligent," possessing the most "industrious mechanics to perform any task requiring peculiar judgement, energy and accuracy, such as the arrangement of . . . an accurate National Survey" (Taylor 1975:15). However, as conceded by Colonel Moody in correspondence from 1860, because of "obstructions arising from the forest and the nature of the ground," accuracy in the survey of the colony's capital would have to give way to practicality (quoted in Taylor 1975:15), an indication of the potentially significant gap between scientific rhetoric and reality. According to land survey historian W. A. Taylor, "It was not always possible to measure what was intended to be measured" (1975:18).

By the 1870s when the new provincial government took responsibility for extending the cadastre, survey methods had not improved considerably. It is well known, for example, that surveyor Mahood kept his chain longer than 66 feet to accommodate a lattice of roads that would later connect preemptors with the wider world.[3] Yet others did not adopt his innovative approach (Draper 1941:219). Mahood's calculations were less than systematic, his method actually increasing the acreages of sections. Field corrections were either applied to make the system commensurate or maps simply fudged to make the surveys seamless.

The introduction of new survey systems could compound problems. In 1859 the Royal Engineers surveyed the Coast Meridian north from Boundary Bay to the Fraser River, creating the spinal column for the first systematic survey system. The geographic stability this action provided was short-lived, however. The implementation of the Township and Range System in 1873 supplanted earlier systems. Except in areas where surveys had already been completed, such as Lulu Island, or where meridians and correction lines conflicted with the new system, the old boundary posts were destroyed and the lines redrawn. It was hoped that the Township System would alleviate past cartographic anxiety, and Mahood was employed to retrace the meridian according to the new method. Despite prior knowledge of the distance between points and survey line conditions described in Royal Engineers' notations, upon reaching the first standard parallel, he found it to be around four chains short, resulting in a northern tier of irregularly sized quarter sections (Draper 1941:219; Taylor 1975:17). Reviews of subsequent Coast

Meridian maps reveal that Mahood's measurements appear to have been effaced altogether (see North et al. 1977:53).

Even when surveys were tolerably accurate, the significance of boundary lines could be contested, as exemplified in the establishment of Indian reserves. Evidence from Vancouver Island suggests that dissenting Natives could easily tamper with reserve boundaries. In 1859 surveyor B. W. Pearse was compelled to "give them a 'feed' of bacon and bread" in exchange for not removing survey posts (quoted in Taylor 1975:36). Bruce Stadfeld (1999) discusses in some detail how practical realities diverged from colonial ideals. Using a variety of examples from different parts of colonial British Columbia, he demonstrates how Native groups did not passively accept the architecture of the land system and territorial boundaries but actively manipulated the positioning of boundaries to improve their individual situations. The Shuswap, for example, augmented their reserves in the interior of the colony by changing the location of boundary stakes (Stadfeld 1999:38; for a similar argument from a different corner of the British Empire, see Given 2002).

Moreover, the geometry the cadastral system imposed upon the landscape meant little to some Natives. William Smith, for instance, declared that a group of Indians had disrespected his preemption and settled on his land at the mouth of the Fraser. According to the farmer's complaint, they bothered his stock, stole everything in sight, and trampled down his dykes (Fisher 1977:195). Similarly, around Matsqui Prairie, Alben Hawkins in 1878 observed persistent problems with marauding "Siwash," (Native-owned) cattle, that made directly for his "Swale grass." When owner "Indian Charlie" was not there to collect them, Hawkins was forced to drive them out himself. As I argued in chapter 7, engineering boundaries both physically and on maps reified power relations and cemented a conceptual geography dividing newcomers and Indigenous peoples, literally putting Natives in their *place*. At the level of encounter, however, the ephemeral nature of survey lines and inadequate means of enforcement meant boundaries could be porous, shifting, and difficult to maintain.

A contentious matter, boundaries were difficult to make visually prominent and, given that trees grew back, hardly indelible. Indifferent to the colonial desire to carve passive wilderness into a new order, nature exhibited the uncanny ability to survive and reclaim the landscape as successional forest. Curiously, areas of regrowth were sometimes described in terms usually reserved for the most primeval wilderness. The Royal Engineers of the British Boundary Commission surveyed the British-American frontier from 1859 to 1863. To clearly demarcate the boundary, a wide avenue of trees was felled on both sides of its axis along its entire length, and cast-iron monu-

ments and wooden posts were placed along its course at regular intervals (fig. 8.1). However, as the line inched eastward over the years from the Strait of Georgia into the mountainous interior, new growth obscured older sections of the cut. Naval officer R. C. Mayne documented this phenomenon during routine provisioning of the line:

> These periodical visits to the boundary-line gave us some idea of the rapid growth of the bush in this country, and showed us how completely futile the mere cutting down of trees to mark a boundary in such a country is. We knew the position of the boundary-line, but could not find the stump which had been driven in to mark the spot; and when I tried to penetrate along the line . . . I found the undergrowth so thick as to be what people unused to that country would consider quite impenetrable. (Mayne 1862:233)

Mayne's observations along the frontier were not isolated. Frequently involved in supplying the sappers of the Boundary Commission, he became increasingly aware of the stimulating effect of land clearance on fresh growth. During a trip to a different part of the line a year after the trail had been cut, his party "hunted for an hour or more" in the bush, later protesting that "no entrance to the trail could be found" (Mayne 1862:233–34).

Nature's speedy obliteration of trails was such that Township and Range surveys had to expend considerable time and effort to physically subdue regrowth. In 1874 surveyor H. G. Ashdown frequently commented on the many hours and days his party spent with axe in hand "cutting out [the] base line" (1874:2). Others were required to go to even greater lengths. In his report to the government on the progress of Indian reserves in the valley, one surveyor emphasized how "the lines are well cut and defined, being good trails almost," describing how corner posts were deeply scored and sunk into the corners of each reserve, and how the Indians' attention was directed to blazed trees and other natural features on the boundaries (Launders, quoted in BCLA *PCILQ* 1875). Despite these strenuous efforts, results were less than successful even on well-trodden meridians. In May 1867, when lands north of New Westminster were being divided into saleable lots, surveyor Howse, working on the baseline of North Road, reported that "the roadway . . . is overgrown with fern and underbrush, leaving only a foot track along the line," adding that it was "badly cut up, the surface being washed away," exposing numerous roots and small boulders (quoted in Harris 1982:16).

History demonstrates that the work of colonial surveyors, applauded by pundits for their role in establishing a decisive colonial architecture, was

FIGURE 8.1. A lithograph of a crew clearing the international boundary between the colony of British Columbia and Washington Territory (from a painting by Frederick Whymper). (In Mayne 1862: frontispiece)

actually a disorganized affair. A landscape seemingly resistant to domination by science and technology challenged the land system imposed on the valley. Successional growth quickly obscured sightlines along meridians and baselines that helped hold the country in the grip of the state. Surveys took years to become sedimented and meaningful on a level that influenced daily routines. Given the gap between the efficacy of the map and the view on the ground, the expansion of the land system as a "disciplinary appendage" was not as clear-cut as has been suggested (e.g., Harris 1997). In this context, the authority of the map hanging on the walls of the colonial administration was undermined, perhaps little more than an "empty threat" (Edney 1997:26–27).

Felling the Forest

If any single act defined the symbolic appropriation of the coast by the colonial imagination, it was the felling of the forests. In retrospect, looking back over a century and a half of change could suggest a direct correlation between land harnessed for productive exploits and the progress of civilization. At a basic level, as Michael Williams (1989:12) argues in his seminal work on the historical relationship between Americans and the forest, progress on the frontier was premised on opening up land for both pasture and arable. Denuding the landscape of its green mantle can be seen as a form of territorialization, an act that permitted light to bathe the earth, facilitating surveillance and control of a surface uninhibited by shadow. I now examine these arguments and suggest that a strict cause-and-effect explanation oversimplifies events, denying the ebb and flow of actual conditions (Cronon 1983:161).

The clearing of the forests has perhaps been most evocatively accomplished in the East. Wilderness gave way to parkland and manicured coppices reminiscent of Arcadian vistas left behind in the Old World, exemplified by paintings of Thomas Cole (Daniels 1993:151). The extent of that vision in the Fraser Valley was more modest, evident in the more limited scale of the prosperous settler's orchards and gardens. Land provided space and soil for farming, food for families, forage for cattle and hogs. Trees made available wood for building and fuel for cooking and warmth. In addition to subsistence, the process of clearing land also afforded opportunities for financial windfalls. For the entrepreneur, the woodlot provided incidental economic bounty and occasionally access to less orthodox markets such as supplying fuel for river steamers (Johnson 1872:58; Williams 1989:153). Nevertheless, the potential rewards of transforming the wilderness did not come without risk. Many settlers paid a high price for social and economic progress. The enormous size of Northwest Coast trees made felling dangerous and difficult, and the perils of removing stumps could turn dreams into nightmares. It is therefore not surprising that "the forestry efforts of early settlers are still sometimes described as 'heroic logging'" (Duffield 2001:112) (fig. 8.2).

The lumberman, as well as the settler, was intent on transforming the forest. As the machinery of capitalism ground into gear, the abundant forest was viewed as a source of seemingly inexhaustible financial profit, and so the making of the agrarian landscape in the Fraser Valley also had to contend with the rise of industrial forestry. The first commercial logging operations were established along the shores of Burrard Inlet, where giant firs and cedars were cherry-picked close to the shoreline and hauled by oxen teams along

FIGURE 8.2. "Heroic logging" by young men who stand triumphantly in front of an old-growth cedar stump in the late nineteenth century. (Courtesy of Surrey Archives, 121.129)

corduroy roads to competing sawmills. Early markets were local, but by the 1880s lumber was being shipped as far as San Francisco and Chile. By the turn of the century, much of the best wood in the valley had already fallen. Once the trees were felled by crosscut saw and dispatched along hastily built rail lines that siphoned the forest off to coastal mills, surrounding watersheds were viewed with an eye to feeding an ever-growing demand (Hardwick 1963). As in other resource industries, transport methods were based on experience gained from other parts of the continent and revolved around

the central challenge of connecting isolated resources to awaiting markets (Harris 1997:179).

The felling of the coastal forest provided the theme for the creation of the second of North America's two great mythical agents of civilization: the lumberman (Williams 1989:20). While not as popular as the cowboy in American literature, the lumberman was mythologized as a tamer of nature—a hardened, axe-toting figure raised on forest virtues and often sustained by the generous consumption of alcohol, an image popularized by authors in the East. Grainger's (1908) *Woodsmen of the West*, for example, is a popular allegorical take on the lumberman's gritty quest to conquer nature (Harris 1997:179). As we shall see, felling trees for both local and international markets did not necessarily pave the way for settlement or an agrarian landscape; nevertheless, it was equated with nation building.[4]

The discourse of colonialism suggests that as cultivated fields and logging scars replaced the blanket of wilderness, the increasingly diverse evidence of human impact was reduced to the single stranded narrative of progress. But was history this transparent given that the felling of the Fraser Valley forest fostered a complex series of relationships that questioned popular beliefs? Surveyors would not have been alone in noting the disparities between the mapped image and the realities on the ground. Cultural values governing the appropriation of nature were also directly responsible for the generation of immature forest, which was often likened to the landscape of pre-contact. If the index of progress was the increasingly productive use of land for farming or logging, how do we account for the discrepancies between expectation and reality when land was recolonized by nature?

To examine this question, I focus on some new categories of evidence. Newcomers' observations about the transformation of the forest were perhaps so commonplace that settlers rarely recorded them (Williams 1989:4–5). So here I turn to the unpublished notebooks of land surveyors, who in contrast kept detailed accounts of the state of vegetation, an invaluable source often ignored by historians and archaeologists. In addition, I draw upon photographic evidence. Images with reasonable provenance indicate that forest regeneration and the production of what could be called "cultured wilderness" were a more common phenomenon than we might have initially expected.

A photograph taken circa 1913 near Port Mann on the south bank of the Fraser illustrates my argument (fig. 8.3). Given that period photographs tended to document pioneer life, group portraits, or aesthetically framed landscapes, this was a less typical subject for the time, capturing what would have been the most mundane of views: trees in a forest. Upon closer inspection,

FIGURE 8.3. A successional forest in the Fraser Valley circa 1913. (Courtesy of City of Vancouver Archives, Out P1202)

however, it indicates a certain variability, the product of a history of human intervention. The foreground is dominated by a young stand of deciduous trees, mainly alder that have invaded an area recently cleared. In the background is a homogenous stand of conifers. High above these are the victims of apparent wild fire, towering burnt remnants of the valley's old growth, what may have been Douglas fir and cedar.

What story does this photograph tell? Is it an abandoned preemption, its claimant having given up the struggle, or is this the tell-tale sign of former logging activity? The detritus of logging—massive stumps and slash—was not much incentive to settlers, and logged-over land was usually left to its own resources (Williams 1989:305). Alternatively, this scene may depict the result of land clearing for a corridor through the area's glacial uplands to accommodate the New Westminster and Southern Railway in 1891 (Treleaven 1981:61). Although their exact nature remains indeterminate, this place was clearly shaped by a combination of events; it indicates a palimpsest of past activity—what Ingold (1993) might call a living taskscape—and a pattern of change that occurred over much of the valley. Significantly, this pattern challenges the notion of unidirectional land transformation, suggesting more complex dynamics between colonists and the environment. Nature had a life

of its own, and taming the land had unanticipated byproducts that could fly in the face of progress. If images of settlers or lumbermen atop gigantic stumps of cedar symbolized victory over nature, then what did entire forests of thick new growth on land that had already been "mastered" represent?

The scale of secondary succession after land had been damaged or cleared by fire undoubtedly made impressions on those who inhabited these places. In addition to the trusty axe and crosscut saw, the tool kit of forest clearance relied heavily on fire and by the late 1880s dynamite as well (Williams 1989:117). In dry conditions, a good fire could give settlers a considerable head start on clearing their land, but uncontrolled it threatened much wider areas. Fires seem in fact to have been so prevalent that their smoke commonly permeated the valley air. As early as 1859, Royal Engineer Charles Wilson wrote that fires frequently plagued the vicinity of the Chilliwack River (Wilson 1970:65). On nearby mountainsides, fires were often the work of Native berry management practices. On the valley bottom, however, they were more likely the result of careless campfires or botched attempts at early land clearing.[5]

Despite Fannin's confident predictions about the colonization of the valley, he experienced moments of uncertainty that cast doubt on human impact and the relationship between colonizer and colonized. Exploring five miles east of Langley Prairie and southward toward the boundary line, he encountered "a strip of country" affected by fire "where the undergrowth is so thick as to make it very difficult to travel through" (BCLA *Sessional Papers* 1876:4). The conflagration of 1868 engulfed much of the valley, aggravated by high winds that carried brands of flaming cedar southward across the border into Washington territory. In September of that year, the *British Columbian* declared that the fires had "destroyed considerable property on the Lower Fraser, particularly surrounding the Sumas and Chilliwack settlements" (Perry 1984:43–45). Fannin's report suggests that the fire completely destroyed the surrounding timber, leaving a black loam of the "best description," high in nutrient value for agriculture. More importantly, however, he wrote "fallen timber and matted undergrowth cover the whole face of the country, forming an almost *impenetrable jungle*, from which the intending settler would be apt to turn away" (Fannin, quoted in BCLA *Sessional Papers* 1876:4; emphasis added). Although forest succession may not have been as marked elsewhere, similar perceptions would still have been common.

Land surveyor notebooks and maps offer a glimpse of the varied forest architecture (North et al. 1977). Not simply land measurement engineers, surveyors were required to be botanists and geographers as well. In the same notebooks where they scribbled equations on the distance and bearing of their

traverses, they kept records of vegetation, soil quality, slope, and hydrology. The government used their compiled notes and sketches to make maps and to inform prospective settlers about local conditions.

The now yellowed survey notes of Township 2, a six-mile square north of the Serpentine River drawn up in 1870, give us a sense of the changing disposition of the landscape (British Columbia 1886). Along a meridian bearing north from Mud Bay, a traverse that would eventually divide the municipalities of Delta and Surrey, vegetation is described in detail as the line was cut. From prairie around the lowlands of the bay, the line quickly rises to glacial uplands. A few miles inland, the relative homogeneity of "green timber" (mature forest) is quickly interrupted. In the space of less than a mile, forest stands change from green timber to burnt timber and back. The following mile reveals a dense growth of young firs, then open woods, another section of young firs, and then again burnt timber. Other transects in the township indicate patches thick with the growth of young firs, willow brush, and other large sections of fire-damaged forest. This mosaic pattern of different ages and species is not evidence of normal succession but large-scale cultural interference.

The impacts of settlement were also responsible for encouraging an invasion of new plant life. Vigorous growth, what forest ecologists call secondary succession (Packam et al. 1992:143), could undermine efforts to tame the country. In lowland forests, the disturbed ground and the invasion of light propagated a quick rejuvenation of buried seeds, roots, rhizomes, and invading seedlings. In a short succession of years where land was not maintained, weeds were quickly supplanted by thickets of shrubs and trees, such as alder, and later by the saplings of what would become forest giants, such as Douglas fir and red cedar. Much thicker than the mature forests of widely spaced conifers, this foliage shot upward in a fierce and tangled competition for light.

That forests were relatively quick to replace themselves contradicts the more simplistic picture of colonial society steadily increasing its control over the land. Problems arise, however, when we attempt to determine exactly how much of the valley was composed of second growth, how quickly it grew, and how local inhabitants grasped this phenomenon. As I have indicated earlier, the character of forests was never consistent but in constant flux due to both anthropogenic and natural processes. Moreover, the tempo of change increased dramatically as more people settled in the valley by the end of the nineteenth century. Despite these variables, many parts of the valley continued to be forested well into the twentieth century. Settlers would therefore have encountered various shades of wilderness. After several seasons

FIGURE 8.4. Forest succession near Chilliwack circa 1900. (Courtesy of Chilliwack Archives, P1987 167 32)

in the valley (many having already pioneered in places like Ontario or the United States), they would have become knowledgeable about the dynamic character of forest ecology, even though such comments are rare in period sources (fig. 8.4).

The active materiality of vegetation patterns is perhaps more easily understood if we consider its role in routine journeys. Wayfinding favored permanent landmarks and places that held "narratives of past movement" (Ingold 2000:237). Before road atlases and road signs, other features sufficed. Where there were no fence lines, cabins, or other features in the built environment, outstanding trees, bends in pathways, and streams were probably just as important. One settler used an "old stump" to mark his preemption's geography of improvement (Hawkins 1880), and many employed carved trees as landmarks. In the 1830s fur traders, for example, relied on a prominent tree with the carved initials HBC to ascertain their whereabouts when undertaking business near the river mouth (Maclachlan 1998:93). Equally conspicuous, even more so before settlements became prevalent, was the culturally produced mosaic pattern of the forest itself.

In the 1870s and 1880s, the majority of newcomers resided in or near New Westminster, or on the open prairies adjacent the river. Only a handful of preemptors occupied the uplands, mainly on small natural clearings and

where there was access to water. Trails and a few rough roads crosscut this patchwork, joining remote parts of the valley with the riverbank. Walking any distance from homesteads, to New Westminster to purchase supplies perhaps or to neighbors to borrow a pair of oxen (Hawkins 1880), would have heightened awareness of breaks in forest cover, young deciduous growth and contrasting tree stands, or places with a fire-blackened understory. Pioneers were forced to become spatial historians acutely attuned to the instability of their surroundings. Wayfinding required adaptation to the changing character of the landscape, an activity complicated by the ebbs and flows of settlement. Land could be preempted and improved in the 1880s only to be abandoned and then reoccupied (and cut over again) at the turn the century.

Considering the mentality of settlers helps illuminate this process. Ruth Sandwell (1999b) paints a complicated picture of the logic of preempting land, which may not have necessarily been envisioned as a means to a commercially viable farming life. Evidence from Salt Spring Island in the Strait of Georgia indicates that land was preempted for a variety of reasons. The land system was designed to facilitate the foundation of a society based on petty commodity production, yet the behavior of settlers seems to suggest varied agendas. Records show that between 1859 and 1891 only a quarter of preemptions had been purchased, while two-thirds had been abandoned. Additionally, census records between 1881 and 1891 indicate that only a small minority of preemptors improved enough land to be considered commercial farmers (Sandwell 1999b:91). After clearing around three acres on average, most families depended on household members to supplement their meager agricultural subsistence with a combination of hunting, gathering, and minute sales of agricultural produce. This pattern should not, Sandwell claims, be understood as failure; rather, many settlers used preemption for flexible land holding that allowed them to simply walk away if better opportunities arose elsewhere.

Similar scenarios were witnessed in the Fraser Valley. Near the American border at Hall's Prairie, for instance, settler H. T. Thrift observed that a large amount of land had been deserted, with "the original settlers having left the neighbourhood" (BCLA *Second Report of Agriculture* 1893:800). Abandonment and relocation to new places, some of which may have been left derelict by others, suggests an almost willful violation of agrarian discourse. However, social progress as reflected by fenced pasture and well-tended crops was not favored by all, at least not exclusively. Clearly, various pathways existed to varied conceptions of progress.

Working the Land

Looking back over longer-term frames of reference (here I am thinking of generations and lifetimes, the timescale favored by colonial history), we see that even regenerated forests succumbed to the axe. According to the *Eighth Census of Canada* in 1941, about half of the total land area of the Fraser Valley had been cleared and made improved farmland (Demeritt 1995:43). Yet other registers of temporality were more important than the upward growth story. Although the landscape began to take on a more civilized appearance and sensibility, including growing numbers of well-tended farms and macadamized roads that crisscrossed the valley, much of pioneer existence was caught up in a cyclical cadence governed by the seasons and the repetitive nature of land improvement.

Based on its own seasonal round, the agrarian calendar generated patterned ways of contact with the land. Here I want to consider the journal of Alben Hawkins (1880), which provides a rare glimpse into the timing and spacing of settler activities. A less ambitious piece of writing than more literary prose, it nevertheless provides insight on the settler's everyday experiences. Little more than a skeletal description of tasks performed and weather observed, his spare notations constituted a record of improvement in which he identified himself as a civilizing presence pitted against his natural surroundings. Significantly, Hawkins's diary embodies a landscape of nested routines that together shed light on a temporality concerned more with mundane cycles than triumphal progression.

In winter, settlers were confined to the warmth of their cabins, and riverboats were tied up, immobilized by the frozen river. Pools of water and deep mud made existing roads impassable and limited travel. Even the railways that eventually penetrated the valley did not greatly improve this condition of seclusion. Not dissimilar to the Native seasonal round, this was a time to make and mend tools, preparing for the season ahead. Axe handles were carved, scythes sharpened, clothing stitched, and improvements planned for the following spring. It was also time to visit with neighbors.

> Jan 1 1875 Made an axe handle. Snow fell to the depth [of] 6 inches. Snow fell all day. Indian Charley fetched [h]is Cow & Calf away.
> Jan 7 Great wind storm from N.E. freezing very hard to[o] cold to work out side. Snow about six inches depth.
> Jan 8 Storm still raging all day. [Calmed down] a little [in] the evening. To[o] cold to work out side.

Jan 16 Hauld [*sic*] out of the woods boards for the sheds. John Maclure Passed. Commenced to nail Some up. Very Cold. Wind Still blowing and Freezing hard.

Spring thaw relieved isolation. The first sternwheeler to pass upriver signaled a bundle of tasks associated with the growing of food, the maintenance of property, as well as the persistent call of improvement. Preparing the soil was an important activity. Plowing new fields with oxen, followed by harrowing, were activities often accomplished with the aid of neighbors. Then seed was planted: oats and clover for cattle feed; peas, onions, potatoes, swede, and carrots for family subsistence and the remainder for market.

May 2 [1874] Antoine [and] myself plowing. Shannon's Bro Left for Sumass. fine day.
May 3 At home all day, fine day, Elliot Brindle['s] Cow Calved Bull Calf.
May 4 Finished Plowing. Took Turners oxen home by Antoine, day fine.
May 5 Commenced to harrow in the morning. Wet afternoon. Salt Cattle in Evening

Summer entailed a host of new activities. Crops needed tending, and maturing hay was cut and baled for cattle feed. This was also a popular period to travel as pathways and roads, normally little more than mires, allowed trips into town to purchase goods, preempt more land, and pay taxes.

July 15 [1874] Cutting hay. Indian Peter at Work. Two strangers went back to the Alder land. Fine day.
July 16 Commence to haul the hay. Indian Peter at work. Large fire in the woods. Prairie all smoke. Day fine.
July 25 Hauling hay, Myself & Peter. Payed [sic] Peter $2.50.
July 31 Commenced to stack on the Prairie. Indian Peter working.

Fall signaled the harvest when the backbreaking work of agricultural labors paid off. Crops were harvested and surpluses sold to neighbors or transported to local markets in places like Derby, New Westminster, or Chilliwack.

Nov 1 [1875] Nicholson Come Over . . . and started to dig Early Rose Potatoes. Wet day.
Nov 2 digging potatoes

> Nov 3 piled 10 sacks near the old stump. Digging afternoon.
> Nov 9 Took up the sweeds [*sic*] Turnips & Sugar Beets. Awful rain & strom [storm] Fine afternoon. Thunderstorm at noon. (Hawkins 1880)

Other natural phenomena could determine the fortune of newcomers. The end of May and early June saw the melting of snowfields that brought floodwaters to the Fraser River and inundated low-lying land. Because dyking measures were frequently insufficient to stem rising waters, the late spring was an anxious time. Given the ruinous floods of 1878 and 1894, settlers kept a close watch on the river's transgressions. Hawkins's preemption was near Matsqui Prairie, not far from the riverbank, and his diary reflects an interest in river life. During the spring freshets, his writing indicates some apprehension that others would have shared. On May 21, 1875, he scrawled with some concern "water very high;" a few days afterwards, perhaps with relief, he noted "water at highest point." But a fortnight later, he observed with disquiet that it had "only" fallen a foot. Until a coherent system of dykes was erected at the end of the century, flooding remained a threat. Because of their frightening regularity, the floods contributed to a sense of cyclical temporality rather than measured linear improvement.

In the background to this choreography of human and natural cycles were routines experienced throughout the year. Clearing the forest was a continuous and seemingly never-ending task. Social progress was not simply a matter of consolidating gains but of ceaselessly improving one's condition. Expanding land for agriculture and pasture, felling timber for fence lines and farm buildings, and cutting out trails consumed all but the coldest parts of the year. Throughout Hawkins's diary, we find him "working in the woods," extending his grip over nature. In the dead of winter, breaks in the weather permitted tasks like hauling "out of the woods boards for the sheds" or "splitting rails" to extend the fence line. In the spring, whole weeks were spent in the forest "cutting logs for pickets," "making road to [the] prairie," and "grubbing roots" to open up land for arable or pasture. In many areas, tree stumps and roots remained long after the land had been cut and burned over, hence the "stump farmer," alluding to the less-than-ideal conditions with which many had to contend.

From time to time, newcomers took stock of the changes they had imposed on the land: new ground cleared for gardens, space for larger harvests, fenced paddocks and new fields, giant stumps uprooted with blasting powder and teams of oxen. These were tangible markers of social progress. Yet new features—farmhouses and barns that replaced log cabins and sheds—were eventually absorbed into the strongly cyclical pattern of existence.

The repetitive nature of making the agrarian dream was such that entire lives were consumed by a narrow clutch of tasks, making social gain seem more illusory than real. "As one old settler remarked, when he had finished clearing the land he was too old to work it and the boys too tired of helping to want to remain on it" (Gibbard, quoted in Winter 1976:104).

The Lie of the Land

Over longer timescales, with the increasing pressure of settlement, cadastral surveys undoubtedly shaped the physical transformation of the valley while influencing how newcomers valued land, as attested to by the sprawling settlement of the city of Vancouver and its suburban tendrils. However, other scales of analysis reveal different stories. Although land surveys made it possible to hold private property, in certain contexts the boundaries they proclaimed actually seemed to impede progress.

With the founding of the colony in 1858, most settlers opted to take free land in the amount of single 160-acre parcels, improving it materially so as to fulfill the conditions of a government land grant, a process known as preemption. Others chose to purchase land outright and in much larger portions, circumventing the land grant clause requiring improvement. Frequently, these absentee landowners were speculators[6] concerned less with populating the territory than with selling lucrative investments once free Crown land had been exhausted and land values had increased. By 1871 a large percentage of alienated land, most of it 160-acre parcels adjacent to the river, had been purchased by land speculators (Harris 1997:86–88, see also *British Columbian*, April 4, 1861).

As R. E. Gosnell observed, for speculators land became "real estate" and "every available piece of land was bought up . . . not for the purpose of farming, but to hold for a rise in prices" (Gosnell 1897:270). Real estate values rose to the extent that land "never saw an axe or a plough" and remained "unimproved." Still this strategy failed to pay dividends for many landowners, as population and economic opportunities remained relatively low until late in the century, creating little market for land sales.[7] It did succeed, however, in discouraging settlement by leaving large blocks of the valley undeveloped.

Whatever the truth to the early charge that land speculation slowed the pace of civilization (Gosnell 1897:270; MacDonald 1862:62), its material effects were clearly perceived to adversely impact newcomers who had already settled in the valley. One strategy of settlers was to preempt land adjacent to occupied improved land. Banding together in this fashion gave settlers access

to neighbors, an indispensable source of labor who could be called upon at various social events such as barn raisings or clearing bees to quicken the pace of settlement. Apart from labor, interdependence meant that settlers could profit from each other's improvements, garden produce, pasture land, or trails, for example (Cherrington 1992:157). The underhanded strategies of speculators could, however, scuttle opportunities to obtain close neighbors.

Where preemptors had homesteaded and cleared land in yet isolated parts of the valley, land speculators would pounce and buy up the surrounding forest, hoping to turn a tidy profit at the expense of newcomers enticed by the emerging oasis. A newspaper editor warned that "just as soon as you go in and commence improvements, the whole region round about will be *grabbed* by the *Land-sharks* and then you may sigh in vain for society" (*British Columbian* April 4, 1861; emphasis in original). A range of commentaries on settlement in the valley echoed concern for the lonely, unfortunate preemptor. As late as 1892, it was recognized "that much land is held by non-resident owners, which lies in its old primeval state, and is very discouraging to residents, who are thus shut in to a great extent" (BCLA *Second Report of Agriculture* 1893:797).

What was good for some was not necessarily good for all. At the scale of lived experience, progress did not adhere to the rules of fair play. A land system that promised to facilitate settlement and capitalist enterprise began to stand for greed. Rather than anticipating visions of agrarian living, survey boundaries became signposts that reified a cultured wilderness. In places, a wall of living green contradicted the mapped image of control and predictability, hemming in and obscuring rhetoric about mastering the land. Progress may have been a concept with little resonance for newcomers forced into exclusion from the rest of society and deprived of access to markets, isolated by the very land system created to promote settlement. Given this rather bleak situation, the only option for some was abandonment, allowing the forest to recolonize land that in the grand narrative would have remained clear. John Knight (1996:222) makes a similar argument: if non-agricultural people, (such as the pre-contact Coast Salish), were not as ecologically passive as commonly perceived, were agriculturalists as purposeful and active in subduing nature as colonial history suggests? The evidence I draw on here suggests that settlement on the so-called frontier could be an incredibly complex affair.

Final Thoughts

In 1873 John Fannin predicted that the Fraser Valley would be quickly transformed from a tangled wilderness into fields of waving corn. However, a close reading of the evidence suggests that progress was an ambiguous ideal. From the creation of survey boundaries to the clearing of land for agriculture, colonial power appropriated and improved the valley for European interests while marginalizing Aboriginal rights. But colonial history did not always exhibit an ascending plot line; unintended consequences mediated its effects on the land, influencing human motivations in unexpected ways. At more local scales, where individuals went about the routine tasks of homesteading, concepts of progress and visions of a better future were sometimes difficult to grasp. What constituted nature and what constituted culture depended on which side of the barrier you stood.

At a very local level, people encountered and responded to diverse conditions for diverse reasons. Their stories, a vital part of the valley's history, are frequently glossed over in our pursuit of the grand narrative. This is not to say that we should ignore the more detached ways of seeing that I discussed in the last chapter. After all, guidebooks and maps and the certainties they projected had real consequences, encouraging waves of immigration to the New World. However, the efficacy of the map was not always supported by the view from the ground, and the juggernaut of progress was beset by practicalities that resulted in a multi-stranded and far less ordered history. Blunted and fractured by agencies beyond its control, the monolithic colonial goal to remake the world was not necessarily shared or enacted consistently on the plane of individual experience.

9

Ties that Bind, Lines that Divide

Frontier history is replete with tropes and iconic images that inform our understandings of social identity in the contact zone. Revisiting the colonial landscape through literature and film reveals that the identities of central characters—where they came from, where they were going, their agendas, roles, and affinities—can be separated by a single divide. Growing up in British Columbia, I recall that this relationship was framed in school as an opposition between pioneers—the resourceful and forward-looking protagonists—and Native peoples—the passive and tradition-bound antagonists. Pioneers affected the land in positive ways, while Native peoples coped with the effects. As Elizabeth Furniss (1997) cogently argues, textbooks, local histories, and museums have historically celebrated this duality as integral to the triumphant colonization of the West.

Although attitudes have recently begun to change, this binary view of colonial society has significant historical purchase and even underlies more revisionist accounts of British Columbia's history (e.g., Fisher 1977; Harris 1997, 2002). In this important body of work that turns the tables on grander narratives, we learn of cultural bias, racist assumptions, and the power relations engineered by the protagonists to legitimize social asymmetry. Perhaps the most celebrated example, Cole Harris's (1997) *The Resettlement of British Columbia* borrows from Foucault's ideas on disciplinary power and Said's analysis of Orientalism to argue that colonialism subverted the interests of Aboriginal people through strategies of representation and domination. Harris's work rightly demonstrates how European practices subjugated the Native geography of British Columbia, but at the same time it tends to gloss over the very complicated nature of social identity by reproducing many of the clear-cut stereotypes of the popular imagination.

Consistent with a theme this text develops, I argue that the communities who peopled the past should not be considered cultural givens but

complex entities realized at different spatial and temporal scales. If identity is premised on multiple lines of social tension that materialize diversely in the landscape, then the monolithic opposition of settler and Native (colonizers and colonized) fails to do justice to the various ways that identity was negotiated in the contact zone (Lightfoot and Martinez 1995:472; Silliman 2005:290-291). As Richard Jenkins observes, "One's social identity—indeed, one's social identities, for who we are is always singular and plural—is never a final or settled matter" (1996:4).

This chapter attempts to delve beyond the façade of caricatures popular between the founding of the colony in 1858 and the end of World War I. Beginning with a broader scale of analysis, I examine the social contexts that helped reify differences between Natives and newcomers, highlighting points of tension where boundaries were routinely policed. Yet most of the discussion considers how identities shifted on fault lines that complicate simplistic pictures. At more local scales of analysis, the categories of colonizer and colonized were undermined by internal and external negotiations, conditions where this dichotomy began to blur or fragment.

Constructing Identity from a Safe Distance

Social identity is constituted by issues that people feel separate themselves from others in contexts where one's sense of belonging comes into question. Knowing who we *are* is always implicit in judgment calls about who or what we *are not*. Belonging in this sense involves a host of socially significant tangible and intangible resources that people may share and invoke when lines need to be drawn in the sand (Jenkins 1996:80–89; Sutton 1998:35–53). In Britain one of the most important markers of identity was class-consciousness. Who you were depended upon issues of literacy, upbringing, and ownership of capital, but in the New World the common motivations of the frontier experience diminished and frayed these lines of demarcation.

In the Fraser Valley, like many other regions of North America, newcomers were *settlers* first and foremost because of their European descent (non-European newcomers, the Chinese, for example, were often considered transients) but also, more specifically, because they shared the vision of improving their social conditions by converting empty land or "waste" into productive space. Although individualism was an important aspect of pioneering, agrarian discourse helped bridge the often considerable differences between people. European perceptions of Aboriginal people bolstered the core values on which settler identity turned, the pioneer ideal of transforming the envi-

ronment. As arbiters of power, settler society viewed Natives as part of the natural environment also in need of transformation. At best, Natives were considered curiosities; at worst, they were viewed as debased and savage Others driven by "untutored instinct." Even though newcomers who had spent any time in British Columbia recognized significant linguistic, cultural, and physiological differences among Indigenous peoples (e.g., Mayne 1862:242), settlers frequently emphasized their similarity, their apparent aversion to modern ways.

Thanks to increases in literacy and networks circulating literary and other media representations of the colonial realm, many newcomers were already familiar with their place in the biological pecking order before setting foot in the New World. Influential schools of thought—particularly social Darwinism, popularized by Herbert Spencer in the mid-nineteenth century—reinforced their sense of social superiority. And a comparison of European civil and technological advancements with Native achievements further confirmed these primitive peoples' biological status near the bottom of the cultural evolution ladder (Fisher 1977:86; Trigger 1989:113).

Although the general reading public was unlikely to encounter more scientific articles, the implications of natural selection rapidly infiltrated popular writing. In Britain readers were bombarded with racial asymmetry in accessible journals such as the *London Times* and *Harper's Weekly*. More developed treatises on the colonies in the tradition of Alexis de Tocqueville's essays on America were also widely read. Popular works simplified, homogenized, and exoticized the Aboriginal "human species" through implied comparisons with European sophistication: "The trunk or bark of a tree forms his floating castle . . . strings of shells and teeth of wild animals his ornaments. . . . The desert fern and forest leaves furnish his couch" and "bulrushes, lichens and moss his protection against the blasts of winter" (MacDonald 1862:131).

Of course, not all journalism trafficked in oversimplified images, particularly as the work of ethnographers began to make its presence felt. For example, the reputable *Year Book of British Columbia*, a guide "dedicated to the best interests of her [majesty's] subjects," recognized the diverse linguistic and cultural heritage of the Indians (Gosnell 1897). Nevertheless, despite evidence of some improvement gained by rubbing shoulders with Europeans, Natives suffered by comparison with the progressive character of colonists—a people caught in a time warp, consigned "to gradually retire before the white race" (Gosnell 1897:163). Defining the failings of savages in print culture tacitly reified rational, moral, and progressive Anglo-Saxons as their inverse in the public imagination and cemented the attendant social boundaries.

While the rank and file of colonial society may not have been exposed to the more sophisticated concepts of social Darwinism, the experience of newcomers did much to authenticate its general principles. The technological disjuncture between white and Native society was striking enough for most whites to assume a clear cultural superiority (Harris 2002:51). In addition, there was Native "pantomimic entertainment" (MacDonald 1862:156), such as winter dancing where costumed performers donned the masks of animal spirit helpers. But most significant to newcomers were the aspects of Native culture that mattered most to settlers themselves. The conditions of Native settlements dotted throughout the valley appeared primitive and inexcusable to settlers, at odds with their own values.

Before Natives were consigned to reserves in mid-century, many newcomers were quick to mock the miserable state of their settlements. To European eyes, the rough cedar construction of shed-roof houses symbolized the antithesis of civilized architecture (Buchli 2002b:207). Even more conspicuously uncouth was the habit of depositing "putrid fish, fish-bones, cockle and oyster shells, old mats and rags, together with filth of every description" on middens, piles of domestic refuse in the front and rear of every village that "[presented] a most filthy aspect, more so indeed than most pig hovels" (MacDonald 1862:152). These conditions offended European sensibilities and stood in marked contrast to colonial spaces. For example, Sophia Cracroft,[1] a tourist and early diarist who had visited the "wretched" conditions of a Native settlement in Victoria, was "struck with the appearance of order in the arrangement of the buildings" at the Royal Engineers camp near New Westminster (Cracroft 1974:40).

Even after two decades of European influence, some Natives apparently continued to loathe and resist change, clinging to their old habits. Reporting on improvements to Indian reserves in the upper valley near Hope, Superintendent for Indian Affairs James Lenihan noted Native aversion to the (modern) frame houses they had been encouraged to build. In the winter they favored retreating to their traditional "Kicckwilly houses" (a semi-subterranean pit house), which they professed to be far warmer, structures the agent "condemned in the strongest manner" "as more like Canadian Root houses than human habitation" (Canada, Department of Indian Affairs 1877).

These habits violated Victorian ideals of social improvement, but it was the Natives' apparent reluctance to harness the land in productive ways—a result in part of their nomadic lifestyles—that truly set Natives apart from settlers. Despite considerable evidence to the contrary (see chapter 3), most settlers believed that Natives failed to properly use the land they occupied, which could be worked far more intensively (Harris 2002:46), and when Natives

did engage in productive activities, their efforts were usually maligned. For instance, early observers frequently noted potato gardens, introduced by fur traders, at almost all the villages in the valley (Suttles 1951). Yet settlers usually ignored their presence or dismissed them as insignificant (e.g., MacDonald 1862:141; Mayne 1862:252). As late as WWI, when most reserves had adopted European-style houses and farming techniques, settlers continued to devalue their habits as quite different. The Women's Institute in Upper Sumas suggested that improvements to a nearby reserve—land they felt should be a public park—had not progressed beyond a "shack" with "a few scraggly fruit trees" being the "only attempt at cultivation" (Canada, Department of Indian Affairs 1915).

It was, however, the institutionalization of boundaries in the landscape itself that most affirmed the social divide. If perceptions of primitive Native culture gave settlers reason to believe that Aboriginal society was poles apart from European civilization, then unequal power relations imposed by Indian reserves, missions, residential schools, and the Department of Indian Affairs decisively confirmed this distinction. Although regarded by some as a noble attempt at social improvement, this new conspicuous architecture of control also worked to label its subjects as deviants. Indeed, as Harris (2002) argues, colonialism reconfigured the landscape along lines that firmly put Native peoples in their *place*.

The Indian reserve system came about for several reasons, one of which involved a growing conservationist lobby alarmed with the degradation of the natural environment (including Native culture) caused by the juggernaut of progress. Influenced by a new charitable attitude, measures were taken to set aside unspoiled land for the Indians' exclusive use, at least temporarily until they were properly civilized (Tennant 1990:45). As Carlson notes, reserves in the Fraser Valley were considered "social laboratories" where well-meaning but ethnocentric whites "sought to remake Aboriginal people in a European mould" (1996a:94). The institution of reserves, partly a humanist endeavor, also harbored a more practical and insidious goal: the process of land redistribution.

The end of the 1860s saw Native geographies fundamentally altered. Most Indian reserves in the valley were laid out between 1864 and 1868, and revisions to their boundaries became a major feature of later years as land became increasingly scarce (Carlson 1996a; Harris 2002:34–44). These changes presented a new challenge to the stereotype of the wandering hunter-gatherer. Within the broader framework of the land system, reserves afforded Aboriginal identity a new geographical fixity; for the most part Natives were confined to reserves, while settlers were free to take up private property everywhere else (Harris 2002:265). Defined by a prominent boundary of

survey posts, well-cut lines, and natural features, the reserve corralled Native interests in a small fraction of the valley, effectively constituting a form of racial apartheid. Neatly fencing off Aboriginals on little patches of turf (as advertised in published maps), reserves enclosed marginalized communities living on the literal and metaphorical fringe of the colonial landscape.

Reserves imposed geographical segregation, while other institutions—notably, missions and residential schools—aspired to cultural assimilation. Missions attempted to eradicate Indigenous belief systems and replace them with the Word of God. Residential schools for children taught practical skills to encourage a measure of independence in the capitalist marketplace. Employing the disciplinary techniques of surveillance and the management of activities across time and space, missions and residential schools weaned their charges from Nativeness, inculcating the refined habits of English-speaking society (Harris 2002:269–270). Nevertheless, the very centers that attempted to assimilate and improve Native behavior became at the same time prominent landmarks branding their pupils as social inferiors. For example, the imposing three-story brick edifice of the Coqualeetza Industrial Institute near Chilliwack, a Methodist residential school built in 1893 (Woods 2001:74), stood separate from and in stark contrast to the surrounding settler landscape. For white colonists on the outside looking in, these places—intended not for the "normal" but the "deviant"—made the boundaries between settlers and Indigenous peoples all the more palpable.

In some contrast to Britain, identity in colonial society was less often a conflict between social classes, although these distinctions should not be disregarded entirely. As Harris (2002:268) argues, colonists "had met a much more other 'other' than any stratum of British society;" at the scale of racial politics, difference turned on a new antagonistic juxtaposition of civilization and savagery. At the same time, colonial infrastructure also encouraged Indians to develop new self-conceptions of being "Indian." Whereas kinship, ownership of resources, stories, and names figured strongly in the construction of pre-contact Aboriginal identities, forced resettlement in opposition to newcomers drew attention to their shared limitations, ideas which I now develop.

Decentering Identity

Representing group identities as coherent, unified wholes can serve to legitimate dominant social or political interests (Jones 2000). Objectifying Indians, settlers, or other categories often assumes a simple one-to-one relationship that identifies a person or group with a particular place or set of objects.

Jenkins (1996), following the work of Fredrik Barth, maintains that group characteristics or core values do not determine identity, which is best understood as a product of boundary creation and maintenance, sites where tensions may arise. The touchstones of identity—the issues that breed familiarity and difference—only become significant in particular social contexts; people can move in and out of areas of demarcation, depending on the issues that arise at any given point (Jenkins 1996:93). In other words, what was considered civilized and what was considered savage was not the only significant debate; the contact zone was also a forum for styles of Othering that crosscut these more familiar categorizations.

A Stormy Gulf

As I argued earlier, mapping the land-owning society of Britain onto the Northwest was not a simple one-way process. Using a restricted palette of symbolism to obfuscate geographical differences, cartography created a unified image, whose value was nevertheless hotly contested by settlers. At a regional scale, this is nowhere more evident than in the fervent contest between settlements on Vancouver Island and their counterparts in the lower Fraser Valley. Not just a struggle between humans and nature, colonization also involved besting one's neighbors. Newcomers who had cast their lot in either location began in some measure to assess their place in the world relative to the successes and failures of their competition across the water. Fuelled by vitriolic newspaper editorials and propagandistic reports of natural resources and improvements on either side of the strait, attitudes quickly escalated into a circling of geographical wagons.

Vancouver Island and British Columbia (1860), written by Joseph Pemberton, a former surveyor-general of the island colony, reveals a rivalry rooted in the establishment of New Westminster in 1858. Pemberton clearly considered the choice of a second capital on the mainland deleterious to the prosperity of British possessions on the coast. For him, Victoria's excellent harbor, "fertile agricultural districts . . . of connected open land," combined with the town's "broad and macadamised" streets, "private dwellings, public buildings, churches," and its attractive and "thoroughly English" character made it eminently suitable as Britain's capital on the coast. In contrast, New Westminster, dubbed "The Phantom City" for squares and terraces more apparent on maps than on the ground, was "decidedly objectionable" due to its steep grade and timber-clad surroundings, not to mention the "music of acres of frogs in spring, and the stings of myriads of mosquitoes in summer" (Pemberton 1860:50–53).

For those who had staked their livelihoods on the valley's prosperity, these words could not have been further from the truth. A review in the *British Columbian*, New Westminster's newspaper, suggested that Pemberton's aims were "mischievous" and that no one "acquainted with the facts" could possibly read such statements "without experiencing feelings of contempt and disgust." Pemberton's membership in the Hudson's Bay Company clique at Fort Victoria and his investments in the developing town informed his agenda. Moreover, it was stated that "if Pemberton's object was an honest one he would have included the testimony of respected military men . . . who were far better suited to give an objective view." In its rebuttal, the *British Columbian* proclaimed "that a better site for a large commercial city could scarcely be found in any country," emphasizing New Westminster's thousands of acres of agricultural land, abundant timber, and ample harbor (*British Columbian*, March 28, 1861).

Other points of contention involved disagreements about infrastructure. Victoria's preferential treatment in matters of regulation was particularly galling for the mainland community. Even though New Westminster was the seat of the mainland colony, the governor of Vancouver Island, James Douglas, was responsible for taxation decisions until 1864. According to the *British Columbian*, Douglas was little more than an absentee "czar" or "despot" interested only in the "aggrandizement" of his island retainers at the expense of a crippled mainland population. Citing "a most iniquitous land system" that favored the rich (see chapter 8), "suicidal tariffs," the lack of "communication with foreign ports," and the failure to institute "a general policy calculated to inspire confidence in the country," it suggested Douglas was squandering their inheritance (*British Columbian*, April 4, 1861).

Relations between the two places remained frosty even after the gold economy collapsed and they were united formally within the Colony of British Columbia in 1866. As late as 1877, rivalry was evident, and the publicity battle resumed as "Mainland" interests attempted to marshal opinion and confront "Islander" advocates believed to be thwarting progress in the valley for their own gain:

> We need not impress the intending settler with the fact, that it is only on the mainland where farms can be obtained; the agricultural resources of the Island are small. We regret to be compelled to notice a rather discreditable habit the Islanders have, in conversing with settlers desiring to come to the Mainland. They appear . . . to make a point of trying to dissuade settlers from coming up here. This, no doubt, may be accounted for in the rapidly increasing importance of the Mainland, which will soon

> overshadow the island's political strength. (*Mainland Guardian*, January 13, 1877)

The gulf dividing Island from Mainland was more than a physical barrier. Mudslinging and the circulation of printed rhetoric became a cause célèbre that shaped opinion on both sides of this watery axis.

Interestingly, within their borders, regional identities coalesced in ways that masked difference. During the 1860s a significant proportion of mainland preemptions were made by Americans, many of whom were former miners from California who swore allegiance to the Crown solely to take up land (Cracroft 1974). This concerned the colonial administration, particularly its military ranks, as they feared a possible explosion of American immigration in the wake of the gold strikes. Patrician colonists defiantly asserted that "there is a sufficient sprinkling of *Englishmen* amongst us to form a sort of conservative element, to act as a check in case the dominant class should be inclined to be *too fast*" (*British Columbian*, April 4, 1861; emphasis in original). Fraser Valley identity attempted to define itself by setting mainland living in opposition to island living in Victoria. That said, this discussion also demonstrates the very provisional nature of this sense of belonging: while a mainland community served certain purposes and influenced investment in the land, it abruptly ruptured when other social tensions came to the fore.

Policing the Boundary: The Making of Chilliwack

In chapter 2 I introduced the concept of agrarianism and considered some of its effects on the settler landscape. Numerous pioneering histories of the valley attest to its ideological influence in transforming wilderness (see, for example, Cherrington 1992; Ramsey 1975; Waite 1977). Apart from its dominant geometric pattern of property, more recent developments have largely erased the built environment from this period. Despite this loss, historical evidence abundantly substantiates a common material culture and new system of values that newcomers imposed on the land. Between roughly 1885 and WWI, the process of settlement exhibited common features. Log cabins were replaced by frame houses surrounded by ubiquitous picket fences. Farms typically included areas of enclosed pasture, orchards, and small cereal and vegetable crops. On a regional level, a developing system of river travel, roads, and eventually railways connected the landscape (BCLA *Second Report of Agriculture* 1893; Demeritt 1995:42; Harris 1997:89). While the vast majority of settlers generally accepted the logic of improvement, values were

mediated by more localized concerns that sometimes downplayed broader feelings of consensus.

The historical development of Chilliwack perhaps best illustrates this dichotomy between local and regional concerns—a place with an Aboriginal name (Ts'elxweyeqw) that is nonetheless one of the oldest European settlements. The luxuriant prairie is located on the flood plains of the Chilliwack River, whose tributaries first drew settlers to the area in 1859. The fertility of the land inspired visions of a potential Eden, and its relatively good alluvial soils combined with a lighter cover of woodland promoted an early wave of preemptions. Most newcomers preempted land near the numerous branches of the lower Chilliwack River, while a second pocket of settlement formed near Sumas Landing on the Fraser River itself. In 1874 the settlement was connected by road to New Westminster and Yale (Cook 1979; Ramsey 1975), and later, extensive dyking projects culminating in a robust system of banks and ditches helped protect it from annual flooding. By 1890 Chilliwack boasted a town center with a high street and the latest conveniences. Reports agreed on the pleasing conditions of its surrounding land, particularly the well-cleared farms and comfortable houses of successful fruit growers envied up and down the valley (BCLA *Second Report of Agriculture* 1893:812).

Its soil productivity and location near the river shaped the local settlement pattern, but the dialectical relationship among settlers defined its sense of community. On one level, as Donna Cook (1979:32–33) notes, aspects of farming connected the valley in a coherent social network. To achieve a more efficient and timely transformation of the land, newcomers relied on the help of their neighbors. For instance, in 1870 five new barns were built as joint projects in labor exchanges. This pattern of interdependence was an important feature of pioneer life, and people would commonly come together in work "bees" to complete particular tasks like ground clearing, building raising, and crop husbandry (Cherrington 1992:157). Evidently, individuals bonded not through simple physical proximity but through activities that united people in routine and practical ways. These practices gave community meaning and simultaneously distinguished insiders from outsiders.

Given the value the age placed on religion and its importance in everyday life, it not surprisingly played an important role in identity formation. Methodism entered the upper valley in the 1860s with Thomas Crosby's efforts to convert the Coast Salish, but by 1868 Crosby's proselytizing had converted nearly the entire white population as well (Neufeldt and Harms 2002:76). Meshing closely with the values of agrarianism, Methodism appealed widely to the ambitious driven to forge a new beginning. Lauding individual initiative, optimism, and self-government, Methodists perpetuated their suc-

cess by banding together to offer one another employment, housing, loans, credit, and political appointments (Wigger 1998:12). By 1882 the first white Methodist church was established in Chilliwack, followed four years later by another at Sumas (Neufeldt and Harms 2002:77). Relative isolation from other regions of the valley, as well as an adopted habit of vetting prospective settlers, helped the community police its boundaries. A form of voluntary settlement prolonged Methodism's strength in the area: "Whenever a prospective settler appeared in the community he was referred to Mr. Wells," a local leader and devout Methodist. "The latter usually invited him to dinner, discovered his religious inclinations and habits and then helped or discouraged him accordingly" (Gibbard, quoted in Ramsey 1975:42).

Methodist doctrine also regulated social values within. In 1885, a 186-signature petition, for example, requested that the community council revoke the liquor license of a Mrs. Bartlett's restaurant, as she was selling liquor with meals, thereby "bringing a blighting curse on [the] community" (Cherrington 1992:162). More than mere talk, abstract ideas seeped into the cultural fabric of settlement in authoritative ways. The circulation of the local newspaper was one of the most influential means of defining community identity, an effective tool for influencing opinion since most settlers would have been literate consumers of inexpensive print media (Mitch 1992:62).

The Methodist-influenced—and aptly named—*Chilliwack Progress* predicted a democratic type of settlement and sermonized on the goal of social improvement through particular measures. Not unlike other newspapers of the period, it provided helpful tips on good agricultural practice, relentlessly invoking religious parables to encourage the application of labor to profitable ends. More importantly, however, it served as a coercive instrument of social engineering that regulated decorum (Wigger 1998:4). In keeping with Methodist tenets, it deployed the strategy of a roving eye, using the carrot and the stick to encourage conformity. Valued members of the community were praised and their laurels published in weekly columns, usually short biographies on social advancement through materially productive means. From humble beginnings, valued members worked their way up the social hierarchy to the ranks of the "wealthiest and most respected farmers" (*Chilliwack Progress*, May 21, 1891), the benchmark for others to achieve. To shore up gaps between the haves and the have-nots, the *Progress* mobilized the idea of an egalitarian future. Imagining an improved and democratic landscape, it united settler aspirations in a progressive yet egalitarian vision of the future:

> Now push the curtain of the present aside and look into the future. See at the end of two years at the head of a straight canal which effectually drains

> the country stands a grist and saw mill which is so centrally located that it is easy of access for nearly every farmer in the Valley. Notice those well-paved roads. Gaze upon those stately building. Yonder stands the school house with its pupils playing on the level green sward during recess, evidence in itself that in a very short time not a foot of land will remain unturned by the plow and buildings necessary for a well populated district must surely follow. (*Chilliwack Progress*, August 27, 1891)

Despite efforts to promote this idealized portrait of Chilliwack's future, other values operated to undermine the image of a stable and close-knit community. Methodism and agrarian discourse were variously distilled and embraced; the concepts, practices, and objects that represented social improvement were emphasized and interpreted differently. The community actively distinguished between individuals who upheld Methodist values and those who failed to measure up, particularly in situations where people's achievements were in public view and when the material culture of settlement crossed the boundaries of good taste.

As vigilance and control over nature were cherished virtues, a crucial aspect of Methodist identity involved the outward appearance of property. The respectable farmer could be "readily pointed out by the appearance of his surroundings, the amount of care and labour expended on his stock, and place, and the general improvements effected" (*Chilliwack Progress*, September 10, 1891). Essential to this image was the erection of a good fence. In addition to its practical functions of controlling livestock and demarcating property boundaries, enclosure had symbolic import (Cronon 1983:130). Tracing the various ways in which Europeans marked land possession in the New World, Patricia Seed (1995) argues that colonized space was most forcefully indexed in British colonies by the building of fences that served as physical barriers between domesticated and natural spaces. A well-built and well-maintained fence—constructed from the very wilderness they literally and metaphorically restrained—ordered the land while regulating social activity in and movement through it (Pred 1985). Moreover, as settlers increasingly appropriated unoccupied land, the fence assumed an emblematic value of a different scale. Wooden posts and rails began to cast their shadows like an uninterrupted lattice over large sections of land, at once unifying that which had been settled and distinguishing it from the unimproved "waste" beyond.

Not all settlers interpreted the fence or what constituted improvements similarly, yet failure to achieve these ideals stirred controversy and divided the community. This is evident in a particularly vexed and chastising newspaper editorial that castigated members of the community: "We regret to see

the front portion of so many of the good farms in the neighborhood have such a dissipated appearance, fences badly out of repair, and what would make tillable land allowed to grow ever with underbrush, while many more of the farmers, in order to clear their land, will haul stumps and other rubbish out on the road and there allow it to remain just where it has been left by the team as a mark of carelessness and obtrusion" (*Chilliwack Progress*, September 10, 1891). Respectability required road fences be painted white, not built with the "blackest rails" so as to limit costs when they rotted through. Nor should the farmer fail to plant shade trees simply because fallen leaves may cause a nuisance (*Chilliwack Progress*, September 10, 1891). Fences and land were significant symbols whose dilapidation suggested a kind of moral decline or social dysfunction on the part of the negligent landowner and served as an unpleasant reminder that progress was not necessarily inexorable.

An extreme example from the glacial uplands of Surrey reveals that settlers who failed to acquiesce to social norms could be subject to social exclusion and even violence. In 1893 committed naturalists David and Peter Brown invested their energy in unorthodox improvements to land given them by their father (Portwood 1996). Instead of clearing ground for conventional agriculture, they grew and nurtured exotic trees. Collecting seed from around the world, they propagated an arboretum on logged-over land north of the Campbell River drainage. In addition to a grove of California Redwood trees, it eventually included thirty-two species, some from the West Coast, others from as far away as Russia, Austria, Japan, France, and Italy. These interests were not completely foreign to Victorian values; after all, living in nature was integral to agrarianism, and gardening and naturalism had become important influences. But the scale of the brothers' project, compounded by a rather eccentric interpretation of homesteading centered on the two-story tree house in which they lived, cast their eccentricities in sharp relief. Agrarian society little understood their peculiarities and branded them Other for their failure to conform. Certain neighbors were even hostile enough to ransack their home on several occasions.

A Past in the Past

Valley settlement was implicated in material productivity, progressive pursuits undertaken in the name of social and economic advancement, but settlement was also legitimated by looking back to and invoking an established past. So far I have focused on improvements in the landscape that defined settler society. The process of settling the valley was not, however, simply a matter of looking forward to the future; landscape transformation also played a

part in the symbolic construction of the past. When relations of privilege and power were in question, identity could depend on one's historical continuity with the land. David Lowenthal (1985:41) suggests that the past is integral to a sense of identity because it helps establish a continuity of being. It renders the present familiar, reaffirming and validating practices that define one's place (see also Sutton 1998). The past is not simply alive in memory; it is also evoked in the material world. Landscape features may come to represent connections with the past through their enduring existence and the manner in which they are used (Thomas 1996:80). The timeline for settlers was thus a continuum, a present colored by progressive visions of a colonial future and nostalgic memories of an idealized past.

For newcomers receptive to an overtly English heritage, or at least for those who felt a certain reverence for Englishness, allusions to the "old country" helped construct identity. In 1877 the editor of the *Mainland Guardian* asserted that the time was not far off when "with increase of population and improved cultivation, we shall present scenes the very parallel to those in the counties of Kent, Surrey and Dorset." At the time, a great stretch of imagination was required to envision the largely forested Fraser Valley ever embodying the order and control of English parkland, pasture, and hedgerows. These evocations, characteristic of a certain element who sought to reproduce a suitably respectable and landed class of society, were at odds with the more egalitarian and impromptu development of other settlement frontiers.

For some, the valley recalled even more esoteric geographies. Enjoying the view from a hillside over the eastern part of the valley near Agassiz, Francis MacNab extolled a picturesque view that struck his historical fancy:

> The mixture of wild forest and choice fruits, the freedom of the unfenced orchards, which yet never suffered from human depredations, recalled pages in old chronicles when monks first experimented with the mulberry and vine in the southern counties of England, and brought the hautbois strawberry from France. Sitting on a huge sun-baked boulder, with the gurgle of a stream close by, and watching a vine throw its wild growth over a rock where its branches of half-ripe fruit lay upon the surface, which reflected and retained the heat of the mid-day sun, I could fancy that close by I should find the cave of a hermit, with the crucifix and skull, and his bed of rushes. (MacNab 1898:237)

Constructing a landscape more akin to Arcadian idyll than manicured English garden, MacNab's gaze is that of the detached middle-class tourist. The scene is evocative of Romantic, pre-Raphaelite influences in painting

and literature. Instead of hedgerows, we see wild growth and the hermit's cave, reminiscent of an Arthurian landscape. Although not yet tame, it is still unmistakably English, a place to be enjoyed and consumed by a more refined observer with time to spare. Tellingly, the agents of change—settlers—are completely invisible. Like the rural peasants of old Europe, they are obfuscated by the very features they husband; the landscape is a place intelligible only to the elite who understand and appreciate its symbolism (Brettell 1986). Such evocations are more likely to have been the reflections of the rarified few, visiting *flâneurs* interested in reproducing their own identities as writers and critics for faraway places of mass consumption where such aesthetic products found a market among the literati.

Those who had committed their lives to harnessing the soil took a vastly different view of the valley. As I have noted earlier, these individuals rarely offered their opinions in writing, so we must make inferences from other forms of evidence. For most settlers, far more mundane and practical activities imbued the landscape with a sense of the past. As Veronica Strang (1997:78) found in studying relationships between settler communities and the land in Australia, the historical landscape of the present often seems to have been defined by the continuity of certain roles—usually economic ones. Significantly, settlers emphasized the heroic efforts of parents, grandparents, and forefathers, situating their contributions in a golden age of pioneering when the frontier was still raw and agrarian ideals pure. Rooted in agrarian discourse, these views highlighted productive interaction with the land, conquering wilderness and transforming landscape into an agrarian space.

These blanket statements do not of course apply unconditionally in every time and place. As Raymond Williams (1993:18) argues, these idealized tones and images were almost invariably in tension with other kinds of experience, notably the establishment of mature commercial centers. Developing farms clamored for access to markets and demanded advancements in infrastructure, improved highways, navigation, and railways. Burgeoning commerce created new depots in the wilderness, places like New Westminster and, later, Vancouver. But in many instances banks and merchants located in the city emerged as the powerbrokers in these relationships, enslaving farmers as staple producers for distant markets, tying their livelihood to the mercy of freight rates and fluctuations in commodity prices (Smith 1969:40). For flourishing agricultural communities, the city could embody a corrupt oppressor of the moral agrarian lifestyle (Short 1991:41–43).

Thus agrarianism also assumed aspects of an anti-capitalist and anti-development agenda whereby hardworking rural farmers became pitted against the callous and immoral city (Williams 1993). In this context, rural

life and identity looked nostalgically back to the past when life was simpler. The 1892 memoirs of Dr. John Helmcken, a Victoria pioneer, lamented the loss of agricultural ways when much of the city was still cultivated fields:

> A barn was on Fort Street covered with large slices of cedar bark, indeed all the roofs of all the buildings were covered with this. . . . A dairy with sixty cows occupied what is now Pemberton's—the North Dairy existed, outside of these there was but little. No thrashing machines or agricultural implements of today, but an extraordinary thick pole with long wooden spikes, made to rotate somehow or other. . . . I never saw it work—but it stood as a monument even then of bygone days. (quoted in Smith 1975:104)

Despite having been a longtime resident of the city, Helmcken saw this earlier agricultural age as fundamental to his identity. The ideal of progress influencing him as a pioneer had ironically at this stage of his life isolated him, feelings he felt compelled to voice where and when they impinged upon his memories.

The past variously informed concepts of social identity that were diversely articulated in the upper Fraser Valley. When MacNab visited in 1897, he noted that "about three-fourths of the Chilliwhack district is mortgaged," a situation that had gained momentum a few years earlier. As a consequence of "fictitiously" estimated land values, grossly high interest rates, and a fall in produce prices, many farms passed into the hands of land companies that agreed to keep farmers on as tenants (MacNab 1898:229). For many newcomers, particularly recent arrivals from eastern Canada (Harris 1997:89) who felt the unjust economic squeeze, city greed mediated identity. Memories of a golden age, common sentiments of what homesteading was supposed to be about, likely immigrated with these individuals, most of whom were already experienced pioneers.

More robust evidence may be found in the manner by which particular families constructed themselves as local elites. In the 1870s preemptors took much of the best land between the floodplain of the Chilliwack River and Sumas Lake, a region settled early in the white history of the Fraser Valley. With the establishment of a community core and the availability of good agricultural soil, growth here, unlike other areas, appears to have been reasonably steady (BCLA *Second Report of Agriculture* 1893:812; see also Cook 1979: fig. 5). But with rapid development came other concerns. The landscape was reworked, and limited resources were strained, changes that fostered nostalgia for the way things were. Families who had grown deeper

roots in the valley, the so-called founding fathers, played an important role in creating and policing new social lines of demarcation. Although conspicuous features of materialist production signified respectability and improved property conferred greater status, the ability to dominate nature was not the only measure of social rank. For established residents, clear connections to the past were an equally important index of social distinction.

The material culture of photographs was one way of signifying this founding status. Around 1906 local landscape views of Chilliwack and Sumas were available for sale by photographer W. S. Forsyth, a number of which appeared in a booster pamphlet titled *Chilliwack the Beautiful* (1906), commissioned by local real estate developers Cawley and Paisley. To increase sales, Forsyth apparently approached some of the more established white families in the area to have photographs taken that would appear in an album alongside his pictures (Harms, pers. comm.). Similar forms of marketing were used elsewhere. County atlases in Ontario and rural parts of the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century identified landowner names and holdings, boosting sales by affirming the social standing of the more affluent and appealing to their vanity (Phelps 1988:163). We have little evidence about the success of Forsyth's plan, but judging from the example of an existing album and the tacit social relations it suggests, we can see how the subjects of this professional photography, a particular segment of settler society, may have considered such an album a cherished heirloom.

A former possession of the founding Kipp family, the album consists of well-handled pages, each depicting a single large monochromatic view. Panoramic stills of the valley, as well as pictures of fields, fence lines, churches, and the new Yale road, are all prominently displayed. Of particular interest is an image of a somber group of settlers: middle-aged and wizened old men wearing ties, vests, and wool suits, sporting handle-bar moustaches, beards, and graying to white hair; ladies wearing high-collar dresses, lace scarves, overcoats, and ostentatious dress hats (fig. 9.1). Cross-referencing family names (Chadsey, Kipp, Nelms, Wells, and others; see Chilliwack Archives Photographic Collection P193) with the date they preempted land (Weeden n.d.) indicates that most had settled in the 1870s and 1880s. More than a cross section of settler society, this photograph portrays a select group of individuals, whose solemn gaze framed by the built environment also betrays a certain smugness, a sense of primacy shared by a respected alliance of old-timers.

This argument is strengthened when we consider that aspects of the built landscape depicted in the album can be seen as monuments to their role as the valley's earliest pioneers. The best example is a photo of an abandoned homestead—the first G. W. Chadsey house (fig. 9.2). Although obscured

FIGURE 9.1. Old-timers from Kipps' photo album. Photograph by W. S. Forsythe circa 1906. (Courtesy of Chilliwack Archives, P. Coll 81)

FIGURE 9.2. The first G. W. Chadsey house, from Kipps' photo album. Photograph by W. S. Forsythe circa 1906. (Courtesy of Chilliwack Archives, P. Coll 81)

by ivy and nearby tree growth, the image may have supported origin myths of the European variety about these settlers being the "first" inhabitants to break the soil. Any evidence of the exploits of more recent settlers (most settlers were younger men and women) is conspicuously absent, as is any depiction of Native presence.[2] Often displayed in household parlors, the tactile portable album symbolically reinforced social rank.

Mobilizing historical qualities that gave the landscape its character became an important means of constructing difference. Consequently, land was not always measured through the optics of geometry, commodity, or productivity; it also became an important resource for enacting roles and creating traditions (Strang 1997:166). As noisome and odious cities became increasingly removed from the agrarian ideal and new migrants were perceived to be freeloading off the backbreaking work of the first pioneers, many people retreated defensively into the past (Lowenthal 1985:121).

Native Identities and the Colonial Landscape

We have already seen how racist policies and physical impositions such as the reserve system gravely restricted the activities of Indigenous peoples and how a general culture of discrimination worked to construct the ethnocentric idea of the indolent Indian, the antithesis of the dynamic settler. However, incarnations of identity among the first occupants of the contact zone were multiple and shifting. Cultural politics deployed the race card to relegate Natives to the fringes of the colonial landscape, but other levels of analysis reveal that these efforts to marginalize and oppress met with varied methods of resistance. Indigenous peoples did not sit back and passively accept their fate.

Among the first texts to question the caricature of the passive Indigene on the Northwest Coast was Robin Fisher's (1977) *Contact and Conflict*. Challenging monolithic accounts, he argues that because neither European nor Native societies could be reduced to formulaic caricatures, their responses to each other were also difficult to predict. Native dealings with fur traders, he demonstrates, were often conducted on Native terms. In keeping with Aboriginal custom generally, house groups not infrequently married their daughters to secure certain advantages; in this case, spouses from the local Hudson's Bay Company meant privileged exchange relationships and access to European goods. They also rejected traders whose prices were too high or goods inferior (Fisher 1977:35–41; see also Vibert 1997).

Fisher is, to my knowledge, among the first to affirm Native agency in the contact zone, a premise that has aroused considerable interest and

inspired theoretically sophisticated approaches (e.g., Acheson 1995; Acheson and Delgado 2004; Carlson 2006; Loo 1996; Marshall and Mass 1997; Prince 2002; Vibert 1997). Less convincing, however, is Fisher's discussion of the period after 1858. Although he demonstrates sensitivity to the situated stance of newcomers in their interactions with Natives (differentiating among settlers, colonial administrators, and missionaries), he also toes the traditional anthropological line that maintains Indigenous culture could not escape a process of decline and European acculturation (see Barnett 1975; Duff 1997; Hobler 1986; Wells 1987), a position that tends to homogenize Native responses to colonial power.

Recent scholarship has advanced a more nuanced view of Native agency, revealing the emergent complexities of the colonial landscape. New opportunities and ways of getting ahead were facilitated by the development of colonial institutions, notably the capitalist marketplace. Newer social articulations did not simply replace older ones, however. Where social advantage could be fostered, people embraced change, appropriating it for their own ends. Of Native desires, ethnohistorian John Lutz (2001:64) writes: "When the Xwelítem (white) capitalist/mercantile economy expanded into S'ólh Téméxw (Stó:lō territory), the Stó:lō lost no time in taking full advantage of the opportunities it presented." This does not mean that they replaced their values with European principles. On the contrary, they exploited the capitalist system to benefit Indigenous institutions and funneled the rewards of their enterprise into traditional social practices, such as potlatches, where competitive gift giving continued to influence social roles.

Sometimes changing conditions and pressures encouraged the bridging of ethnic and racial differences. Challenging the rigid settler-Native dichotomy, Tina Loo's analysis of Indigenous peoples' engagement with colonial law reveals that Natives were not always on the receiving end of justice but sometimes actively participated in upholding it, "often against their own people" as well as others, a strategy that brought material rewards (Loo 1996:78). The practices that Loo identifies were not isolated or deviant but representative of the ambiguities of colonialism. Her research sheds light on the very situated and contingent nature of social identity. Not all Aboriginals saw themselves as the anthropologist's Other. Some saw themselves as law-abiding citizens of the state and participated fully in the new architecture of colonial society to better their circumstances.

As we shall see, attaining proficiency in the new cultural grammar was also conducive to reworking the social order and the production of new cultural hybrids (Gosden 2004:113; Marshall and Mass 1997). An account of the origins of Xá:ytem (fig. 9.3) exemplifies such a hybrid: a large rock

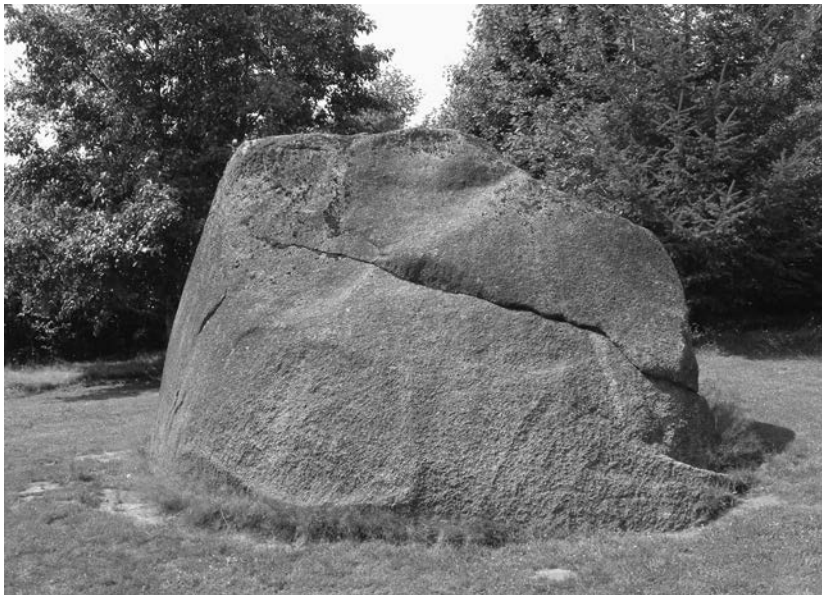


FIGURE 9.3. Xá:ytem, transformer rock near Mission. (Photograph by Karen Pohlmann, collection of the author)

located near Mission, British Columbia, created when three high-ranking individuals were changed to stone by Xexá:ls as punishment for not passing on their knowledge of reading and writing to fellow kin (Carlson 1996:187). The subject matter and moralizing subtext of this narrative illustrates an interesting grafting of cultural traditions, combining elements of storytelling about the age of transformations with the influences of colonial education at residential schools. The development of opportunities, networks, and the material culture of contact did not necessarily coherently replicate the social and cultural forms significant in pre-contact times but often promoted recombinations that, while attempting to be faithful to older principles, were guided by the improvisational character of relatively rapid change.

Identity in an Industrial World

In the context of the contemporary political landscape, where tensions over land, natural resources, and self-government continue to be hotly debated, ties to Aboriginal identity are often viscerally defined (Harris 2002; Tennant 1990). In the Fraser Valley notions of being Coast Salish (of the language family), Halkomelem (of the language), or of a particular tribal, kin, or house

group affiliation are commonly subsumed by a more encompassing Stó:lō Nation identity, a virtual form of boundary maintenance that many consider the most important form of social demarcation for those people who can trace pre-contact genealogical connections to the region. As Carlson (2001b:24) explains, being Stó:lō (literally "river"—and by extension "the River People") derives from a shared language and communication system, and common beliefs about blood ties and spiritual relationships in the geographical boundaries of the lower Fraser watershed.

These relationships constitute important touchstones that bind the Stó:lō in a postcolonial world where questions raised in the context of Aboriginal rights continue to reinforce distinctions between Natives and non-Natives. But to what extent are current political debates, and the lines of social identification they inflect, true of earlier periods? A plethora of accounts of Native history in the valley could readily persuade us that the values demarcating the Stó:lō as a self-identified community today were operating more or less coherently in pre-contact times; indeed, for some a line of continuity connects the modern Stó:lō with their ethereal origins and time immemorial (e.g., McHalsie 2001).

Historian Keith Carlson (2001b, 2001d) is one of the few to tackle this issue directly. Focusing on the social upheavals of this period, he suggests that although Stó:lō concepts of identity were indeed shaped by events such as smallpox and the fur trade, these were grounded in an understanding of their own Native historiography—itself mediated by traditional forms of knowledge and not necessarily by European value systems or other outside forces. For example, as discussed in chapter 5, he argues that Native migrations in response to population decimation and the magnetism of the fur trade did not rupture the coherency of the social fabric but simply adapted changes into an existing cultural logic so that new settlement patterns broadly followed traditional rules. Broadly speaking, Carlson's analysis engages the contingent character of culture contact, dovetailing well with some of the arguments laid out in earlier chapters; however, his argument is less convincing in its insistence on the maintenance of a collective consciousness that chose to identify itself as Stó:lō in a way that seems based more on contemporary social and political tensions than those prevalent in the early contact period.

If I read Carlson's argument correctly, it is premised on the notion that the increased river focus of Native settlement after smallpox and during the fur trade facilitated a high degree of intercommunity exchange not seen on many other parts of the coast. Perceived as an extension of the ocean and an open highway for travel (Carlson 2001b:24; Duff 1952:16), the river connected villages along its length, meaning that movement upstream or down

encouraged a dense network of ties among villages, such as bonds of marriage, resource sharing, and trade (Carlson 2001b). Indeed, Carlson explicitly contends that "the legacy of these movements was the enhancement of an existing sense of collective Stó:lō ('river') identity" (2001d:30).

That connectivity promoted close ties with neighbors surely makes good sense; however, as I argued in the first half of this chapter, the relations of similarity that contributed to social identity often emerged when confronted by difference, an issue aptly addressed by Barnett, for example, who notes that "the people living on the [Squamish and Fraser] Rivers drew a distinction between themselves and the 'salt water people,' by which they meant mainly those on Vancouver Island" (1938:122). Here Barnett discusses regional types of Othering, which would have been signaled by linguistic cues and the material culture of dress that distinguished mainlanders from islanders. These distinctions resemble what Jenkins (1996:99) would call "temporary checkpoints" rather than the kind of "river" identity that Carlson seems to imply, which promotes a constant stocktaking of membership in ways more consistent with the social and political climate of very recent history.

In fact, it would have been surprising if the various mainland and island groups strung out along the coast did not make likeminded regional comparisons when referring abstractly to people who lived across the water, on the other side of the bay, or below the mountain. Indeed, given that the noun Stó:lō is certainly more ancient than the colony of British Columbia, it is not inconceivable that those living on the river mobilized the term as a social distinction when questions of geographical difference required boundaries be drawn. I made a similar argument with respect to the Mainland and Vancouver Island identities of settlers, which were marshaled at times around a differential access to markets and resources. The interrelations of groups separated by geography were certain to produce perceptions of otherness, but context is also an important consideration, as such categorizations would dissolve when tensions of a different order came to the fore. For example, in keeping with the current scale of analysis, language as much as topography defined regional belonging. As Hill-Tout wrote of his valley informants: "Collectively they are known to themselves as the Halkomelem or Henkomenem" (1978:39), a distinction that would also have included speakers on eastern Vancouver Island, contrasting them with speakers of other languages, such as the neighboring Squamish and Nooksack.

Still, such abstract identities did not necessarily demarcate groups in ways that were viscerally experienced, consensual, and reifying. Up until at least the middle of the nineteenth century, the everyday character of group relations in the valley itself was quite complex, and the relatively large

ethnographic body of evidence[3] casts doubt on the sense of unity it is sometimes assumed Natives constructed. Kinship, which followed sinuous lines that selectively included peoples and places, did not connect all groups equally. And the associations that were made tended to follow established traditions, although these were susceptible to change. Indeed, Carlson (2008) himself has recently argued that tribal identities and their transformations could have played an important role in the context of intercommunity contacts in the valley.

Differences in the built environment (longhouses predominant at the coast and pit houses more common near the canyon), dialect (between upriver and downriver), and occasional interregional hostility ensured that intra-valley relations turned on a variety of issues. Hill-Tout (1978:44–45), for example, recorded a history of enmity between the Chilliwack and Pilalt apparently on account of one tribe overrunning the other's hunting grounds, a struggle more likely to police tribal boundaries than promote "healthy strategies for community prosperity"[4] consistent with Carlson's (2001a:24) more instrumentalist line. In addition, Natives who called the valley home were not connected exclusively by the river's geography but also by established, formalized relationships far beyond the valley. Links to other parts of the coast entangled locals in a diffuse web of bilateral kinship ties that caused kin groups to look outside the valley as much as inside (Duff 1997:25; Harris 1997:71).

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, however, these dynamics began to change. Events surrounding British Columbia's establishment as a colony were implicated in creating a sense of Stó:lō identity grounded in the experience of a newer and more significant Other. Drastic changes in the landscape at the behest of newcomers began to define the conditions under which Natives could participate in colonial society. These had enormous repercussions for the connective tissues of kinship, the family unit, and other local-scale distinctions. One of the most important transformations was the establishment of a wage-labor economy that tended to take people away from more traditional spaces of interaction. Seasonal work logging, canning salmon, surveying roads and boundaries, as well as agriculture, all assumed importance in the Aboriginal economic geography. Wage labor introduced great variability in Native economic strategies but also ensured aspects of commonality. Salmon fisheries continued to play a considerable role in the seasonal round, but as markets grew, increasing rates of itinerancy and detachment from places of traditional activity became the norm. At the same time, spaces of capitalist production began to function as connective nodes that gave rise to new kinds of social distinction. In this context a new politicized identity grounded in common feelings of disenfranchisement and shared spaces of work began to take root.

Capitalist economic opportunities arrived with the gold rush, and many Indigenous people began to work as miners for themselves or for white prospectors, who paid them two to four dollars per day (Duff 1952:41). Later, as the colonial infrastructures of road and railway construction stretched across the land, Native laborers worked alongside Chinese immigrants (who had also arrived to exploit the gold diggings), connecting areas of wilderness with centers of power and commerce like New Westminster and the new city of Vancouver. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Native workers had become a linchpin in the development of local agriculture. Because few non-Natives were willing to accept jobs as farm laborers, Natives were able to demand lucrative wages, which could then be used to enhance potlatches and other traditional practices (Carlson and Lutz 1996:115–116). The general labor shortage in the emergent capitalist landscape, combined with ever-shrinking valley open to Native subsistence activities, created a situation that suppressed berry picking, hunting, and seasonal activities while promoting the guaranteed rewards of the new formal economy.

Hop farming in particular seems to have provided an important context for new patterns of social exchange. By the late 1870s white-owned hop farms became important centers of economic production in the areas of Chilliwack and Agassiz. Because farm labor was virtually nonexistent and the settler population was still fairly small, farmers turned to the local Halkomelem-speaking population for wage labor. Native wage labor that took men away from the family unit for long periods, logging or road building, for example, could greatly stress familial relations, but hop picking, conversely, appears to have afforded a number of advantages. The farms were close to villages clustered in the lowlands along the Fraser River. The work was not physically demanding, so family members could work together for about a month in late summer, harvesting, sorting, and baling hops for sale on the market (Hancock 2001; see also Carlson and Lutz 1996:119; Lutz 2001:64). In fact, because this work was well paid due to the high demand for labor, hop yards attracted not only local Halkomelem speakers but also groups from different regions of the coast and interior including Quwutsun' from the east coast of Vancouver Island, Squamish from Burrard Inlet and Howe Sound, Nlaka'pamux from the Fraser Canyon, as well as groups from farther up the coast (Carlson and Lutz 1996:119; Hancock 2001:70). Thus, many Native people routinely spent part of the annual round in the non-traditional geography of capitalist production spaces among a diverse cross section of peoples.

Examining the spatial conditions of hop yards and their place in the colonial landscape is crucial to understanding how they helped rework

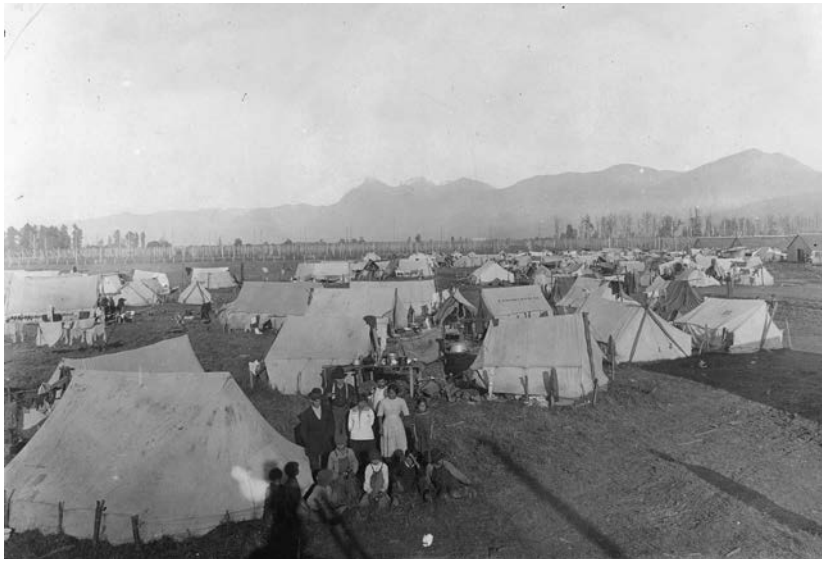


FIGURE 9.4A. Hop pickers at a tent village at E. Clemens Horst Co. hop yards circa 1900. (Courtesy of Chilliwack Archives, P1363)

connective tissues. Because the picking season lasted for about a month, families chose to locate themselves right in the hop fields, living cheek by jowl in temporary settlements (fig. 9.4a). The settlements, or camps, were situated in a new landscape of fenced fields, ditches, and rows of crops—a relatively neutral capitalist landscape that failed to respect older lines in the land. By the turn of the twentieth century, settlements were further ordered by barbed wire and neat rows of undifferentiated bunkhouses centered on a grid layout (fig. 9.4b). Violently sheared from the Aboriginal landscape, these places were devoid of the names, totems, and stories that endowed the varied kin groups who came to work the fields with different formulations of power and identity.

Emotive ties to place may have remained strong, but in practical terms Native historical precedence was mitigated by a new geography of geometry, neutrality, and equivalency that downplayed older tensions and distinctions. The hop yard afforded a strong measure of common experience and became an important focal point of negotiation where the meeting of culturally and genealogically distinct communities created new social categories. This did not mean that everyone got along; some degree of segregation persisted along cultural and linguistic lines. Nevertheless, the hop yard experience encouraged interaction that cut across the traditional smaller-scale house-

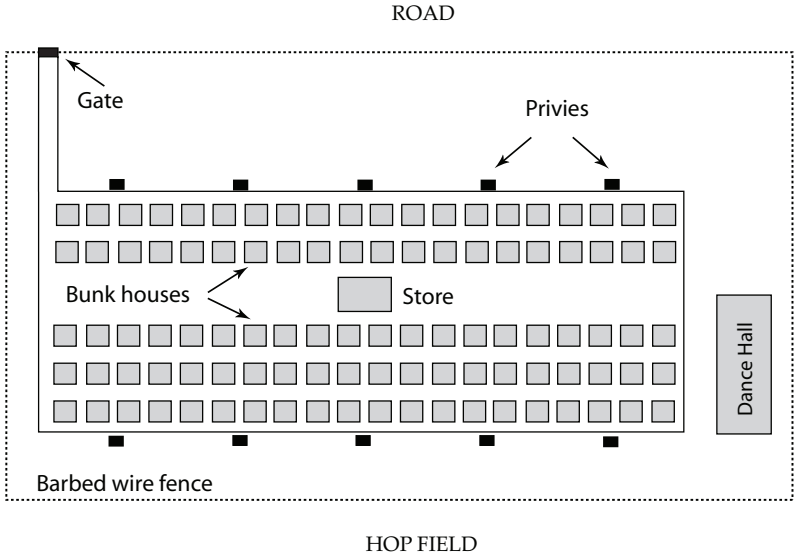


FIGURE 9.4B. A typical plan of a hop yard residential camp circa 1900. (Adapted from Hancock 2001:70)

hold and kinship networks, opening up the possibility of broader-scale ties among people who would not have ordinarily engaged in regular contact (Hancock 2001).

Because the farms were circumscribed by the relatively compact geography of the upper valley, new relationships were not difficult to maintain. Indeed, the annual migration of families to hop yards may well have been coordinated to maintain new bonds of friendship and marriage. Moreover, the relative importance of hop picking compared with most other types of wage labor meant that gatherings became routine social events in the seasonal round, not dissimilar from potlatches, winter dances, and other traditional gatherings (Carlson and Lutz 1996:119). As if remarking on this new institutionalized phenomenon, Andrew Phillip of the Chehalis people observed: "We stay on the reserve part of the year and in the summertime we go fishing and hop picking" (quoted in Lutz 2001:64).

Given the geography of apartheid that kept Indigenous peoples legally and physically relegated to Indian reserves or drove them to more remote places away from the eye of the state, hop yards became one of the few places in the valley where large groups could routinely exchange information and express opinions. Moreover, potlatches were banned in 1884 and winter dances discouraged in the new climate of assimilation (Tennant 1990:51),

making links among groups, typically reinforced during winter gatherings, less tenable. Colonial methods of surveillance and control restricted traditional forms of social reproduction here to a far greater degree than on most other parts of the coast or interior due to proximity to colonial power centers and a burgeoning settler population. Thus hop yards would have provided a new arena that enabled dialogue and self-determination.

Dominant settler society attempted to subordinate Aboriginals, imposing on them a common identity, yet Natives found commonality in their subjugation. As John and Jean Comaroff argue, in the context of ethnic minorities, "the substance of their identities, as contrived from both within and outside, is inevitably a bricolage fashioned in the very historical process which underwrites their subordination" (1992:57). Recognizing the importance of power in numbers, Natives who sought change appealed to a sense of Indigenous community in the face of colonial injustice and exclusion from equal participation in society (Duff 1997:96).

In 1914 the Katzie, finding themselves on the wronged side of race relations, attempted to apprise the 1912–1916 Royal Commission of their unfair treatment and property violations. Allying themselves with their disenfranchised neighbors, the "Stalo [River] Indians" emerged as a unified voice of dissent. "With great appreciation of the Spirit, which has led you to come, from your homes, to take the grievance of the Stalo Indian. We feel especially greatful [*sic*] to you for premitting [*sic*] us the opportunity of expressing to you personally the great appreciation of the Stalo Indians, for the action of your Government to take steps and settle the long standing grievance of the Indians" (BCLA *PCILQ* 1914). Employing the language of the white man, as Harris (1997:133) maintains, can be seen as a type of strategic resistance designed to win over colonial officials, but even more critically, such exhortations represent an early expression of an emerging self-identified and essentially Stó:lō community vastly different in kind from the nominal, abstract regional terms of identification that characterized relations with outsiders prior to colonialism.[5]

From outside the reserve boundaries looking in, white society saw the landscape's first occupants as simply an undifferentiated and primitive Other. But from inside the boundaries of the hop yard looking out, a common sense of incarceration and dislocation among this diverse group inspired "ethnogenesis" (Jenkins 1997) and the construction of a unified view of the land's unfairly subjugated "(ab)original" occupants (Brealey 2002). Suttles notes that Wilson Duff's *The Upper Stalo Indians* (1952) was the first academic work to "adopt the term for the people of the Fraser Valley" reflecting this new sense of community (Suttles 1990:474). While Duff's attention was focused mainly upriver,

his observation of cultural similarities that crosscut the region provided the "Stalo" (by the 1970s "Sto:lō" and by end of the last century "Stó:lō") with a sense of materiality in print and encouraged a tradition of research that traces the contours of Stó:lō history and their struggles with colonialism.[6]

"We Are Not a Lazy and Roaming-About People, as We Used To Be"

Deep divisions of racial asymmetry characterized colonial society, yet differences between settlers and Natives were not always cast in sharp relief. When Natives embraced social improvement, when they presented themselves as no longer "lazy and roaming-about,"[7] dissimilarities could be more readily downplayed. In 1898 Indian Affairs Deputy Superintendent General James A. Smart claimed that the adoption of agricultural pursuits and "fixity of residence" would transform the "nomadic denizens" of the forest and produce a sense of "individual proprietorship, habits of thrift . . . the value of money, and the importance of its investment in useful directions" (quoted in Kostuchenko 2000:7). And institutions such as residential schools directed their efforts toward these goals. Indians were generally considered unsuited for intellectual life, and although literacy and "good morals" were taught, agricultural skills were a major emphasis (Carlson 1996a:102). These strategies perpetuated perceptions of the inferior Native but began to inspire among Aboriginals new ways of thinking about land and about getting ahead. As Duff (1952:41) observes, this change did not take long to register, demonstrated by population shifts from non-arable to arable land during the early decades of white settlement.

The image of the savage living in nature was particularly challenged in cases where progressive Aboriginal farmers were able to emulate aspects of an agrarian lifestyle. As I have noted earlier, aspects of European agriculture were not new to the Native economy. While not all European observers recognized the value of such endeavors, especially when farmed plots occupied land claimed in a preemption, some clearly did. R. C. Mayne (1862:252), for example, noted large potato gardens at nearly every village in the valley by the time British Columbia was placed on the map. Initially influenced by missions, kitchen and market gardens spread to most Indian reserves on the south coast and southern interior during the 1860s (Knight 1978:168). During the 1870s the Department of Indian Affairs took charge of Aboriginal welfare. Departmental agent reports between 1871 and 1875 suggest some surprise upon discovering that many reserves in the valley raised significant numbers of livestock and grew a range of produce in small garden

plots (Knight 1978:169). Departmental assistance appears to have been more rhetorical than material; nevertheless, by 1885 Natives once believed to be indifferent to agriculture had transformed much of their allotted land into productive investments (Knight 1978:171).

We should keep in mind that the Aboriginal seasonal round was still considerably mobile and varied. Most continued to spend time at accessible ancestral fishing sites during the spawning season, and although hunting and gathering played a less important role, working in the migrant industries of agriculture or salmon canning consumed considerable time (Lutz 2001). The experience of Aboriginal subsistence farming did not differ greatly from that of white farmers. As Kostuchenko (2000:11–13) observes, Native farmers faced challenges similar to those faced by white settlers, including clearing stands of old growth, removing giant tree stumps, and reclaiming land on flooded riverbanks; moreover, they probably gained substantial experience working as farm hands for local settlers.[8] As the social engineering of assimilation likely envisaged, with the establishment of farms, aspects of the Indigenous seasonal round assumed a cadence familiar to that of white settlers. With relatively similar growing conditions across the valley, the time of planting crops was much the same, as were the tasks of nurturing the soil, weeding, and harvesting. Like their European counterparts, most Native farms struggled in the adverse conditions of the incipient and fragile economy, producing only enough to feed families on reserves, though some did prosper (Lutz 2001:64).

Agents for the Department of Indian Affairs were impressed at times with the efforts of Indian reserves in the upper valley, particularly where they were endowed with adequate land for arable and pasture and where Native chiefs recognized the social efficacy of land improvement. Kostuchenko indicates that agent reports singled out a number of individuals, such as "Chief Alexis of Cheam in 1875, the chief of Kwakwakapilt in 1888, Chief Billy of Skowkale and Chief Joe of Kwakwakapilt in 1896." Particular praise, however, was reserved for Chief Pierre of Hope, who had cleared and cultivated about thirty-five acres of land (Kostuchenko 2000:20). Because obtaining a comprehensive picture of the more successful reserves' historical development is difficult, Rolf Knight has looked at evidence from the Washington Lummi Indian reserve just south of the Canadian border, where by 1883 "houses, barns, farm implements, livestock—in short, the material appearance of their farms—were said to be comparable to the small farms of white settlers then in the region" (Knight 1978:170).

While never as successful as the most established white farms, a number of reserves excelled not only at land improvement but at produce sales at

local markets. In Chilliwack and Langley, Indian agents described Indian bands as prospering due to their sale of surplus including fruit, potatoes, and other field crops (Kostuchenko 2000:22). In some cases, reserve agriculture was superior to that of neighboring white farms. In 1915, for instance, the reserves in the Chilliwack Valley sold 1,400 boxes of pears, 4,500 boxes of apples, 1,100 boxes of plums, and 3,600 boxes of cherries (Knight 1978:175). The 1912 agricultural fair held in New Westminster also included around 300 entries from Native farmers. More than just an acceptance of agriculture as an efficient means to produce food, these facts and figures speak to change or accommodation in the way the land was valued.

For a few Natives, acquiring land away from the reserve became a strategy for advancement and reframed the category of settler. During Governor Douglas's tenure, for instance, a non-resident Squamish man applied to preempt land near New Westminster. Anticipating land office resistance, he stressed that the lot was "some distance from town, so that it cannot prove to be an annoyance." More sympathetic than many to the plight of Aboriginals, Douglas had decided that as British subjects they could preempt land and purchase lots under the same conditions as anyone else provided that they resided on the claim, built a dwelling, and cleared and cultivated the property (Fisher 1977:155). In practice, however, most could hardly afford to preempt, much less purchase land, and after 1866 Commissioner of Lands and Works Joseph Trutch created a new ordinance preventing them from obtaining land without written permission.

Yet despite even these barriers, some were successful. Anecdotal evidence shows that Charley Brew, a Native from Langley, successfully preempted 160 acres between 1872 and 1875 (Cail 1974:29). And during the mid-1880s, with little land left to farm in the Fraser Canyon reserves, a few young men asked the Department of Indian Affairs for aid in acquiring parcels to expand their own investments (Fisher 1977:184). Many more had put these ideas into practice by the early twentieth century. In 1910 about 20 percent of the approximately 20,000 acres Natives cultivated in British Columbia were on private land (Knight 1978:174).

Billy Sepass (K'hhalserten), Native Chief, Respected Farmer

Identity cannot, I have argued, be objectively defined in the manner of a cultural historical horizon; rather, it is created at the site of different tensions arising from social encounters across time and space. Of course, interpretations of these tensions and fault lines, what Jenkins calls *nominal* forms of identity, may be wildly diverse. For identities to persist, however, the experience of labels,

the *virtual* form of identity, must have consequences that actively influence social practice (Jenkins 1996).

The experience of farming was similar for Aboriginal and newcomer: both struggled with an unrelenting landscape and incipient markets, and both were subject to the ebb and flow of broader economic trends. At certain times antagonistic relations prevailed, and frosty stares were exchanged across the fence line. Nevertheless, the common goal of harnessing nature and eking out a profit could bring people together despite their differences. These points of commonality I doubt were ever acknowledged at the broader scale of race relations, but at local scales of analysis, Native prosperity emphasized the creation of new kinds of social identification that sympathized and connected with the experience of newcomers.

The interaction of Aboriginal communities and white farmers occurred more regularly in the Chilliwack Valley, where agriculturally-based reserves were scattered amid a developing settler landscape. In a pamphlet designed to positively represent the budding agricultural community for investors, local real estate agents S. A. Cawley and L. W. Paisley emphasized the contributions of local Indians to the colonial transformation of the land: "The Indians have always found it a desirable place for their permanent encampments, and many of them still remain, having adopted the manners and customs of civilization, cultivating their own fields and adding considerably to the wealth of the community" (Cawley and Paisley 1906:5).

We might read booster literature like this as a thinly veiled attempt to project an image of colonial society through rose-colored glasses. Highlighting the civilized nature of Natives may have quelled fears about settling in the midst of savages, depictions with clear financial implications for the authors, who as land speculators had serious economic investments in the valley. Still, journalists had been writing Aboriginals out of the landscape since earliest contact, so why had this inclination finally abated? Material improvements gleaned from the reports of Indian agents suggest that Native progress, at least on an abstract level, was being invoked as part of the larger project of community achievement, a trend that intensified when Chilliwack was forced to distinguish itself in relation to other developing centers competing for new settlers.

The Aboriginal side of this relationship may furnish more substantial evidence. Of particular interest is the practice some Native farmers employed of mobilizing symbols of social improvement to align themselves—at least outwardly—with the values of local white settlers while at the same time facilitating and reifying social distinctions with other Indians. One of the most successful Native farmers, regarded highly by Natives and settlers alike,

was William "Billy" Sepass or K'hhalserten, Chief of the Scowkale reserve in the Chilliwack lowlands. Sepass was a *siyá:m* (high-status person), descended from a powerful kin group (Wells 1987:35) of smelá:lh (worthy people), meaning he enjoyed unblemished ancestry, leadership skills, and good manners (Carlson 1996a:91; Duff 1952:80). By the late nineteenth century, however, maintaining authority and one's social standing had become more complex, settler invasions and the institution of colonial law having significantly strained traditional modes of influence. But many si:yá:m, rather than passively succumb to change, appear to have begun actively appropriating the symbols of influence traded on by white farmers to reassert and even cultivate their positions.

Improvements Sepass made to his land on the Scowkale reserve were comparable to those achieved by white settlers. Embracing aspects of European culture, Sepass established a fine residence bounded by a stately evergreen hedge, a large barn, a fruit orchard, and well-tilled fields (Wells 1987:35–36). Contemporary photographs indicate how he recruited the material trappings of the civilized classes to project an air of propriety. His frame-built house was painted white and featured steep gable ends and dormer windows. Surrounding the house was a white picket fence that created a zone of exclusion between the domestic space of the house and the working space of the farm (fig. 9.5a). Of course social respectability was achieved not by merely aping European housing style but by actively participating in the improvement of one's land and harnessing it for agriculture. As Wells observes, Sepass "took pride in the leadership he was able to give his people when their government expected them to change their way of life from their long-established custom of living off the products of nature" (1987:36). Years of working as a farm laborer for local settlers had deepened his knowledge of agricultural practice, particularly its social and economic advantages in the emerging capitalist landscape. In the following years, his "good judgement . . . created within him the ability to lead his people into agricultural pursuits, at which for some years they were quite successful" (Wells 1987:36).

Despite the active deployment of agrarian ideals through material culture, we should be careful not to oversimplify arguments of acculturation or posit the wholesale destruction of Native institutions. In the face of efforts to erase Aboriginal values, the potlatch and other traditional practices maintained much of their social efficacy by going underground. Other institutions—Native cosmology, for example—were mediated by Christianity but continued to claim cultural authenticity and distinction from European belief systems (Amoss 1978; Carlson 2001c; Wells 1987:103). But neither should we see these changes as "largely superficial," representing only the

elements of Western culture that were "usefully adapted to long-held Native values" (Prince 2002:63). Rather, cultural interaction comprised social forms influenced by both the past and the present.

By taking a leading role in the social transformation advocated by settler society, individuals like Sepass were able to maintain their privileged place in Native society in non-Native ways (fig 9.5b). Being a broker of agricultural knowledge helped assert traditional power relations, but relative success in advocating agrarian living also enabled new kinds of social recognition. Prior to colonization, power and influence tended to flow from one's ability to lead and were not necessarily tied directly to birth. As Duff argues, while siyá:m were considered leaders, they did not have the absolute authority of chiefs. Rather, for the Stó:lō, chief meant "a man appointed by the Indian Superintendent to conduct the affairs of a reserve" (1952:81). However, with the establishment of the reserve system, individuals like Sepass—si:yá:m able to use their status in ways that could benefit from emerging capitalist influences—were recognized by Indian superintendents as de facto chiefs. The accolade of chief was a nominal identification externally imposed from the outside, yet if Sepass's experience is representative, this label potentially garnered a new institutionalized social ranking respected on both sides of the cultural divide.

Interesting tensions informed Sepass's place in colonial society. While confirming his role as an authority in Aboriginal society, he also went to some length to remake himself as a valued member of the wider non-Native community. There is little doubt that familiarity with European cultural values evidenced by the material improvements to his land signified these intentions. But the biographical maps he produced at the end of WWI tell a more complicated story. With the assistance of local farmer and past employer A. C. Wells (Wells 1987:75), Sepass drew two maps depicting the Chilliwack River and other tributaries cutting their way through the upper part of the valley to the Fraser.

Although not drawn to scale, and orienting south and west respectively rather than north, they show in some detail the original watercourses prior to their alteration by settlers. As David Schaepe (2001d) notes, they appear to exaggerate the relative size of watercourses when compared with the Fraser River, suggesting their historical importance as features of the local Aboriginal landscape. Indeed, for much of Sepass's life, at least until the end of the nineteenth century, footpaths and roads were neither extensive nor in good condition, with most travel occurring by boat (Weeden, pers. comm.). In this sense, Sepass's depictions resemble earlier Indigenous mappings that emphasized the features in the landscape as they were experienced on the ground

FIGURE 9.5A. The Sepass family home. (Courtesy of Chilliwack Archives, P5572)

FIGURE 9.5B. A Sepass family portrait in the 1870s. (Courtesy of Chilliwack Archives, P5571)

rather than assuming a detached Euclidian mode of representation (Brealey 2002:40). But for Schaepe, they are also very much a political statement and, as he suggests, with their "juxtaposed Stó:lō and Xwelítem (white) settlements and mixed Halq'eméylem and English place names, they subtly capture the ever-escalating struggle between Natives and newcomers for land, resources, and 'place'" (2001d:126).

To be sure, conflict was an important theme during this period, yet other factors mitigated division. This is not to say that cultural tension was a thing of the past. But as much as colonialism was about conflict, it was also about moving on, accepting conditions, and making something of what you had. These ideas appear to be particularly evident in Sepass's large-scale representation of the lower Chilliwack River, which adopts a more conciliatory and pluralist view of the landscape achieved through the use of regular symbols and the selective representation of features (fig. 9.6). His intention was not to represent the totality of the physical landscape, as was often the case with Europeans maps, but rather to identify places important in the life of William Sepass. Incorporated in this picture are contemporary and historical Indigenous village place names, the homes of white farmers, the site of the first Methodist church, and even the location of a "Luckukuk falls first picnic in 1871." There are more modern features such as roads, bridges, and stores, and notably the author's own property, "Chief Billy Sepas' Farm."

Of interest here is the effort to selectively portray his own place in the landscape in terms conspicuously similar to those of established white settlers (and perhaps other Natives residing in other parts of the valley) while at the same time differentiating himself from his own Native community on the Scowkale reserve. The homes of non-Natives, W. Higginson, A. C. Wells, and J. Fletcher among others, are represented by individual solid rectangles in the manner of Sepass's own property located within the boundaries of the Scowkale reserve. Interestingly, his own farm is readily distinguished across the river from the reserve proper, and yet only its inclusion within an unnamed boundary line demarcating reserve lands suggests any association with that community. Moreover, despite what would have been relatively dense land use within the reserve—which as early as 1877 included at least seven frame houses (Canada, Department of Indian Affairs 1877)—Sepass represented the village as a single, homogenous rectangle. This may have been an attempt to underline a social distinction between his own revered place in Native society and that of other Scowkale Stó:lō, perhaps a strategy in keeping with the institutionalization of his role as chief. Sepass's map does not wholly capture the complex social relations in this area, yet it indicates that he was an individual with a high degree of fluency in what could be very

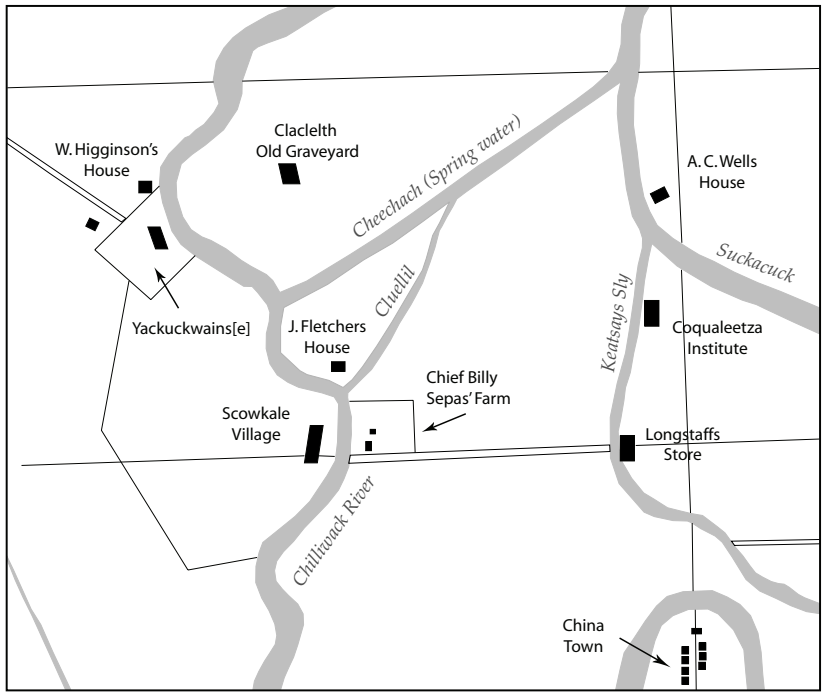


FIGURE 9.6. A Sepass map of the lower Chilliwack River circa 1918. (Adapted from Wells 1987:78–79)

different social worlds, as well as someone most concerned with carving out a stable existence in the face of practical realities.

Conclusions

In her analysis of environmental values in Queensland Australia, Strang (1997:166–167) argues that colonial whites ultimately brought their identity with them from Europe, whereas Natives received their self-conception from the land. She suggests that settler identity was mediated by romantic constructions of place based on the consumption of literature and film that reproduced frontier stereotypes. Although social differences within this group may have been registered through established practices (reinforced with different roles like ranch hand and landowner), these notions of being could be easily "picked up and put down elsewhere" (Strang 1997:166). Strang maintains that for settlers the landscape was a stage for the enactment

of colonial desires, whereas for Aboriginals it was the firmly rooted place of their ancestors.

For all the compelling detail that Strang elicits in this study, her premise, which effaces relationships that crosscut this divide, is less persuasive. I have argued in this chapter that social identities could not be linked predominantly to roots, as she seems to suggest, but were engendered by multiple relationships, relations of similarity and difference grounded in varied contexts of social interaction where a community's or an individual's sense of belonging came into question or was threatened (Jenkins 1997:54). To be sure, where white interests focused on appropriating land for productive investments, Indigenous people were demonized as inferior and incapable. However, other forms of categorization at different scales of social life also operated in the social space of the valley. Identity for those living and working in the contact zone hinged on divergences and ambiguous senses of being, animated by changing relationships in the colonial landscape and entangled social formations that allowed people to move forward in the world.

10

A View from the Ground

From high above the Fraser Valley, one may view its topographies, gaze at its settlements, and observe the network of roads that ties everything together. From this lofty distance, the world appears uncomplicated, transparent, and neatly ordered because a mode of detachment, physical or intellectual, can impose a deceptive measure of simplification; with closer proximity, the view begins to reveal greater complexity. This book has attempted to bring a remote perspective down to earth. Throughout this text, I have been concerned with a more intimate history of the landscape and of the people who fashioned it in both mind and matter.

Drawing on diverse and sometimes eclectic sources, from archaeology and ethnography to cartography and history, I have explored the ways that both newcomers and Native groups came to understand the Fraser Valley and its varied textures over the first century or so of cultural contact. Volatile cultural exchanges that occurred in the wider context of European expansion in the Northwest form the background for a study that attempts to trace some of the ways in which the landscape was transformed and perceived. Following a number of different pathways, I have sought to understand how people used the landscape, how they worked upon it, and most importantly, how what they made of it reflected their own sense of *place* in the world as well as that of others. Whether imaginative or practical, these perceptions had real consequences insofar as they shaped society in interesting and often ambiguous ways.

Approaching history from this angle has also meant a significant departure from more conventional plotlines. While my analysis begins in what is often termed the proto-historic period, prior to the European incursions of the later nineteenth century, the broader history of this period is in many respects colonial, and one of my most important themes is the social discourse of colonialism and the built landscapes, objects, texts, and theoretical frames

that have served to sustain it. To the extent that colonialism is often implicated in a larger project of representing, subjugating, and territorializing peoples and places, the thematic issues I have dealt with here can be seen as part of a growing body of work that seeks to "write back" from the colonial margins (Bender 1999; Clayton 2000).

At this present historical juncture, we are probably more aware than ever before of the power asymmetries and social injustices of this period. As I have argued, however, we can end up neglecting the everyday details of social life as experienced in the contact zone by focusing on the big issues, such as how the environment of the Northwest Coast determined to an extent the development of society during this period or how imperialist desires, capitalism, and the emergence of commodity markets began to shape the landscape. An awareness of the bigger picture is vital, but attempting to read the permutations of place through such broad frames of reference can result in rather predictable plotlines, histories that homogenize patterns across time and space and reduce complex issues to black-and-white caricatures.

One of the most enduring narratives involves the progressive social and cultural development of Aboriginal and settler societies based largely on different groups harnessing peripheral landscapes, intensifying their economic production of naturally abundant resources such as food plants or wood for emerging commodity markets. While such correlations may help to answer broader systemic questions like issues of long-term change, they tend, as I have argued, to completely miss the ongoing shifting social production of the landscape. The control that Natives and newcomers wielded over nature was not necessarily a clear case of core-periphery economics but was entangled with interesting and novel values, some of which complicate and contest grander narratives.

Similar arguments can be made about the way we think of the history of these cultures and their reciprocal effects. Instead of a more simplistic picture of core transforming the passive periphery whereby European forms of culture prevailed over Native ones, or its reverse, a messianic focus on resistance, we should see this period as defined more by the politics of give and take. This view does not entail a simple blurring of cultures and their ways of seeing, nor should we disregard the often unequal relationships at this time. It requires instead an acute attention to the new categories of being that formed around relations of opportunity, desire, and power (Gosden 2004).

If we can reveal the connections between people and the material conditions of the landscape, including existing human geographies and relations of power, then we can see how identities both united and fragmented according to different lines of questioning. While Hudson's Bay Company traders could

be abstractly mobilized as conquers of the wilderness and symbols of European expansion, colonial surveyors—conquerors of a perceived superior class—could have seen them as little better than the Native "denizens of the forest" among whom they lived. This is partly an issue of the scale at which different arenas of social interaction are resolved (Edmonds 1999a). Accordingly, a major emphasis has been varying scales of analysis, examining the contingent linkages between people and the import of landscape in diverse social arenas.

As I have argued, local-scale negotiations of the Aboriginal storied landscape were, for example, crucial to identity formation at the level of the Native family unit and kin group, although they were not impervious to broader influences. Indeed, the devastation of smallpox combined with the impetus of new European trading alliances in the Fraser Valley and other parts of the coast gave momentum to the shifting of values. With the establishment of the colonial landscape and its disciplinary infrastructure, new and more persistent, albeit never continuous, types of identification emerged and crosscut the valley. In this context, membership among the Stó:lō was grounded in varied forms of resistance as well as a desire for a better future, favoring the creation of social ties on levels not previously experienced.

The issue of scale underlies two other important themes I have addressed. The spatial and temporal history of the Fraser Valley as socially experienced cannot be discussed as an abstract concept divorced from the social networks that upheld it. From a spatial point of view, this means we can discuss the valley as something that was both produced and consumed. For European explorers such as Vancouver, the Northwest Coast was successfully packaged as an artifact of imperial possession and a space that anticipated commercial opportunity. Insofar as it inspired a generation of commercial ventures to the region, his mapping of the coast had real social consequences. Still, the geographic stability constructed by this and later forms of mapping was not necessarily accepted in other social arenas. For traders and later settlers, whose experiences were mediated by less-than-absolute conditions on the ground, the landscape was riddled with ambiguities.

A similar logic applies to our understanding of temporal experiences. From the perspective of the Victorian world, the global advance of Europeans became a self-congratulatory story of collective upward growth that replaced the disorder of wilderness with the order of civilization. While this view had a significant degree of purchase among settler society, it was not the position or experience of all. In fact, the practices of land survey and forest clearance often encouraged forests to grow back, greatly complicating the trajectory of progress and in some cases marooning early pioneers in a culturally constructed wilderness.

The core of my argument emphasizes how colonial history cannot be divorced from the landscape itself, from the active material and participative character of places, and their role in social and historical transformations. Colonial history looks different through the prism of landscape, an approach that respects the locality of the social production ensnaring people in its folds. To this end, my thinking on the politics of encounter between newcomers and Natives, and more broadly between humans and the environment, is closer to what Sluyter (2001) has proposed for a theory of colonial landscape transformations. In this account, Natives, newcomers, and the landscape are not autonomous and objective categories but exist instead as mutual entanglements in the contact zone, hybridized social forms composed of varying and, as Marylin Strathern (1991) describes, "partial connections" to other times, traditions, places, and ways of seeing.

Due to the broad scope of this book, my conclusions in many ways only scratch the surface, and the issues that I have raised often create more questions than answers. Much remains to be learned from more local-scale comparative approaches that examine how the lived experience of landscape breaks down in different places. For instance, within the colonial geography of apartheid experienced by Native peoples, I have suggested that a certain fragmentation occurred along lines of desire as new opportunities presented themselves. Certain high-status Natives like Sepass are easier to study from the historical evidence, but what of the lower-status people, s'téxem? How did those who had forgotten their history negotiate their way in the new colonial order? (See Carlson 2008.) I have also argued that the landscapes of exploration and (re)settlement were complicated by a host of material variables that diversely constructed the experience of newcomers. We know something about social and religious movements such as Methodism and how they mobilized aspects of material culture to police boundaries of acceptability, but how did these engagements play out differently across the province?

Critically, if we are to achieve the right balance between generalizations and nuanced complexities of place, we need to move beyond single-scale discussions of how people came into contact with the land and with others, which when read together often homogenize the experience of the contact zone. Because the politics of social and cultural encounter were realized in very particular ways in the Fraser Valley, moving this research agenda forward requires more comparative work on culture contact and colonial power structures in varied areas of the Northwest Coast and beyond. For example, the experience of colonialism differed farther north on the coast, where economic patterns appear to have exhibited a more traditional character well into the twentieth century (Martindale 2006).

These questions are vital to understanding how the remarkably complex cultural geography of the coast and its many valences of expression have emerged in more recent times. This process is fundamentally dialectic in nature; we forge ahead by drawing upon events and their material signatures to create new forms of synthesis wherever tensions or questions of similarity and difference are felt—challenging the categories we invent to make sense of them. Often people encounter and act upon very different material conditions for diverse reasons. Attempting to track these concepts through time and space is difficult, and sometimes we lose sight of what we started with. Frequently glossed over in our pursuit of the grand narrative, these understudied issues are, nevertheless, a crucial part of the history of the landscape.

Notes

Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Writing of particular influence here includes Barrett (1999), Bender (1993, 2001, 2002), Edmonds (1999a, 1999b), Gosden (1994, 1999), Ingold (1993), Morphy (1993, 1995), Sluyter (2001), and Tilley (1994).

Chapter 2. Setting the Scene

1. See Ames and Maschner (1999:103-107); Borden (1968); Grier (2008); Schaepe (2001a).
2. For detailed accounts of Native subsistence, see Barnett (1975), Duff (1952), and Suttles (1955, 1990).

Chapter 3. Constructing an Aboriginal Landscape

1. These ideas are largely reproduced in Oliver (2007:3–4). Any bookstore in Vancouver will have a good selection of popular landscape literature. Ian Mackenzie's *Ancient Landscapes of British Columbia* (1995) is an outstanding example. See also Malcolm Lowry's short story "The Forest Path to the Spring" published in *Hear us O Lord from heaven thy dwelling place* (1961), a paradisal take on the coast that helped popularize it in literary circles. For a fascinating interpretation of the social, discursive, and political practices that have constructed the idea of the rainforest on Canada's West Coast, see Bruce Braun (2002).
2. There is some debate about whether the Salish notion of deity predates European contact. Many accounts suggest a single transformer or deity—Xals—an agent of moral authority not unlike a Christian priest or prophet in many aspects (see Bierwert 1999:73; Carlson 2001c). Numerous origin stories insisting on the authenticity of a divine creator (Jenness 1955) may be conflations, though, with early missionary teachings in the second half of the nineteenth century. For the sake of consistency, I have chosen, except when quoting others, to use the plural, Xexá:ls, following more current accounts (McHalsie et al. 2001; Wells 1987:181).

3. Totemic relationships classify human kin groups and non-human beings into a conceptually organized natural order that delimits social units and may serve as a basis for social reproduction. Totems gain affinities with human lineages through historical relations defined by Myth Age events rather than morphological similarities. Simply put, apparently unrelated beings, otters and particular human lineages, for example, could be the descendants of a common ancestor. Such findings commonly cast strong doubts on the notion of taxonomic universality among species (Descola 1996:85–87).
4. This was not always the case. In the upper valley the Pa'pk'um entered into relations of reciprocity with mountain goats considered to be the living descendants of their ancestors. Before the mountain-goat hunter set out for the high country, he was required to observe certain ritual activities to assuage the soul of the mountain goat. First, he would have to bathe and fast for several nights in supplication. The morning of his departure he would paint his chin red, draw a red line over his forehead down to the point of his nose, and fasten eagle tail feathers to his hair. These practices were believed to increase the hunter's climbing abilities (Boas 1894:460).

Chapter 4. Beyond the Water's Edge

1. The substantive detail of this chapter is reproduced in Oliver (2007).
2. Some sites indicate continued stripping activity for decades, if not hundreds of years. On Meares Island one site had been stripped regularly between 1722 and 1936 (Stryd and Eldridge 1993:220).
3. The smallpox epidemic also had a clear impact on Indigenous logging practices. Many felled logs and canoe blanks, apparently abandoned in the forest, appear to date from this period (Stewart 1984:40; Stryd and Feddema 1998:16).
4. Assessing the size of large managed berry patches in relation to pre-smallpox levels is difficult.

Chapter 5. Between Stories and the Landscape

1. It is unclear why Jenness does not refer to all three eponymous families mentioned in the tradition. Perhaps he was reluctant to include this information because so little was remembered about the ancestor Xwthepecten, who created Port Hammond.
2. This same sense of respect for and continuity with the past is evidenced by Old Pierre's own Indian name, Thalhecten. Inherited from his ancestor, it served to place him in an ancient and privileged line of descent.
3. A further interesting example relates to the mythical origins of the Swaixwe, a mask worn by a privileged lineage of dancers to legitimize certain events, the bestowing of names and other property, for instance. As Duff (1952:123) and

Codere (1948) maintain, although myths provided by groups living on the mainland and Vancouver Island sometimes suggested a local origin for the Swaixwe, other lines of evidence indicate historical antecedents emanating in the upper Fraser Valley.

Chapter 6. Ambiguity and Geographic Truths

1. In 1721 the novelist Jonathan Swift used the lack of knowledge about the coast to construct his own land of giants, which he named Brobdingnag. A Dutch ship captain was believed to have discovered the land that came to be known as Jesso or Company Land in the seventeenth century, and the mythical Strait of Anian was thought to be a navigable passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic (Hayes 1999).
2. For an interesting account of the potential risks faced by European vessels, see Acheson and Delgado (2004).
3. Landscape views commonly available to the educated probably differed greatly from those of the often invisible crewmen, many of whom were illiterate (Mitch 1992:1) and who lived in far less comfortable conditions than the gentlemen enjoyed. The often demanding and monotonous conditions of maintaining the voyage would have colored the crew's experience of the coast.
4. It should be noted here that although Vancouver possessed all relevant charts by Cook, Meares, and others, he never accepted them as substitutes for his own (Lamb 1984:47).
5. Don Thomson (1966:209) speculates that there may not have been either enough public interest in the map at the time or a publisher with sufficient capital to produce it. Alternatively, he suggests, the map remaining unpublished may have provided a competitive edge over business rivals.
6. Other evidence can be brought to bear on this point. The fact that the river was also designated by Indigenous names on European maps, prior to its unequivocal placement on Vancouver's coastline in 1824, suggests a reticence among explorers to establish its presence in empirical terms once and for all. A number of Arrowsmith maps, for example, continued to identify the river as Tacontche Tesse or Fraser's R (Hayes 1999:107).
7. Interestingly, the very idea of Fraser's River appears to have been enough to convince Simpson of a possible navigable connection with the interior, despite the fact that Fraser had demonstrated its futility, knowledge that circulated in the more restricted social networks of traders. Maclachlan (1998:7) suggests that Simpson's "cavalier attitude towards danger" may have explained his failure to seek out one of the company's employees, Proveau, who had accompanied Fraser through the canyon.
8. In Archibald McDonald's words, marriage "had the effect of reconciling [the men to the post] and of removing the inconvenience and indeed the great uncertainty

of being able to get them year after year replaced from the Columbia" (Report to the Governor and Council, 1830, quoted in Maclachlan 1998).

9. For example, in McDonald's 1830 report to the Governor and Council, February 25, he remarked on his informants' accuracy about the population of Indians living in the canyon: "It is however [a] fact proved by the repeated examination of the Indians themselves and in particular the last mentioned chief [Sopitchin] on the 3rd division, who is mostly a resident here, & whose acct. Of the lower Indians we knew to be correct" (quoted in Maclachlan 1998:221).
10. The problem here is trying to distinguish Aboriginal traditions of mapmaking from European ones. Natives may have become accustomed to the bird's-eye view plan through exposure to European conceptions of space (Harvey 1980:33–34).

Chapter 7. Toward the Colonization of Opinion

1. British Columbia's first governor, James Douglas, originally chose Derby for the site of the capital. Owing to concerns about the defense of the colony, however, it was moved to the site of New Westminster.
2. One such map is Aaron Arrowsmith's *Map of America* published in 1801 with additions to 1837. Brealey (1995:142) makes a similar point, suggesting that small-scale maps had little utility in the field and limited usefulness as tools of subversion.
3. Ascertaining longitude required the use of a chronometer, a timepiece set to Greenwich Mean Time, which was then used for comparisons with the local angle of the midday sun. This allowed a rough estimation of degrees of longitude from the prime meridian.
4. Curiously, perhaps because of the contempt held for the survey skills of the Hudson's Bay Company, there is no mention of A. C. Anderson, the first European to establish these routes over a decade earlier. Not to be outdone, Anderson reaffirms in his memoirs, *The History of the North West* (1878), his role in the establishment of the colony, placing himself at the center of the history of exploration and highlighting his connection to the brigade trails.
5. Philosopher John Locke argued that the benefits of land could only be realized through labor. Labor was an individual's possession, and the products of labor were therefore one's property. Property was derived from nature, which if left alone was little more than waste (Harris 2002:49).
6. The publication of different kinds of maps including cadastral maps appears to have been common practice across North America (see Home 1997:37; Kain and Baigent 1992:307; Spittle 1988). According to the *British Colonist* (1860), however, the protocol was not always straightforward. On the colony of Vancouver Island at this time, access to survey maps appears to have been granted by governor's favor.

7. My use of the term "resettled" is inspired by Cole Harris's (1997) excellent portrait of colonial power and displacement in his book *The Resettlement of British Columbia*.

Chapter 8. The Paradox of Progress

1. The less common alternative is the downward plotline chronicling the loss of natural ecosystems and other unintended consequences of rapid development (Oke et al. 1992). This authorial voice portrays history in poorer, more degraded, and less satisfactory terms, an account of degradation exemplified by the 1930s Midwest dust bowl (Cronon 1992). It should also be noted that progress is a relatively recent concept, a defining feature of the late modern age, prior to which the notion of decline was in many veins of European thought equally important (Bury 1955:10–21).
2. Tellingly, many authors use the term "evolution" to describe historical change. A strict definition of evolution has, however, no relationship to temporality but relates rather to qualitative changes in the organic structure of a particular organism. As Giddens maintains, "History does not have an evolutionary shape, and positive harm can be done by trying to compress it into one" (1984:236).
3. One chain is equal to 66 feet; 666 feet is equal to 1 furlong; and 8 furlongs is equal to 1 mile. A township consisted of 36 square miles.
4. Since public attitudes parallelled those south of the border, the lumberman was eventually treated with ambivalence. Paradoxically, felling the forest to support the growth of the nation also contributed to environmental degradation, destroying the very wilderness that gave agrarian living its symbolic purchase (Williams 1989:20).
5. Native management of the valley lowlands using broadcast burning was limited but not, according to HBC observations, unheard of (see Machlachlan 1998:31).
6. Cail suggests that "there was scarcely a public figure in British Columbia who did not acquire large holdings of agricultural, pastoral, and mineral land" (1974:14).
7. As Harris explains (1997:86), the staple trade associated with isolated settlements was not easily converted into other kinds of economic activity, one of the age-old problems of European settlement across Canada. Incipient local markets and largely inaccessible larger ones significantly hampered the ability to diversify and create a coherent sustainable base.

Chapter 9. Ties that Bind, Lines that Divide

1. Cracroft, the niece of arctic explorer Sir John Franklin, accompanied her aunt, Lady Franklin, during her 1861 tour of the Pacific Northwest (see Cracroft 1974).
2. The exception is a single photo of the silhouette of an Indian fishing on the river from his canoe. An iconic depiction, this image was de rigueur for the consuming tastes of the tourist gaze (Crawshaw and Urry 1997).

3. The weight of evidence consistently supports more localized expressions of kin group and tribal community identification reproduced at the scale of day-to-day encounters (Boas 1894; Barnett 1975; Hill-Tout 1904:312–313; Jenness 1955).
4. On instrumentalism, see Gosden (1999:191).
5. Carlson (2008:173) has recently argued that the disruption of boundaries created through the development of an agricultural landscape "did much to foster the maturation of an even broader sense of Stó:lō collective identity," implying a change in degree rather than, as I have argued, a change in kind.
6. On the continuing struggle between the Stó:lō and colonial power structures, see, for example, Cameron (1996) and Thom and Cameron (1996). Illustrating the contested nature of social identity, debate endures as to whether downriver groups should be included as members of the Stó:lō (see Thom 2002).
7. In 1874 the Department of Indian Affairs received a petition signed by 110 Indian leaders in the Fraser Valley that proclaimed, "We are not a lazy and roaming-about people, as we used to be" (quoted in Fisher 1977:184).
8. This point is confirmed in the diary of Royal Engineer and settler Alben Hawkins (1874–80), who regularly employed Natives to help improve his land near Matsqui Prairie.

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About the Author

A native of the West Coast of Canada, the author received his BA in Archaeology and History from Simon Fraser University in 1998. After working for a year in consulting archaeology in British Columbia, he moved to the United Kingdom to attend graduate school at the University of Sheffield, where he was awarded an MA in 2001 and a PhD in 2006. His research focuses on interdisciplinary approaches to the social history of landscape in western Canada and the United Kingdom. His articles exploring issues of colonialism and the archaeology of "natural" places have been featured in edited volumes, in the *Canadian Journal of Archaeology*, and on BBC Radio 3. He is currently Lecturer of Archaeology at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.