

Canoes and Colony:  
The Dugout Canoe as a Site of Intercultural Engagement in the Colonial Context of  
British Columbia (1849-1871)

by

Stella Maris Wenstob  
B.A., University of Victoria, 2011

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of the Requirements for the Degree of

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in the Department of Anthropology

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University of Victoria

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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Dr. Ann B. Stahl, Supervisor  
(Department of Anthropology)

Dr. Robert L. A. Hancock, Departmental Member  
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## Abstract

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The cedar dugout canoe is iconically associated with First Nations peoples of the Pacific Northwest coast, but the vital contribution it made to the economic and social development of British Columbia is historically unrecognized. This beautifully designed and crafted oceangoing vessel, besides being a prized necessity to the maritime First Nations peoples, was an essential transportation link for European colonists. In speed, maneuverability, and carrying capacity it vied with any other seagoing technology of the time. The dugout canoe became an important site of engagement between First Nations peoples and settlers. European produced textual and visual records of the colonial period are examined to analyze the dugout canoe as a site of intercultural interaction with a focus upon the European representation. This research asks: *Was the First Nations' dugout canoe essential to colonial development in British Columbia and, if so, were the First Nations acknowledged for this vital contribution?*

Analysis of primary archival resources (letters and journals), images (photographs, sketches and paintings) and colonial publications, such as the colonial dispatches, memoirs and newspaper accounts, demonstrate that indeed the dugout canoe and First Nations canoeists were essential to the development of the colony of British Columbia. However, these contributions were differentially acknowledged as the colony shifted

from a fur trade-oriented operation to a settler-centric development that emphasized the alienation of First Nations' land for settler use. By focusing research on the dugout canoe and its use and depiction by Europeans, connections between European colonists and First Nations canoeists, navigators and manufacturers are foregrounded. This focus brings together these two key historical players demonstrating their "entangled" nature (Thomas 1991:139) and breaking down "silences" and "trivializations" in history (Trouillot 1995:96), working to build an inclusive and connected history of colonial British Columbia.

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Klecko klecko!

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the smell of the ocean, the feel of wet dew lingering on the grass in the long morning shadows cast by the spruce and hemlock trees, and the softly droning sound of CBC. This thesis is dedicated to my memories of home and everyone's memory of home. May we never be separated from them and may we all find a way to get back.

# Chapter 1: Boarding the Canoe

## 1.1 Introduction

Today the cedar dugout canoe is iconically associated with First Nations peoples of the Pacific Northwest coast (Erickson 2013:3; Neel 1995:1; Osler 2014:34), but the vital contribution it made to the economic and social development of British Columbia is historically unrecognized. This beautifully designed and crafted oceangoing vessel, besides being a highly prized necessity to the maritime First Nations peoples (Arima 1974:93-96; Drucker 1963:73; Durham 1960:9; Lincoln 1991:14; Waterman and Coffin 1920:12),<sup>1</sup> was an essential transportation link for European colonists. In speed, maneuverability, and carrying capacity it vied with any other seagoing technology of the time. In its extensive use by Europeans during the colonial period, it became an important site of “entanglement” (Thomas 1991:139) between First Nations people and colonial traders and settlers. This research sifts through the textual and visual records produced by Europeans during the colonial period to examine the dugout canoe as a site of intercultural interaction with a focus upon the European perception and experience of this engagement. It asks the research question: *Was the First Nations' dugout canoe essential to colonial development in British Columbia and, if so, were the First Nations acknowledged for this vital contribution?*

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<sup>1</sup> Today the dugout canoe is important to coastal First Nations peoples as a site of cultural resurgence as evidenced by the Canoe Tribal Journeys (Lincoln 1991; Marshall 2011; Neel 1995; Osler 2014)

## 1.2 Terminology

I use the term *First Nations people*, since this a preferred name for many Aboriginal peoples of the Pacific Northwest coast of British Columbia (Muckle 2007:2). To counteract the tendency this convention has of submerging the individual in the term ‘nation,’ I will endeavour to reference individuals when information is available. When discussing places and First Nations peoples referenced in the written sources analyzed I use the name given in the source (for example, *Nahwitti*), unless it is clear enough which First Nations group is being discussed, in which case I will offer the modern accepted orthography of the Nations’ name (for example, Nitinaht to Ditidaht; see Appendix A, Map 2). When discussing larger trends that involve Aboriginal people, including those from inside and outside of British Columbia, I use the term Indigenous, if more specific designations are not possible.

I use the term *European* to denote the non-native newcomers to the Pacific Northwest. These newcomers come from disparate backgrounds, such as British, American, and French-Canadian. Therefore, *newcomer*, *white*, and *non-native*, does not adequately encompass who these people were. Since other visible minorities, such as Chinese and Hawaiians, were also newcomers to this area, my use of European signals a distant, yet possibly visible or conscious connection to “Western” Europe.

I use the term *dugout canoe* as a catch-all to refer to the numerous styles (see Appendix A, Map 1 and Table 6) and designs of carved cedar dugout canoe, manufactured and used by coastal First Nations peoples of the Pacific Northwest coast, or “canoe nations” (Neel 1995:3) during the colonial period. When possible, the design, use and First Nations manufacturer of the dugout canoe is indicated.

### 1.3 Canoes and Colony

The colonial period began formally in 1849 with the establishment of the Colony of Vancouver Island. By 1871, when British Columbia joined Confederation as a province, the people of the Pacific Northwest area had for some time been entangled in a colonial fur-trading economy but this dynamic had been affected by the growing importance of a settled land-use economy. This colonial shift resulted in devastating consequences for the First Nations people since colonial intentions emphasized the dispossession of First Nations' land (Edmonds 2010b:4; Harris 2004:174; Perry 2001:12). European struggles to legitimize this otherwise unjust dispossession of First Nations peoples were often accompanied by a misrepresentation or, often more drastically, a “vanishing” of First Nations peoples from European records (Lutz 2008:36; Trouillot 1995:99). This contributed to the creation of a British Columbian history that has traditionally failed to acknowledge First Nations' influence and activity (Erickson 2013:3; Edmonds 2010a:16; 2010b:4; Lutz 2008:16-17; Wickwire 2005:47; Thomas 1991:12). This privileging of Euro-centric narratives has meant that the study of First Nations' histories was left to anthropologists and archaeologists who early on created a temporally (Fabian 1983:4), spatially segregated and subjective story of the First Nations' past. As a result, historical connections between First Nations and Europeans were until recently difficult to recognize and imagine (see also Cooper and Stoler 1997:6; Trouillot 1995:99; Stahl 2002:835, 2010:152; Wolf 2010:4).

During this era of colonial legitimization through “vanishing” (Lutz 2008:36), or what Trouillot (1995) terms “silencing,” Europeans depended on the dugout canoe, and often on the power and skill of First Nations paddlers, as a primary means of transport. By



examining European written and visual documents describing and portraying European dugout canoe use, this research explores how Europeans represented First Nations peoples and the dugout canoe. These sources allow this research to gauge whether First Nations peoples were segregated and *othered* (Dirks 1997:200; Edmonds 2010a:8; Erickson 2013:30; Fabian 1983:31; Hall 1996:287; Lutz 2008:36; Perry 2001:12; Said 1989:207; Stoler 1989:135; Trouillot 1995:96). The placing of European and First Nations actors in an “entangled” arena (Thomas 1991:139) of mutual engagements aboard and around the canoe, builds a connective narrative to desegregate the colonial images and accounts examined (Edwards 1997:59; Ingold 2000:54; Jones and Boivin 2010:341; Knappett 2011:48; Latour 1996:2, 2007:64).

As the dugout canoe is used through this research as a material “lens” of sorts to focus research and demonstrate physical connections and engagements between First Nations and Europeans, recognition of previous research using material culture must be made. Researchers working in material culture studies offer useful theoretical approaches to create a better understanding of how artifacts and items of material culture, such as the dugout canoe, could have been used to inform, contest or threaten a colonial discourse of alterity, which often resulted in the creation of taxonomies of difference (Comaroff & Comaroff 1997:8; Loren 2001:184; Lutz 2008:36; Perry 2001:14; Stahl 2010:152; Thomas 1991:174, 2000:213). As such, this research focuses in part upon questions of colonial taxonomies: how they are created, defined and contradicted. By using the dugout canoe - a highly identifiable First Nations form of material culture - the role that a

*foreign*<sup>2</sup> technology played in this negotiation of taxonomies or categories that Europeans attempted to ascribe to both themselves and *others* is exposed.

The dugout canoe and its associations serve as a material focus that guides the tracking of the European produced visual and discursive representations. This focus allows some of these contradictions and problems of colonial taxonomies encountered through visual and written representations to be foregrounded opening up a venue for analysis of European and First Nations engagement. This placement of First Nations material culture (the dugout canoe) and European canoe users, and often First Nation crewmen together, or in an “entangled” (Thomas 1991:131) way through this research, aims to break down historical barriers and “silences” (Trouillot 1995:96), demonstrating a shared history with active First Nations and European participants.

Turning to the organization of the thesis, *Chapter 2: Understanding the Waters* situates the study in relation to theoretical considerations, colonial studies, and an analysis of the “colonial imagination” (Erickson 2013:11) and anticipates how the thesis contributes original knowledge to the discipline of anthropology.

*Chapter 3: Paddling the Canoe*, describes the study’s methodology and research design. The methodology employed is similar to the method used by Thomas (1991) since written European colonial sources from traveller’s accounts, diaries, memoirs, letters, editorials and government documents are examined over time (from 1843 to the early 1900s) to demonstrate examples of European usage of the dugout canoe both with and without First Nations crews. In addition, archival images of canoes portrayed by Europeans during this era are analyzed to track trends in European “taste” (Stahl 2002:835) for this method of transport. The colonial time period, from 1849 to 1871, is

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<sup>2</sup> By foreign I mean of an ‘othered’ set of people.

enlarged from 1843 to the early 1900s to accommodate the inclusion of a greater amount of data, since prior to the introduction of photography in the 1850s there are very few visual representations of the North Pacific coast. This longer window of analysis allows for the detection of trends that may be present prior to an official colonial presence in 1849, and later, after the joining of British Columbia with Canada at Confederation. Since understanding the processes of representation is key to the source criticism of the images and written accounts examined, a thorough analysis of visual and written representation is provided in this chapter.

*Chapter 4: Gaging the Currents* briefly outlines the process of canoe manufacture, the symbolic importance of the canoe to many coastal First Nations peoples and the types and designs of canoes seen along the North Pacific coast. Also summarized in this chapter, is a tracing of British Columbia's colonial history as written by European newcomers, with an emphasis upon the European use of the dugout canoe over the colonial period. The cultural and historical grounding presented in *Chapter 4* provides a framework for the presentation and analysis of archival data in *Chapters 5: The Documentary Voyages* and *Chapter 6: The Visual Voyages*.

Chapter 5 provides analysis of the written sources over time. Chapter 6 examines the visual sources over time. Both Chapter 5 and 6 are split up into sections through time, from 'Before 1849,' '1849 to 1858,' '1858 to 1871' and 'Post 1871'—this is to allow for the establishment of trends through time. *Chapter 7: Pulling Together* offers a cross-analysis of the findings of Chapters 5 and 6 to demonstrate disparities and trends in these two forms of colonial representation.

In conclusion, *Chapter 8: Going Ashore* summarizes findings, addresses limitations of this research, identifies avenues for further work and discusses how this thesis challenges currently held views about the First Nations' role in British Columbia's history. Included here is a reflection on how this research addresses anthropological understanding of seemingly foreign utilitarian material culture items. The documentation of the uses of the dugout canoe is a way to bring together previously characterized disparate (hi)stories of European newcomers and First Nations peoples, uncovering aspects of the colonial enterprise in British Columbia long silenced by the vanishing of First Nations peoples from the history of British Columbia (Trouillot 1995:96).

## Chapter 2: Understanding the Waters: Anthropological Context

### 2.1.1 Introduction

Before embarking on a voyage, one must understand the waters: the tides, winds, strength of the swells and the pull of currents. Before embarking on this scholastic journey, the deep waters of colonial studies, anthropology, Indigenous studies and material culture studies need to be plumbed and I, as your pilot, need to outline who I am and where I come from as a researcher.

In addressing the questions that prompt this thesis, *Was the First Nations' dugout canoe essential to colonial development in British Columbia and if so were the First Nations acknowledged for this valuable contribution?* work needs to be done to analyze the theoretical angles present and implied in these questions. The results and context created by colonialism are lingering and pervasive, permeating popular culture and disciplinary practices (Cooper and Stoler 1997:17; Dirks 1997:211-212; Gosden 2004:30; Peyton and Hancock 2008:49; Said 1989:217; Stoler 2002:864; Wolf 2010:4). This chapter examines the colonial context, the colonial constructions of the Indigenous, or *other*, and the use of material culture to forward these constructs. My focus is on the dugout canoe as it was used as a utilitarian item and its potential theoretical importance to our understanding of colonization processes. To get at an understanding of the abstraction and praise given to the dugout canoe, but not to its First Nations progenitors, a critique is given of the “colonial imagination” (Erickson 2013:28).

### 2.1.2 Situating Self

Because “anthropological representations bear as much on the representer's world as on who or what is represented” (Said 1989:224), I begin by locating myself as a researcher (Kovach 2010:110). I am of European-settler heritage, but I was raised and home-schooled on a remote island on the west coast of Vancouver Island. My mum always used to say, “the land owns you, you don’t own the land.” This philosophy has shaped my personal connection to place, giving me a strong sense of belonging to Barkley Sound, as well as influencing my understanding of land rights. My island home was once the site of a bustling First Nations village, as evidenced by the shell middens, the glass trade beads found along the beaches and the giant culturally modified cedar trees in the forest behind. Today it is deemed an “ancient” archaeological site, but this characterization divorces the reality of how recently this land was taken from First Nations peoples.<sup>3</sup> Witnessing and living among the archaeological manifestations of the people whose home is now also part of my spirit, contributed to the development of my own complicated sense of place and has given me an avenue for understanding the Nuuchah-nulth teachings of *isaak* (respect) for all things — respect for myself, the people around me and nature (Atleo 2004:15). Respect is key to building a future in any discipline and it is an element I have endeavored to infuse in this thesis.

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<sup>3</sup> My island home is Tzartus Island, and it is located on the borders between Huu-ay-aht and Ts’ishaa7ath First Nations Territory. It is said that it was not the Huu-ay-aht or Ts’ishaa7ath people who lived at the village of Sha:howis (the name of the “vanished” village where I grew up), but a different tribe, the HIKO:ʔATH, who were ravaged by disease after contact forcing them to leave their home. Now this area is divided between Ts’ishaa7ath and Huu-ay-aht land claims (Arima et al. 1991:122-123).

I was drawn to this topic of highlighting First Nations contributions to the development of British Columbia, since I was raised to appreciate First Nations culture, art, work, life ways and humour and I grew up to realize and abhor the continuous modern day denigration and devaluation of these same people. This thesis is just one small attempt to express my love and thanks to the First Nations people I know, by exposing the contradictions of the past that have led to the present misconceptions and misrepresentations of First Nations peoples.

After my thesis is submitted, I intend to present my research to a First Nations audience, be they my extended family in Barkley Sound and Ucluelet, or the supportive people at the First Peoples House for feedback. Although this research primarily analyses the European relationship with the First Nations dugout canoe and how the colonists negotiated their dependence upon and relationship with the First Nations, it is important to be reflective on the relationship this research has with living First Nations people today, and one of the ways I intend to do this is to share my findings (Kovach 2010:110).

Klecko Klecko

## **2.2 Anthropological Approaches to the Colonial Context**

Colonialism, empire and the relational creation of colonized and colonizers are historical processes with long reaching and complicated pasts (Cooper and Stoler 1997:3; Gosden 2004:24; Said 1989:207). Colonization has often been considered in relation to its post-1492 forms and legacies (Silliman 2010:31), of European empires staking claims in foreign climes, subjugating, displacing and all too often destroying Indigenous populations to gain access to resources, and later, land to settle excess populations,

resulting in colonial expansion across the globe. Colonization, however, is a much more ancient process.

Gosden (2004:26) argues that there are three generalizable stages, or types, of colonialism in human history, with the potential for any given colonial project to shift in and out of any single stage or type (and therefore not progressing in a linear manner). These include: “colonialism within a shared cultural milieu” (2004:40), “middle ground” (2004:36), and “terra nullius” (2004:30). He argues that the first of these is the oldest method of colonialism. Here the dominating power is built out of economic material wealth, for example money, and these wealthier groups are able to become the dominate colonizers through shared cultural and economic values, or an accepted financial system, with their subordinates. This method does not mobilize a state's power against that of another, instead financial takeover by foreign individuals occurs. An example of this method of colonialism is seen in the movement of excess Greek populations in the eighth century B.C.E., moving from their homeland to “get rich,” by extending trading relations between the mother land and their new settlement (Gosden 2004:32). “Middle ground” colonization occurs when shared social and cultural values are created between newcomer and Indigenous groups where previously no such similarities existed, allowing trade and coexistence to develop. This process is seen in the historical context of the early fur trade, for example on the Pacific Coast that is typified by a mercantilist coexistence between First Nations and European traders (Barman 1996:152; Fisher 1992:36; Gough 1984:xiv; Harris 1997-1998:63; Mackie 1997:20; Tennant 1990:17). In “terra nullius” colonization, unlike the previous two types, the dominating power is “naked” (Gosden 2004:33) and no longer obscured through wealth and shared values. Here the values and



rights of the Indigenous are completely disregarded and undermined as the colonizing power seeks to take over their resources and lands using whatever method is necessary. This process can be seen historically in most post-Colombian colonization projects, including that which transpired in the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia—as settler colonization outweighed mercantile trade (Edmonds 2010a:12, 2010b:105; Fisher 1971:12; Lutz 2008:7-8; Perry 2001:14; Pratt 1992:10; Tennant 1990:39).

The colonial context, or “contact zone” (Pratt 1992:6), examined in this thesis includes the colony of Vancouver Island (established 1849) and the colony of British Columbia (established 1858, but later joined with the colony of Vancouver Island in 1866 to form the colony of British Columbia). British Columbia experienced at least two different types of colonization since first contact with Europeans occurred. Early decades of the nineteenth century saw a “middle ground” process in which the North Pacific's only European presence was through fur-traders whose methods were governed by the need for peaceful trade relations with First Nations groups (Barman 1996:152; Fisher 1992:36; Mackie 1997:20). This was followed much later, in 1849, by a stronger colonial presence, when First Nations' land became an issue, since settlers had been encouraged to farm and make their livelihood on First Nations' land (Barman 1996:152; Edmonds 2010a:15; Fisher 1971:12; Lutz 2008:44; Tennant 1990:39). This emphasis on colonial acquisition of land forced the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia into a policy of “terra nullius” colonization.

By labeling the land as “terra nullius,” meaning empty or void land, colonizers were able to erase, or at least obscure, the presence of the Indigenous populations and deny

First Nations' rights to their land. Early justifications of "terra nullius" is seen in the writings of the Enlightenment thinker, John Locke (Gosden 2004:27; Stocking 1987:13), who argued that unoccupied or inadequately used land was up for grabs by more "progressive" users, or, more specifically, European colonizers. Indigenous populations were considered to exist in a "state of nature," using the land only in the capacity of hunter-gatherers, even though many researchers have demonstrated this to be an uninformed, prescriptivist way of thinking, since Indigenous farmers and food providers were often integral to feeding these colonial projects (Deur and Turner 2005:338; Edmonds 2010b:91; Wenstob 2012:120), as well as providing labour (Lutz 2008:36; Knight 1978:15) and other necessary services to the colonizing populations. However, Gosden (2004:28) argues that Locke's ideas about agriculture and the development of this Western way of thinking were developed in the colonial context to emphasize progress, property rights, civil society and the colonial individual in juxtaposition to the Indigenous peoples in the various colonial settings. Likewise, Stocking (1987) demonstrates how ancient and essential the building of contrast is to the development of the notions of "civilization," as concepts of civility were often drawn in juxtaposition to the "barbarous," or "savage" (Stocking 1987:10). Similarly, ideas about "progress" in human development have deeper links to defining Christendom, and then later Europe, as a standard of "Western cultural identity" (Stocking 1987:11). These complex and conflicting terms of "civilization" and "progress" provide tools for an exclusionary practice, as by definition, they work to separate Western identities from those outside of Western identification. These ideologies were developed and worked out over time as a

reaction to the "others" (for example, the Indigenous peoples) encountered in the colonial context (Stoler 1989:137). As Cooper and Stoler observe,

The ambiguous lines that divided engagement from appropriation, deflection from denial, and desire from discipline not only confounded the colonial encounter, it positioned contestation over the very categories of ruler and ruled at the heart of colonial politics. (1997:6)

Here, Cooper and Stoler (1997) demonstrate how the process of colonization was in flux and at every step in contestation. The relationship between colonized and colonizer likewise experienced continual and complementary change (Cooper and Stoler 1997:7; Pratt 1992:6; Stahl 2014b:484). Conflicting ideas of “civilization” and “progress” were used in a purported universal way to justify damaging colonial processes. Long-standing hierarchical schema, such as “the Great Chain of Being,” were combined with Judeo-Christian ideologies, Hobbesian theories, and other social theorists to establish differing degrees of humanity and allow for the unequal treatment of people (Stocking 1987:11-16; Trouillot 1995:76). In her analysis of colonial travel writing from the mid-nineteenth century, Pratt (1992) identifies an iteration of this subjugating process as a method of representation that she terms the “anti-conquest,” which “refer to strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony” (1992:7). This is accomplished by the “seeing-man”—the male colonist who looks out upon foreign land and by “seeing” from a Euro-colonist perspective naturally possesses (Pratt 1992:7). Pratt (1992:202) outlines this process through her close analysis of Richard Burton’s account of his “discovery” of Lake Tanganyika. Burton’s description aestheticizes the scene and also laments its lack of civilized beauty—for example, the want of mosques and “civilized” architecture. As a

passive viewer, Burton claims the landscape through his sight and descriptions and also recommends the landscape's "improvement," thereby asserting his European right to judge (Pratt 1992:204-205).

### **2.3 The "Other"**

The relational process through which European colonizers constructed the identity of the colonized is also known as the process of *othering*. Here the *other*—those subjugated through this process (for example, the colonized, or the Indigenous)—are constructed and treated (by the colonizer) as an opposition to *self* (the subjugator), thereby allowing for the creation of distinct identities in direct divergence from the other (Edmonds 2010a:8; Erickson 2013:30; Fabian 1983:31; Dirks 1997:200; Hall 1996:287; Perry 2001:12; Said 1989:207; Stoler 1989:135; Trouillot 1995:96). Othering in the colonial context is often mediated through material culture, whereby the adoption of "stuff" (Miller 2010:50) may or may not influence the colonized or colonizer's identity (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997:217; Dietler 2010:220; Loren 2001:184; Thomas 2000:205; Stahl 2010:165). This facet of othering is considered in more depth in later sections, but it is important to bear in mind how heterogenous and fluctuating this process is and how materiality also can play an active part in this process. Othering, however, is not just a process encountered in the colonial context, where the colonist subjugates the colonized; it is seen throughout human history as a process where marginalized peoples are made the other, or become othered, in the face of a dominant society.

Fabian (1983) discusses the concept of the other, in relation to the way in which anthropology's subjects (often its others) were actively placed in a time outside of the discipline's own, in what he terms a "denial of the coevalness" of the other (1983:31). This placement of the subject of anthropology outside the realm of western time puts the other in the past, limiting the ability of the subject or informant to be contemporary and to have current influence. This denial of the coeval reduces the agency of the informant or the othered more generally, as well as that of the group of people he or she is informing the anthropologist about. By writing othered people in a separate time, anthropology served broader colonial and national projects in the subjugation of the people it studies. As Gosden (2004:30) claims, "the distance [formed through the process of othering] that made the study of Native American society possible and necessary was the final form of colonial usurpation, leading to cultural decline, although not destruction" (see also Dirks 1997:209). This temporalizing discourse, seen not only in anthropology, but other disciplines as well as more broadly in popular culture and the media, is detrimental to a group of people since it denies them an involvement or a voice in society, thwarting their ability to effect change or counter the dominant voice. In Canada, public discourses like this contributed to the denial of First Nations individuals the right to a Federal vote until 1960, the absence of First Nations peoples from most modern popular histories up until the 1990s, and the continued lack of acknowledgement of First Nations land rights, to name just a few effects of not recognizing the current existence of a group of people.

Said (1989:217) argues that, as anthropologists, we must acknowledge the echoes and very real effects of colonialism if we are to contribute meaningful work that benefits our

field and humankind more generally. This is required to counter socially conditioned cultural relativism and definitions derived from our indoctrination into colonialism, for example those of stadial theory (Edmonds 2010a:8) and scientific racism (Trouillot 1995:78). Said (1989:221) argues a similar point to Fabian (1983:30) in contending that anthropological method must change to be inclusive of the interlocutor's voice in conversation rather than a dominating narrative, thereby recognizing the coevalness of the other and the power dynamics that inhere in knowledge production. However, Said warns that “anthropological representations bear as much on the representer's world as on who or what is represented” (1989:224), meaning the viewpoints and histories of the anthropologist need to be made explicit to critically understand the material produced.

Fabian (1983) and Said's (1989) critiques have prompted positive disciplinary shifts and spurred much work to make a more inclusive discipline (Cooper and Stoler 1997; Edwards 1997; Gosden 2004; Loren 2001; Singleton 2001:1; Stahl 2014a:5; Stoler 1989, 2001; Wood 1990), as well as other disciplines such as history (Dirks et al. 1994; Edmonds 2010a, 2010b; Lutz 2008, Pratt 1992; Stocking 1987; Thomas 1991, 2000; Trouillot 1995), geography (Erickson 2013; Harris 2002, 2004; Perry 2001) and Indigenous studies (Frank 2000; Tennant 1990; Wickwire 2003, 2005). Although recent decades have seen some significant changes as disciplines have worked to undermine damaging structures in analysis and discourse, the negative machinations of temporalizing discourse and exclusive othering are processes that often still escape criticism in public dialogue.

In his discussion of the history of erasure of the Haitian revolution, Trouillot (1995:96) documents how histories that are “unthinkable” (1995:82), or do not fit with

the dominant narratives of the time, are often not recorded and are in a sense “erased,” especially in the written record. Cooper and Stoler (1997:2) similarly point out the irony that the Haitian revolution was the first instance of democratic freedom and liberation for both slaves and marginalized peoples, but Haiti's achievements were never recognized by later French supporters of the Declaration of Rights of Man, or by British and American abolitionists because Haiti did not fit their stereotypes of the dominant European assisting the meek African. Concerns that African and Creole revolutionaries might not adopt European civilization threatened the European bourgeois ideas about the universal class of civilized Europeans, further prompting this “disappearance” of the Haitian liberal landmark.

Thus histories of others whose actions do not fit with prescribed stereotypes are often re-written or obscured (Cooper and Stoler 1997:2; Gosden 2004:27; Trouillot 1995:82). Apropos to this thesis, the First Nations dugout canoe, which served as an important method of transport in the colonial days of the British colonies of the North Pacific coast, does not fit the prescribed stereotypes seen in descriptions of First Nations labourers as “generally in a degraded state, [and] valueless in the labor market” (Harvey 1867:9; see also Lutz 2008:36-37).

It is important to underline that these identities—whether other, colonized, Indigenous, European or colonizer — are neither monolithic nor homogenous, but rather diverse and dependent on geographical, situational, and chronological context. Agents and the categories through which they are apprehended were mutable, not static building blocks for an argument (Cooper and Stoler 1997:7). In her examination of North Sumatra European settlements and the fluid creation of the colonial identity in juxtaposition to the

Indigenous and mixed-race workers, Stoler (1989) encourages a shift in the anthropological gaze away from the colonized to the colonizers. In this particular colonial context of Northern Sumatra, Stoler (1989:136-137) found the colonial identity and colonial projects more generally were in flux and often differed from expectations articulated in metropolitan policy (see also Edmonds 2010b:16; Loren 2001:175; Perry 2001:14; Pratt 1992:10; Stahl 2010:165; Steiner 1985:100; Stoler 1989:136, 2002:847; Thomas 1991:10; Trouillot 1995:96).

Stoler (1989:138) argues that the racism that developed out of colonial agendas is also fluid and divergent as is the colonial process. For example, in Northern Sumatra the onset of immigration of European women from the mother country corresponded with a restructuring of plantation society, as now European workers were expected to provide for their families in a way that did not create a proletariat “white poor” (Stoler 1989:150). This restructuring of pay increased the wealth gap among the richer European workers, Indigenous Javanese workers and Chinese “coolies” (Stoler 1989:142). This financial restructuring combined with the added presence of European women, both heightened racial-financial tensions as the wealth gap between these groups increased and also caused racial-sexual boundaries to become more clearly delineated by European men in an attempt to separate European women from the threat of Indigenous Javanese and Chinese “corruption” (Stoler 1989:146; see also Perry 2001:14). Stoler’s (1989:138) indication of the reactive construction of the colonizer and the colonized is a productive study area since it explores the dynamics of power that work to marginalize a group of people, as well as give clues to the complicated politics of identity and the processes of identification. This thesis takes inspiration from Stoler’s work (1989) as it traces the



changing constructs of the other, or more specifically of the First Nations, through changing representations of themselves and their material culture (the dugout canoe), by the colonial settler population in British Columbia.

## **2.4 Material Culture Approaches**

Historical archaeology and material culture studies offer a powerful way to uncover vanished peoples and erased histories. Material culture is a general term that refers to the physical presence of a culture or the materiality of a cultural process. Before material culture can be adequately defined, first the definition of *culture* must be queried, along with a discussion of why *cultural process* is perhaps a more accurate term. Concepts of culture are difficult to pin down, as any fixed, “thing-like” definition has the tendency to freeze it and the people who embody it in a stasis. This results in a homogenizing of cultures and peoples and denial of change, much like the temporalizing discourse of others (Fabian 1983:31) discussed above. For a productive study that acknowledges the development, interactions and changes of practices of people, culture must be considered in terms of process. Culture is an interactive process that changes through time and is mostly distinct to a group of people.

Material culture can include such physical *things* as artifacts, buildings, features and so on. Historical archaeology and anthropology have used material culture in conjunction with the written record to aide in Trouillot's exposure of “histories of erasure” (1995:96) to reveal histories elided by standard historiography (Silliman 2010:29; Stahl 2010:153). By demonstrating material connections between disparate groups, material culture histories can break historical barriers (Stahl 2010:150). By analyzing the ways in which

Indigenous material culture was used by European colonizers, silences and exclusions of the activity of the colonized others (Trouillot 1995:26; Stahl 2001:2) in documentary sources may be gleaned. However, these material gleanings also carry their own methodological silences and exclusions that are created through subjective production—through what is observed, recorded, and collected (Stahl 2001:27; Wood 1990:83). As such, I outline how approaches to material culture offer productive ways to understand the dugout canoe, both theoretically and analytically, at the same time as I use the dugout canoe as a lens to analyze and explore constraints of the available historical and visual sources. Specifically, the dugout canoe is used to indicate a First Nations' presence (Edwards 1997:59) where First Nations individuals' contributions are usually silenced in written accounts.

Despite the value of material sources, Silliman (2010:30) argues that the study of material culture is not so straightforward as to allow for a group of objects, or an assemblage (Joyce and Pollard 2010:292; also DeLanda 2006:10), to indicate only one group of people or a specific culture. Material culture is often gifted, traded, bought and sold across cultural boundaries, becoming part of the culture-making processes of other groups, different from those from which it originated. In addition, cultural boundaries are often not clearly delineated as they too are ongoing projects in which people engage—in part through materiality. Silliman (2010:33) illustrates the complexity of cultural boundaries in his archaeological research of Indigenous labourers living and working in European colonial households. Here, artifacts typically identified as European would have been associated with Indigenous labourers, even though the Indigenous presence may not be obvious given both the obscuring written record and the misleading material

evidence (Silliman 2010:33). DeLanda (2006:12) also contends that assemblages are complicated collections of goods that are made up of dimensions that can be interpreted in a number of ways and may be used to indicate, or challenge, identity. This theoretical grappling with identity is useful to this thesis' work since it helps in the understanding of how 'stuff' (Miller 2010:50), or material culture, can be used to influence, construct and codify identity, and thus brings to view participants and their processes of identification. In the context of this thesis, this approach provides an avenue for thinking through why the representation of the dugout canoe was easily separated from its First Nations manufacturers by European record keepers.

Thomas (2000:213) argues that researchers need to move beyond a conceptualization of categories of identity, where objects are used to affirm identity, since "[t]hings do not necessarily stand for cultures." Thomas' discussion moves beyond Silliman's (2010:33) caution that things may not reveal the truth about those with whom they are associated. Instead, Thomas (2000:213) argues more fully against the notion of definable identity, as well as pointing out the difficulties of ascribing such a Eurocentric definition to a non-Western group of people. Thomas' critique of the notion of identity and the identification process itself (2000) separates his work from that of Silliman (2010).

Thomas' (2000:213) considerations of identity are similar in many respects to Ingold's (2000) metaphorical arguments against the limiting Cartesian characterization of a divide between material and culture, where materiality is simply seen as culture physically impressed upon the world. Ingold advocates a relational approach to material culture and its manufacturer. For Ingold making is a relational process made up of many constituents including cultural practice, the individual and materiality. As such, he calls into question

the divisions between raw material, maker and finished product. All these steps are amalgamated and make up a relational whole (Ingold 2000:63), harkening to Thomas' critique of the constrictive categories of identity and identification through things (Thomas 2000:213). By breaking down the separations between “things” and people, constructions of identity may also be broken down, bringing to view how processes of identification are “entangled” with things (Thomas 1991:8; Stahl 2002:835, 2010:152). Likewise in this thesis, the dugout canoe encompasses the First Nations manufacturer, canoeist and the European user, as well as its own material self as a method of transport, as the dugout canoe. This line of analysis is helpful to develop the fluidity of identity and identification as it works with and through material culture.

This holistic approach carries many of the same themes as the debate about the nature of culture—is it a mental template impressed upon the world? Or is it a changing relational process, altering with influences, actors and through time? Ingold (2000:62) carries this discussion through a metaphor of weaving and the surface encountered through this process. To construct a basket, the weaver take strips of material with both an inner and outer surface and weaves them back and forth, exposing them to the outside of the shape and the inner side (2000:54). The weaver acts upon both sides and the materials in turn act upon the weaver. In this way they are inseparable—as is material culture deeply implicated in the practices of culture-making.

From here it is productive to briefly outline the discussions in material culture studies surrounding the agency of material culture, so as to address the possible active relationship between things and people. Jones and Boivin (2010:334) describe this debate as an attempt to challenge and reframe the dichotomy between “subject” and “object”

(see also Knappett's [2011:45] consideration of “things” versus “objects”), as a relational process between humans and things/objects. Jones and Boivin (2010:340) do not argue that “things” inhabit a reworked “person-like” slot usually taken by the human (or subject); instead, they argue that material culture, humans and the environment exist in a complicated, fluid, entangled relationship.

Researchers have described this entangled relationship variously as a network with nodes (Latour's Actor-Network Theory, or ANT [1996:2, 2007:44]), a meshwork with threads of interaction overlapping and changing (Ingold's SPIDER [2007:12, 2008:209]), as well as a redefined process of *chaîne opératoire* (Knappett 2011:48). Metaphors of interaction abound, but the epistemological and ontological shift seen through these arguments (Jones and Boivin 2010:343) offer a different way to think through material culture. Symmetry of participation is often key to these theories, where each node and/or thread of connection equally serves to build these relationships, networks or meshworks. This lends power and agency to each participant in these relationships, where participants can be a person, place or thing. However, symmetry tends to obscure power differentials, which has resulted in the reframing of these connections between people and things as complicated and “heterogenous” (Jones and Boivin 2010:341). These approaches offer interesting avenues for “following the material” (Knappett 2011:46) and allowing for the agency and power (Latour 2007:64) of material culture in human relationships. These arguments, like Thomas' (2000:213) observations about taking for granted Western ideologies, offer new perspectives on how people of the past (for example, European colonists) may have interacted with material culture (for example, the dugout canoe). For this thesis, network theory could reveal a different perspective on the past by revealing

the agency of the First Nations canoe manufacturers, canoeists and the dugout canoe in colonial contexts of interaction on the Pacific Northwest coast.

This “following of the material,” harkens to earlier work by Kopytoff (1986) tracing object biographies. By studying the individual objects’ economic journey through the process of valuation between “commodity” and “non-commodity,” Kopytoff (1986:65-67) reveals contradictions of morality when inalienable objects become commodities as they are valued and sold (for example, the sale of a priceless Renoir painting) and when alienable objects become inalienable non-commodities (for example, ritualized paraphernalia such as the British crown jewels; 1986:74). By closely following the journey of material culture, the works of Kopytoff (1986) and others (Appadurai 1986; Miller 2010), have shifted material culture studies back towards the level of the “particular,” which emphasizes the individual object and its path (Hicks and Beaudry 2010:15-16).

Hicks and Beaudry (2010:16) argue that this move to studying the particular, instead of creating limits to research, provides strength in the richness in detail of understanding by situating research within a specific context and process. By revealing nuanced patterns that are echoed in global research, this method of analysis as used in this thesis examines the particular—the First Nations dugout canoe—in a situated place, to contribute to a greater understanding of broader colonial processes. Focusing on the dugout canoe allows for the development of an understanding of the processes of changing constructions of representations (Trouillot 1995:83; Stoler 1989:135) of European use of the First Nations dugout canoe, as the particular context of British Columbia shifted from a “middle ground” to a form of “terra nullius” colonization (Gosden 2004:30).

This analysis, although highly contextualized and particularized, is relevant to similar global colonial processes and contributes to research into how colonizers used and represented Indigenous material culture. By using the particular material culture of the dugout canoe as a lens to view the perceptions of First Nations' technology and labour by Europeans, this study demonstrates the contradiction of morality and logics of discrimination that served to build the other out of the First Nations participants in these active, working relationships with Europeans. Instances of European use of the dugout canoe are in themselves "material moments" (Stahl 2010:152), where material objects have the ability to collapse space and time creating a bodily engagement between the past and present, thereby anchoring First Nations labourers and European passengers together in the canoe. Although in this case, the dugout canoe may not collapse the present into the past, it does serve to break down the denial of the coeval as warned of by Fabian (1983:31; Edwards 1997:59), yielding a physical indication of both First Nations individuals at work and Europeans using and likely depending upon their labour-actions which are obscured, twisted or actively ignored in contemporary European written sources of the time (Lutz 2008:36).

To avoid issues concerning meaning and potential pitfalls of "identity," this thesis traces *practices* recorded in historical written and visual sources, rather than asking unanswerable questions about what these things and happenings meant in the past. This method borrows from Stahl's (2002) approach which trains analytical attention on past practices as discerned from historical archaeological sources. By establishing what Stahl, quoting Hebdige, characterizes as "cartographies of taste" (Stahl 2002:835), patterns of production, consumption, choice and demand can be tracked. This can be useful, not only

to understand what happened in a particular place, but to provide a basis for comparison to other such “cartographies,” and thus yield insights into commonalities in colonial projects. Stahl (2002:832-834) uses “taste” as a lens to understand material choices made in contexts of newly introduced European goods to Indigenous people. In this thesis the focus is on the colonizer, and more specifically on the “taste” Europeans developed for the First Nations dugout canoe, rather than the First Nations or Indigenous taste for European goods. Although seemingly, this research appears to be more a “cartography of practice and representation,” rather than of taste, I would contend that this thesis’ research is still concerned with the tastes Europeans had for dugout canoes—as expressed through their practice of use and representation.

Stahl's (2002) approach takes direction from Thomas' (1991) *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*. By using the term “entangled” in his title, Thomas (1991:5) argues for a positioning of Europeans and Indigenous peoples as each significant, active contributors in colonial interactions and discourses. This is similar to Pratt’s considerations of “contact zones,” as a replacement term for the “colonial frontier,” since this perspective considers this context “not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understanding and practices often within radically asymmetrical relations of power” (Pratt 1992:7). Thomas’ (1991:8) methodology provides inspiration for this thesis. He temporally compares descriptions of Fijian material culture written by Europeans—beginning with first contact, then explorers, missionaries, planters, ethnologists, British government administration and pioneers. Each of these agents of colonialism had different agendas and purposes and Thomas analyzes how their descriptions carried and



participated in the development of these political trends in taste. These descriptions of Indigenous material culture and the goods that were collected and selectively displayed by Europeans were extremely powerful, creating politicized representations of Indigenous peoples and lifeways, often in an unfavourable light. Like Thomas, I analyze the historical documents left by newcomers of various kinds (traders, settlers, administrators, etc.) to follow trends in their descriptions of the dugout canoe. In addition, this thesis demonstrates implications of their descriptions seen in written policy of the time, directing inquiries as to how influential these descriptions were at the time and perhaps still felt now.

By tracing the changing tastes (Stahl 2002:835) of Europeans for canoe travel and use in the colonial context of British Columbia, this research approaches the study of identification as a process (Stoler 1989) and works to avoid the tendency to essentialize identity through things (see Thomas 2000:213; also Ingold 2000:62). To get at this process of identification through things and to understand the potential role of the Northwest coast dugout canoe in this colonial context, a thorough understanding of how material culture acts or is perceived to act upon identity and identifying is useful. Perceived identity and representation are important concepts to recognize in the colonial setting, since much work done by European newcomers to subjugate and steal land from First Nations peoples was arranged through written and visual representations. Issues of representation will be more fully covered in the next chapter as part of source criticism (Chapter 3). I turn now to how processes of othering are constructed through “things.”

## 2.5 Othering through “Things”

Material culture is often thought of as identified with the people who manufactured it and as an entity that encodes culture and people, but many researchers have shown this notion to be far more complicated (see Thomas 1999:10, 2000:213), especially in the colonial context, where political decisions about what identity “meant” (Stahl 2002:828) and the role of materiality in its production were rampant and powerful. Clothing played a major role in processes of colonization (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997; Hansen 2004; Loren 2001; Steiner 1985; Thomas 1991, 1999, 2000). Clothing was often seen to act upon the civility of the colonial subject, as in such examples where dichotomies between clothed and unclothed developed, and missionaries and colonial officials often endeavoured to clothe the colonized (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997:8). Although these studies focused on a very different colonial and geographical context, their focus on how material culture is used to work at identity and transform subjects in colonial contexts is useful to this thesis’ examination of how Europeans relied on the First Nations’ dugout canoe at the same time as they denigrated the civility and capacity of those who made and piloted the canoes. In these situations, attention is often brought to the methods by which the colonized reinterpret and negotiate this introduced material culture, often incorporating and hybridizing it into pre-existing cultural practices, thereby creating multivariate meanings of this material culture.

By examining the introduction of Christianity and missionaries’ attempts at conversion through cloth in the Pacific, Thomas (2000) offers considerations of identity construction through things. On the surface this new cloth medium quickly replaced traditional barkcloth, but, according to Thomas (2000:213), traditional Polynesian

practices and crafts adapted in an original way to work with this new cloth. This resulted in a change in technology, not practice. To Christian missionaries cloth encoded conversion and civility, which promoted their encouragement of its adoption by Polynesians. To the Polynesians, however, Thomas (2000:209) argues that cloth most likely had a very different and difficult to read message of conversion, where cotton cloth likely adapted into the traditional role of tapa cloth and played upon the Polynesian ideas of empowerment through the use of European goods. The European adoption of the dugout canoe likewise empowered the adopter as it provided a vital method of transport that allowed for colonial development. Conversely, however, this thesis examines the European use of Indigenous material culture for a utilitarian purpose, instead of the Indigenous use of European material culture for a utilitarian purpose.

Other historical anthropological studies have examined the power of clothing practices in colonial settings in a variety of work areas. As Jean and John Comaroff's work (1997) on missionization in South Africa shows, converted individuals were often aware of the power of civility in cloth, and some Indigenous people manipulated the political symbolism, wearing European clothes in certain contexts and changing to Indigenous garb to fit better in others, as well as practicing "synthetic, syncretic style" (1997:241) by combining Indigenous and European styles (see also Cohn 1996:111). Loren (2001:184) discusses how Europeans and Indigenous peoples were able to create advantageous political identities through the adoption of foreign clothing that aided in the interactions between one another. In her study of dressing in the early colonial Mississippi Valley (late seventeenth to early eighteenth century), Loren documents selective Indigenous use of European clothing and European adoption of Indigenous practices, resulting in a

complex mixing of the two fashions (2001:181-185). Here, Loren (2001:173) harkens to Bourdieu (2010), arguing the active use of clothing was a way to ease the tensions of the coming together of two doxas, navigating heterodoxy and the struggle by colonial officials and Indigenous nations alike to maintain their respective forms of orthodoxy in this colonial context. Common ground, or Gosden's "middle-ground" (2004:31), was opened up for trade and interactions by this use of dress by European and Indigenous traders alike to adapt to differing situations, for example, individuals wearing European garb to appeal to colonial officials and Indigenous clothing to facilitate trade (Loren 2001:184-185).

Unlike Loren's analysis of the co-option of the fairly utilitarian material culture of clothing, Thomas (1991:174) focuses on the use of sacred Indigenous Fijian items of material culture by British colonists in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century to establish and legitimize colonial power. Along with the ruling British colonists, missionaries also sought to destroy Indigenous "idols" in a symbolic and physical act of conversion of Indigenous people. Collectors created their "scientific" role as the gatherers of material culture through Indigenous Fijian material culture (Thomas 1991:144), displaying these cultures to the world stage at distant museums and exhibits, often in an advertising bid for the new colony (Thomas 1991:151). In these ways, sacred material culture was removed from its context of creation and put to work as a tool and symbol of power, creating identities for the British colonizers that legitimized their claims.

According to Dietler (2010), consumption—that is, the practice of adopting and using goods or items—has the power to produce cultural or social identity as well as to challenge it (in addition to simply ignoring preconceived identities). Dietler gives the

example of the differences between the consumptive practices of Coca-Cola between Africa and America. He sees the African adoption of Coca-Cola not as an “Americanization of Africa,” but as an “Africanization of America” (2010:220). This active and politically dangerous process of adoption and the resulting consumption is similar to Thomas’ chapter (2000; Dietler 2010:222) on the colonial introduction of cloth to the South Pacific in an attempt to control and influence Indigenous people by “making subjects by means of objects” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997:218). As Dietler's (2010:220) case shows, however, the use of material culture to create identity is not guaranteed to play out in the way one would expect. As in the cases summarized here, instead of becoming Western, material culture adds to the localized identity, often even strengthening it.

This can, however, go both ways, the Western identity may also be shaped by foreign goods too—as is seen in Loren's (2001) research and to an extent in Steiner's (1985) case study of the relationship between British cloth manufacturers and African colonized consumers. Steiner (1985:94) demonstrates the agency of African consumers and their connections to the metropole through consumption. Steiner shows how African taste and consumption directly informed cloth manufacture in England, revealing a group of Europeans who cared greatly what tastes were present in the colonies (1985:98). In this case, cloth manufacturers in Britain began to create and reflect fashions favoured in Africa, or risk losing profit (1985:94), demonstrating an appreciation by Europeans of African textile taste and sensibilities (1985:106). These observations are pertinent as this thesis examines how the adoption and use of foreign material culture (the dugout canoe)

could have the power to influence the political identities of individuals, specifically that of the colonial Europeans.

While much of our understanding of the power of objects in social life was inspired by the study of sacred and inalienable material culture (Mauss 2000; Weiner 1985), research that examines the utilitarian and ubiquitous (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997; Dietler 2010; Loren 2001) shows that utilitarian material culture is also telling. Miller (2010:50) argues that the “humility of things,” the way in which material culture serves as a framework for action, or the way material culture blends into the background, is key to their power to shape human practice. By creating a “second-nature,” Miller (2010:53) contends that material culture encodes unconscious and conscious social cues as to how to behave appropriately. A focus on these everyday, “small things forgotten” (Deetz 1996:5) offers a telling platform from which to study. This thesis attempts to get at how these objects of material culture (the dugout canoe) become obscured, relegated to the background, and their First Nations’ manufacturers “vanished” in the colonial context of British Columbia.

However, the “blindingly obvious,” as Miller (2010:53) calls questions concerning everyday “things,” is often not considered when it comes to European appropriation of Indigenous everyday technologies in colonial settings. Although there are numerous examples of research outlining how the colonized adopted the colonizer's material culture, both sacred and mundane, and there are plenty of examples of researchers examining the colonizer’s adoption of the colonized’ sacred material culture as away to gain power and manipulation (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997:219; Mauss 2000:65; Thomas 1991:132-133; Weiner 1985:210), there is little research that has focused on colonial adoption of the colonized's mundane material culture. Fashion studies (eg.

Hansen 2004:373; Loren 2001:175; Maskiell 2002:29) and recent agricultural and subsistence studies (eg. Carney and Rosomoff 2009:5; Mintz 1986:xvii) offer an exception to this as non-European cloth, styles and food ways are seen to influence European practices. Research that looks at well known, accepted European adoption of Indigenous technologies, such as the North American fur-traders adoption of snowshoes and moccasins and in India the British adoption of the pajama and architectural element of the veranda, have, however (as far as my research can tell), escaped scholarly scrutiny. Arguably even in Loren's work (2001), dress can be interpreted as both material culture used for a utilitarian purpose and as another symbolic tool that acts or can be used as a technique of power (by both Indigenous and European people alike).

That is not to say the First Nations dugout canoe did not have a complicated identity, as the dugout canoe was (and is) considered a type of sacred material culture to First Nations peoples, and definitely in its use by Europeans, the dugout canoe moved in and out of being simply a utilitarian mode of transport to often serving a symbolic purpose as it was adapted for political purpose. But our anthropological understanding of the European/colonist's adoption of the Indigenous/colonized's material culture for a utilitarian practice is limited. This lack of research is surprising considering the agency and power researchers have already begun to recognize in colonial subjects (Steiner 1985:100; Thomas 1991:10, 2000:209; Trouillot 1995:96) and the way in which identity and behaviour of both the colonized and the colonizer informed and mirrored one another (Bracken 1997:11; Dirks 1997:200; Edmonds 2010b:16; Loren 2001:175; Perry 2001:14; Stahl 2010:165; Stoler 1989:136 and 2002:847).

## 2.6 The “Colonial Imagination”

Tracing European use of the canoe illustrates the colonial practices that preceded, validated, and promoted the production of European nationhood on native soil. Three centuries after Columbus’s first voyage, the canoe was still purveying North America to Europeans through the physical acts of exploration and settlement. With its use by fur traders, missionaries, and surveyors, the canoe was written materially and semiotically into the landscape of what would become Canada. (Erickson 2013:11)

Erickson's recent work, *Canoe Nation* (2013), offers a counterpoint to this thesis.

Unlike this thesis which focuses on the dugout canoe in the specific context of colonial British Columbia, Erickson (2013:2) explores an abstraction of the canoe (which includes all types of canoes made and in use by Indigenous peoples in Canada, including the dugout cedar canoe, as well as others such as the birchbark canoe and the cedar canvas covered canoe), as a symbolic tool in nation-making in Canada. This tool has been used both physically and symbolically over time, with many changes seen, as it was exploited in relation to the differing agendas of explorers, missionaries, colonists, and national leaders.

In early days, Erickson contends (2013:6) explorers used the canoe as a “fetish of colonial justification,” “a marker of primitive life” and a “symbol of primitive life.” This “myth of the canoe” became divorced of its Indigenous progenitors as it was used by the nation to tell the story of the country’s origins, full of pioneer spirit and man against the empty environment. Ironically, the Indigenous canoe—central to Indigenous lifeways—was perverted to forward the narrative of the dominant nation (Erickson 2013:12), while the accomplishments and history of First Nations people were and are continuously denied.

Erickson's goal through this work is to interrogate the “colonial imagination,” the process that creates these narratives of nation that work to exclude and silence key



players in history. This colonial imagination is an expression of self-representation and it is often done in juxtaposition to others (Erickson 2013:28), operating in a very similar way to the processes described by Edmonds (2010b:16), Hall (1996:287), Perry (2001:14), Pratt (1992:6), Stahl (2010:165), Stoler (1989:136, 2002:847), Thomas (1991:10) and Trouillot (1995:96).

This thesis examines the colonial imagination in its development in the colonial context of British Columbia, and like Erickson (2013), the dugout canoe is used as a lens to understand these changing processes. However, this thesis is grounded more in the study of material culture and the importance of context. Whereas Erickson's work (2013) is a more generalized study of Canadian history and all canoe types, this thesis is tied to the particular material culture of the cedar dugout canoe and to the specific context from just before 1849, when the colonial presence was beginning to be felt on the Pacific Northwest coast, to the colonists' heyday of 1871, when the colony of British Columbia joined Confederation to become part of Canada (specifically, to follow data trends, analysis is from 1843 to 1946). This emphasis upon context and the particular (Hicks and Beaudry 2010:16), lends strength to this research since it allows for a deeper understanding of colonial history on the coast and the anthropological understanding of the use of exotic utilitarian material culture through the close tracing and correlations between practice or taste (Stahl 2002:832-834) and representation (Thomas 1991:174; Pratt 1992:6) of dugout canoe use.

## 2.7 Thesis Questions

The questions posed in this thesis build on these literatures to explore the dugout canoe as a site of tension in colonial interactions. I ask:

*Was the First Nations' dugout canoe essential to the colonial development in British Columbia and, if so, were the First Nations acknowledged for this valuable contribution?*

My specific focus is on the dugout canoe, a technology<sup>4</sup> unique to the Pacific Northwest coast. Under the umbrella of *dugout canoe* found along the Pacific Northwest coast are several variants, each valued for its particular characteristics and uses (for example, sealing canoes, open water canoes, flat bottomed canoes, etc.) as well as different styles or designs associated with different First Nations groupings along the coast (for example, Nuu-chah-nulth, Coast Salish, Tsimshian, etc.; see Appendix A, Map 1 and Table 6). This technology provided an integral service to the colonists, without which much of the colonists' work would have been hampered, slowed, or perhaps not have happened at all. A more thorough outline of these uses of the dugout canoe appears in later chapters (Chapters 4-7), but what is important to understand here is how essential this was to effective colonization.

The European dependence upon the First Nations' dugout canoe likely threatened and challenged European constructions of the othered stereotype of First Nations peoples' (Edmonds 2010b:16; Perry 2001:14; Pratt 1992:6; Stoler 1989:136 and 2002:847; Trouillot 1995:96). Research has shown that the colonist's identity does not seem to be

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<sup>4</sup> I refer to the dugout canoe as a 'technology,' with no reference to technology studies, but as simply an item of material culture produced with considerable skill and design for "the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes" (New Oxford American Dictionary, Apple Inc. [version 2.2.1], 2005-2011).

threatened by material culture of the colonized peoples (cf. Loren 2001:184-185), especially when it was an item of sacred importance to those they were colonizing (as discussed above referring to Thomas 1991:174). Yet often colonizers and missionaries were very conscious of the Indigenous colonized and converts taking up European goods, often seeing this as metaphor of civility or a coding of betterment (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997:219). Certainly, the colonists' identity was often perceived as threatened by the colonial context (for example, the fears around “going native”), but the adoption of exotic, Indigenous goods did not seem to be as detrimental to European civilized identity as was the process of the adoption of the European metropole’s material culture to the perceived Indigenous identity. However, as mentioned above, researchers have shown that the perceptions of missionaries and colonists were often wrong in consideration of the colonized's “civility” and agency, as Thomas (2000:205) remarks “we do not know what was received, simply because we know what was being offered.” By tracing differences in taste (Stahl 2002:832-834) and descriptions (Thomas 1991:174; and Pratt 1992:6) of the dugout canoe by Europeans and their visual representations (Savard 2010:8; and A.Thomas 1981-1982:63) of canoe use (photographs and illustrations), along with a tracking of the same European descriptions (or lack of descriptions) of First Nations peoples, disparities and conflicting entanglements (Stahl 2002:832-834 and 2010:152; Thomas 1991:174) between Europeans and First Nations labourers and their material culture will be demonstrated. Understanding this process of separating material culture from its originators is telling of the colonial process that is often characterized by the separation and alienation of Indigenous peoples from their land and life ways

(Gosden 2004:28). As well this research reveals one example in which Europeans adopt essential utilitarian items.

## Chapter 3: Paddling the Canoe: Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

To find examples of European use of the dugout canoe, both with and without First Nations crews, I examined European written and visual sources from 1843 until the early 1900s, including traveller's accounts, diaries, memoirs, letters, government documents, drawings, paintings and photographs, following a similar ethnohistorical method as used by Thomas (1991). Lutz (2008:16-17) and Wickwire (2005:471) contend that more research needs to be done that incorporates the rich and too often ignored oral history of the First Nations people of British Columbia and other First Nations generated sources. As my research centres on European representation of dugout canoe use and First Nations peoples, I used only European-generated sources. By focusing analysis on European sources, this research shifts the anthropological gaze to problematize colonial history with its "trivialization" (Trouillot 1995:82) of First Nations participation in the development of British Columbia and to question the European colonist's role in this historicizing process (Cooper and Stoler 1997:4; Stoler 1989:136-137).

Besides summarizing the visual and written data and the variables to be considered, which encapsulate the questions needed to be drawn out through this analysis, a nuanced examination of representation is necessary to frame this methodology. Since considerations of source criticism and methodological understandings of representation are key to understanding creation of the written and visual sources drawn on in this research, an outline of anthropological theoretical knowledge of representation begins

this chapter. This will be followed by a brief outline of the data sources and selection process used by this research as well as a consideration of the variables confronted by the research questions asked and the data available.

### **3.2 Representation**

Representation is a key variable to be considered when examining European constructions of dugout canoe use and First Nations peoples through both the visual and written sources. Primarily, representation explores the expression of the dynamic between the representer, the subject (which could possibly be self, in the case of self-representation), the audience and the influence of social, cultural, political and economic context on all of these. Context encompasses and influences the work produced by the representer and, to a degree, the tastes of the representer's audience. That is not to say that context is an overarching thing that is impressed on actors; it too is continually in flux as it is influenced and formed by the actions of representers and the audience. In the case of this historical research, there is temporal distance between the social, cultural, political and often economic context of the original audience for whom the image or written piece was produced and the audience consuming the work today. This results in what researchers usually term "bias" in the representer's work (and technically the contemporary critique), but this difference in contextual framing is simply a reflection of the perceived "common knowledge" held by the representer and the audience (Cooper and Stoler 1997:1; Pratt 1992:9).

In their analysis of the making of bourgeois colonial cultures, Cooper and Stoler (1997:1) argue that late nineteenth-century colonial projects were bound up in popular

notions of “universal principles as the basis for organizing a polity.” These principles elided the diversity of colonial projects on the ground and the disparities between metropolitan policies and intentions, and the on-the-ground practices and daily situations in the colony (Cooper and Stoler 1997:3). The colonist in this situation was often torn between expectations from metropolitan discourse and the daily realities of living in the colony, articulating and working out self-representations and practices that took from both. Researchers also point to how colonial period representations were shaped by the growing persuasiveness of romantic ideas of the “primitive” (Brettell 1986:131) wrapped in natural history’s “science” as a “structure of knowledge” (Pratt 1992:9). Shifts in colonial projects to include territorial expansion that created settler populations in colonies resulted in changing representations of the original inhabitants of these annexed lands (Cooper and Stoler 1997:4; Edmonds 2010b:16; Hall 1996:287; Perry 2001:14; Pratt 1992:10; Stahl 2010:165; Stoler 1989:136, 2002:847; Thomas 1991:10; Trouillot 1995:96).

In these ways, context is a major factor in the negotiation and construction of perceptions of self and other and—particularly important in reference to this study—the colonized other. Social and political pressures and “common knowledge” govern what, and who, representers expected to see in the colonial context. In her comparative analysis of travel writing, ethnography and ethnohistory, Brettell (1986:131) contends that travel writers, faced with a *what* or *who* that did not fit their expectations, were apt to proclaim moral indignation and “disgust” in their writings. Conversely, ethnographers confronted by a subject who did not conform, tended to omit reference to that which did not fit

stereotypes, resulting in “silences” (Trouillot 1995:82), particularly in writings about shifting Indigenous practice that challenged the ethnographer's concept of the *traditional*.

The representer, producing images or written works, reflects both the context from which she or he works and their desired audience (Said 1989:244). However, personality and individualization come into play here too, since writers and artists are influenced but are not slaves to their social, cultural, political and economic backgrounds. As such, they negotiate their circumstances. Here I treat audience as separate from the socio-cultural context because it governs (to an extent) stylistic choices and tailoring of medium. For example the explorer and fur trader William Downie in an 1869 letter to the Governor of the Vancouver Island colony, James Douglas, described his travels and the people he met in terms of the resources these potentially could offer to the colony. In contrast Martha Cheney's 1853-1856 diary described day-to-day happenings with little obvious editorial appeal for a particular audience, since she was writing for herself. In short, what is said is crafted in terms of who is presumed to be listening (Brettell 1986:134).

Representation may be of people separate from the representer. It may be an overt portrayal of self (most obviously, in self-representation). Either way, however, self-representation is an element of all forms of representation, since it is the writer, artist or photographer using her or his skills and knowledge to represent the subject. As Said (1989:224) warns in his critique of anthropological representations of the interlocutor, representations are fundamentally grounded in the anthropologist's worldviews, which shape what or who is included, and how these thing(s) or person(s) are represented.

This is also true in the highly subjective process of image making. For example, the composition, the editing, the placements of boundaries all give the viewer a greater sense



of the concerns of the artist rather than the subject, potentially revealing much about the artist's culture, context and the way in which the artist perceived the subject (Edwards 1997:54). This may in turn limit the agency of the subject, closing off the subject's perspective since they are now in the hands of the representer. However, subjects often found ways to subvert the representer's intentions (Pinney 2008:S36-S38), as many colonial subjects became practicing photographers. For example, in British Columbia, many First Nations peoples commissioned portraits and engaged with the process of photography, historically, often becoming photographers themselves (Blackman 1981-82:90; Savard 2010:69). In any case, what the viewer of an image sees reflects the artist's framing of reality. Gidley contends that, "[w]hat such representations in fact offer are varying illusions of reality" (1992:1).

Within the context of photographic research in British Columbia, Davison (1981-1982:21) argues that concerns about the subjectivities of the visual representer are similar to those raised in source criticism of written travel accounts (Brettell 1986:134; Pratt 1992:7) or other written sources (Wood 1990:83) produced in the colonial context. Even though these questions of the representer's "varying illusions of reality" (Gidley 1992:1) add an important consideration to the use of photographs and images in research, Davison contends that these sort of challenges to analysis do not create a significant barrier for the use of photographs to "amplify" avenues of historical inquiry (Davison 1981-1982:34). These "illusions" or perils of "subjectivities" can be made useful to the scholar concerned with the role of the colonizer (often the representer) and the way this is changing and reworking as a reflection upon the Indigenous other (often the subject) (Edwards 1997:59; Stoler 1989:136). Within the colonial context of British Columbia, there

appears to be a marked change in written and visual representations by European sources. Representations became generally increasingly negative towards First Nations and First Nations individuals, creating exclusionary narratives (Edmonds 2010b:16; Lutz 2008:37; Perry 2001:12; cf. Stoler 2001:836). This change developed out of many contributing trends in thought and situation, including: a rising romantic stereotyping of the “vanishing” and “lazy Indian” (Francis 1996:3; Lutz 2008:36); the growing popularity of theories such as the stadial scale (Edmonds 2010a:8) and the “great chain of being”; as well as the increasing settling European population in the colony, who brought these ideas and emphasized settling and extracting natural resources—objectives that required control and use of First Nations land. In addition, this growing European population came to compete with First Nations labourers for occupations (Littlefield and Knack 1996:18; Lutz 2008:233). In this context, colonial agendas are played out in the European representations (both visual and written) of the First Nations others (Gidley 1992:1; Hauser 2001:31).

The previous chapter discussed how the other can be both something separate from self and a politically charged term, used by many researchers to talk about the way in which groups of people are excluded and denigrated by another group of people (Edmonds 2010a:8; Erickson 2013:30; Fabian 1983:31; Dirks 1997:200; Hall 1996:287; Perry 2001:12; Said 1989:207; Stoler 1989:135; Trouillot 1995:96). Othering in the colonial context in British Columbia worked to marginalize and racialize First Nations peoples and individuals (as well as other alienated groups of people, such as Chinese) through actions and representational media, such as print and photography.

Pratt (1992:7) in an analysis of colonial travel writing observes how these representations are constructed and worked out in reaction and in contrast to the colonized other. These colonial anxieties arose out of attempts to legitimize and make innocent the colonial presence on Indigenous lands and the use of Indigenous resources and labour. Metaphors and stereotypes were constructed and worked to more easily produce and consume these colonial narratives. These stereotypes include the “vanishing Indian,” the “lazy Indian,” as well as other denigrating slanders, such as being incapable of “improvement” to become “civilized;” however, as many researchers have indicated about Indigenous groups around the world, “improvement” and “civilized” were often shifting and unattainable bars, since the concept of “civilized” was created and reworked in terms of those colonized others that were “uncivilized” (Cooper and Stoler 1997:7; Edmonds 2010b:16; Stoler 1989:136, 2002:847; Thomas 1991:10; Trouillot 1995:96). This is true in the context of this case study considered here, where the bureaucratic limitations of the colony and later the nation state of Canada, strove to keep these stereotypes alive (Lutz 2008:36). The correction and analysis of this myth of the “lazy Indian” (Lutz 2008:7) is one that greatly motivates this research. It is remarkable that such a contradictory stereotype could be sustained in the face of the many industrial and technological achievements of the First Nations populations of British Columbia.

Image making and writing are powerful tools of the colonizer, to control, order and limit the colonized other through representation (Hight and Sampson 2002:9; Pinney 2008:S35). It has been argued that representation of the other works in a way to define the colonizer—by a contrastive, *us* versus *them* polemic (Erickson 2013:28; Maxwell 1999:2; Sweet 2001:11). Through her study of travel writing and written work produced

in “contact zones” by European sources, Pratt (1992) analyzes how these “writings[s] produced ‘the rest of the world’ for European readerships” (1992:3) and in turn, how “Europe’s constructions of subordinated others [has] been shaped by those others, by the constructions of themselves and their habits that they presented to the Europeans?”(1992: 6). These questions are indicative of the way in which “contact zones” (Pratt 1992:7) developed in these contexts, where interactions and “entanglements” (Thomas 1991:8) between the colonizer and the colonized other, resulted in unique and often disparate representations

Pratt analyzes what she terms the “anti-conquest” (1992:7) perspective that characterizes many European writings. The role of Europeans, in taking over the colonized other’s land and resources, is denied through guilt-cleansing legitimization at the same time as the colonizer’s power over these resources is exerted. Struggles to legitimize this dispossession of First Nations people were often accompanied by misrepresentations (Maxwell 1999:10) or, often more drastically, a “vanishing” (Lutz 2008:36) of First Nations people from European records (Trouillot 1995:99). This has contributed to the creation of a British Columbian history that has traditionally failed to acknowledge First Nations influence and activity (Edmonds 2010a:4; Lutz 2008:16-17; Thomas 1991:12; Wickwire 2005:47). This Euro-centric, “white”<sup>5</sup> history has often left First Nations histories to anthropologists and archaeologists who have created a temporally and spatially (i.e. geographically) segregated (Fabian 1983:4) history, which separates out First Nations’ involvement from the “greater” colonizer’s history, as if

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<sup>5</sup> The term “white,” though popular in earlier histories, is a problematic term to use about the early colonists of British Columbia, since many of these early fur trade colonists were of racially and culturally mixed unions (Bracken 1997:10; Edmonds 2010a:12, 2010b:105; Lutz 2008:39; Van Kirk 1997-1998:150; Van Rijn 2006:542). I use it here to demonstrate the way in which this style of history is usually categorized.

these two did not share a past and future. As a result, historical connections between First Nations and Europeans are difficult to make and imagine, even though in reality they do exist (see also Edwards 1997:55; Trouillot 1995:99; Pratt 1992:6-7). By focusing upon the European written and visual representations of their use of the dugout canoe, this research “entangles” (Stahl 2002:835; Thomas 1991:139) European users and First Nations paddlers, navigators and carvers to demonstrate their shared history. In this way, this research strives to interrogate different avenues of representation, that is the representation of material culture, to reveal this process of obscuring First Nations carvers, navigators and paddlers.

Historical sources are subject to archival biases. Wood contends (1990:83) that the most researchers can hope to glean from historical material “are in fact constructions, not ‘reconstructions’ for too much information has been lost at every point in time to make reconstructions possible.” Here, the researcher is striving to be the representer of a past from bits and pieces. Likewise, this thesis uses written sources and images produced by European colonists to build an understanding of how these European individuals used and often relied upon dugout canoes, and First Nations labour, to build the colonial foundation in British Columbia. In this way, this thesis works to “construct” a history that undermines its past traditional colonial “constructions,” which denied First Nations’ contributors (Cooper and Stoler 1997:4; Lutz 2008:36; Trouillot 1995:82).

Photography and image making have been used in various projects to create controlled representations of a subject matter, be it a person, place or thing (Hight and Sampson 2002:1). Pinney (2008) offers important thoughts for this research’s consideration of photography and other record making processes. Pinney (2008) traces how, in the early

days of photography (from approximately 1839 to the early 1900s), this controlled representational power of photographs was seen as a “cure” to difficulties of representation by British colonists in India, especially those issues around the credibility of the eyewitness, since the photograph produced undeniable proof of witnessing (2008:S34). In this way, the camera was more powerful than the human eye. As the technology became more mobile (both in terms of education and logistical accessibility), photography became a “poison” to colonial powers as its subjects gained access to representation and were able to record images and film in an uncontrolled way, often undermining the hegemonic power of the colonists.

These metaphors of “cure” and “poison” play out in the examples presented by Pinney (2008:S36-S38) of the photographic recording by Narayan Vinayak Virkar of the Jallianwallabagh (Amritsar) massacre of 1919 and the 1922 protests that ended in British colonial police brutality at the same location, recorded this time on film and still photographs by A.L. Vargas. The photographs and film produced in these important and devastating events gave power to the oppressed. The responses by the colonial powers to repress the circulation of these photographic productions demonstrate the deep anxieties of the state. These anxieties also in turn reveal the “indexical” power of photographs—a term here used by Pinney in the spirit of Charles Sanders Peirce, where “an index was distinguished from other kinds of signs by its physical relationship of causal contiguity with its referent. Just as smoke indexes fire, so photography indexes the play of light on objects in front of the camera’s lens” (2008:S34).

This way of looking at the representational method of photography and film is important to Pinney (2008:S42), since it allows him to describe the colonial engagement

with its own propagandist representation in the face of losing control of the production of film and photography. In an attempt to regain control over this potentially destructive communication tool, colonial powers censored film as it left and entered India and edited film captions. These colonial censors worried that the indexical European moralities represented by film may “destroy the moral authority of white colonizers” (Pinney 2008:S41), by indexically representing Europeans in a way that is unsavoury.<sup>6</sup> Conversely, photographs that extended the colonial hegemony were preserved, indicating the potentially biased archival collections (Wood 1990:83).

Pinney’s (2008) consideration of historical context offers a useful approach for this research since it reveals how these technologies and the material results of these technologies—in this case photographs and film, but potentially also written documents such as travel writing, newspapers and ethnography—could be perceived and considered. Though considered a “cure” at first, photography was also considered with disdain by British colonial officials as Pinney (2008:S40) alludes to when publicity through photography was considered “disgusting” (S41). This revulsion is still felt today in much of Western society, as photography is not part of the recording process of the Canadian, British,<sup>7</sup> Hong Kong and many other court systems (they often allow the use of courtroom sketches instead to visually record the court process) since it is considered vulgar and an indecent way to portray her Majesty’s court, as well as due to fears of privacy violation.

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<sup>6</sup> This is similar to the colonial fears observed by Stoler (1989:150) about creating a “poor white” population in Java due to the introduction of Dutch wives to the European colonist workers.

<sup>7</sup> 1925 Criminal Justice Act. c. 86 (Regnal. 15\_and\_16\_Geo\_5) Part III, Section 41. Prohibition on taking photographs, &c., in court. Electronic document, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/15-16/86/section/41>, accessed January 12, 2015.

As photography may be perceived both as a reliable documentary method and as a tricky, novel deceiving device, considerations about how technology can be seen in contradictory ways highlight the importance of questioning our historical understanding of taken-for-granted technologies used today. This reveals that technology can be a symbol of novelty and a tool of image production and representation. Drawing from these considerations, it is important to be aware of how changing media and preferences for them condition who and what is represented. As outlined below and in later chapters, image making shifts from sketches to photography, with early photographic efforts limited to easily accessible areas (specifically coastal locations accessible by water), which contributes to an increased number of photographs that depict coastal scenes rather than those of the interior (Savard 2010:13).

The “Indian,” as a subject matter for photography was highly commoditized. Blackman (1981-82:107) discusses how, in colonial British Columbia, photographs of First Nations people were a major trade for commercial photographers, making these European generated images of First Nations peoples a “human curio” of sorts, with the same collector-draw as “masks, baskets, and boxes” (see also Francis 1996:5). Here, the image itself as an object served a role, both as a commoditized item that collectors must have, but also, as Savard (2010) quoting Buckland (1980) notes, as a carrier of information to demonstrate the “exotic Indian” and “[t]o show Indians to Europeans” (Savard 2010:60).

Photographic technology did not arrive in the Pacific Northwest until 1859 (Savard 2010:29), but even then the equipment was cumbersome and delicate. Its use was limited to easily accessible areas in these early years. Its limitations are also reflected in the



stylistic choices of the photographers. “Documentary realism” typifies most of these early images on the coast, where the images are “clear and sharply focused, meant to convey the reality of life as perceived by the photographers at a point in time” (Savard 2010:13). Later photographers, from the 1880s onwards, were more prolific, taking images of a greater array of subjects, since now the camera and its trappings were more durable, portable and accessible to nonprofessionals. The school of “pictorialism” developed around this time, from approximately 1891 to 1910. This style focused more on props, composition and trick editing to create images that were artistic and not as based in realism as earlier styles. The photographic style of Edward Curtis (discussed below) follows many “pictorialist” themes (Hauser 2001:34; Savard 2010:13).

The ways in which representation is bounded by agendas and preconceived notions of the artist (the portrayer) are a central theme examined by art historians, anthropologists and historians concerned with image production, circulation and consumption. Research focused on “the boundary” (Edwards 1997:54; Glass 2011:28) nature of the early colonial period has revealed productive relationships and interactions between the colonized and the colonizer. Using the metaphor of the boundary, Edwards (1997:59) and others (e.g. Pinney 2008) have been able to examine the many contradicting themes of representation through the photographic medium. Through his analysis of photographs by Edward C. Curtis, Gidley (2003:131) has demonstrated how artists were often governed by common themes and trends. Curtis’s compositions follow the once popular theme (from roughly 1890s to the 1920s) of the “vanishing Indian,” where the romantic illusion of being removed from modernity and the effects of time or Western history is created to remove the First Nations peoples from being actively involved in the colonizer’s culture and way

of life (see also a critique of this denial of the coeval by Fabian [1983:4]; Gidley 2003:131; Hauser 2001:31). Unlike earlier photographers of the “documentary realism” school from the mid-nineteenth century in British Columbia (Savard 2010:69), Curtis never portrayed a First Nations launderer, potato seller, shopkeeper, or canoeist transporting European travellers. Instead he staged epic scenes of First Nations people undergoing accepted, so called, “traditional” tasks—such as fishing, gathering reeds and digging for clams. As Hauser remarks in her analysis, “[b]y creating a distorted appearance Curtis did not capture the ‘vanishing’ Indian; his artistic choices and practices ‘vanished’ the contemporary, even future Native American” (2001:36). Although the images produced by Curtis are beautiful and striking compositions, they served to reinforce popular stereotypes and added further proof of the “limited” involvement of First Nations individuals in the colonial project (Gidley 2003:117; Hauser 2001:32). His images of the “vanishing Indians” explicitly played to the narratives of “natural eradication” (Hauser 2001:33) of First Nations people, which was undoubtedly appreciated by his main financial backer, J.P. Morgan, whose wealth was built by railroads cutting through unacknowledged Indigenous land, threatening and often destroying Indigenous life ways and cultures.

This analysis of representation and representational process gives the research methodological grounding. Questions concerning biases of the representer, subject and audience are important to my analysis. Inquiries about circulation and context are integral to understand what happens after the image or written work is produced. These theoretical considerations evoke methodological implications that are addressed below (Section 3.4).

### 3.3 Data

A variety of historical documents and images provide data on canoe use on the Pacific Northwest. These include: fort journals recorded by traders and merchants; colonial dispatches (letters of an official nature written between colonial representatives and representatives of the metropole, that is, Great Britain); travel writing (letters, journals and diaries written by travellers visiting the Pacific Northwest); memoirs; diaries; letters; as well as newspaper accounts published in both local papers such as Victoria's *British Colonist* and more distant contemporary publications, such as the *Illustrated London News*. Newspaper sources such as the *Illustrated London News*, famous for its engraved illustrations, are also useful for gathering data on images of canoe use. Other image sources include photographs, paintings, etchings and drawings in the British Columbia Archives. The B.C. Archives houses many of the written sources listed above, although some are also available online through UVic's library resources, as well as in a published format. The digital collections of the Stark Museum of Art, the Bamfield Community Museum and Archives, City of Vancouver Archives, the American Antiquarian Society and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association's Historic Fisheries Collection, courtesy of the National Archives— all available online— provided several images as well.

The data selected for final analysis provides only a selection of the images and written material originally examined for analysis. Examples were chosen that: 1) demonstrated the diversity and ubiquity of European dugout canoe use through time; and 2) highlighted the different ways Europeans were representing their use of the dugout canoe through time. With overlapping examples, sources that best met these two requirements were

given preference. Prime sources were selected to establish trends through time and give evidence of different uses of the dugout canoe, rather than drowning the reader in repeat examples. Table 1 gives an example of this selection process, as it illustrates how nearly 300 images examined were winnowed down to just 68 prime examples in the final analysis (Chapter 6).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For access to a complete spreadsheet of image material examined use the below link for the shared Google Sheet: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16ks9WeohBi\\_WUV4\\_IVfaI2KZbp2lMtrPww-5HxGOdrY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16ks9WeohBi_WUV4_IVfaI2KZbp2lMtrPww-5HxGOdrY/edit?usp=sharing)

**Table 1: Images considered versus images used**

Number of Images Considered		Number of Images Used		Archives/Collection
~121 photographs	~95 non-photographs	32 photographs	27 non-photographs	British Columbian Archives (accessed in person and online)
5 non-photograph		1 non-photograph		American Antiquarian Society (accessed online)
1 non-photograph		1 non-photograph		Stark Museum of Art (accessed online)
1 non-photograph		1 non-photograph		State Library of New South Wales (accessed on microfilm in person)
7 photographs		2 photographs		NOAA's Historic Fisheries Collection (accessed online)
~6 photographs		1 photograph		Bamfield Community Museum and Archives (accessed online and in person)
~5 photographs		2 photographs		City of Vancouver Archives (accessed online)
~ 5 non-photographs		1 non-photograph		<i>Illustrated London News</i> (accessed in person and online)
2 photographs		Not used because cost prohibitive		U.S. Bureau of Fisheries/ National Geographic Creative (accessed online)
<b>Total number considered: ~141 photographs and ~103 non-photographs</b>		<b>Total number used: 37 photographs and 31 non-photographs</b>		

### 3.4 Variables to Consider

Besides noting presence or absence in these written and visual sources of dugout canoe use by Europeans, I looked for their descriptive prominence in written sources (were they given much space in the writings, or were they treated as taken for granted? See Table 2). As Table 2 outlines, when available, details about each canoe trip were

recorded, for example the date, the people (i.e. who were they, how many, what were their backgrounds), the starting and end points, the payment or reimbursement to any First Nations crew (if present), or the cost of the dugout canoe, the overall duration of the voyage and, when available, the seating arrangement. For some images, visual identifications were made of First Nations and European passengers, but often images were not clear enough and these identification techniques were not reliable, so I endeavoured to back up these starting perceptions with further research into the particular images to ascertain whether or not those portrayed in the image were European or First Nations. Where relevant, whenever I was uncertain about the identity of the people present I indicated so in the analysis. For longer journeys, I recorded any stopovers mentioned, as well as other patterns I noticed (see Tables 2, 3 and 4 for details on variables recorded). This allowed me to establish patterns of use and trends of descriptions through time. I also compared first-hand travel accounts to secondary, government documents as a means to discern if there were disparities between travel accounts locally recorded and more policy-oriented reports (to see if the information reported by the government report is likely to be accurate and vice versa). In this way, I was able to gauge the possible differences between the policies of colonial administrators and the practices of European settlers (Cooper and Stoler 1997:9). I also examined if the character of these accounts were influenced by European colonial category construction—asking whether writers sought to distance themselves from First Nations objects and interactions or perhaps characterized these interactions in a particular way (Stoler 2001:851)?

**Table 2: Variables considered**

1. Length and duration of voyage.
2. Stopovers or overnight stays on voyage.
3. European role? (passive passenger, active passenger— i.e. helping with paddling)
4. Descriptions of interactions with First Nations peoples. Present or not?
5. Characterizations of First Nations? Positive, negative, neutral or nonexistent?
6. Descriptions of the dugout canoe? Present/absent? Positive, negative, neutral or nonexistent? Size, style, colour, decoration?
7. Seating arrangement? Seating protocol observed?
8. Method of payment or reimbursement for voyage? Presence/absence?
9. Hired First Nations crew and canoe or did the European traveller have own canoe and put together separate First Nations crew?
10. Who were the European passengers? i.e. What was their identity, socioeconomic, cultural, experiential background, number of people?
11. Who were the First Nations actors? Local or distant? If possible what was their identity, socioeconomic, cultural, experiential background, number of people?
12. What was the gender of paddlers and passengers?
13. Accompanying illustration or photograph of canoe? Presence/absence?

Wood (1990:83) argues that work concerned with historical material needs to be done with care, since historical documents and images are created and preserved in an inconsistent way, being subject to human error, agendas, biases and archival biases. Consideration of the reliability of the sources is required, since the quality of certain European writers and artists' portrayals come from a specific cultural contexts, motivated by agendas that colour their written and visual production (Kovach 2010:110; Stahl 2001:39). However, this is relevant to the questions I am asking about the negotiation of categories since uncovering the motivations and cultural framings behind these biases

reveals the influences of the processes of category creation and maintenance. As variable 10 (Table 2) implies, keeping in mind the author's purported character (i.e. reported by his or her contemporaries), context, history (where the author came from, their background) and audience (who he or she was writing for) helps me to control for this potential reliability issue (Brettell 1986:129; Pratt 1992:6; Wood 1990:89). Just as archaeological research is preoccupied with the provenience of artifacts, the site formation processes and the post-depositional modifications, the historical method's most important criticism centres upon context, specifically the who, what, where, when and why of a document and motivations that brought about the production of these writings and images (Wood 1990:82). To help account for possible biases in my interpretations of written sources, I included the whole quote in the analysis section (instead of paraphrasing relevant information) to allow the reader to judge for themselves the validity of my conclusions.

Where descriptions allowed, I also examined the seating protocol in the canoe (Table 2, variable 7). This line of inquiry relied upon the European's written acknowledgment, mention and perception of these First Nations protocols. Were Europeans seated in positions reportedly honoured by First Nations protocols (according to the European recorders)? Was this recorded or recognized to differ between First Nations groups and communities? Was there an embodied protocol in the canoe to which Europeans were held to using this transport? How much control was expressed by the First Nations pilots and to what extent was this acknowledged by the European writers? To get at comportment aboard the canoe, I also looked at archival images of Europeans in dugout canoes (Table 3). Besides getting a further understanding of European comportment



aboard the dugout canoe, by comparing these photographs to the writings, I was able to get at disparities in practice and protocol, seen in either staged photographs or scripted writings.

**Table 3: Image (photograph/non-photograph) variables**

1. Number of occupants?
2. Occupants First Nations, European, or?
3. Is the photograph/ illustration contrived or in an obvious way staged?)
4. If apparent, what is the seating arrangement aboard the canoe?
5. If apparent, what is the gender of the occupants?
6. What style of canoe is it? Tsimshian, Nuu-chah-nulth, Salish, etc.
7. Is the picture a static, composed image or does it contain movement/or the promise of movement?
8. Who was the photographer or artist? Biographical details?
9. Motives for taking photograph/sketching drawing?
10. Was the image commissioned? If so, by who?
11. Location of the image? Where was it taken?
12. In what context does this image appear? For example, as an illustration in a historical memoir or a family photo from the B.C. Archives.
13. Who is in the image (if this information is available)?

As I recorded these images, I separated my photographic data from my other images (sketches, etchings and paintings). I filed images under artist, date, and location the image depicts (Table 3, variable 12). As with the data gathered from the written sources, I analyzed these images chronologically. I also tried to keep my own written description of the image, including information on a classification of the canoe type, its apparent use in the image and the number of people in the canoe (Table 3). Some important details were often not available for certain images (for example, artist, date, people portrayed in the

image). I include these images in my analysis because the details visually apparent in the images are often rich enough to yield information relevant to this research's questions. These details, although less contextualized, can provide useful documentary information (Davison 1981-1982:27). However, interpretations of these images are greatly limited by this missing information, like an artifact without provenience (Wood 1990:82).

Since temporality is an important variable, I recorded specific dates as I encountered them, taking care to arrange the data chronologically. I explored whether and how the transformation from a mercantilist to a settler society, or the shift from a "middle ground" colonial project to that of a "terra nullius" colonialism (Gosden 2004:27), was accompanied by shifts in how Europeans perceived and wrote about the canoe by using and tracking data that comes from specific dates (for example, specific photographs or traveller accounts). Although this method was successful with my analysis of the historical written documents, I encountered several technical limits on the resolution of the image data, as photography came late (1859) to the coast and was often technologically constrained (Savard 2010:29). Although this made it unsuitable for the data made up of photographic images to indicate anything about the shift from the mercantilist to the settler society in the colony, I would argue (and I demonstrate later) that the very prevalence of canoe use in later photographs and images is telling of how integral this First Nations' technology's was in the development and sustaining of this growing colony.

These variables examined through the written (Table 2) and visual sources (Table 3) are designed/selected to get at the thesis questions: *Was the First Nations' dugout canoe essential to colonial development in British Columbia and, if so, were the First Nations*

*acknowledged for this vital contribution?* Table 4 further breaks down these thesis questions. To understand broader colonial trends, the variables recorded through Table 2 are compared across accounts, asking if descriptions of First Nations dugout canoes and First Nations canoeists were shaped to fit a particular narrative (Erickson 2013:12). Any agendas seen in narrative may indicate whether Europeans acknowledged First Nations peoples for their labour and technological contributions to the development of British Columbia. Analyzing whether or not traveling by canoe brought opportunities for close relationships to develop between First Nations and Europeans, or if they were places to enact racial divisions, could possibly give clues as to why a European written representation of the dugout canoe trip was constructed in a particular way. Looking for trends in characterization of First Nations, labour and their transport technology within or outside of a particular colonial category, allows for a possible understanding of the fluidity of this identification process (Stoler 1989:136).

**Table 4: What do these variables demonstrate?**


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Are these descriptions shaped to fit a particular narrative (Erickson 2013)? (This should be apparent when the data have been compared across accounts)

Did traveling by canoe bring opportunities for close relationships to develop between First Nations and Europeans, or were they places to enact racial divisions?

Do these accounts characterize First Nations, their labour and their transport technology within a particular colonial category? Are there temporal trends of characterization?

If so, does the embodied space created by the First Nations' canoe and the practice of journeying by paddle contradict/ maintain/ or have a neutral effect upon the taxonomical process?

Did the fact that they were adopting First Nations transport affect (or perhaps even threaten) the Europeans who wrote about such ventures (Ingold 1997:59; Jones and Boivin 2010:345; Mauss 1979:102; Stoler 2001:863)?

Do the images of canoe use contradict or support the narratives forwarded by European authors?

Did Europeans acknowledge First Nations' skills, technology and innovation in maritime technology (the dugout canoe) and navigation (their piloting)? Or were these skills downplayed, trivialized or ignored?

If Europeans did express acknowledgement First Nations' skills, technology and innovation in maritime technology (the dugout canoe) and navigation (their piloting), was it based upon their observances of the physical dugout canoe, or were they impressed with First Nations skills and technology, or was it both?

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Studying whether or not the embodied space created by the First Nations canoe and the practice of journeying by paddle contradicted, maintained, or had a neutral effect upon the taxonomic process gives clues as to the possible effect this item of utilitarian material culture may have had upon the self-identification process of the European colonist. Likewise, researching whether or not European writings indicate anxieties for their colonial identity (Stoler 2001:863) helps to not only understand this process of identification, but also may contribute to the way in which European's represented the First Nations dugout canoe, its manufacturers and the First Nations canoeists. Image sources were also questioned to see how they contradict or support the narrative trends

developed through an analysis of European authors. Images provide information that can be used in conjunction with the analysis of written sources and also independently to possibly identify separate visual trends in research.

Tracing whether or not Europeans acknowledged First Nations' skills, technology and innovation in maritime technology (the dugout canoe) and navigation (their piloting), or if these skills were instead downplayed, trivialized or ignored (Trouillot 1995:94), gets at the core of this thesis research question (see Table 4). This inquiry may get at an important trend in First Nations representation by European colonists. Following this, if there was acknowledgement of First Nations' skills, technology and innovation in maritime technology (the dugout canoe) and navigation (their piloting), understanding whether or not it was based upon European impressions of the dugout canoe itself, or alternately the skills and technology of First Nations' people and technology, or perhaps both, will help to disentangle whether Europeans may have valued the colonized material culture and/or First Nations' skills and labour.

## Chapter 4: Gaging the Currents: Historical Context

### 4.1 Introduction

The Pacific Northwest Coast cedar dugout canoe has been described and chronicled by Europeans since contact. This chapter examines the historical background of canoe use by both European colonists and First Nations peoples in British Columbia during the colonial period. It outlines what makes the dugout canoe a unique technology, why there was a demand for it in the colonial economy, and how the role of First Nations paddlers, as able and expert mariners, served as gate keepers and facilitators for European exploration and mapping of the Pacific Northwest Coast.

Included in this chapter is a more general history of European activity and settlement in British Columbia. Specifically, I chart the shift from a mercantilist-based fur trade economy to a colonizing settler economy, which changed the relationship between First Nations and Europeans (Edmonds 2010b:14; Harris 2004:174; Gosden 2004:24; Lutz 2008:37; Perry 2001:12). This early colonial period is significant in its transformative nature as Europeans were beginning to define their colonial intentions and create colonial taxonomies and silences. These changes were often in targeted juxtaposition to First Nations peoples' freedoms and needs, as Europeans attempted to segregate and other First Nations people (Edmonds 2010b:16; Trouillot 1995:96). However, these transformations did not occur in isolation, since these negotiations of discourse were in tandem to conversations with the metropole (be that Britain or Canada) and other colonies (Edmonds 2010b:16; Loren 2001:175; Perry 2001:14; Stahl 2010:165; Steiner

1985:100; Stoler 1989:135, 2002:847; Thomas 1991:10; Trouillot 1995:96). This history serves to connect the story of the European use of the dugout canoe on the Pacific Northwest Coast to global, colonial histories and research.

## 4.2 The Dugout Canoe

Scrutiny of an exquisitely-finished canoe, the most demanding manufacture produced by primitive North Americans, may impart more of the dreams and talents; intelligence and passions of its builders than all the native folk-lore yet compiled. (Durham 1960: 9)

The technology of the canoe has been described by numerous anthropologists and historians alike, as well as in the often cited historical accounts from newcomers to the Pacific coast such as fur traders and later settlers. Sources such as Swan (1868), Boas (1909), Waterman (1920), Durham (1960) and Arima (1974) offer important fact-oriented, scientific approaches to the canoe as an object of technological and socio-cultural value to its First Nations' makers. These sources focus upon easily verified facts about the canoe, in many instances with the motive to preserve process and objects (in short, culture) without actively supporting it (with the exception of Arima [1974] who commissioned the construction of a whaling canoe for his study). Although these sources do not offer much critical insight into the historical-social connections between Europeans, First Nations and canoes, in their focus on the construction, use and detailed descriptions of the canoe, they do indicate a European preoccupation with the dugout canoe. They provide the reader with a starting point to describe what a dugout canoe is and the potential it brings to a cross-cultural relationship.

Each of the types (of canoe) in this way has its own particular uses. The series as a whole is an example of high specialization in a seafaring mode of existence. (Waterman and Coffin 1920:12)

Today, the process of canoe manufacture varies depending upon which source one consults, but not in a contradictory way. Rather, these sources highlight the uniqueness of the process, since it is driven by the individual needs of the carver (as well as his/her Nation), the design, the use of the canoe, and the particular attributes of the log (Durham 1960:67). This variance is probably true for earlier canoe manufacture as well, but with few written historical sources describing the manufacturing techniques, we are left with a limited, almost regimented perception of canoe construction. An open mind is needed when considering the variance of process seen today and those observed in the past, but for the sake of understanding the technologically, spiritually and physically demanding process, I outline what these authors have put forward as the accepted “*chaîne opératoire*,” or chain of operations, of canoe manufacture (Gosselain 1998:87), tracing the steps and choices that shape canoe making.

The cedar dugout canoe is essentially a watercraft made by hollowing out a red cedar log (*Thuja plicata*) but, of course, it is a lot more than that. Nearly every First Nation along the coast was known for their distinctive design of canoes (see Appendix A, Map 1 and Table 6). Most famously there are the “Nootka” or “Chinook” canoe originating from the Nuu-chah-nulth nations (Swan 1868:35; Durham 1960:48; Lincoln 1991:14; Waterman 1920:9); and the Northern Style canoe associated with the Haida nation. Other designs include the Tsimshian river canoe, the Bella Coola river spoon canoe, the Coast Salish canoe and the Salish shovelnose river canoe (Lincoln 1991:22-23). Within this regional typology there is great variance, and canoes were a major trade item. The Tla-o-qui-aht were known to host one of the major “canoe-marts” of the South-West coast of



Vancouver Island<sup>9</sup> and the Haida were prime canoe traders in the North (Durham 1960:48). Identifying a nation by their canoe is not as straightforward as it would seem, since many of the nations used canoes obtained by trade. However, rather than this possibly confusing story about “origin” serving as a limitation, instead this is an analytical opening for understanding how complicated identity and identifying processes are—as the story of trading canoes and designs opens up an understanding of First Nations interconnections and influences between other Nations. This way of thinking problematizes ideas such as “authenticity,” monolithic othering and separating of First Nations peoples.

According to Waterman (1920:13-14) among the Nuu-chah-nulth style canoes there are at least seven types of canoes: freight; war; whaling; three-person; sealing; one-man; and the children’s canoe. All of these types are technically adapted for their use. For example, the sealing canoe had a specially designed hull with a “knife blade” (Waterman 1920:13) “semi-keel” (Durham 1960:51) which stopped the canoe from slapping as it went across waves since a part of the hull never left the water, allowing seal hunters to approach their prey silently. Aboard the canoe there would be at least one person in the front paddling as the power and one person in the very rear acting as the steersman. However, if necessary and depending on the canoe’s size, it could be managed with only the steersman. When moving between winter and summer villages, the larger freight size canoes (from between 20 and 40 feet) were often used to transport household items, such as house boards and personal effects. Waterman (1920:13) describes rafts created of house boards secured across two canoes, so as to transport the household within calm

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<sup>9</sup> William E. Banfield, 1858. Vancouver Island. Its topography, characteristics, &c. Number II. The Netinett District. *Victoria Gazette*, August 14. Accessed from BCA.

waters. This versatility of use is just one aspect of the canoe that makes it unique as an essential technology of the Pacific coast.

The workmanship of the canoe was (and is) as spiritually involved as it is technologically. The techniques of manufacture, including the *chaîne opératoire*, is covered extensively by Swan (1868), Boas (1909), Waterman (1920), Durham (1960) and Arima (1974), but these accounts do not address the spiritual investment of canoe manufacture, which is arguably one of the most enduring and important legacies of the process and the canoe itself. More recent publications (Lincoln 1991; Neel 1995) argue for the canoe as a symbol of First Nations' resurgence and self-determination, as seen in the rising popularity of canoe journeys (the Tribal Journeys and the Pulling Together canoe journeys beginning in the early 1990s), where the spiritual power of the canoe is integral to the promotion and regeneration of cultural strength. The canoe is treated with respect, since it is a "spiritual vessel" that embodies both the spirit of the great and ancient tree from which it was made, as well as manifesting the skill and expertise of the master carver who created it.

According to Neel (1995:5), in reference to Kwakwaka'wakw canoe carving process, the carver had a great responsibility in carving a canoe, since the safety of future users was dependent upon the performance of the canoe. To prepare him for carving, many spiritual procedures needed to be observed, including abstinence from sexual relations and avoidance of combing one's hair lest cracks develop in the log. Then a suitable tree must be selected. In what is now Alaska, amongst the Tlingit, near the northern extreme of the Western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*) distribution where it becomes too cold for these forest giants to reach their massive proportions, the dugout canoes were made of Sitka

spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) (Lincoln 1991:7). To the south, in what is now British Columbia and Washington State, the First Nations people favoured Western red cedar for its large size and its springy, light wood. The tree needed to be in a suitable location, have clear grain and be rot free (to test for rot, a small hole would be carved into the tree; Lincoln 1991:25). Then the tree was felled. Before contact, this was often done by chisel and/ or by fire with controlled burning. Later, after contact, suitable trees were often felled with an axe and in present day it is done with a “traditional chainsaw.”<sup>10</sup> A prayer was offered after the felling in thanks for the cedar’s sacrifice to the canoe builder and his family (Neel 1995:5).

According to Lincoln (1991:25) sometimes many trees were felled and worked on together; later, in the 1920s, groups of logs were rafted together and sailed down to a nearby village or camp. Sometimes, the log was worked into a rough canoe where the tree was felled. With the help of hired hands (according to Boas 1909:357), or friends and relatives (Lincoln 1991:25), the rough canoe was slid on skids (Boas 1909:357) out of the forest to the water, then it was towed to a beach close to the carver’s home (Lincoln 1991:25) where the canoe was finished.

As Neel (1995:5) observes, “[t]he canoe site became a meeting place as people gathered to watch the canoe take shape.” Neel’s book *The Great Canoes* (1995) highlights the ability of the canoe to ‘pull’ people and culture together, with the finishing of the carving process as one such case. Still today, canoe finishing is an important social process that brings people and knowledge together. At this stage, the carving becomes even more technical and complicated since now the carver is creating the lines that will carry the canoe across the water. Today the roughing out of the canoe is done by

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<sup>10</sup> H. Wenstob, personal communication, September 12, 2011.

chainsaw. The fine lines are done by adze and chisel, two tools that were used, in different forms, since before contact. Before the widespread introduction of iron, the adze and other sharp tools were made of sharpened mussel shell, beaver teeth, or stone, such as jadeite or nephrite, and occasionally from iron found aboard shipwrecks from Asia (Lincoln 1991:26).

To widen the beam, the canoe was spread by steaming and heating the hull. Steam spreading was done by filling the canoe with water and adding red-hot, fire heated rocks. Near by the canoe, a hot fire was lit to add a dry heat to the outer hull. As the water reached a higher temperature, the cedar wood of the canoe became pliable, while the outside of the hull became more brittle from the dry heat of the external fire. The canoe maker then inserted thwart pieces to push the hull out and to hold the canoe at its new width. Before spreading, the hull needed to be thinned so as to prevent this process from simply cracking the hull, allowing the hull instead to gently spread. Lincoln discusses Bill Holm's observations of canoes from the Smithsonian where mid-sized canoes (of approximately 25 feet) are 3/4 inch thick on the sides and only 1½ inches on the bottom, and a 58 foot Nuu-chah-nulth (or Nootkan) canoe (of a width of 8 feet) is only 1½ inches thick along the sides (Lincoln 1991:27-28). With the oceangoing vessels, such as the Nuu-chah-nulth (or Nootkan) canoe and the Haida's Northern canoe, a bow and stern piece would be added after the spreading process. These pieces, held in by withes of cedar sewn into the bow and stern, also hold the spread hull apart. The stern piece helps keep the canoe dry in a following sea (Waterman 1920:18). Some types of canoes, it is argued, had an enlarged bow piece to shield the canoe travellers from attack by projectile weapons, such as arrows or firearms (for example, a supposedly "extinct" Nuu-chah-

nulth style of war canoe, the “Head” canoe [Lincoln 1991:6]). The hull of the boat was often treated by charring and rubbing fish, whale or seal oil on it. The hull of specialty canoes, such as the whaling canoe, was not allowed to be pulled up the beach where it would risk scraping on the sand or pebbles, since this type of canoe needed to have a perfectly smooth bottom to hunt whales noiselessly. This type of canoe was carried up the beach by the canoeists (Waterman 1920:22). With all types of canoe, special care was taken when beached since direct sunlight could treacherously dry out the canoe producing cracks and splits. Canoes were often covered in dampened mats and blankets when beached to keep in the cool moisture. However, minor splits and cracks could be fixed with pitch caulking and lashing with cedar withes (Lincoln 1991:30).

The manufacture of the canoe is a technically, physically and spiritually involved process. Without the technical expertise of the carver, the canoe would not be able to handle the rough seas of the West coast or be engaged in the many adapted uses such as whale or seal hunting. Felling and transporting a half finished canoe is an arduous process, as is the carving process itself. However, the importance of the canoe as an integral component of First Nations culture is not only because of the distinct, technical designs which are in many ways perfectly adapted to the Pacific Northwest Coast, nor because of the physical effort put into manufacture; but also because the canoe itself is a spirit (Neel 1995:5). The dugout canoe is both a spiritual and a physical entity that attests to the expertise and unity of coastal First Nations people.

But how does this information about what the canoe seems to be to First Nations people lead into my thesis questions that focus upon the European use of the canoe? We cannot know if Europeans too were ontologically in the ‘same canoe’ as First Nations

peoples, that is we can not know if Europeans saw the dugout canoe as both a spiritual and utilitarian object, but through the European written descriptions we can glimpse at how Europeans considered the dugout canoe. As a utilitarian object however, the sheer ubiquity of use of the dugout canoe demonstrates it was clearly important to European newcomers.

Many Indians and whites who have followed the sea tell us that this type of canoe ships less water in a storm than any craft in the world. If we are looking for a catchword, we may call this the 'ocean-going canoe.' (Waterman and Coffin 1920:15, speaking of the "war canoe" or the Nuuchah-nulth style).

Coastal First Nations people with this technologically adapted watercraft were able to use the ocean as their main thoroughfare, allowing them to transport heavy cargoes and numerous passengers. The oceangoing canoes of the Haida and Nuuchah-nulth allowed for far-reaching coastal trade and the development of an intimate knowledge of the Pacific Northwest coastline, as well as knowledge of offshore currents and weather patterns (Arima 1974:93-96; Durham 1960:75; Lincoln 1991:5). These attributes made First Nations navigators essential to the early and late 'exploration' and development of the coast by European newcomers. European sailing ships with their deep draughts were not nimble enough to negotiate the rocks and inlets of many coastal areas, relying upon favourable winds and the ship's boat to make trips in difficult coastline. In addition, Durham (1960:77) discusses Captain Cook's observation that the Nuuchah-nulth canoes were easily faster than a well-manned, European longboat. The maneuverability and speed of the canoe made it a logical replacement of, or adjunct to, the watercraft used on the coast by Europeans. As well, the thriving canoe trade from the Nuuchah-nulth and

Haida carvers meant the Europeans were able to tap into a market to fill their need for a maneuverable boat.

### **4.3 “History” as Defined by Europeans**

This section focuses primarily on European colonial history from the beginning of the colony of Vancouver Island continuing through to the joining of the colony of British Columbia with Canada in 1871, with less detailed reference to the post-confederation period. My aim here is to present an outline of British Columbia’s history to contextualize the arguments and critiques presented in later chapters. My research questions are primarily about the colonial outcomes in the British colonies of Vancouver Island (established 1849) and British Columbia (established 1858 and later joined with the Colony of Vancouver Island in 1866). The canoe was used by European fur traders and explorers before 1849 and, since I am tracing the effects of the shifting British colonial intentions in the Pacific Northwest from a mercantilist to a settler focus, I begin when these influences started in the 1840s and led to the establishment of the colony of Vancouver Island.

The colony, known officially as the Island of Vancouver and its Dependencies, was created in 1849 to ensure the British claim to the Pacific Northwest in response to pressures from the Oregon Treaty (1846), which declared everything south of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel as American territory and everything to the north as British territory. In anticipation of this treaty, the main trading consolidate on the west coast, the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC), with headquarters on the Columbia River (well below the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel) established Fort Victoria on the southern end of Vancouver Island in 1843

(Ormsby 2003a) on land belonging to several families of the Lekwungen. The trading post at Fort Victoria, with James Douglas as its Chief Factor and its handful of HBC employees, was the sole colonial settlement on Vancouver Island in 1849. Negotiation of an “extinguishment” of First Nations land ownership began in 1850 (Keddie 2003:48), when tracts of the land surrounding the fort and in the neighbouring districts were “purchased” from the local First Nations families of the Lekwungen by the HBC in what later was known as the “Douglas Treaties.”

There seems to be some argument in the literature and in popular culture whether or not these land transfers can be considered “treaties.” The eminent historian and anthropologist, Wilson Duff (1969:6) argued that although Douglas never referred to these land transfers as “treaties,” favouring instead “purchases” or “deeds of conveyance,” they were in fact treaties in “their form and effect, in popular parlance over the years and in present legal fact” (1969:6) — this interpretation would suggest that they were not signed in the spirit of treaty, but over time came to serve as a treaty. In fact, they were indeed deemed valid “treaties” by a Supreme Court ruling in 1965 (Claxton 2003:7). Historians, such as Edmonds (2010a:9), refer to them as “deeds of conveyance,” arguing that although they were established to extinguish First Nations’ land rights, by their very existence they *asserted* the First Nations rights to land since they set a precedence for active consultation with First Nations individuals and the need to extinguish First Nations land rights before occupying the land (Edmonds 2010a:9; Fisher 1971:4). Lutz (2008) outlines how the translation of these land agreements may not have been clear between the two parties. Lutz (2008:79) quotes Lekwungen-WSÁNEĆ elder David Latasse’s 1934 account of Douglas’s treaty process as interpreted by himself and



other participating First Nations people as an agreement to rent the land, with payments each year. The WSÁNEĆ elder, David Elliot, describes Douglas' payment of blankets for land as interpreted by many First Nations peoples present at the time as a sign of peace, or a "sign of the cross," to indicate British good will toward the WSÁNEĆ people and not the purchase of their land (Lutz 2008:80).

Between 1850 and 1854 there were fourteen such "agreements," signed for the Vancouver Island colony, in Sooke, Victoria, Metchosin, Fort Rupert and Nanaimo. After 1858, Douglas was no longer Chief Factor of the HBC, cutting him off from access to funds to settle the land question, making him reliant on the tight purse of the Colonial Office in London — this arrangement put a halt to further land negotiations (Fisher 1971:4). These "deeds of conveyance," along with Treaty 8 signed in Northern BC and Yukon Territory between 1910 and 1914, were the only land agreements executed within British Columbia until the Nisga'a Treaty implemented in 2000 (Bracken 1997:41; Duff 1969:6; Sanders 1999-2000:103). The rest of the colony was subject to an arbitrary reserve system imposed upon First Nations lands with little or no First Nations consultation, sacrificing First Nations land rights to the wants of settling colonists (Fisher 1971:5; Tennant 1990:40).

The first independent settler of the HBC, Walter Colquhoun Grant, arrived by way of canoe from Nisqually in 1849 (Gough 2003 and Ormsby 1979:lxiii). Three days later, in canoes, Douglas accompanied Grant in selecting land for settlement. Grant's "little body of colonists," as Douglas described his new settlers in a letter from September 9, 1849 (Bowsfield 1979:38), set to farming in Sooke in the fashion of the restrictive and frustrating Wakefield system (Mackie 1992-1993:3). The Wakefield system of land

settlement locked land prices to support the colony and encourage the settlement of wealthy landowners with their indentured servants, a system that was developed to both make the colony self-sufficient and replicate the class-structures of Britain (Van Kirk 1997-1998:150). Early settlement in the colony, though dependent upon First Nations land, in many ways maintained amicable relations with the First Nations of the area. The land the settlers farmed became one of the “purchases” Douglas was to arrange in the 1850s from the T’Sou-Ke First Nation of the area. In their first winter on Grant’s farm, the colonists were reliant upon Fort Victoria and the nearby First Nations population for food and supplies.

The early years of the colony were directed mostly by the interests of the HBC, which had been given a ten-year crown grant to govern the land and resources in order to promote settlement and to ensure American influence did not take root in the colony (Gough 1984:28). The HBC’s mercantilist focus promoted First Nations and European relations to be somewhat peaceful and respectful, following the HBC’s policy of paternal trade (Fisher 1992:36). Fisher (1992) has been criticized (Harris 2000:65; Lutz 2008:43-44) for this simplification of the complexity of these interactions between First Nations peoples and European fur-traders, as Europeans were often violent and reactive in their First Nations trade relations. Nonetheless, this early European presence on the coast was limited in numbers and resources and were forced into a trading relationship similar to Gosden’s (2004:31) “middle ground” theory, that necessitated semi-reciprocal trade and work relationships with First Nations peoples. The fur trade relied upon First Nations labour and peaceful involvement, given that the primary interest of the traders was First Nations’ products and not land or resources (as were the wants of the later colonial era).

Peaceful relations with the First Nations peoples were necessary to maintain prosperous trade (Fisher 1992:36). In addition, the First Nations populations greatly outnumbered the European population. Victoria's European population in 1853 was reported by Douglas to be less than 300, with 93 children making up most of that number (Edmonds 2010b:102). This was a potentially fearful minority for the settlers when considered in comparison to Douglas' 1854 observation (Lutz 2008:84) of 2000 First Nation visitors from up and down the coast coming to Victoria to seek work. This is in addition to the 1,600 or so Lekwungen people living in what became the Victoria area (Lutz 2008:86). Edmonds (2010b:106) and Van Kirk (1997-1998:150) have also pointed out that the women at the fort, as wives to the HBC men, were all of First Nations descent—although these women tended not to be from local First Nations communities or groups (Van Kirk 1997-1998:150). When taken in comparison with later decades in Victoria's history when “whiteness” became essential to the British identification in the developing colony (Bracken 1997:10; Edmonds 2010a:12, 2010b:105; Lutz 1992:71, 2008:39; Perry 2001:12; Van Kirk 1997-1998:150; Van Rijn 2006:542), these marital unions are telling of how connected and dependent the lives of Europeans and First Nations were.

However, the population imbalance between First Nations and Europeans made peaceable relations imperative (Fisher 1992: xii). In this early period of the colony, when no Royal Navy or militia was as yet established permanently at Victoria, defense of the fort was limited and at times non-existent (Gough 1984:28). Europeans were nervous about an American takeover as well as an attack from First Nations peoples. This anxiety was sharply expressed by Richard Blanshard, the first governor, who took a more corporal approach to perceived First Nations slights, as demonstrated in his 1851 harsh

attack on a “Nahwitti” village that purportedly held murderer(s) responsible for the deaths of three deserting seamen outside of Fort Rupert on the Northern end of Vancouver Island (Gough 1984:47). This retaliatory stance was the first of a long line of gunboat enforcements of British colonial control of the coast (Gough 1984:33). During Governor Blanshard’s extended investigation of this incident at the Kwakwaka’wakw village near present day Port Hardy, he was unable to take the gunship back to Fort Victoria and was forced to make the 200 mile return ocean journey by dugout canoe.<sup>11</sup>

The company’s monopoly of the colony hindered Governor Blanshard in his planned colonial improvements and, after only a year of service, he resigned. Blanshard was replaced in 1851 by the less politically favoured, but the more convenient and logical choice of James Douglas. During this late fur trade era, the canoe was used extensively by men at the fort for trading expeditions, freighting, travel, mail delivery, and as ship’s tenders. In 1852, Governor Douglas used dugout canoes to explore and survey the east coast of Vancouver Island (Douglas 1854:245), and the young colonist Martha Cheney tells in her diary (from the years of 1853 to 1856) how travel by hired dugout with First Nations paddlers was the fastest and by far the most convenient way to get to Victoria for dances and social visits from her family’s Metchosin farm (Nesbit 1949:108). These two sources demonstrate that the canoe was a highly demanded technology and service among the population of Victoria.

By 1858, the settlement of the colony remained slow, with farmers and entrepreneurs hampered by selective immigration policies and high land costs (in comparison to the United States; Edmonds 2010b:103). In this eventful year, however, gold was discovered

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<sup>11</sup> Blanshard to Grey, January 31, 1852. The Colonial Despatches of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1846-1871.

at the Fraser River and shiploads of gold miners came up from the goldfields of California. Nearly overnight, the small port was overrun with miners (Fisher 1992:95). It is estimated the population in Fort Victoria increased from just 500 “white” people to approximately 20,000 (Cavallin 2008:1). There were not enough dwellings to house these people, nor were there adequate passenger ships that travelled to the gold fields on the mainland. Canoes were hired and bought by miners desperate to get to the goldfields and stake their claim. In these early days when there were few steam ships, canoes were essential to travel up the Fraser River and later to the Cariboo gold fields.

As the surveyor for the Nautical Survey and the Royal Engineers, Lt. Richard C. Mayne, remarked, travel by canoe was more affordable and quicker than travelling by trails and more versatile and reliable than travelling by steam ship. Side-wheel steamships were hindered by temperamental steam engines, the need to land at a dock and were often impeded in rivers with any obstructions or uncertain depths (Downs 1967-1971:13). In the early months of the 1858 Fraser River gold rush when rapidity of transport was imperative, steam ships were unavailable on the Fraser River— making dugout canoe travel the only possible water transport.

As the gold fever continued to rage, canoes that had been easily available to the first miners traveling up the Fraser River became increasingly scarce and expensive, forcing the gold seekers to buy canoes from more distant ports such as Victoria, Port Townsend and Seattle (Lutz 2008: 89 and Swindle 2001: Kindle loc. 643). The trader and Indian agent, William Eddy Banfield wrote about the canoe markets of the coast in his Victoria newspaper articles, describing how the Pacheedaht First Nation held a “canoe mart,”

whose mark-up on canoes reached 150% in Victoria.<sup>12</sup> Prices inflated from \$35 (Swindle 2001:Kindle loc.1155) per canoe in April to \$200 in June 1858 when the gold rush was at full surge.

The uncontrollable influx of population brought by the gold rush precipitated new ideas and new demands on the colony's budget and time. A colony on the mainland was created to handle these new concerns, leading to the establishment of British Columbia in 1858. With New Westminster as its capital, James Douglas took on the dual roles of Governor of both Vancouver Island and British Columbia. New roads needed to be built to access the Fraser Canyon and later the Cariboo gold fields. Increased pressure was placed upon First Nations' land as gold miners preempted land without treaties or First Nations consultation. Since these early miners relied upon the First Nation's knowledge of the river and their canoeing to reach the diggings, the relations between white miners and First Nations were strained and conflicted (Harris 2000:10). First Nations individuals often were rival miners themselves (Fisher 1992:98; Lutz 2008:177; Swindle 2001: Kindle Loc.1174). American gold miners (a major proportion of the miners) brought with them racist views based on American policy on how best to deal with the "savages" (Barman 1996:153; Fisher 1992:97). Farms were also established in the hopes that the two colonies could become self providing, which also encroached on First Nations' land (Fisher 1992:102).

The large number of American gold miners who came to the colonies were perceived as a threat by British colonists. When American miners began to plan a celebration of an American national holiday in Victoria with the organization of a regatta, they were

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<sup>12</sup> William E. Banfield, 1858. Vancouver Island. Its topography, characteristics, &c. Number II. The Netinett District. *Victoria Gazette*, August 14. Accessed from BCA.

stopped by the British colonists. Anxious British colonists responded to this obvious American encroachment by organizing a bigger and more impressive regatta to celebrate the Queen Victoria's birthday on May 24, 1858 and thus began a tradition of the canoe races that continued throughout the century (RBCM 2009; Keddie 2003:117).

The canoe regattas were used to establish and demonstrate the legitimacy of colonial control of the Pacific coast. Eventually, a special type of dugout canoe was developed by First Nations canoe builders that combined Nuuchahnulth and Coast Salish lines with the narrow body and seating arrangements of a European racing shell (Dewhurst 1967:17 and 46). Many different tribes participated in these races (as well as holding their own) along with European racers for cash prizes, with eager spectators of both First Nations and European origin (Dewhurst 1967:43).

The popularity of these races quickly spread, with races being held throughout the Salish Sea. Photographs were made of these races, and served as popular tourist purchases in the growing post card trade (Francis 1996:6; Savard 2010:21). By the 1920s races were being held throughout British Columbia, and even in northern Washington (Dewhurst 1967:47). Although the popularity of these races declined among European spectators, they are still continued at First Nations' celebrations (for example, the yearly Tlu-piich Games held in Port Alberni entertains a day of canoe racing).

The two colonies that would eventually become the province of British Columbia experienced a transformation of sentiments and relationships following the shifting emphasis of European immigration on settlement rather than the fur trade. Now Europeans were focused on owning land and staking a permanent claim in the colony and its resources. In a way, this led to a relabeling of First Nations' land as "terra nullius"

(Edmonds 2010a:12, 2010b:105; Fisher 1971:12; Gosden 2004:30; Harris 2002:xxi; Lutz 2008:7-8; Perry 2001:14; Pratt 1992:10; Tennant 1990:40) as method for Europeans to justify taking First Nations occupied land. Historians often characterized these Europeans, in Victoria specifically, as anxious to represent a little bit of their mother country in this new foreign land (Bracken 1997:12-13; Edmonds 2010a:6; Van Kirk 1997-1998:105).

The settlers were also anxious to make a secure claim to their land, regardless of the damages to First Nations peoples. This was reflected in the heedless way in which Victoria's new municipal government (incorporated in 1862) segregated the Lekwungen people and other First Nations peoples in the Victoria area (for example, the infamous removal of the "Northerner's Encampment" of visiting Kwakwaka'wakw and other Northern First Nations) to separate them from their valuable land and from European settlers (Edmonds 2010a:14; Van Rijn 2006:549).

Van Rijn (2006:542) highlights the fears of the other and the inherited hygiene hype of Victorian London as he outlines the thoughtless way in which the smallpox outbreak in Victoria was dealt with in 1862-1863. The European inhabitants of Victoria used fears of contamination and blamed First Nations for their lack of "hygiene" as a reason for their susceptibility to the disease and as a rationale for the forced removal of First Nations peoples from the Victoria area for the duration of the outbreak, thereby removing their threat to European settlers (Van Rijn 2006:549). This ill-conceived quarantine led to the unfortunate and avoidable spread of the disease up the coast, thereby causing many unnecessary deaths in the northern parts of the island and mainland, to which infected First Nations individuals had fled (Van Rijn 2006:550). Following this enforced



quarantine, segregation bylaws were introduced in Victoria by the municipal government. These laws essentially produced a pass system after dark for First Nations peoples in Victoria (Edmonds 2010a:12). This system's implementation, however, was problematic, since the definition of European was contested (especially for First Nations wives of European men and the children of these unions), and many First Nations people served integral occupations in the city, working as maids and servants (Lutz 2008:84; Edmonds 2010a:12).

As the 1860s progressed, European settlers struggled to represent First Nations peoples as an impediment to development of the colony. Concepts such as stadial theory, an Enlightenment notion of the stages of mankind's development—namely of, hunter-gatherer, pastoralist, agriculturalist, followed by the triumph of commerce—was used by settlers to legitimize their occupation of First Nations' land (Edmonds 2010a:8). In attempts to demonstrate the First Nations' lowly placement on this stadial scale, European settlers sought to show how First Nations did not work their land or use it in a “deserving” manner, in what was considered a Lockean “productive” way—placing First Nations peoples in the lowly status of hunter-gatherers (Edmonds 2010a:8). This narrative was in stark contrast to the real dependence early settlers had upon First Nations food stuffs such as potatoes (Wenstob 2012:120), fisheries, oil (Bowe chop 2004:308), labour and the commerce First Nations peoples had adapted to service European patrons, for example the canoe trade to meet the demand of miners.

First Nations people were increasingly labeled as lazy, indolent and useless as labourers, in contradiction to the actual demand settlers had for First Nations people as both skilled and unskilled labourers (Lutz 2008:46). Although First Nations people would

not be recognized or counted in the government census (see for example, Harvey's 1867 survey, where First Nations labourers are deemed "valueless in the labour market" [Harvey 1867:9]), First Nations individuals contributed a significant portion of the labour force (Knight 1978:8; Lutz 2008:36; Edmonds 2010a:6), possibly since European labourers were not yet in surplus (later, however, conflicts over jobs would develop between First Nations, Europeans and other immigrant workers [see Littlefield and Knack 1996:18; Lutz 2008:233]).

Contradictions between public perception and actuality were common in regards to representation of First Nations peoples. Edmonds (2010a:15) points out that First Nations in Victoria became increasingly portrayed in accounts from the municipal government and newspapers as vagrants, when in actual fact, according to contemporaneous police reports (from 1862 to 1865), First Nations peoples were never charged with vagrancy since they were legally allowed to move about, occupy and pass through their own land on which the city of Victoria was situated. Meanwhile, European immigrants who tried to live among First Nations people, staying in Lekwungen longhouses, were caught and found guilty of vagrancy by the City of Victoria's police (Edmonds 2010a:15). Edmonds (2010a:15) goes on to suggest that contradictory concepts such as vagrancy and segregation did not stick as possible ways to prosecute First Nations individuals in the early years of the settler phase because their labour was in so much demand by European settlers. Edmonds (2010a:15) suggests that when First Nations people were seen as encroaching upon European jobs and money making ventures, these segregation laws became stronger.

Many scholars have pointed out that First Nations peoples were seen as a threat to the popular consciousness of the settler. According to Bracken (1997:2), First Nations peoples were in a way an unexpected warped reflection of the white-Anglo self (in their dress, manner and in the mixed marriages of the fur trade) encountered on the edge of empire where only the exotic was expected (see also Perry 2001). Bracken (1997:11) describes this as a “folding,” where two cultures encountered and interacted with one another, making the lines between the two difficult to perceive—especially in encounters resulting in mixed marriages, which were so prevalent during the fur-trade era (see also Van Kirk 1997-1998:150). To make up for this blurring of lines, settler populations became anxious to delineate boundaries and separations between First Nations and themselves by segregating, discriminating and disappearing First Nations in society (Bracken 1997:4; Cooper and Stoler 1997:7; Edmonds 2010a:6-7; Fisher 1992:76; Lutz 2008:36; Trouillot 1995:95; Stoler 1989:136-137, 2001: 836; Van Kirk 1997-1998:150).

In 1864, Governor Douglas was retired with a knighthood and the joint governorship of the two colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia was split into two positions taken by the career governor, Governor Seymour (Fisher 1971:8) on the mainland, and Governor Kennedy on Vancouver Island. Yet again, the dugout canoe was used as a symbol of colonial control (Thomas 1991:151), as Governor Seymour called for a canoe regatta at New Westminster, made up of many First Nations chiefs and their canoes, to celebrate the Queen’s birthday and recognize his new position as governor (Fisher 1971:8). On this occasion, Governor Seymour promised to honour Douglas’ previous policies and guarantees to First Nations peoples, but as Fisher (1971:9) outlines, this new government with Joseph Trutch appointed as Chief Commissioner of Lands and

Works failed to carry forward Douglas' promises. Trutch's land policy in fact subverted Douglas' loosely sketched policies (Tennant 1990:40) to fit the new colonial agenda of removing First Nations people from choice land that could otherwise be occupied by European settlers (Fisher 1971:12). Under Trutch's policy, First Nations reserves were stripped to below Douglas's minimum size (Fisher 1971:17) and already established reserves were "reallocated" (Fisher 1971:10) to fit these new lower standards. First Nations discontent was suppressed by Trutch and hidden in bureaucracy. It is argued by Fisher (1971:20) that Trutch's British Columbia Indian land policy is distinct from the rest of Canada in that aboriginal title was actively not recognized and, in relation to the rest of Canada, there was very little land eventually allocated to First Nations, making British Columbia no better than the infamous United States' Native American land policies (Harris 2000:85).

Meanwhile, the Fraser River and the Cariboo Gold Rush had ebbed and the two colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia were faced with economic depression. The infrastructure the colonial governments had struggled to provide for the transient miners left the colonies in debt. In an attempt to consolidate this debt, by cutting down administration, the two colonies joined forces in 1866 to create the single colony of British Columbia. This amalgamation did little to relieve financial issues, and by the late 1860s overtures were made to the Dominion of Canada about creating a new province (Elliott 1971-1972:3). Some residents of Victoria were reluctant to join forces with Canada, since it placed them farther away from the mother country of Great Britain and under the jurisdiction of a foreign power (even though Canada was at this time still a colony of Great Britain) (Elliott 1971-1972:68).

In 1871, however, British Columbia, with an estimated population of 50,000, joined Confederation to become Canada's seventh province. However, 73 per cent of that population was First Nations (Lutz 2008:166) and, in the new province of British Columbia, they became wards of the state, denied the right to vote, to own land, and to have legal standing in court. The management of "Indian Affairs" was handed over to the Federal government of Canada (Barman 1996:154; Bracken 1997:35; Tennant 1990:44).

In 1872, with "Indian Affairs" coming under control of the Federal government, Dr. Israel Wood Powell was made Indian Superintendent of the Indian Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State in Victoria. Superintendent Powell was most infamously known for his campaigning for the potlatch ban (Bracken 1997:35) and as an early and persuasive advocate of the residential school systems (Bracken 1997:240). With Trutch serving as Lieutenant-Governor, Powell's attempts to make First Nations' reserves larger and improve water rights were hampered by an inhospitable provincial political climate (Tennant 1990:46). Perhaps many of Powell's paternalistic policies and observations were the result of current trends in thinking (Tennant 1990:45), a lack of understanding (Fisher 1992:180), and the political limitations (Tennant 1990:46) in his position, rather than his direct inclinations to negatively effect First Nations peoples and lifeways (Lutz 2003). Nevertheless, the results of Powell's policies arguably laid the ground work for some of the most insidious incarnations of assimilation and acculturation, as the residential school system and the potlatch ban strove to strip First Nations peoples of their cultures and incorporate them into the newly dominant Anglo-European culture of Canada.

Politically, legally, socially and culturally these were difficult times for First Nations individuals and groups, as increasingly their rights as persons and nations were taken from them. However, authors such as Knight (1978:8) and Lutz (2008:95) argue that financially, despite challenges in raising loans on their government-owned land (unlike their European counterparts) or in enforcing contract law, First Nations individuals were able to make good money and express their agency through their economic impact to the province's economy.

Beginning in 1868, First Nations sealers, especially Nuu-chah-nulth, Haida and Coast Salish sealers and their canoes became part of the sealing fishery (Crockford 1996:4; Keddie 2003:116; Lutz 2008:200). Oceangoing Nuu-chah-nulth style canoes were specially adapted with flat gunwales (with no rise in the stern or bow as is common), so as to enable them to easily stack aboard the sealing schooners (Arima 1974:88). European schooners were redesigned to hold canoes on the deck. First Nations sealers were responsible for the hunting of the seals and the European sealers were responsible with taking the canoes to the sealing grounds by schooner — providing a floating base camp of sorts. In these ways, this economy was a true “co-operative production” (Crockford 1996:51) between First Nations and European sealers, with this dynamic of mutual benefit of working together seen in both labour relations and technological adaptations (Crockford 1996:51).

In her thesis on the Nuu-chah-nulth involvement in the pelagic sealing industry, Crockford (1996) argues that First Nations involvement in this economy is counter to many broad brush histories of Indigenous labour in the colonial period, where First Nations peoples are portrayed as increasingly marginalized and victimized. Instead,

Crockford (1996) demonstrates that, despite limiting legislation and rising racial discrimination and segregation, First Nations peoples still exerted their agency and earned livelihoods in a growing capitalist economy in a way that arguably did not betray their culture. The profits earned from sealing were divided in a way that still followed traditional Nuu-chah-nulth redistribution systems (Crockford 1996:60; also Arima 2001:309), with the hunter receiving two thirds of the catch, allowing for traditional redistribution within the potlatch system. Crockford also argues the stretch of the schooner trips, the time between when they were away from shore and when they returned, followed and allowed for Nuu-chah-nulth sealers to follow their religious and ritual observations needed to be done onshore (Crockford 1996:62). Lutz (2008:200) agrees with this argument, pointing out that Nuu-chah-nulth sealers often had control over their schedules, managing their work to fit around potlatches. In contrast, Arima (2001:309) argues that pelagic sealing challenged traditional Nuu-chah-nulth lifeways since the individual financial gain allowed to sealers enabled individuals to rise above their rank and group, thereby threatening chief systems, by allowing previously poor individuals to potlatch. Either way, First Nations labourers and specialists with their dugout canoes contributed to the sealing economy of the coast in a significant way.

After Confederation, the canoe continued to be an essential tool for colonizing pursuits. Due to improved steamship transportation from San Francisco and the development of railroads across the continent in the 1880s (especially the CPR, Canada's first trans-Canadian railroad), tourism became possible. Tourists and local European settlers alike were especially interested to take in the "Indian Arts and Crafts," and traveling by canoe was a favourite outing. The coal baron James Dunsmuir was fond of

travelling by canoes for fishing and hunting trips, often employing a First Nations guide (Reksten 1991:139 and 221). Small model canoes also became popular as a souvenir in the tourist trade (Lutz 2008:89).

The canoe also continued to be an essential tool for the “development” of the colony. One of the first gas engines to be outfitted to a fishing boat on the north Pacific coast was constructed in Vancouver by Easthope Engines in 1900 and a dugout canoe served as its first commission (White 1976:255-256). Dugouts and First Nations fishing techniques (Stewart 1994:25) were imperative to the fishing industry. That the first gas fish boat should be a dugout is not so surprising if one considers the impact of their design and manufacture on the fishing industry (Knight 1978:11). First Nations boat builders greatly influenced the design of fishing boats—the lines of a dugout are visible in the older wooden trollers that used to be so common on the coast (Arima 1974:13 and 17)—and they built many of the fishing boats that serviced the coast (Knight 1978:83).

Meanwhile, the dugout remained important to surveyors travelling across difficult terrain. For example, the surveyor and photographer, Frank Cyril Swannell (Gordon 2006:177), photographed his many canoe exploits, some of which took place in the interior of the province and included the construction of dugout cottonwood canoes by himself and his men. Swannell assisted in the surveying for the Atlin-Quesnel telegraph line (1901) and the Trans-Pacific cable line (1902), which was often laid by cedar dugout canoe—as can be seen in his prolific photography of this time (see Chapter 5). In this way the canoe was used to connect the province with the rest of Canada and the British Empire. Thus the canoe was officially embedded in imperialistic pursuits.



#### 4.4 Summing Up

As can be seen from this short overview, the canoe as technology and a service was essential to the “progressive” stadial development of the colony (Edmonds 2010a:8)—in many ways confirming the contradictory fears outlined by Bracken (1997:3) of the colonists being reflected in the colonized (i.e. Europeans seeing themselves in First Nations peoples) and the colonists in turn reflecting their colonized (Europeans becoming unknowingly similar to First Nations) in their use and dependence upon First Nations skill, technology and labour. The dugout’s contribution to the economy is seen in the extensive use and irreplaceable role it served in the pelagic sealing fishery specifically, and in other fisheries more generally on the coast. In the speed, reliability and maneuverability of the canoe, it was able to collapse space and connect disparate parts of the colony and allow the swift gathering of geographic information to chart the colonies. From the rudimentary system of delivering mail, messages and people via canoe to the laying of the trans-continental telegraph line, the dugout canoe was imperative in improving communication along the Pacific Northwest coast.

## **Chapter 5: The Documentary Voyages: Sampling of Written Sources with Analyses**

### **5.1 Documentary sources**

This chapter provides examples of the data analysis technique, as well as document trends found in the data collection. Data in this analysis are organized temporally by period: pre-colonial (Before 1849); early colonial (from 1849 to 1858); mid-colonial (from 1858 to 1871); and confederation (from post 1871). A relatively even distribution of material across the periods discussed allows a close understanding of European perspectives on the dugout canoe from the early colonial period (from 1849) through to Confederation, as British Columbia became Canada's fifth province.

### **5.2 Before 1849**

Canoe travel has a long history of use in what would become eastern Canada. Both the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company relied heavily upon birchbark canoe transport and travel. In 1813, the Northwest Company (NWC) transported a shipment of birchbark canoes from Montreal to London and then around Cape Horn to aid their first Pacific operations on the Columbia River, only to find these canoes to be ill adapted to local conditions (Mackie 1997:18). Bateaux or split or sawn cedar boats were often used on the lower Columbia River. In 1815, the NWC began to use First Nations labourers to deliver dispatches between Fort George (Astoria) and other forts, to save the cost of sending a brigade of 40 or 50 men (Mackie 1997:20). This marked the beginning of the First Nations peoples involvement in the mail system. Mackie (1997) argues that

reliance on local First Nations labour became one of the most impactful factors of the traders' method west of the Rockies. As trade expanded along the Pacific Northwest Coast following the take over of the NWC by the HBC (in 1821), use of First Nations labour increased and the coastal cedar dugout canoe came to be more heavily used. Large dugout canoes, often manned by mixed crews made up of local First Nations individuals and HBC men were used by the HBC expresses. These expresses ran regular routes, transporting goods, dispatches and people between posts (Mackie 1993:361-362). Canoe travel was far more reliable than transport by HBC sailing ship. The arrival of the steam-powered side paddlewheel ship, *S. S. Beaver*, in 1836, offered an improvement to transport by sail, but could not compete with the dugout canoe in availability, speed, efficiency and economy.

Dugout canoe transport had become very important to HBC's Columbia operations by the time Fort Victoria was established in 1843. Mackie (1997) quotes the "Recollections" of Liliias Spalding,<sup>13</sup> daughter of the HBC trader Joseph William McKay, reminiscing that one of the reasons Victoria Harbour was chosen as a better place than Esquimalt Harbour to establish the new fort, was since "Camosun was more convenient for the Indians to beach their canoes" (quoted-Mackie 1997:278). First Nations individuals were the HBC's major suppliers, customers and workforce. The quotation above highlights the importance of situating the fort in the First Nations' world to allow for easy trading and access to First Nations labour. It also underscores the indispensability of the dugout canoe to the HBC's operations.

Dugout canoes and First Nations labour were integral to sustaining transport, even with the arrival of steamships to the Pacific Northwest, as First Nations labourers worked

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<sup>13</sup> Liliias Spalding, "Recollections," McKay Papers, BCARS, quoted in Mackie 1997: 278.

to extract and supply coal to Navy ships from the seams on northeast Vancouver Island at Fort Rupert (near present day Port McNeill). As Commander G.J. Gordon wrote in a letter addressed to Captain J.A. Duntze, October 7, 1846:

I have the honour to inform you, that having arrived at McNeil's Harbour for that purpose [of stocking up on coal], I made known to the Natives through Mr. Sangster my wish to obtain a supply, and the next day several canoes came laden with Coal, and they continued to increase in number until our departure.

At the advice of Mr Sangster I slung a tub holding about six Cwts from the Fore Yard which was lowered into a canoe and quickly filled: in this manner ...we received 62 tons from the 24th to the 26th paying for each tub as it came up by articles of trifling value which I procured at your suggestion from the Officer in charge of Fort Victoria, the whole of the expenses incurred including a few presents necessarily made to the Chiefs, will made [sic] the Coals average not more than 4/s per ton.<sup>14</sup>

This quotation indicates what an important labour source First Nations individuals provided as colliers, and also shows the dugout canoe's role as a vital ship's tender. First Nations were integral to the growing coal industry on the coast, providing the main labour for surface mining and transporting coal. A First Nations man was even reportedly responsible for the discovery of coal at Nanaimo. Early on the HBC and fledgling colony relied on coal from the northern end of Vancouver Island, near Fort Rupert. When a First Nations man was found using coal at his blacksmith forge in Victoria he was questioned as to where he got it. He offered to come back with a canoe load of coal, which he did, showing a better and more accessible source of coal. Both in Fort Rupert and later in Nanaimo Harbour, First Nations canoeists, mostly women, were essential to the transport of coal to the carrier ships (Barman 1996:55; Lutz 2008:171-173). The coal industry on

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<sup>14</sup> Gordon to Duntze, October 7, 1846, The Colonial Despatches of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1846-1871.

Vancouver Island owed much to First Nations discoveries and labourers, building the coal industry that supplied American steamers and the Royal British Navy as it came to establish a Pacific post at Victoria. As underscored by the quote above, First Nation labourers and their products were procured relatively inexpensively.

In 1847, Paul Kane, Canadian artist and writer, travelled to the Pacific Northwest, visiting HBC forts as he sketched fort life and First Nations villages, people and daily life. His 1858 published accounts of his trip, *Wanderings of an Artist* (1968) offer an insightful companion to his sketches (see Fig. 4) and add an outsider's perspective of the Pacific Northwest coast. Much of his coastal journeying was accomplished by hired dugout canoe with First Nations crew. From Fort Victoria, Kane went on a number of canoe trips, visiting First Nations villages to make sketches. On the return of one such trip (May 14, 1847) visiting First Nations villages along the Washington side of the Straits of Juan de Fuca, Kane, accompanied by the head chief Chea-clach,<sup>15</sup> four of his men and Fort Victoria's interpreter, recorded his harrowing crossing by dugout canoe:

Chea-clack considering that our canoe was too small, succeeded in changing it for a larger one, and at 3 o'clock A.M. we embarked and proceeded to make a traverse of thirty-two miles in an open sea. When we had been out for about a couple of hours the wind increased to a perfect gale, and blowing against an ebb tide caused a heavy swell. We were obliged to keep one man bailing to prevent our being swamped.

The Indians on board now commenced one of their wild chants, which increased to a perfect yell whenever a wave larger than the rest approached; this was accompanied with blowing and spitting against the wind as if they were in angry contention with the evil spirit of the storm. It was altogether a scene of the most wild and intense excitement:

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<sup>15</sup> Confusingly Chea-clach appears to be the name of a head chief (of an unspecified tribe) who serves as Kane's guide (1968:155) and also the name of the chief of the Clallums (1968:156), he does not make it clear if these are indeed the same man.

the mountainous waves roaming round our little canoe as if to engulf us every moment, the wind howling over our heads, and the yelling Indians, made it actually terrible. I was surprised at the dexterity with which they managed the canoe, all putting out their paddles on the windward side whenever a wave broke, thus breaking its force and guiding the spray over our heads to the other side of the boat.

It was with the greatest anxiety that I watched each coming wave as it came thundering down, and I must confess that I felt considerable fear as to the event. However, we arrived safely at the fort at 2 P.M., without further damage than what we suffered from intense fatigue, as might be expected, from eleven hours' hard work, thoroughly soaked and without food; but even this soon passed away before the cheerful fire and "hearty" dinner with which we were welcomed at Fort Victoria. One of the Indians told me he had no fear during the storm, except on my account, as his brethren could easily reach the shore by swimming, even should the distance have been ten miles. (1968:163-164)

This passage demonstrates the appreciation Kane had for the First Nations crew's skill, as well as the fear, discomfort and triumph offered by a rough sea crossing. Interesting here too is his account of the crew's singing. Singing and chants are often used by canoeists to keep in time as well as for more spiritual reasons, such as raising morale and fighting evil spirited weather (Neel 1995:6). For Kane, however, the crew's singing only added to his fear and discomfort.

Before Kane's return to Fort Nisqually he was asked by Roderick Finlayson, HBC officer in charge of Fort Victoria at the time, to take letters onward to Fort Nisqually. Kane engaged the services of a visiting chief who was returning to Fort Nisqually. Kane's passage describing this trip on June 9, 1847 is telling of the need both parties had of the service of the other.

He [the Nisqually chief] was very glad of my company, as my being the bearer of despatches would be a certain protection for the whole party from whatever Indians we might meet. I asked him how he had managed to escape on coming down, and he showed me an old piece of newspaper, which he said he held up whenever he met with strange Indians, and they, supposing it to be a letter for Fort Victoria, had allowed him to pass without molestation.

The gentlemen in charge of the various posts have frequent occasion to send letters, sometimes for a considerable distance, when it is either inconvenient or impossible for them to fit out a canoe with their own men to carry it. In such cases the letter is given to an Indian, who carries it as far as suits his convenience and safety. He then sells the letter to another, who carries it until he finds an opportunity of selling it to advantage; it is thus passed on and sold until it arrives at its destination, gradually increasing in value according to the distance, and the last possessor receiving the reward for its safe delivery. In this manner letters are frequently sent with perfect security, and with much greater rapidity than could be done otherwise. (1968:171-172)

Not only does this passage demonstrate how Paul Kane, the Nisqually chief and the HBC benefitted from the dispatch delivering relationship, but it also details how the delivery of letters was achieved when the regular canoe express was unavailable or inconvenient.

In the 1848 treatise *Vancouver's Island: The New Colony*, James Edward FitzGerald criticized the HBC's monopoly and control over the colonization of the new colony. Although he never travelled to the North Pacific coast, he offered a conflicting argument for both the amicability and treachery of the First Nations people of Vancouver Island. FitzGerald related a second hand story that demonstrates the trust the HBC had in their First Nations canoe-men:

There is no reason to apprehend any obstacle in the way of a settlement arising from the savages; those who have lived

amongst them say they are very easily managed. When Her Majesty's frigate "America" was lying in Port Discovery,<sup>16</sup> the Governor of Fort Victoria, in Vancouver's Island, was asked to come over, and they sent a boat for him, but he preferred coming in a canoe, rowed by a number of Indians, and he returned with them alone in the night. (FitzGerald 1848:6-7)

Nonetheless FitzGerald (1848:7) concluded his description of the First Nations people of the west coast with the observation: "They are treacherous, as all savages are, but seem to be readily propitiated."

FitzGerald's description contains incongruities, such as a reference to the "Governor of Fort Victoria" when the first officially appointed governor (Governor Blanshard) was not appointed until five years later. This inaccuracy likely results from a distorting second hand story; however, in spite of this, the passage is telling of the early importance of the dugout canoe given that FitzGerald uses the dugout canoe as a sign of the partnership formed between European and First Nations peoples. FitzGerald seems to use the HBC man's purported trust and preference for a First Nations manned canoe as an indicator of the "propitiatory" nature of the First Nations people. The European use of the dugout canoe appears to be seen, by FitzGerald, as evidence of the way in which European Newcomers and First Nations people were able to work together.

### **5.3 1849 to 1858: The Early Colonial Period**

The colonial period officially began on the Pacific Northwest coast with the creation of the Colony of Vancouver Island in 1849. This resulted in very little change at first, as the HBC still held political sway—controlling immigration, land costs and the

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<sup>16</sup>According to Gough (1974:72), the *H.M.S. America* was at this anchorage in 1845 posted to defend British interests during the Oregon Crisis.



development of infrastructure. In August 1849, the first independent colonist, Captain Walter Colquhoun Grant, arrived in Victoria by dugout canoe, having missed the sailing of the ship on which he was supposed to travel with his hired men (Bowsfield 1979:lxiii). After his arrival, Chief Factor James Douglas and J. W. McKay accompanied Grant by dugout canoe to search for a site for settlement. Grant chose the area of Sooke as it had a decent millstream and timber, in spite of Douglas and McKay's recommendation of Metchosin given its greater proximity to Victoria. By October 8th, 1851, Douglas petitioned Archibald Barclay of the colonial government for funds to build a wagon road to connect the settlers at Sooke Inlet with Victoria, as the settlers were "put to a great expense for canoe hire for want of a good horse road" (Bowsfield 1979:222). This underscores how essential canoe travel was for many years in connecting the settlements of Sooke and Victoria.

In October of 1849, Reverend Robert John Staines and his wife Emma arrived in Victoria, employed by the HBC to establish a school and teach the company's and settler's children (Bowsfield 1979:59). According to the popular history, *The Pioneer Women of Vancouver Island: 1843-1866* (1928), Eliza and James Anderson, children of the mainland HBC trader Alexander C. Anderson, travelled by canoe to Fort Victoria to attend this school. Although this is a second hand retelling of this journey, it is interesting to see the romantic treatment this story is given by the author. From "Fort Langley," Lugin (1928:29) writes,

they were met by Mr. Douglas, who took the young girl and her brother in charge. They were placed in separate canoes with a half a dozen Indians to paddle each small craft. In this way they were to travel all the long miles of waterways down the turbulent Fraser, out into the open waters of the Gulf, and across the sweep of sea which feels

the rough swell of the Straits. Even today, in large steamers which ply these waters, the waves often wash over the decks. We can well imagine the emotions of these two children during this dangerous journey, huddled in the centre of the canoes, not understanding a word of the language of the natives. A storm broke and the rain beat down into the canoes, wetting them to the skin. The wind blew, and waves loomed up black and terrifying all through the night. But the steady chanting song of the Indian paddlers served to reassure the children somewhat, and early in the morning they reached Plumper's Pass to dry themselves and break fast. Happily, the sun shone. This last day of the long journey was a pleasant one, and the children slept soundly that night, their fears allayed. By the next morning they had reached Victoria. (Lugrin 1928:29)

Like FitzGerald's previously quoted account of canoe use, this passage of the Anderson children is retold by a later source. Apparently, much artistic license is taken with this quote as it is difficult to know how the author knew how the children felt comforted by the “steady chanting of the Indians” or that the children slept “soundly.” In addition, it is likely that First Nations languages, or at least the trade language, Chinook, was not so foreign to these children as they grew up with a fur trader father and mother of mixed Cree, French-Canadian and Scottish heritage.<sup>17</sup>

This excerpt does offer some truths though. Children were brought to Vancouver Island to attend Staine's school and many travelled to Victoria by dugout canoe (MacLurin 1938:247). Lugrin's treatment of this story is telling to this analysis. The romantic portrayal of canoe travel by Lugrin makes the dugout canoe and the First Nations canoe men themselves work as a symbol of otherness. This otherness, is set up as part of the heroic adventure that the children must overcome to attend to their civilized right to education. Interestingly, unlike the first hand journey described by Paul Kane

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<sup>17</sup> Nancy Marguerite Anderson, “Betsy Birnie, wife of Alexander Caulfield Anderson,” *Fur Trade Family History* (blog), November 23, 2009, <http://furtradefamilyhistory.blogspot.ca/2009/11/betsy-birnie-wife-of-alexander.html>.

(1868:163-164) whose fear was heightened by the First Nations songs, to the children the chants or songs of the First Nations canoeist acted like a lullaby, soothing their purported fear of the other and the elements.

In March of 1850, Governor Blanshard, the first governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island arrived and, by September of 1851, due to failing health, financial issues and frustration with the tight control the HBC held over the colony he resigned and returned to England. Although his stay was short, Governor Blanshard did manage a few canoe trips, one of which was particularly uncomfortable for him. As he described the hardships of his past position as governor of Vancouver Island in correspondence requesting a new governmental post addressed to Earl Grey in January of 1852, Blanshard wrote:

twice I was called to proceed to the Northern part of the Island on account of differences between the Hudson's Bay Compy's Servants, and the natives, and on one occasion was under the necessity of making a passage of seven days in an open canoe during the month of November, which acting on a constitution already enfeebled by repeated attacks of the ague, reduced me so low that on my return to Victoria, where there was not at that time any medical advice, I was unable to walk and my recovery was not expected.<sup>18</sup>

Governor Blanshard was forced to make this 200 mile voyage by dugout canoe from Fort Rupert (near present day Port McNeil) after his investigation and retaliatory attack against the "Nahwitti" peoples, who allegedly were responsible for the murders of four seamen deserters. Although evidence was unclear as to whether these murders were the result of individual First Nations people or actions carried out by a specific First Nations group, Governor Blanshard was anxious to exert colonial authority and commanded the

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<sup>18</sup> Blanshard to Grey, January 31, 1852. The Colonial Despatches of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1846-1871.

*Daedalus*, under Captain George Wellesley, to bring the murderer(s) to justice (Gough 1984:43-46). Thus commenced a series of attacks against the “Nahwitti” peoples by Governor Blanshard’s order and brought much criticism to Governor Blanshard from Douglas (Barman 1996:152; Gough 1984:47), other HBC personnel and colonial officials in London (Hendrickson 2003; Gough 1984:48), who considered Blanshard’s actions to be ill considered and potentially damaging to First Nations’ relations with Europeans. After a punitive attack upon the “Nahwitti,” Governor Blanshard was forced to return to Victoria by dugout canoe.

This dugout canoe journey, as can be seen from Blanshard’s complaint, was long, uncomfortable and damaging to Blanshard’s health. Although Blanshard’s reign as governor is marked by a breakdown of First Nations relations and a greater push toward punitive measures against perceived First Nations disorder, he still was able and willing (when given no other options, that is) to travel by dugout canoe, most likely with a First Nations crew.<sup>19</sup> This indicates a strange contradiction in how Blanshard considered First Nations and First Nations individuals. Unlike Douglas, or many other HBC men who were acquainted with First Nations politics, Blanshard was unable to separate the individual from the First Nations group as a whole, since his punishment was directed at the whole tribe rather than particular First Nations individuals (Gough 1984:47). These punitive actions are purportedly taken with the mind to teach a lesson that a “white man’s blood never dries,” and not out of a stated racist fear of the First Nations peoples and practices as a whole (Gough 1984:46). Whatever the motivation, or mixed motivations, to these actions, paired with the fact that Blanshard returned relatively unharmed with a First Nations crew by dugout canoe and was willing to go by canoe in such a situation,

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<sup>19</sup> However, it is likely that Blanshard’s canoe-men were not made up of ‘Nahwitti’ paddlers.

indicates that a First Nations threat was not as feared as Blanshard's punitive actions demonstrate.

Instead of perceiving the dugout canoe as a symbol of First Nations' collective "propitiatory" nature, as evidenced by FitzGerald in 1848, here Blanshard seems to see the dugout canoe as an unfortunate given, a normative element of backward, colonial life in the Colony of Vancouver's Island—a way of life that Blanshard's temperament and health could not tolerate.

Another example of the normalized nature of the dugout canoe can be seen in Reverend Staines' letter to his Uncle Boys in England:

These circumstances [his house and farm] thus operate upon the Colony of Vancouver's Island, which is distant from the Coast of Oregon only from 8 or 10 to 15 or 20 miles, a distance which people are continually traversing summer & winter in canoes; (I have done it myself, and am intending to do it again next week[]). (Staines to Boys, July 6, 1852)

In contrast to Governor Blanshard's disdain for canoe travel, Reverend Staines appears to be exhibiting an almost school boy glee at the prospects of living in such an adventurous new world, where open sea canoe travel was an every day occurrence. However, these accounts may be slanted toward their very different audiences (Pratt 1992:6). Reverend Staines is writing to family, to whom, judging by the content of his letter, he had neglected to write since his arrival. Reverend Staines was painting an optimistic, busy portrait of the new colony and his role in it, possibly to assuage any fears or worries his Uncle Boys may have been expressing. Governor Blanshard, on the other hand, was writing to Earl Grey of the colonial office requesting a new appointment. Here he

defended his own character and explained why he was forced to hand in his resignation, therefore he is painting a bleaker picture than Reverend Staines.

During the early years of the colony, several exploratory expeditions were conducted by dugout canoe. Very little was known about the geography of Vancouver Island at this time, in spite of the fact that the Fort at Victoria had been in place for almost ten years.<sup>20</sup> In July of 1852, Mr. Moffat travelled across the Northern end of Vancouver Island up the Comox River to Nimpkish Lake and eventually to Nootka Sound by dugout canoe (Mayne 1862:179-180; Pemberton 1860:113-147). In August of 1852, Douglas travelled up Haro Strait to Nanaimo by dugout canoe to inspect the coal findings there and explore the route. In 1852, the Haro Strait had not been charted and had been travelled by only a very few Europeans. Douglas relied heavily upon dugout canoes with First Nation guides in charting Haro Strait. He wrote that Haro Strait is “probably inconvenient for sailing vessels on account of the strong currents and frequent calms which occur in these narrow waters” (1854: 245),<sup>21</sup> making travel by dugout canoe the only possible method for this charting expedition, since traveling by steam power would be dangerous given the lack of charts and the cumbersome nature of these large ships. Douglas’ descriptions of the waterways and inlets he encountered are often made in terms of canoe travel. As Douglas noted in reference to the Cowichan River, it is “navigable for canoes to its source” (1854:246) and the Nanaimo River “falls into the inlet, and is navigable for canoes to the distance of 40 miles from the sea-coast” (1854:249). This use of the canoe as a marker of passable waters likely indicates that First Nations guides were the source of this

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<sup>20</sup> For example, Roderick Finlayson discovered Saanich Inlet in 1848, five years after the establishment of Fort Victoria, which is geographically quite close ([Fort Victoria Journal](#), September 7, 1848)

<sup>21</sup> According to the original letter by Douglas to Pakington, dated December of 1852, available online through [Colonial Despatches of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1846-1871](#), the date of this journey is incorrect and should be August 2, 1852.

information, and also demonstrates Douglas' well-established notion that dugout canoe navigation was key to travel on the coast.

The design and the speed of the dugout canoe was clearly appreciated by Europeans. Many drew parallels to contemporary European boatbuilding and suggested that canoe carvers had much to teach Western shipwrights. Akrigg and Akrigg (1992) offer the 1853 comments of the crew of the visiting *H.M.S. Virago*. Paymaster W.H. Hills, observed that the dugout canoe hulls had the lines of the “clipper bottom” (Akrigg and Akrigg 1992:115) and acting master, George Inskipp Hastings likewise noted with specific reference to the Great Northern style canoes that they “rode over the nasty ripples... in a most beautiful fashion—they are models worthy of our boatbuilders copying” (Akrigg and Akrigg 1992:115).

The *H.M.S. Virago*, a steam sloop of the Royal Navy, visited the coast in 1853 to investigate possible gold finds in Haida Gwaii and to defend this area from purported American encroachment. As the *H.M.S. Virago* travelled to Haida Gwaii, by way of the east coast of Vancouver Island, she too attempted Haro Strait, but struck upon a rock at Porlier Pass that damaged her hull (see Fig. 10). Thereafter most of her voyage up the coast was focused on finding an adequate beach on to which to run the ship to affect repairs, which they did not find until Fort Simpson (near Prince Rupert). While traveling off Cape Mudge, the *H.M.S. Virago* was raced by several canoes, as Hills records in his personal journal on May 7, 1853:

As we approached the village several canoes put off; five were large and each having fifteen Indians on board. These fellows throw the more Southern tribes in the shade. They were fine, strapping, naked specimens of the tribe savage; with faces painted black or vermillion and the hair tied in a

sort of a top knot at the back of the head, adding to the fierceness of their appearance. As we passed them they made a great noise shouting and gesticulating to get us to stop; seeing this of no avail they got out their paddles and still shouting and working like so many demons endeavoured to keep up with the vessel: although we were going about 7 ½ knots several of the canoes managed to keep within hail for two or three minutes; but at last dropped astern.<sup>22</sup>

This passage is just one example of the speed and capabilities of the dugout canoe and the canoeists. It attests the speed attained by dugout canoes that easily competed with the steam technology available on the coast at the time. Apart from the visiting Royal Navy ships, such as the *H.M.S. Virago*, the only permanent steam vessel on the coast at the time was the HBC's *S.S. Beaver*. The *S.S. Beaver* maintained a speed of six knots— with a purported potential of eight and a half knots (Lamb 1938:168)— but had the disadvantage of reduced maneuverability due to its side wheels (and a deep draught). In addition, the *S.S. Beaver* required at least one ton of coal for every hour spent at six knots. When run with wood<sup>23</sup> instead of coal, the fuel it consumed in one day required a crew of lumbermen two days to gather (Downs 1967-1971:13). The potential speed of eight and a half knots was rarely, if ever achieved, since the weight aboard needed to be streamlined (which hardly happened as she was usually carrying supplies and trade goods) and weather had to be optimal. Later more permanent steam vessels operated along the coast, but their speed and dexterity was often challenged by the dugout canoe.

The rate of settlement in the Colony of Vancouver Island remained slow, but steady as the colony developed. Even with the construction of a wagon trail to connect the

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<sup>22</sup> William Henry Hills, October 12, 1852 - July 1853, Journal- *H.M.S. Virago* & *H.M.S. Portland*. Microfilm, Mitchell Library, Sydney, Aus. Y12 ML MSS. 1436/1. Copy in, Philip and Helen Akrigg fonds, In Microfilms Part A, # 20-3. UBC Library's Government Publications Division. Call # AW 1 R 7720.

<sup>23</sup> For more information about the *S.S. Beaver* see the Vancouver Maritime Museum. "Beaver." Accessed July 19, 2014. <http://archive.today/JbqRc>.



colonists at Metchosin and Sooke, canoe travel was still vital to join the various farms with the somewhat more metropolitan area of Victoria and Esquimalt. Martha Cheney Ella, a young, English colonist, offers the only known diary, by a woman in early colonial Victoria, from before the Gold Rush (recorded from 1853 to 1856) (Nesbitt 1949:95). The farm on which she lived with her uncle and aunt frequently saw visitors from Victoria and served as a halfway point for settlers traveling to and from Sooke. These travelers often came and went by dugout canoe—providing Ella with many instances of dugout canoe use to make this method of travel appear commonplace in her writings. However, as Ella's various accounts of the difficulty of getting canoes and paddlers demonstrate, although this method of travel was commonplace, it was not as reliable as the Europeans would have wished. First Nations paddlers were often otherwise engaged, as Ella records on April 22, 1853:

Mr Swanston came in from the Fort in a Canoe, wanting to go on to Soake [sic] but could not get a Canoe from the Indians on account of their feast. (1949:103)

A feast at a nearby First Nations village meant that First Nations canoeists could not be chartered and Mr. Swanston was forced to find another method to return to Victoria. Ella often made mention of the difficulty in procuring a canoe due to weather, lack of canoeists and feasts at the nearby village, yet still this was a quicker and preferred method of traveling.

Across the border, Mr. T.F. McElroy, of Olympia, Washington, came on a leisurely sight-seeing tour of Puget Sound and Vancouver Island to “visit...the several flourishing towns” along the way. To return from Vancouver Island, McElroy along with several fellow travelers hired a dugout canoe. As he wrote to the editor of the Home

Correspondence in the *Columbian* newspaper on October 19, 1853, McElroy and his fellow travelers:

chartered a canoe and five Indians, and on Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> inst., were again on the waters all homeward bound. To me, a landsman, the return trip was rather rough traveling, and I more than once found myself wondering whether a supervisor ought not be at work there levelling the hills and hollows. At 9 o'clock, P.M., we landed on the lower end of Whidbey's Island, and camped for the night.<sup>24</sup>

This passage demonstrates that dugout canoes and First Nations canoeists were employed to cross the straits. Taken together with Reverend Staines letter and Martha Cheney Ella's diary, these accounts indicate that canoe travel was commonplace and necessary. To McElroy, it was a trying and uncomfortable way to travel, but this is a personal discomfort, which he writes about in a comedic way explaining it as part of his shortcomings as a "landsman." His fellow travelers reportedly did not experience similar discomfort, perhaps suggesting that they more routinely availed themselves of it.

Regular canoe users, such as Martha Cheney Ella, her family and her friends did not seem to have their own purchased dugout canoes, relying instead upon First Nations to provide that service. Perhaps they preferred to hire the paddlers with their canoes because these settlers did not have the skills or knowledge to manage their own canoes. By contrast in Shoalwater Bay, just North of the Columbia River in Washington State, the settler, enterpriser and amateur ethnographer,<sup>25</sup> James Swan owned several canoes of various types and sizes. One canoe, a forty-six foot long and six foot wide Nuu-chah-nulth style canoe (Swan calls it a Chenook canoe) purchased from Chief Kape of the

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<sup>24</sup> T.F. McElroy, 1853. Home Correspondence. The *Columbian*, October 20. Accessed from BCA.

<sup>25</sup> Later, Swan's knowledge and interest in First Nations peoples and culture led him to become an Indian agent in Washington State.

Quinault Tribe (Swan 1998:78)<sup>26</sup> could hold thirty people, and Swan wrote about how his First Nations friends from the Shoalwater Bay area requested to borrow it to go on fishing expeditions:

One day old Toke came to me with the information that there were plenty of salmon in the Nasal, and he wished to borrow my large canoe, as his was not large enough to carry all his people. I consented, provided I could go with them; to this he gladly assented, and we soon got our things ready for a week's sport. After we had safely stowed our blankets, guns, hooks, spears, and provisions, we started off, with my little canoe in tow to act as a tender. (Swan 1998:135)

In this passage we see Swan set off with his large canoe and provisions, along with his small canoe acting as a tender. Although Swan was full of praise and respect for his First Nations neighbors and their technological contributions, he joined a long list of other sources that criticized the “leisurely” (Leighton 1888:30) pace at which canoeists traveled:

A person traveling with Indians, particularly in canoes, should make up his mind not to be in a hurry; they move just as it suits them. If the wind is fair, they make sail if they have one, or, in lieu of that, will hoist a blanket, and go as the wind blows. But if it is ahead or is calm, they paddle along in a very lazy sort of manner. If night is likely to overtake them before getting to their destination, they always try to go ashore before dark, where they can find fresh water and make a good camp; and when their fire is made and their supper cooked, they feel as much at home as if in their own lodge. There is no hurrying with them to reach the next tavern, or, like the youth tied to his mother's apron-strings, feeling obliged to be at home when the bell rings for nine o'clock in the evening. Where ever night

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<sup>26</sup> The dates in Swan's accounts are often unclear, but since he arrived in Washington in 1852 and published *The Northwest Coast: or Three Year's Residence in Washington Territory* in 1857, his accounts are placed chronologically as a contemporary of Martha Ella Cheney and T.F. McElroy and before the accounts from the Fraser River Gold rush.

finds them, there they rest, and sleep secure. (Swan 1998:135-136)

In commenting on the speed of travel, Swan notes the frequency of camping. Swan's naive construction here of First Nations travelers as comfortable with camping and their wilderness surroundings, harkens to the Western tropes of native "children of the forest," reflecting Swan's likely education in the philosophies of the "noble savage" (Francis 1996:3; Harris 2004:170-171; Stocking 1987:10-16). However, as Swan's writings demonstrate, this construction was not necessarily conscious or free of complication, since as the first passage indicates, Swan became deeply enveloped in First Nations life-ways—working, fishing and living with First Nations people. Speaking of another canoe trip Swan wrote:

We could have reached home easily, but, as there was no occasion for haste, I preferred to travel just as the Indians were used to going, without hurrying them up continually, which only vexes them to no purpose. Indians can be hired to go as quick as a person desires, but when they are traveling with their families, they dislike very much being obliged to go faster than a very moderate pace.

When in the canoe, all hands will paddle vehemently, and one would suppose the journey would be speedily accomplished, the canoe seeming almost to fly. This speed will be kept up for a hundred rods, when they cease paddling, and all begin talking. Perhaps one has spied something, which he has to describe while the rest listen; or another thinks of some funny anecdote or occurrence that has transpired among the Indians they have been visiting, that has to be related; or they are passing some remarkable tree, or cliff, or stone, which has a legend attached to it, and while the old folks never can pass without relating to the young, who all give the most respectful attention. When the tale is over, the steersman gives the word "*Que-nuk, que-nuk, whid-tuck*" (now, now, hurry), when all again paddle away with a desperate energy for a few minutes, and then the same scene is again enacted. But if the wind happens to be fair, then they are happy; the sail is set if they have one,

or if not, some one's blanket serves instead, and down they sit in the bottom of the canoe, and eat dried fish and tell stories. If the wind is very fresh and squally they sit to the windward, and whenever a puff strikes the sail strong enough to threaten a capsize, they all dip their paddles deep into the water, bringing the broadside of the blade towards the bottom of the canoe, which serves the purpose of righting her and throwing the sail up into the wind. They are exceedingly expert in their canoes, and very seldom meet with accidents. (Swan 1998:248-249)

Although it is easy here to lump Swan's comments as stemming from the growing racialized stereotype of “Indian Time,” where First Nations peoples were expected to be unconcerned by time and schedules, that is not completely fair. In these passages, Swan is critical and slightly patronizing about the speed of travel by canoe, but he is also understanding and tries to make the reader understand too through his long description of traveling by canoe. One could also criticize Swan for too easily slipping into discussing “Indians” in a generalized way, but as his introduction to his volume states: “In all matters relating to the Indians, I only give an account of those *I have lived with*, the Chenooks, Chehalis, and one or two tribes north of Gray's Harbour” (Swan 1998:6). Swan gives no stated pretense of making generalizable accounts of First Nations life-ways.

Swan's writings bring to life historic canoe travel in a way that other authors do not. Although Swan was influenced by common stereotypes and prejudices, as is seen in his patronizing language and his “children of the forest” construction of some of his descriptions, in his passage about the speed of canoe travel perhaps he is simply observing what he believes to be true. That is that the First Nations people he has travelled with could be hired to travel speedily, but they preferred to go at a slower pace when travelling with their families.

#### 5.4 1858 to 1871: The Mid-Colonial Period

In March of 1858, the sleepy Colony of Vancouver Island was struck by a flash flood of gold seekers heading to the Fraser River. Victoria's infrastructure was stretched. Tent cities erupted and all possible watercrafts were appropriated to carry miners to the Fraser River. Steam ships were unable to travel up the Fraser River as far as the gold fields, leaving a significant distance to be traveled either on foot or by canoe. Dugout canoes and First Nations guides were especially sought after by miners who, often begrudgingly, valued First Nations knowledge of the routes to and up the Fraser River. Lewis J. Swindle's 2001 digital publication, *The Fraser River Gold Rush of 1858 As Reported by the California Newspapers of 1858: Was It A Humbug?* makes available many American newspaper accounts of miners from the goldfields—offering an American perspective on the Fraser River goldfields and the necessity of the dugout canoe. These accounts were often relayed to newspapers as letters carried by the mail services available on the coast. The mail service itself was often the dugout canoe, as a Port Townsend correspondent for the San Francisco newspaper the *Alta California* writes on March 9, 1858:

Our mail facilities, are in a rather dilapidated condition, our contractors having fallen back upon the old legitimate plan of transporting the U.S. MAIL - viz; the Indian Canoe. (Swindle 2001:Kindle Locations 524-525).

However, as another Washington correspondent, called Brown, wrote for the *Alta California* in Olympia on March 26, 1858, the dugout canoe was soon replaced in the Puget Sound stretch of the run by competing steamships:

We have two steamers now running on the Sound—the *Sea Bird* and the *Constitution*. Two weeks ago, the mails were carried around in canoe. Now, we have two steamers running opposition; both demanding the mails, entering

protest, etc. Verily it is a feast or a famine. (Swindle 2001:Kindle Locations 602-604; italics added for clarity)

Apart from the use of the dugout canoe for delivering letters and supplies, it was relied upon by miners to travel to the gold fields. As this column excerpt nicely summarizes in the *San Francisco Herald* on April 6, 1858, the dugout canoe was one of the only options for travel:

...The rush of parties to these mines has been so great, that he [Adams] says there is not a canoe... to be had from the tribes of Indians who are near the entrance of Fraser's River. I learn from Mr. M. [Manson], who has frequently traveled up and down this river, the following facts in reference to its navigation. The tide rises, it is said, as high as seventeen feet - no breakers at the bar or entrance to the river. Once an [sic] steamers, of medium size, can enter and go up the river as far as Fort Langley, some forty miles; and the river is navigable to the first rapids for steamers drawing five or six feet of water - distance, ninety miles. An ugly portage has to be made here. The rapids above this would interfere with the navigation for anything except canoe. As there are three rapids intervening between the terminus of St. Navigator and the mines, the distance would be as follows. From Victoria, Vancouver Island, to Fraser's River, fifty miles; to the first rapids, ninety; to the mines, canoe navigation, forty miles. It is supposed a steamer will be placed on the river in a short time. Miners going there at this time could not calculate on this. The reliance would have to be on canoes from Puget Sound. There is a tax assessed by the provincial Government of five dollars per month on each miner. (Swindle 2001:Kindle Locations 632-643)<sup>27</sup>

Swindle (2001:Kindle Locations 639) makes clear that the number of dugout canoes demanded by the mass in flux of miners traveling up the Fraser exceeded the supply, driving the price of canoes up and making miners wait until they could obtain one from miner's coming back down the river, or until freshly built canoes became available from

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<sup>27</sup> This tax was often charged to each canoe for ease. See "Despatch to London: Douglas to Stanley," June 10 1858, *The Colonial Despatches of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1846-1871*.

First Nations carvers. Just a month prior, Franklin Mathias was able to express his preference in a particular style of canoe. As Mathias recommends to a Mr. Plummer, who published his letter in the *Olympian Pioneer* in March of 1858 (it was later republished in the *Alta California*):

Every party that starts from the Sound should have their own supplies to last them three or four months, and should bring the largest sized Chinook canoes, as small one are very liable to swamp on the rapids. Each canoe should be provided with about 30 fathoms of strong line for towing over swift water, and every man well armed. (Swindle 2001:Kindle Locations 705-707)

The Chinook, or Nuu-chah-nulth style, canoe originates from the Nuu-chah-nulth people of the west coast of Vancouver Island and Cape Flattery. The trader and entrepreneur, William Eddy Banfield, in his descriptions of the Pacheedaht First Nation (located near Port Renfrew) wrote for the *Victoria Gazette* on August 14, 1858 that:

Their region is also a great canoe mart, although very few are made in the neighborhood. A large percentage is gained on the slave traffic and canoes—slaves fetching, at Victoria, forty-five and fifty blankets; canoes net about one hundred and fifty percent profit. Dollars are not much in demand, although they perfectly understand their value. Blankets, slaves and beads are their real and sterling commodity.<sup>28</sup>

This market in Victoria for canoes directly correlated to the explosion of miners demanding transportation, which the Pacheedaht First Nation were able to provide as middlemen traders, transporting canoes made, according to another of Banfield's accounts,<sup>29</sup> by the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations of Clayoquot Sound. As Banfield suggested the prices for dugout canoes reflected the high demand by miners and made for quite a

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<sup>28</sup> William E. Banfield, 1858 Vancouver Island. Its topography, characteristics, &c. Number II. The Netinett District. *Victoria Gazette*, August 14. Accessed from BCA.

<sup>29</sup> William Eddy Banfield. 1858. Vancouver Island. Its topography, characteristics, &c. Number VII. Clayoquot Sound - The Tonquin Massacre. *Victoria Gazette*, September 9. Accessed from BCA.



profit at Victoria and other towns along the miner's route to the goldfield. As Mr. A. L. Sehden writes on June 14, 1858 from Whatcom, Washington to a Nicholas Hall, who published this correspondence in the *Daily Union*:

We buy canoes off the Indians from \$50 to \$200 apiece. It is a high price, but they lay over anything in the boat line I ever yet saw. They are burnt out of cedar trees scraped and painted, and run like lightning. Four of us yesterday gave \$100 for one. (Swindle 2001:Kindle Locations 2886-2893).

The riches of the goldfields were thought to justify the expense in reaching them.

However, as indicated by Banfield, dollars were not necessarily the mode of transaction.

As Mr. E. R. Collins recalls to the *Alta California* paper,

At Harrison River they employed an Indian pilot, at the rate of one dollar per day, payable in handkerchiefs, shirts and other 'traps'... (Swindle 2001:Kindle Locations 712-716)

In addition to dugout canoes, First Nations pilots and crewmen were also essential to traversing the Fraser River, as a miner warned from Fort Langley in May of 1858:

If you come in a canoe hire an Indian to go with you; they can be had to go clear through to the mines for about twenty dollars—and that is nothing compared to the almost certain loss of the canoe and provisions to be met without him. (Swindle 2001:Kindle Locations 1522-1527)

However much the miners relied upon First Nations guides, their relationship was not always easy. American miners especially tended to carry with them hostile preconceived prejudices about “Indians” and how best to treat them. As Harris (2000:110) outlines, in the early months of the Fraser River gold rush it was difficult for the colonial government to ensure justice, which forced them to rely mostly upon the miners themselves to maintain the peace. In these early months relations between First Nations and miners were usually cordial, as both required the benefits of trade and the labour force of the

other. But as more and more “Indian fighters” from the American South came to the goldfields, tensions arose.<sup>30</sup> As Mr. W.H. Woods warned from McCaw’s Rapid, Fort Yale in the *Puget Sound Herald* on May 1, 1858:

Parties coming up Fraser River should have canoes, if possible, and manned by Indian; and they ought to keep watch every night and day, for the Indians on this river will steal any and everything within their reach. In going up the river, they should never interfere with their Indians, but permit them to go by any route they may [sic] see fit to select, and to load the canoe as they please. Indians from Fort Langley to Fort Hope are paid \$1 per day, with provisions three times a day, morning, noon and night. From Fort Hope to the digging they are paid \$1 per day, with provisions. (Swindle 2001:Kindle Locations 1395-1396)

Here, Woods advised miners to back away from their preconceived notions and let their First Nations crew do what it is they were hired to do, at the same time as he reinforces the stereotype of thieving First Nations peoples. Woods also indicated the costs of hiring First Nations labourers to assist with mining. First Nations individuals and families were early workers in the goldfields (Lutz 2008:177). They were responsible for most of the early gold discoveries and, much to the annoyance of the American miners, First Nations peoples did not easily give up these claims (Knight 1978:131).

A special correspondent for the *San Francisco Bulletin*, on May 11, 1858, offered an especially conflicted account of managing a First Nations crew. On the one hand, he reportedly needed his First Nations paddlers to guide him and his fellow travelers safely up the river, but on the other hand this American correspondent reveals a great dislike

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<sup>30</sup> These ‘Indian fighters’ held that eradication was the best method of dealing with First Nations peoples (Harris 2000:110)

and distrust for these individuals, most likely arising out of racist prejudices, miscommunication and a misunderstanding of cultures.

Our Indians, too, gave us a great deal of trouble. Every item [sic] we stopped to eat or camp, they would draw a crowd of their people around us, and would refuse to go on without our giving them a coat or something else. On one occasion, they held on to the canoe, but the sight of a drawn revolver soon brought them to their senses. Without them, however, we would have found it impossible to go on. [T]hey knew every foot and every eddy in the river, and would take us five miles where we would have been puzzled to have made one. On arriving here, we paid them, when they attempted to s[t]eal some paddles from us; but instead, got kicked, and left with a canoe belonging to some Indians here. (Swindle 2001:Kindle Locations 1715-1723)

This passage is riddled with distrust, violence, fear of thieving and of being abandoned. The correspondent seems to greatly resent being put in a position of dependence upon these First Nations individuals and is perhaps more reactive to their purported misdemeanors than he likely would have been if they were labourers of a Euro-American background.

Like the cost of the canoe, the cost of hiring a First Nations crew rose and was varied from \$1 a day plus provisions (Swindle 2001: Kindle Locations 1395-1396) to \$3.50 a day (Swindle 2001: Kindle Locations: 1155-1174). These costs were still less, however, than traveling by foot and hiring a packer. As Mayne recalled, in the winter of 1858-59 on the Lilloett River,

The Indians were taking goods up the river in their canoes for 5 cents (2 1/2 d.) per lb., while the packers on the trail were charging 15 cents (7 1/2 d.). (Mayne 1862:404)

Traveling to the gold field was dangerous and treacherous. Although the canoe was less expensive, quicker and easier than traveling by foot, it was nonetheless dangerous.

Many lives were lost on the fast flowing Fraser River, especially in the late Spring-early Summer months when the river was running at its swiftest from winter runoff. As this letter republished in the *Alta California* in April, 1858, relates, canoe travel could be deadly:

The greatest trouble is experienced in getting over the rapids at the present high stage of water. Above Fort Yale several canoes have been swamped, and all their stores lost. The following persons were drowned by the swamping of a single canoe: James Blair, a blacksmith from the Sandwich Island; John Wilson, (unknown), Ned Smith, who came from Sydney in the *Eli Whitney*, and two Kanakas. (Quoted in Swindle 2001:Kindle Locations 858-860)

With this massive increase of immigration to the gold fields, the resources of the governing body of the Colony of Vancouver Island were strained. To regulate settlement and development of this area, the mainland colony of British Columbia was created in 1858, with New Westminster decreed its capital in 1859. Although this new administration was set up, resources were still stretched. In January of 1859, when rumours of a disturbance at Yale reached the coast, a composite force was called to assist, made up of Royal Engineers and officers of the Royal Navy.

Richard C. Mayne a surveyor of the Royal Navy was among the group summoned to provide backup strength and reestablish the peace. Upon arriving at Langley, Mayne and his fellow officers found out that the only steamer shallow-bottomed enough to travel up the Fraser past Langley, the *H.M.S. Enterprise*, had already left for Yale. Instead of splitting up his men, Mayne elected to go ahead by dugout canoe to catch up with the *H.M.S. Enterprise* and instruct them to return and pick up their re-enforcements. As can be seen from Mayne's retelling of his canoe adventure, traveling by canoe in January with ice on the river and hidden rocks and eddies made for treacherous waters:

Mr. Yale, the Hudson Bay Company's officer at Fort Langley, undertook to provide a canoe and crew for the journey, and my own preparations were soon made—a blanket, frock and trowsers [sic], a couple of rugs, two or three pipes, plenty of tobacco, tea, coffee, some meat, and bread, a frying-pan and saucepan, completing my outfit. At this time canoe-traveling was quite new to me, and familiar as it has since become, I quite well remember the curious sensations with which this my first journey of the kind was commenced. It was midwinter, the snow lay several inches thick upon the ground; the latest reports from up the river spoke of much ice about and below Fort Hope, so that I was by no means sorry to avail myself of the offer of Mr. Lewis, of the Hudson Bay Company, who had accompanied the 'Plumper' to Langley as pilot, to be my companion, Mr. Yale had selected a good canoe and nine stout paddlers, four half-breeds and five Indians, and when I landed from the ship a few minutes before eleven they were waiting on the beach, dressed in their best blankets, with large streamers of bright red, blue, and yellow ribbons, in which they delighted so much, flying from their caps. Mr. Yale had previously harangued them, and presented them with these streamers by way of impressing them with the importance of the service in which they were engaged. Seating ourselves in the canoe as comfortably as we could, away we started, the frail bark flying over the smooth water, and the crew singing at the top of their wild, shrill voices, their parti-colored decorations streaming in the bitter winter wind.

The North American Indians, and indeed the Canadians as well, paddle much more steadily when they sing. They keep splendid time, and, by way of accompaniment, bring the handle of their paddles sharply against the gunwale of the canoe. In singing their custom is—and the greatest stickler for etiquette among us will find himself outdone by the Indian's respect for whatever habit of fashion may have dictated—for the steersman to sing, the crew taking up the chorus. Although I have frequently tried to induce one of the others to start a song, with the view of testing the strength of their social habit in this respect, I have never succeeded unless supported in my request by the steersman. (Mayne 1862:60-61)

Here I break into Mayne's story to draw attention again to a European making note of the singing of the First Nations crew. Mayne demonstrates how comfortable he is, in this

his “first journey of the kind” (Mayne 1862:60), or is it perhaps a fictional bravado that he relates, as he describes himself as almost teasing First Nations’ protocol, by attempting to prompt other paddlers than the steersman to begin the song. Either way, these aspects of Mayne’s account demonstrate a dramatic difference between his canoeing experience and interaction with First Nations paddlers, compared with those related by American miners above, who often were frustrated, angry, disrespectful, pushy and even violent with their First Nations paddlers. Mayne's experiences may have differed as a result of his evident respect and trust in the First Nations paddlers. Mayne gives mention to the ribbons presented to the paddlers by Mr. Yale (of the HBC) to remind them of “the importance of the service in which they were engaged” (Mayne 1862:60). This grounding in gifts and the sanctioning of the service by the HBC also likely set Mayne up for a good trip, since the HBC and First Nations peoples traditionally are known to have had a good working relationship. Additionally, Mayne was of a different background than the gold seekers. British by background and having served the crown, Mayne was “King George man” who historically had a better relationship with First Nation people that did the “Boston men” or American traders (Gough 1984:16). These histories aside, Mayne appears to have been a less disrespectful, suspicious or money scrimping sort of person (as the Royal Navy was paying for his expedition), by comparison to the gold-seekers who were often responsible for disturbances of the peace and were mostly interested in easy, quick money.

Mayne continued with a detailed account of the role of each paddler and the seating arrangements aboard the canoe:

This post of honour [of the steersman] is usually conferred upon the senior of the party, unless the owner of the canoe

happens to form one of the crew, when he takes the seat by virtue of his interest in it. Next in position and importance to the steersman are the pair of paddlers who sit immediately behind the passengers; then come the two forward hands, who have a great deal to do with the management of the canoe in keeping clear of blocks of floating ice, or the snags which often appear suddenly under its bows, and preventing the current from spinning it round and swamping it, which, but for the keen look-out they would keep and their dexterity in the use of paddles, would often happen in such swift and treacherous currents as those of North American rivers.

We paddled along quickly until five o'clock, when we stopped for supper, and landing, made tea. This meal over, we started again and held on steadily all night. If the journey by day was strange and somewhat exciting, how much more so did it become when night set in! Wet, cold and tired, we rolled ourselves up in the rugs, and in time fell into broken sleep, lulled by the monotonous rap of the paddles upon the gunwale of the canoe, the rippling sound of the water against its sides, the song of the men now rising loud and shrill, now sinking into a low drowsy hum. Ever and anon roused by a louder shout from the paddlers in the bow, we started up to find the canoe sweeping by some boat moored to the shore, or a miner's watch-fire, from which an indistinct figure would rise, gaze at us wonderingly as we passed howling by, and sometimes shout to us loudly in reply. We might well startle such of the miners as saw or heard us. Whenever we passed a fire, or a boat drawn up ashore, or moored to the trees by the beach, in which miners might be sleeping, the Indians would commence singing at the top of their voices; and we often saw sleepers start up, in wonder no doubt, who could be traveling on the river at night at such a season,—and in some fear perhaps, for several murders had lately been committed, which were attributed rightly or wrongly to Indian agency. And, indeed, as we swept by a watch-fire near enough for its glare to light up the dark figures straining at their hard work, and their wild, swarthy faces, with the long, bright ribbons streaming behind them,—we might well give a shock to some wearied sleeper roused abruptly from dreams of home, or some rich claim which was to make his fortune, by the wild Indian boat-chant. (Mayne 1862:61-62)

As nighttime closed in, Mayne's account takes on a dreamy, exotic, otherworldliness as he imagines how the canoe and its paddlers would appear to those they passed. In his imaginings, he and Mr. Lewis, the only European travelers aboard the canoe, do not serve to make the canoe and its paddlers mundane or any less exotic. In his description he and Mr. Lewis are simply sleeping passengers, not responsible for the propulsion of the canoe or seemingly actively involved in its progress or its appearance, yet the trip itself is the result of their design. How can these passengers be at the same time initiators and recorders of the voyage, yet also seem to be invisible?

To return to Mayne's account, as he relates with awe his crew's ability to negotiate the perils of the Fraser River and the discomforts of being awoken by a nearly foundering canoe:

Most of our journey lay close along the shore, where of course, the current was less rapid and advantage could be taken of the numerous eddies that set in near the banks. Our chief man was quite well acquainted with the river's navigation, having been for years in the Hudson Bay Company's employ. When we came to a rapid, or it was necessary to cross the river from one bank to the other, by one consent the singing would cease, the paddler's breath be husbanded to better purpose, and every muscle strained to force the canoe over the present difficulty. At such times when any greater exertion was necessary, or a more formidable obstacle than usual seemed on the point of being mastered, the Indians would give a loud prolonged shout terminating in a shriller key, and dash their paddles into the boiling water with still fiercer vehemence. There can be few stranger sensations than which we felt many times that night, when after paddling so steadily alongshore that we had fallen fast asleep, we were awoke suddenly by a heavy lurch of the canoe, and found the water rushing over the gunwale, and the boat almost swamped by the fierce exertions of the paddlers, and tearing broadside down rather than across the rapid river, until with a shout it was run ashore on the opposite bank, and the excited rowers



rested a few minutes to regain their breath before again paddling up the quieter water by the shore.

Next morning, about four o'clock, we landed for a short spell of rest, and, clearing away the snow, lit a fire and lay round it for a couple of hours. At the end of that time we picked ourselves up, stiff with cold, and breakfasted, and by half-past seven were under weigh again and paddling up river, the Indians, to all appearances, as lively and unwearied as if they had slept the whole night through. I cannot say the same for their passengers. It was very cold, a sensation which we both tried in vain to be rid of by taking an occasional turn at the paddles; and the few snatches of short, disturbed sleep we had managed to obtain had left us very much fatigued. The novelty of the situation, too, in my case had worn away, and I confess that the second night of my journey was one of unmitigated discomfort and weariness. (Mayne 1862:62-63)

Mayne and Mr. Lewis are not responsible for paddling the canoe, but do give the occasional pull to warm themselves up. Here we see that Mayne no longer enjoys the adventure and romanticism of canoe travel, but he is still no less impressed by his crews' endurance and strength.

Upon the second morning we rested a little longer by our watchfire, Myhu-pu-pu, the head man of the party, assuring us that we had plenty of time to reach Hope before nightfall. But Myhu-pu-pu was wrong: night fell while we were still some miles before the fort. About three in the afternoon we had boarded the 'Enterprise' and learnt that she had been three days in the ice, had only got out of it indeed the previous morning, and that Colonel Moody had not, therefore, been able to reach Hope until that day. We had reason to congratulate ourselves upon our good fortune, as we had only met some floating ice and been nowhere in very serious danger from it, although once or twice we had narrowly escaped being swamped by swollen blocks. But as we proceeded we found the river more and more swollen, the ice thicker and in greater quantities, and despite all the efforts of the crew, darkness set in while we were yet some miles short of our destination. On we pushed, however, and I had fallen asleep, when I was suddenly awakened by a sharp crack almost under my head.

The canoe had struck a rock in crossing a rapid in the river, at a spot now known as Cornish Bar, but then called Murderer's Bar, from a murder that had taken place there, and she was stove in unmistakably.

Thanks to the courage and skill of the elder of the crew, we were extricated from our perilous predicament. Leaping on to the rock, against which the full force of the current was driving the canoe, they lifted her off without a moment's hesitation, and the other rowers shooting her ashore, we all jumped out and ran her up upon the snow. Of course everything was wet, ourselves included; but we were too grateful for our narrow escape to heed this trifling inconvenience. Meanwhile the men, whose courage and readiness had preserved us, were still upon the rock, the current sweeping by up to their knees and threatening to carry them away. The canoe being hastily repaired and veered down to them by a rope, they too were brought safely ashore. Then arose the question, how were we to be got to Fort Hope that night? It was a serious one, not admitting of a very easy solution. To get the canoe afloat again was found impossible, as she was slit fore and aft, and it was ultimately determined to leave two of the Indians in charge of it while the rest of us tried to make the trail, which was known to pass near this spot to the Fort. (Mayne 1862:60-65)

Mayne and his men made it to Hope that night with no more serious mishap and caught up with the *H.M.S. Enterprise* in time. This marked the first of many of Mayne's canoe journeys during his time on the Pacific coast from 1857 to 1861 as part of the surveying crew charged with mapping British territory in the Pacific Northwest. Many of his adventures during this time, including the one related above, were published on his return to England in 1862. I have quoted Mayne here extensively, since he gives perhaps one of the best European-sourced descriptions of travel in a dugout canoe.

People back home in England and America were hungry for information about the colonies and the goldfields. The HBC man, William Downie, went on two exploratory missions in 1859 by dugout canoe, one from Jervis Strait to Nanaimo and another up the

Skeena River to Fort St. James in the interior. These journeys, like those of the gold seekers previously, were publicized afterwards—appearing initially in the Colonial Despatches as a forwarded letter originally to Governor James Douglas from Downie,<sup>31</sup> in J. Despard Pemberton's 1860 book (1860:151-153), as well as in Mayne's 1862 publication (1862:449-454). Interestingly, Pemberton and Mayne's retellings of Downie's accounts differ in parts, suggesting imperfect copying of Douglas' original letter and the inclusion of unmarked edits. Downie's accounts alone are not so remarkable, but the necessity for reiteration by both Pemberton and Mayne is telling of the growing appetite for information about little known areas of the Pacific Northwest.

Captain Charles E. Barrett-Lennard visited the Pacific coast in the Fall of 1860 and circumnavigated Vancouver Island in his small sailing yacht, the *Templar*. His accounts show how ill adapted travel by sail was for navigating the weather and the intricate bays and sounds of Vancouver Island, since often unfavourable wind forced the *Templar* to be towed in and out of port by dugout canoe. For example, while attempting to reach a Koskimo village in Quatsino Sound, due to lack of wind Barrett-Lennard lost sail power:

We had to beat for some time against the wind in endeavouring to make the Koshkeemo [Koskimo] village. The wind at length failing, we arranged for two of the largest canoes to tow us in—an operation which they successfully accomplished, with the accompaniment of an unceasing chorus of shouting and singing, if their monotonous chanting can be dignified by the latter term. Every now and then they would stop, declaring they were tired, and we could only induce them to proceed by the threat of refusing to keep to our part of the agreement if they failed to perform theirs; we having agreed to pay them in biscuit and molasses for their trouble. At length, after a

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<sup>31</sup> William Downie to Douglas, October 10, 1859, reporting on his exploration of the Skeena River. Enclosed within, Despatch to London: Douglas to Newcastle, November 1, 1859, 880, CO 60/5, p. 243; received January 27, 1860. *In* The Colonial Despatches of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1846-1871.

long, but in no sense of the term either a steady pull or a pull altogether — a thing, indeed, never attempted by the Indians in paddling — we found ourselves anchored off the Koshkeemo [Koskimo] village. During all this time we had a very decent, civil sort of an Indian on board, who gave directions as to the course we ought to pursue. (1862:72-73)

Not only was Barrett-Lennard's *Templar* propelled by First Nations power, but also a First Nations pilot guided her. Here again is mentioned the First Nations practice of singing while pulling, with Barrett-Lennard not exactly moved by the "unceasing chorus" (1862:72). He was also not impressed by the irregular energy of the paddlers— who took too many breaks for Barrett-Lennard's liking. Generally, Barrett-Lennard seems disappointed with most First Nations actions, or perhaps wary of giving praise. Examine here, Barrett-Lennard's description of the dugout canoe, which he seems unable to leave on a praiseworthy note:

Rudely fashioned as they [the dugout canoe] may appear, in the hands of an Indian crew these vessels are wonderfully buoyant and sea-worthy; at the same time, the Indian is by no means fond of exposing himself to bad weather at sea, and will wait for days before putting out, if it appears likely to blow. (1862:50)

This passage both recognizes the technology and skill of the First Nations peoples, but nullifies this praise by also proclaiming them too fearful to use it. This is an example of what I would call a *negative-compliment*, where the attempts at praise are nullified by some contradicting modifier. The negative-compliment is less disguised in the earlier accounts by the gold miners, who are torn between their entrenched racism and their need for First Nations skill and technology. Here, in Barrett-Lennard's passage, it is more carefully cloaked in rational prose, making the racism less obvious. With time, the carefully constructed negative-compliment increases in the writings of Europeans (Lutz

2008:37). Lutz describes these forms of contradictory European written constructions, specifically of First Nations labourers, as a form of “schizophrenia” (Lutz 2008:37).

Barrett-Lennard’s ethnographic observations of the First Nations peoples he encounters tend to the derogatory as he observes:

One of the chief defects in both sexes is their very awkward walk, or rather waddle, caused by their legs and feet being cramped and deformed, and their toes turned in, from constantly sitting in their canoes. (1862:46)

Later, however, he discounts the fear of physical deformity. As Barrett-Lennard states:

I always used the paddle in preference to the oar in these waters, having by this time become thoroughly expert in handling it; I could thus see where we were going, and steer our craft accordingly. (1862:117)

Here the dugout canoe serves to create a physical other of the First Nations paddlers, yet conflictingly the European is somehow free of this same physical defect. Comments on the influence of canoe travel upon physical features are made by many writers of this period (for example, Mayne 1862:242-243 and Sproat 1868:23), but Barrett-Lennard offers a clear example of this ethnographic contradiction. Similarly, Comaroff and Comaroff (1997:219) in their work on missionization in South Africa discuss missionary attempts to convert Tswana peoples through European dress, European clothes presumed to civilize the Tswana by covering their “nakedness.” This work analyzes the ideology behind this conversion of the colonized through ‘things’/material culture, and successfully argues that missionary plans often did not come to fruition, whether by European clothes being adopted uniquely into traditional Tswana ways of life or rejected outright. Thomas (2000:205) similarly explored processes of conversion through cloth and observed that Polynesian colonized accepted cloth and clothing, but not for the reasons the missionaries

wanted. Thomas' examination demonstrates that material culture is open to interpretation and reinterpretation, as “we do not know what was received, simply because we know what was being offered” (2000:205). However, in Barrett-Lennard's case, we see both how he perceived the dugout canoe as it was used by himself and how he perceived its use by those he was attempting to other. Material culture may have an affect upon those who use it, such as in the way Douglas' exploration ventures were shaped to some extent by canoe travel, but Barrett-Lennard is not physically affected by his canoe use in the same way as he purports the First Nations peoples were.

Dugout canoe travel continued to be imperative to the colonial projects of British Columbia, as it was used for survey and missionary work. At the end of the Summer of 1860, Dr. Charles Forbes of the Royal Navy spent 40 days prospecting the Harrison Lake region for minerals at the request of Governor Douglas, mostly by dugout canoe (Forbes 1862:32-40). Missionary projects also continued to rely upon dugout canoe use to reach their First Nations flocks. As Mayne, observed while surveying off the north east end of Vancouver Island in late April of 1860:

When in Henry Bay we witnessed the arrival of some Roman Catholic priests, which caused the greatest excitement among the natives. They were scattered in all directions, fishing, &c.—many on board and around the ship—when a canoe, with two large banners flying, appeared in sight. Immediately a shout was raised of “Le Prêtre! Le Prêtre!” and they all paddled on shore as fast as they could to meet them. There were two priests in the canoe, and in this way they travelled, visiting in turn every village on the coast. A fortnight afterwards, when I was in Johnstone Strait with a boat-party, I met them again. It was pouring wet day, cold, and blowing hard, and they were apparently very lightly clothed, huddling in the bottom of their canoe, the Indians paddling laboriously against wind and tide to reach a village by night, and the sea washing over them, drenching them to the skin. I never saw men in a more

pitiable plight. They had a little map with them, and asked me to show them where they were, of which they appeared to have a very hazy idea. One of their men had a shot a deer, which they were delighted to exchange for some biscuit, of which they had run very short. Certainly if misery on this earth will be compensated for hereafter, those two priests were laying in a plentiful stock of happiness. (Mayne 1862:175-176)

The Anglican Bishop George Hills also went on many mission ventures by canoe, traveling to Yale (1996:127 and 155-156) and traversing Alberni waterways by dugout canoe. On his return journey from Alberni to Victoria by steam gunboat, the *H.M.S. Grappler*, Hills recorded in his diary on October 29, 1860 how a canoe of three First Nations people passed his ship:

A canoe of three Indians we also passed, who live in the canal, these were the How-cheak-lesets [Chicklisets?]<sup>32</sup>... They overtook us in their canoe, though we were steaming seven knots. (1996:261)

This is yet another example of the potential speed and ability of the dugout canoe to challenge European technology of the time.

In 1861, with the wrecking of the Peruvian brigantine *Florenzia* off the west coast of Vancouver Island, the dugout canoe and First Nations paddlers served as all-round emergency responders—delivering supplies to the foundering crew (Barett-Lennard 1862:122), saving the crew from drowning and recovering cargo when the ship was finally wrecked beyond saving. So too was word sent via canoe to the *H.M.S. Thetis* at anchor in Somass.<sup>33</sup> After his investigation of the sale of the wrecked *Florenzia* by the

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<sup>32</sup> Roberta Bagshaw (1996:261) interprets Hills' "How-cheak-lesets" as "Chicklisets?," but I would argue that these canoeists may more likely be members of the Uchucklesaht Tribe, given the location where Hills encountered these First Nations peoples (near the mouth of Alberni Inlet) and the closeness of the phonetic sound of the Uchucklesaht Tribe's name with that of Hill's account.

<sup>33</sup> 1861. Supposed Loss of the Gunboat Forward; Total Loss of the Brig Consort; Arrival of the *Florenzia*'s Crew. Another Wreck. Statement of John Larkin. *The British Colonist*, January 11. Accessed from BCA.

trader, Captain Stuart, near Ucluelet, Captain Edward King returned to Victoria through Barkley Sound, dodging stormy weather at Diana Island in the Deer Group of Islands. While entertaining a shooting party to pass the time, King accidentally seriously shot himself in the arm. Here again, a dugout canoe was considered the fastest option to transport King to Victoria to a doctor. Unfortunately, the weather was too rough to allow canoe passage outside of Barkley Sound, so King was forced to travel by the schooner *Saucy Lass* to the mill at Somass (near present day Port Alberni), where he died en route.<sup>34</sup> The events surrounding the loss of the *Florenca* demonstrate that the dugout canoe offered a rapid response to maritime emergencies.

By the early 1860s, steamships, such as the sternwheelers and those driven by screw propellers (Gough 1984:12), were far more common on the coast and in the interior of the Colony of British Columbia. Sternwheelers made regular runs between the two colonies and ran up major interior rivers such as the Fraser, Thompson and Skeena, as well as maintaining routes on many lakes (Down 1967-1971:8-9). However, as Alexander Rattray commented upon the resources and capabilities of the Colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver Island, with these newer methods of travel, the dugout canoe was still valued:

Access to the settlements beyond, and to the diggings at Cariboo, is less easy and more expensive, and is usually had, either by canoe or “trail,” according to circumstances. Miners usually travel in company. The canoes are large, and well adapted for river navigation; and, prior to the introduction of steamers on the Fraser River, they afforded the only mode of transport to the mines, and, even now, many miners prefer going from Victoria in this way. (1862:180)

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<sup>34</sup> Edward Stamp 1861. Report of Inquest held at Somass— Barkley Sound on the body of the late Edward Hammond King; Edward Stamp acting coroner, and twelve jurors heron named. March 8. Colonial Correspondence, File 1643. Accessed from BCA.



This passage somehow divorces the First Nations paddler and manufacturer of the dugout canoe, despite granting the canoe status as a given method of travel. By failing to appreciate the role of First Nations paddlers and canoe manufactures, this passage marks a possible silencing of First Nations involvement in colonial history (Trouillot 1995:96) and a more complete appropriation of this First Nations' material culture or technology. It must be remembered, however, that the 1860s were also a devastating period for First Nations populations as they were ravaged by diseases introduced by immigrants and increased segregation measures taken in Victoria by colonists (Van Rijn 2006:542; Edmonds 2010a:9). Perhaps this account fails to record a First Nations presence since these miners were indeed paddling their own canoes. This quote may indicate a physical disappearance of First Nations peoples, not just a rewriting of cast.

In 1863, Theodore Winthrop's *The Canoe and the Saddle* was published after his death in the American Civil War. Recounting Winthrop's leisure journey to the Pacific Northwest ten years earlier, with its lengthy descriptions of the natural beauty of the Cascade Mountain range and the Pacific Northwest, this book quickly became an American classic and Winthrop is often credited with establishing the aesthetic of the Northwest (Lindholdt 2006:xix). But as Lindholdt comments (2006:x) racism and an unbridled superiority-complex darkens Winthrop's accounts. Although the recounted events took place before the Fraser River Gold Rush, making Winthrop's accounts contemporary with those of William Hills, T.F. McElroy, Martha Ella Cheney and James Swan, it is analyzed here in the 1860s since it is a dramatized account that saw much editing by the author after the events, placing its framings more in the early 1860s than the 1850s.

At Port Townsend, Winthrop recounted interrupting a First Nations celebration to wrangle a dugout canoe and several paddlers. He also sought to hire the services of Chetzemoka, or the “Duke of York,” as he was dubbed by the settlers and referred to as here by Winthrop, to act as a guide to take him to Nisqually, near present-day Tacoma. While searching for a guide he managed to insult nearly every First Nations individual he met, including the chief of the S'Kllallam First Nations, dubbed “King George” by European settlers, who Winthrop attempted to awaken with his boot. When finally, after “striking a bargain for the leaky better of the two vessels”(2006:11), Winthrop bombastically described his canoe as thus:

No clipper that ever creaked from status quo in Webb's shipyard,<sup>35</sup> and rumbled heavily along the ways, and rushed as if to drown itself in its new element, and then went cleaving across the East River, staggering under the intoxicating influence of a champagne-bottle with a blue ribbon round its neck, cracked on the rudder-post by a blushing priestess, — no such grand result of modern skill ever surpassed in mere model the canoe I had just chartered for my voyage to Squally [Nisqually]. Here was the type of speed and grace to which the most untrammelled civilization has reverted, after cycles of junk, galleon, and galliot building, — cycles of lubberly development, but full of instruction as to what can be done with the best type when it is reasoned out or rediscovered. My vessel was a black dug-out with a red gunwale. Forty feet of pine-tree<sup>36</sup> had been burnt and whittled into a sharp, buoyant canoe. Sundry cross-pieces strengthened it, and might be used as seats or backs. A row of small shells inserted in the red-smearred gunwale served as talismans against Bugaboo. Its master was a withered ancient; its mistress a haggish crone. These two were of unsavory and fishy odor. Three young men, also of unsavory and fishy odor, completed the crew. Salmon mainly had been the lifelong diet of all, and they

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<sup>35</sup> Webb and Bell's shipyard was located in Brooklyn, New York and was responsible for the Monitor, the first ironclad of the Civil War (Footnote by Lindholdt 2006: 212)

<sup>36</sup> It is unlikely that his canoe was made from pine, since dugout canoes were usually made from Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*), or in the north (where Cedar trees were less likely to grow to the required size), made of Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*).

were oozier with its juices than I could wish of people I must touch and smell for a voyage of two days. (Winthrop 2006:11-12)

This exhausting prose of Winthrop deals in the negative-compliment, as he exalts the virtues of the canoe at the same time as he separates it from its “withered,” “haggish,” and “fishy” progenitors with disparagement. He both commends the dugout canoe as a supremely adapted mode of conveyance—a perfect method of transport for his surroundings—yet his racism will not allow him to see beyond the stereotype of the drunken, smelly, lazy and even ugly “Indian,” or “Siwash” as Winthrop prefers, who are responsible for such perfection in maritime technology. Winthrop exhibits a racist conflict in his writings of both esteeming the so-called 'primitive' and their closeness to nature,<sup>37</sup> and criticizing the ungrounded “civilization” he has known, yet at the same time switching back to denigrate that “primitive” lifestyle for its lack of “civility.”

The year 1864 marked a major political shift for the colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver Island as Governor Douglas retired with a knighthood. His joint governorship was split into two positions with Governor Seymour on the mainland and Governor Kennedy on the island. Governor Seymour marked his new position with a weeklong celebration of the Queen’s Birthday, during which he called for a canoe regatta and invited First Nations chiefs of the area to a luncheon to be held at Government House in New Westminster. The pomp and glory of a canoe regatta lent splendour to Governor Seymour's celebrations. With over 3,500 First Nations peoples in attendance (Harvey 2013:66; Ormsby 1958:206) the event also served as a very public display of First Nations acceptance of his governorship. As Fisher (1971:8) quotes, Governor Seymour

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<sup>37</sup> Of course, this idea of the Indigenous’ closeness to nature reeks dangerously of the Western stereotypes of the “noble savage” and the “children of the forest,” which are also not without their issues (Francis 1996:3; Harris 2004:170-171; Stocking 1987:10-16).

also sent to London for “one hundred canes with silver gilt tops of an inexpensive kind, also one hundred small and cheap English flags suitable to canoes 20 to 30 feet long” (Fisher 1971:8;<sup>38</sup> Ormsby 1958:206), to give as a gift to “good Indian Chiefs” (Fisher 1971:8).<sup>39</sup> In this way the canoe and its accoutrements were used to further the European’s political agenda (cf. Thomas 1991:151).

This use of the dugout canoe does not separate it from its First Nations originators. Instead by incorporating canoes into imperial ritual and planting upon them symbols of empire, the canoe becomes an actant (Knappett 2008:143; Latour 1996: 369)—a sort of material objectification of First Nations and European good will—in establishing First Nations acknowledgement of British rule and the authority of governorship. This is similar to FitzGerald’s 1848 representation of the canoe, to connote peaceful relations between First Nations and Europeans, but this symbol appears to be created for the First Nations public, as much as the European. This connection is politically emphasized to appease the First Nations constituents, to make the point that the new governor would not neglect First Nations issues. It is ironic that these festivities took place at the same time as the Colony of Vancouver Island’s expeditionary investigation of the controversial “Chilcotin War.” Seymour began his own investigation in the interests of the Colony of British Columbia directly after these celebrations were over (Harris 2000:167; Lutz 2008:136; Ormsby 1958:206, 2003b; Williams 1996:85). Seymour’s reign came to be marked by a breakdown in First Nations relations (Fisher 1971:9; Tennant 1990:40) not only with the infamous “Chilcotin War,” but also a devastating increase of European

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<sup>38</sup> Seymour to Cardwell, 23 September 1864, Governor’s Despatches, vol. IV., quoted in Fisher 1971:8

<sup>39</sup> Enclosure in Seymour to Cardwell, 31 August 1864, Great Britain, Colonial Office Correspondence with British Columbia Governors, GO.60/19, University of British Columbia Library/ PABC, quoted in Fisher 1971:8.

encroachment upon First Nations land and the government sanctioned reduction of reserve sizes.

The dugout canoe continued to be integral to the European exploration of the colonies. Leaving in June, 1864, Robert Brown with the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition (VIEE) hired a dugout canoe to transport their supplies up the Cowichan River and into Lake Cowichan on their mission to cross the island and explore the little known interior island. Brown, a botanist and expedition leader, recorded the exploits of the VIEE in his journal (Brown 1992) and in an official governmental report (Brown 1864). Frederick Whymper, discussed below, accompanied the VIEE as an illustrator producing many companion sketches to Brown's writings, as well as publishing his own observations of this venture (Whymper 1868). Brown's journal is dotted with indirect mentions of canoe use. It is most telling of the relationship developed between hired paddlers, guides and Brown himself through use of the hired dugout canoes, as captured in his journal entry of June 9, 1864 in which he described the negotiating to hire a First Nations guide, canoe and paddlers:

Through his [Tomo,<sup>40</sup> Brown's guide] assistance I manage after a long talk with his people to engage, for such time as I choose, bounded by the country he was acquainted with, Kakalatza the chief at \$2 per diem—and the promise of cultus potlatch if he behaved very well—& \$1 per day for the use of his large canoe until we got to the Lake after which we reserved the right of striking a new Bargain. At the same time I engaged the boy Lemon who had also been at the Lake [Cowichan], & was accounted a good poler for the same time at \$1. after heavy talking and bargaining. The other Indians (always great nuisances the making

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<sup>40</sup> Tomo, or Thomas Antoine, as Whymper knew him (1868:44) was apparently his Iroquois (or Goano'ganoch'sa'jeh'seroni) name and his HBC name was Thomas William Anthony. Of Metis and Chinook heritage, a child of the fur trade, Tomo was an accomplished linguist and draughtsman with a good eye for chart making who grew up on the coast at various forts working for the HBC some years previous to 1864 (Brown 1992:49 and foot note Hayman 1992:139; van den Berk 2014).

bargains with other Indians for if they do not go themselves they are sorry to see their neighbors get anything & accordingly take these means to prevent them going) told him not to be a slave to work for \$1.00 a day, that nobody but Stickeens would take that. We were chiefs of King George they said & if clutus men did pay as much surely we ought, an agreement somewhat lost on me. When I shut them up by telling them that the Bishop told that they wrought for him \$1/2 per day—they answered me that when they wrought for the Bishop or Priest they did not wish for pay—the old policy of the Catholic Missions. This with Tomo made our number 12 men. I found that some Whites who wished to ascend the River before had to camp three days here before they could get any Indians to go for less than \$2 per Day & had finally to return, though the canoe was their own. (1992:49-50).

This passage illustrates the on-the-ground process of hiring canoeists and canoes from a European perspective. In this case, it is clear that the First Nations people, identified as Cowichan by Brown, have bargaining power, which Brown seems to resent. Whympier also seems to have difficulty with the idea of First Nations people being aware of how to extract a good deal, as he describes the same encounter writing in 1868:

On the 9th June, after a “hyas wa-wa” (big talk) with the Indians, Brown at length succeeded in hiring a canoe, and, putting the larger part of the stuff therein, sent it up the Cowichan River in charge of one white man of our party and several Indians. The larger part of us proceeded by land direct to the village of Somenos, where we found several large lodges, or “rancheries,” as they are termed in the colony. The natives were drying fish and clams on strings hanging from the rafters of their dwellings, and were by no means anxious to engage in our service. There were two reasons for this reluctance, which was one of the main draw backs of our journey. The first was simply that they lived so easily, getting salmon, deer, and beaver meat in abundance, and consequently were indifferent to anything but extremely high pay. The second and main reason was fear of surrounding tribes, especially those of the west coast, who were accustomed occasionally to kidnap “unprotected males,” and carry them off as slaves. At length “Kakalatza,” an old “tyhee” or chief, of grave but

dignified appearance, and who persisted in wearing a battered chimney-pot hat, given to him by some settler, was engaged to act as our guide to the Cowichan Lake. (1868:43)

Whymper uses indifference and fear as motivations to explain why the Cowichan people described here were difficult for the VIEE to hire, so difficult as to be “one of the main draw backs of [their] journey” (1868:43). These explanations distract the reader from the notion that the individual Cowichan people they dealt with were perhaps good business people negotiating for fair wages.

Canoe travel was essential to this exploratory mission, so much so that several dugout canoes were commandeered in the name of Her Majesty the Queen to transport this expedition; as Brown relates in his official colonial report on the VIEE:

On rounding a point [at the end of Nitinat lake] we were startled to see a large substantially built Indian village, but not inhabited; where we were glad to find a tolerably good canoe, which we pressed into the service of the Expedition in the name of Her most gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, and Her faithful Deputy His Excellency Arthur Edward Kennedy. We immediately returned to camp [where] Whymper and I set ourselves to work to caulk up the leaks in our new acquisition with flour bags and pine resin. (1864:6; See also Whymper 1868:50-51)

This official colonial account by Brown is interesting to compare to his less official, personal unedited journal of the expedition. In this journal, he describes this same commandeering of the a dugout canoe, but in slightly different terms:

Tuesday June 28<sup>th</sup> 1864. Up at 4 a.m. Barnston and I went off in a little canoe to seek Indians, to go after Buttle and Lewis to take us all to the Nitinat village. Rounded the first point on right side in face of a heavy sea and adverse wind, and found an Indian [village] or *Rancheria* of 4 or 5 large lodges. As our canoe was leaking badly, [we] drew in to see if we could get another. The whole rancheria was deserted until the salmon season but in a chief's house

(known by a ring in the wall) we found a tolerably good canoe which we took in possession of accounting to the free and easy style of the North West. (What would a member of the Expedition Committee say if we were to take loan of his horse!). (1992:78)

Here there is no mention of Queen and colony, no proclamations of service and duty, just the remarks of a laughing thief. This earlier account, makes a mockery of Brown's purported ingratiating official colonial report and like those passages of Governor Blanshard (1852) and Reverend Staines (1852) demonstrates the effect audience may have on the editorial decisions of the author (Pratt 1992:6). Nevertheless, these two passages demonstrate that the dugout canoe was valuable to Europeans, to the point of stealing—this despite the fact that this particular dugout was only “a tolerably good canoe” (Brown 1992:78).

Caroline Leighton, an American settler and journalist, described her first canoe journey in 1865 from Port Gamble to Port Townsend, Washington Territory. Leighton express the same frustration as Swan (1857), several Fraser River gold seekers (1858), Barrett-Lennard (1862) and others as to the speed and work ethic of the First Nations paddlers, but like Swan and unlike those other sources analyzed, Leighton “catch[es] enough of their [the First Nations paddlers'] careless, joyous mood” to not let their speed impede her enjoyment of the journey. As Leighton (1888:30-31) relates,

The next day we decided to try a canoe. We should not have ventured to go alone with the Indians, not understanding their talk; but another passenger was to go with us, who represented that he had learned the only word it would be necessary to use. He explained to us, after we started, that the word was “*hyac*,” which meant “hurry up;” the only danger being that we should not reach Port Townsend before dark, as they were apt to proceed in so leisurely a way when left to themselves. After a while, the bronze paddlers — two siwashes (men) and two



klootchmen (women) — began to show some abatement of zeal in their work, and our fellow- passenger pronounced the talismanic word, with some emphasis; whereat they laughed him to scorn, and made some sarcastic remarks, half/ Chinook and half English, from which we gathered that they advised him, if he wanted to reach Port Townsend before dark, to tell the sun to stop, and not tell them to hurry up. We could only look on, and admire their magnificent indifference. They stopped whenever they liked, and laughed, and told stories. The sky darkened in a very threatening way, and a heavy shower came on; but it made not the slightest difference to them. After it was over, there was a splendid rainbow, like the great gate of heaven. This animated the Indians; and their spirits rose, so that they began to sing; and we drifted along with them, catching enough of their careless, joyous mood, not to worry about Port Townsend, although we did not reach the wharf till two or three hours after dark. (1888:30-31)

Here Leighton seems to take the canoe as it is given. She has preconceived stereotypes that are met— she expects First Nations paddlers to travel at a “leisurely” (30) pace—but her perspective is open enough that she is still able to appreciate the beauty around her, the company of her paddlers and their way of travelling. Arguably, appreciating natural beauty says nothing about Leighton’s unprejudiced character, since authors such as Winthrop (1863), Brown (1992) and Sproat (1868) were great appreciators of nature and also discriminatory in their attitudes, but here Leighton is able to overcome her biases and even enjoy the pace of the journey.

The naturalist and Royal surveyor, John Keast Lord, present in the Pacific Northwest to work on the British North American Boundary Commission, describes a fishing voyage by dugout canoe, which is less laudatory than Leighton. He relates in his 1866 volume, his uncomfortable voyage from the North end of Vancouver Island:<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Lord is not specific here as to location or date of this voyage, but his account is too vivid to exclude.

The canoe was what is commonly called a 'dug-out,' that is, made from a solid log of wood... I had hardly completed my investigation of the canoe, its crew, and contents, when, to my intense astonishment, the four Indians lifted me, as they would a bale of fur, or a barrel of pork, and without a word deposited me in the bottom of the canoe, where I was enjoined to sit, much in the same position enforced on a culprit in the parish stocks. I may mention, incidentally, that a canoe is not half as enjoyable as poets and novelists, who are prone to draw imaginary sketches, would lead the uninitiated to believe. It would be impossible to trust oneself in a more uncomfortable, dangerous, damp, disagreeable kind of boat — generally designated a 'fairy barque,' that 'rides, dances, glides, threads its silvery course over seas and lakes, or, arrow like, shoots foaming rapids.' All a miserable delusion and a myth! Getting in (unless lifted, as I was, bodily, like baggage) is to any but an Indian a dangerous and difficult process; the least preponderance of weight to either side, and out you tumble into the water to a certainty. Again, lowering oneself into the bottom is quite as bad, if not worse, requiring extreme care to keep an even balance, and a flexibility of back and limb seldom possessed by any save tumblers and tightrope-dancers. Down safely, then, as I have said, you are compelled to sit in a most painful position, and the least attempt to alter it generally results in a sudden heeling-over of the canoe, when you find yourself sitting in a foot of cold water. (1866:144-145)

From these observations, it is apparent that Lord was not impressed by the technology of the dugout canoe or the skills of the First Nations paddlers, finding his venture completely disagreeable. Although he does begrudgingly admit to the athletic ability of the First Nations canoeists, as they are able to maintain balance in the dugout canoe—a feat that he finds impossible. This 1866 volume indicates a decrease in praise for dugout canoe travel that does not necessarily demonstrate a decrease in use of the canoe by Europeans, but potentially exhibits a change in European considerations and written constructions of dugout canoe travel.

Decreasing praise and recognition of First Nations skill and technology was a trend that increased as the question of Confederation reached public prominence into the next century. Take for example, Arthur Harvey's troubling 1867 statement from the Audit Office, Ottawa, "[t]he native population [of Vancouver Island] is estimated at 18,000, generally in a degraded state, value less in the labor market" (9). Harvey's observation is the beginning of the official colonial "trivialization" (Trouillot 1995:96) of First Nations peoples from British Columbia's economy,<sup>42</sup> since First Nations involvement was being rewritten as "insignificant" although First Nations were very much in the population's majority. This is a "vanishment" (Lutz 2008:36; Trouillot 1995:96) of First Nations' labour that was integral in so many capacities to the development of the colony. European reliance upon the dugout canoe and First Nations paddlers is only one such example of First Nations contributions to the "labour market" (see Lutz 2008; Knight 1978).

Gilbert Malcolm Sproat's *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* (1868) and Frederick Whympers' *Travels and Adventure's in the Territory of Alaska* (1868) echo the sentiment that First Nations' involvement in the labour market was "degraded and valueless" (Harvey 1867:9). The aforementioned negative-compliment, where the dugout canoe is applauded at the same time as First Nations' skill and culture were denigrated, became a prominent feature in European writing during this period.

In his capacity as government agent, magistrate, Indian reserve commissioner, businessman, and author (Foster 1998), Sproat took advantage of the opportunities presented by a developing colony. He was an influential figure in his day, shaping

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<sup>42</sup> In 1866, facing financial depression after unsustainable development due to the slacking of the Fraser River Gold Rush, the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia joined forces to create the single colony of British Columbia.

governmental policy, for example, in formulating the infamous Potlatch Ban (Bracken 1997:43). His 1868, overtly racist, written work had a far-reaching impact on the historic and ethnographic understanding of British Columbia. This influence has often been damaging, as the information he presents was often not critically considered with an understanding of the biased context from which it emerged.<sup>43</sup>

His 1868 publication is primarily concentrated upon the Nuu-chah-nulth people of the west coast of Vancouver Island (whom he calls the Aht, and in latter editions have been known as the Nootka). As discussed above, the Nuu-chah-nulth Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations were major canoe builders and accomplished canoeists. As Sproat himself describes,

The most skilful canoe-makers among the tribes are the Nitinahts [Ditidahts] and the Klah-oh-quahts [Tl-o-qui-ahts]. They make canoes for sale to other tribes. Many of these canoes are of the most accurate workmanship and perfect design<sup>44</sup>— so much so that I have heard persons fond of such speculations say that the Indians must have acquired the art of making these beautiful vessels in some earlier civilized existence. (Sproat 1868:85)

Here Sproat is unable to let the compliment sit alone, he must add a modifier that makes the Ditidahts and the Tla-o-qui-ahts unable to produce such a technological achievement given their uncivilized state, instead Sproat makes the dugout canoe a product of their previous “civilized existence”(1868:85). This is one among a number of examples of Sproat’s use of the negative-compliment. In another example he pairs

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<sup>43</sup> Not to mention the fact that much of Sproat’s 1868 work was greatly plagiarized from the works of William Eddy Banfield (see J. Wenstob n.d.).

<sup>44</sup> This line in particular is one that J. Wenstob (n.d.) argues Sproat plagiarized from the writings of William E. Banfield, as Banfield published in the *Victoria Gazette* on September 9, 1858 (#VII: Clayoquat Sound— Tonquin Massacre), “This [Clayoquat Sound] is the great canoe mart of west coast. The Indians make canoes varying from ten to sixty feet in length, *of the most accurate workmanship and perfect design* [italics added]. They sell them to the Macaws [Makahs] and Netinetts [Ditidahts].”

acknowledgement of the skill of First Nations canoe paddlers, with a characterization of paddlers as escapees incapable of systematic and sustained effort:

I remember many instances of Indians having escaped from us through their skill in swimming, and paddling, and travelling through the woods. The management by a single Indian of a canoe in crossing a rapid stream cannot be surpassed. At the same time, I may observe that I have seen a trained crew of white men beat a crew of Indians in a long canoe race on the sea. The civilized man seems to have more bottom in him, when the exertion is intense and prolonged. (1868:36)

Although Sproat recognizes that First Nations peoples were more adept and faster canoeists, he quickly bests them with a crew of Europeans under his instruction, able to beat the “Indian” with “bottom,” or stamina, and civilization.

Whympers’s 1868 publication, although relating adventures that occurred several years before the publication date, is greatly influenced by Sproat and his publication.<sup>45</sup> In 1864, Whympers finished up his sketching tour of the territory of the Tsilhqot’in people where the Waddington road was under construction to connect Bute Inlet with the Cariboo gold rush of the Upper Fraser River. After visiting with the road crew, Whympers returned by dugout canoe with letters to deliver for the superintendent of the road workers. Whympers left the area the day before the fateful killings of the road crew, which was the beginning of the “Chilcotin War.” In his 1868 publication, Whympers offers a contemporary analysis of this war, one that takes from Sproat’s recent speculations about the effect of the “vices of civilization” on First Nations peoples. Whympers reduces the actions of the Tsilhqot’in warriors responsible as motivated by greed and the negative effects of civilization

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<sup>45</sup> Whympers even dedicates a few pages to discussion of Sproat’s 1868 publication (see Whympers 1868:31-32).

(Whymper 1868:36-38). The “Chilcotin War” occurred in 1864, but this clear literary conversation between these two authors places Whymper's work firmly in the late 1860s.

Preceding his analysis of the Tsilhqot'in struggles, Whymper gave an account of his speedy return by dugout canoe before the onset of the “Chilcotin War”:

The superintendent had gladly entrusted letters of importance to me, and had in fact rather hurried my departure in order that they should reach Victoria by an early date. I therefore, on the noon of the same day, the 30th April, left the river by canoe, in company with two of the work men, and one Clayoosh [Klahoose (?)] Indian. The latter being the owner of the canoe, proved an inexorable tyrant, and kept us paddling for three days, from early dawn to dewy eve. Although these “light kanims,” built of cedar, appear too frail for the sea, we came down the inlet, and crossed the Gulf of Georgia to Nanaimo Point, Vancouver Island, in perfect safety, getting then a fair breeze till the end of our trip...As long as the weather is moderate there is nothing more pleasurable than lying at the bottom of a canoe, smoking or dozing, whilst it cleaves through the water, but in a rough or chopping sea one's time is occupied in keeping it baled out, and the Indian's in steering, — a careful and difficult operation. ...

We arrived safely in Victoria without meeting with any further incidents of special interest, and were generally congratulated by persons of experience on having made a very quick trip. The distance, 185 miles, had occupied us five days, camping every night. (Whymper 1868:30-31)

The “tyrant” in this canoe journey is not the European passenger shouting “*hyac*” as in Leighton's 1865 trip (1888:30-31), instead it is the Clayoosh (Klahoose [?]) canoeist who sets the pace and drives Whymper. With this speedy canoeist they make the trip in record time, traveling in only 5 days from the head of Bute Inlet on the mainland to Nanaimo Harbour.

In 1871, the Colony of British Columbia joined Confederation, becoming a province of Canada. This political change had substantive implications for the relationship between First Nations and Europeans, as First Nations were now designated a distant federal problem and First Nations individuals became wards of the state— legally “vanishing” (Trouillot 1995:92) First Nations peoples in British Columbia.

### 5.5 Post 1871: The Confederation Period

After Confederation, the written record demonstrates that steam travel gradually replaced the dugout canoe in speed, accessibility and carrying capacity. However, in many industries, the dugout canoe maintained its role as an essential technology of economic pursuit, for example in fishing, pelagic sealing and surveying, and increased its role as a leisurely tool of recreation and as a politically charged symbol. The pervasiveness of the negative-compliment continued during this period, resulting in obscurations of the First Nations' connection to the dugout canoe.

Dr. Israel Wood Powell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, was openly impressed by the Northern-style canoe of the Haida and the Nuu-chah-nulth style canoe, as he remarked on January 11, 1873 in his official, compiled *Report of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for British Columbia for 1872 and 1873*:

The superb canoes made by the Hydahs [Haida] and Alits [Nuu-chah-nulth] are perfections of design and accurate workmanship;<sup>46</sup> and it might be added, that the lines of the first clipper built by an eminent ship-builder of Boston were taken from a Nootka [Nuu-chah-nulth style] canoe. (1873:7)

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<sup>46</sup> Yet again, these words echo Banfield's 1858 lines and Sproat's (1868:85) plagiarizing. It appears that somehow “perfect” and “accurate” are lines that describe the dugout canoe to these colonists.

Powell added to the growing list of authors that purport the Boston clipper ships' debt to the Nuu-chah-nulth style dugout canoes (see Inskipp and Hills from 1853 discussed above; Whympers 1877:167; Drucker 1963:73; most recently, Osler 2014:38-39).

Further, in this report, Powell directly contradicted the information presented by Harvey just six years earlier, who ignorantly argued that First Nations peoples were "valueless in the labor market" (1867:9). Powell did this by contending that First Nations people were not only the main supporters and consumers in British Columbia's import economy; they were also main contributors to the exports of the economy— supplying staples like fish, fish oil, cranberries and furs, bringing in nearly \$240,000 (Powell 1873:15). As well, Powell contended that First Nations general labourers, including boatmen, were important to the development of the economy, as he summarizes:

The high price and scarcity of labor make the men invaluable aids to the settler and manufacturer, while the women often make excellent laundresses and general servants. I have no doubt that the Dominion survey parties, while exploring the wilds of British Columbia during the last two years for a practicable railway route, experienced what many an old pioneer trader or miner<sup>47</sup> has heartily felt, i.e., the great importance of the natives as expert boatmen and industrious packers. (1873:15)

It may be that Powell argued for attention to be given to the First Nations' contribution to the economy in light of his responsibility as Superintendent of Indian Affairs or perhaps it concerned him personally. Notably, however, Powell concluded his praise by shifting back into the negative-colonial construction of the First Nations peoples by labelling the First Nations people as "savage" and "uncivilized," which brings his

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<sup>47</sup> It is worth comment here, that Powell relegates 'the pioneer trader or miner' of only 20-30 years ago to a seemingly ancient past.



arguments back in line with assimilatory colonial projects that emphasized more paternalistic governmental policy:

These considerations point to the great necessity of preventing, as far as possible, even in a financial point of view, the ruin and decimation of this class of our inhabitants [First Nations peoples] now going on; but when added to this, the higher and holier purpose of elevating them from a savage and degraded state to the position of useful citizens, the duty of judicious administration in their behalf on the part of a wise and humane Government becomes imperative. (1873:15)

Powell's concluding sentence makes his previous arguments just as limiting as Harvey's 1867 blatant misinformations. By nullifying his previous praises, Powell prophesized that without the support and transformation of these "savage and degraded" First Nations individuals by paternalistic, protective policy, First Nations involvement in B.C.'s economy would disappear. By denying their previous economic contributions as not qualifying to make First Nations peoples "useful citizens" (Powell 1873:15), Powell denied their agency. Powell appears to think that, although First Nations individuals managed to fill these labour gaps and created these enterprising roles on their own, government involvement was needed if they were ever to achieve an acceptable level of civility.

Canoe travel became a part of the growing tourist experience in British Columbia. Independent leisured adventurers, such as Henry Barneby (1884:130-131) and his friends travelled to the west coast in 1883 and went out of their way to partake in the dugout canoe— much to their annoyance as "the rowing was absurd" (130). On a tight schedule, they reacted badly when their paddlers waited on the wind and were castigated by Barneby for their "leisurely" pace (Leighton 1888:30).

After being cramped up in the canoe for more than four hours we reached the pier-head of Cowichan only just before the arrival of the steamer from Victoria for Nanaimo; but there was no time to have a bathe, to which we had been looking forward. (1884:130-131)

As true tourists, their trip revolved around access to hot running water. Cut off from that, they were less than amused.

Recreationally, the dugout canoe continued to be a popular pastime at regattas for European pleasure seekers both as spectators and as participants. Canoe regattas remained an important pastime for settlers and were also telling expressions of political identity at state holidays (such as the Queen's birthday), as discussed previously with Seymour's 1864 celebrations.

First Nations crews were major competitors in these races, with their specially designed racing canoes; however, as spectators they was less readily included or accepted. The *Daily Colonist* of Victoria voiced the strain felt by European onlookers caused by the presence of First Nations spectators at the Regatta celebrating the Queen's birthday in 1893. The reporter described in detail the drunken conduct of a First Nations spectator—playing up this negative stereotype. This illustrates how complicated the European construction of the First Nations' identity had become in this late nineteenth-century world. Along with the First Nations spectator characterized as drunk and disorderly are the competing First Nations paddlers responsible for “one of the most keenly contested and exciting events of the regatta.”<sup>48</sup> These conflicting constructions indicate how pervasive the negative-compliment had become.

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<sup>48</sup> 1893. The Aquatic Sports: Indian Canoes— Thirty Feet. The Daily Colonist, May 25:1. Vol. LXIX—No. 140. Electronic document, <http://archive.org/stream/dailycolonist18930525uvic/18930525#page/n0/mode/1up>, accessed January 8, 2014.

As the century progressed and a new century was met, dugout canoes continued to be an essential technology, connecting the provinces waterways and building industries such as fishing and shipping, as ship tenders (for example, Crosby 1914:33; Carr 2004:31). In 1900, the first gas-powered engine used on the Pacific coast, the Easthope engine, was installed in a dugout canoe for fishing. Prior to this the only means of propulsion for small boats operating on the coast were sail, paddles, oars and steam power. In an interview conducted in 1976 by White of Raincoast Chronicles, Peck (Percy) Easthope recalls his family's mechanic enterprises, installing the first paying customer's gas engine:

So we made one [a gas engine] five horsepower, stepped it up to five. They bought one, put it in that canoe and all the fishermen, when they saw them going up the river instead of sailing and rowing, y'see, ha ha, oh! We gotta have an engine! Well that started the thing goin' in the fishin' industry, That was the first gas fishboat. An old dugout. (1976:255-256)

This new method of propulsion brought great changes to the use of the dugout canoe. Dugouts converted to gas propulsion were still in use in the early 1960s on the west coast. Other famous conversions to the dugout canoe included sail, as was used in 1901 on what is probably the most famous Pacific dugout canoe in history, the *Tilikum* (a Chinook word for friend). This 38-foot, Nuu-chah-nulth style dugout canoe was radically outfitted with raised gunnels, a weighted keel, three masts, a rudder and other modifications. Although dugout canoe conversions to sail were common, the *Tilikum* is famous for her long-distance voyage.

Leaving Victoria, she underwent a global journey under the command of Captain J.C. Voss and the reporter Norman Luxton—the smallest known vessel ever to have attempted

such a trip. Differences of opinion and temperament led Luxton to leave the voyage at Suva, Fiji before the vessel reached its destination of London, England. Captain Voss completed the venture travelling through Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, South Africa, South America, the Azores and finally London, England, where he was greeted by fawning media frenzy.

Both Voss (in 1913) and Luxton (posthumously in 1971) published contradicting remembrances of the voyage. Examined here is only how they procured the dugout canoe that became the *Tilikum*. Luxton's version of events is greatly romanticized. The dugout canoe is given an ancient age for which Luxton imagined a blood-soaked, battle-filled past. Luxton reports that Voss bought the canoe from a First Nations woman only with the help of "hard talking" (Luxton 2002:33), but according to Voss' accounts he managed to buy the canoe off a First Nations *man* after first plying him with liquor, knowingly breaking the laws banning First Nations people from consuming alcohol (Voss 1926:47-48). Although, contradictory and confusing, both accounts share in a praise and pride for the dugout canoe that became their *Tilikum*. As Voss brags of his ingenuity in choosing a dugout canoe for their voyage:

It struck me at once that if we could make our proposed voyage in an Indian canoe we would not alone make a world's record for the smallest vessel but also the only canoe that had ever circumnavigated the globe. (Voss 1926:47)

Thus, this analysis leaves European canoe use on one of its finest triumphs. The *Tilikum* is an example of Europeans incorporating the dugout canoe into European history and culture-making practice and partly removing it from First Nations associations and circulations (Erickson 2013:6; Kopytoff 1986:67). Though celebrated as a canoe that

could, the First Nations connection to the *Tilikum* was in many ways downplayed joining what Erickson (2013:12) calls the “myth of the canoe,” where it came to be a symbol of pioneer spirit and man against nature, a rhetoric device that served the heroic narratives of Voss and Luxton. Yet this hybrid background of the *Tilikum* is also what defines her fame—she is integrally connected to her First Nations creators. As Voss predicts, the fact that she is also a dugout canoe is what has contributed to her lasting global fame and brought the Pacific coastal dugout canoe international attention.

## 5.6 Summary Thoughts

From 1846 with Commander G.J. Gordon describing dugout canoes carrying coal to 1901 with the *Tilikum* circumnavigating the globe, this chapter has covered over 50 years of European dugout canoe use. Documentary evidence attests that the dugout canoe was an essential tool for the colonial development of British Columbia and that the First Nations involvement in this practice was not always appreciated. Visual research outlined in the following chapter complements these findings—strengthening, confirming and uncovering separate patterns of dugout canoe use and trends of European visual representations of it. A cross analysis of both documentary and visual sources will be provided in Chapter 7, which works to *pull together* these separate, yet parallel lines of evidence.

## Chapter 6: The Visual Voyages: Sampling of Visual Sources with Analyses

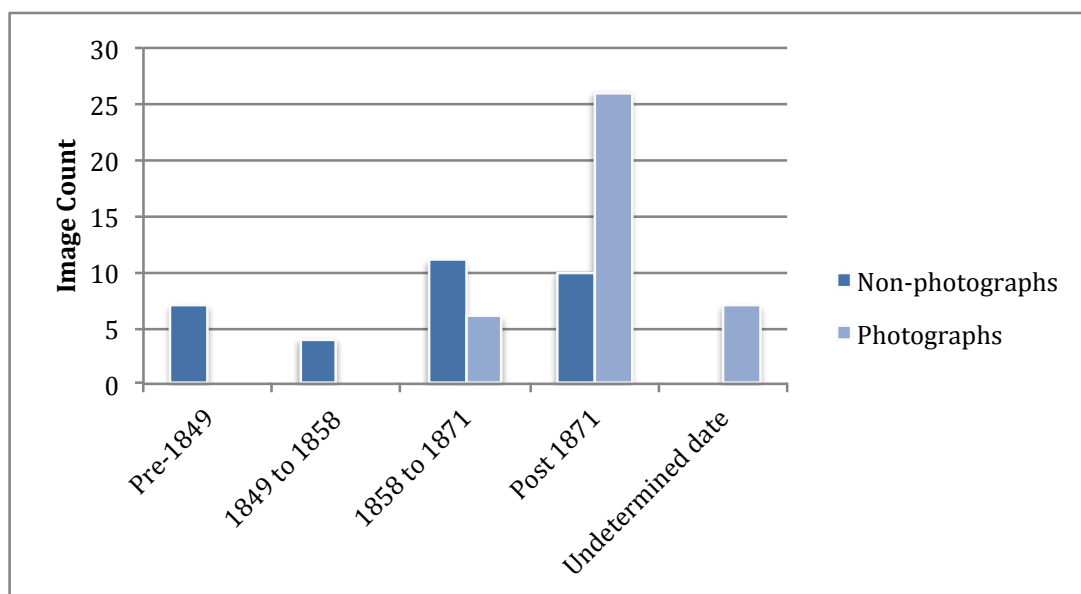
### 6.1 Introduction

Researchers often use images for illustrative purposes to prove or more clearly demonstrate observations made through textual analysis (Savard 2010:12). This research expands on this technique to use images as an equally informative data source (Davison 1981-1982:21), asking questions about composition, audience and the choices made by the artists, to get at deeper trends of representation and patterns of practice of European dugout canoe use. Visual inquiry opens up a new avenue to ask: *Was the First Nations' dugout canoe essential to colonial development in British Columbia and, if so, were the First Nations acknowledged for this vital contribution?* Comparison with the textual analysis (in Chapter 7) may corroborate or challenge trends discerned from those sources.

Because this analysis is organized chronologically, both photographic and non-photographic visual sources will be considered together. This joint scrutiny is somewhat conflicting because of the differences in mediums resulting in dissimilar questions being asked of the artists when considering composition, subject and audience, as well as the simple constraints of skill and technology. As discussed in the methodology section, photographic representation was initially restricted to skilled photographers trained in the camera's use, while the cumbersome delicate machinations of the camera limited its use to easily accessible areas, such as places accessible by water (Savard 2010:14). Issues of skill and composition shape an artist's practice, whether in reference to drawing, sketching or photography, but differently in relation to these media. Drawings, sketches

and paintings were prone to the editing of the artist, in a similar way to that of written sources (Brettell 1986:129). In other words, artists had a tendency to reconstruct scenes that resonated with their previously held expectations. In this way, artists could recreate their homeland in this new world—making the foreign familiar (Brettell 1986:128; Crowley 2011:97; Little 2007:13; Pratt 1992:10). To some extent, paintings and sketches offer a more authentic representation of how the artist saw the world, or wanted to see the world, since their representations are not mediated through a machine that records—the artists themselves are the recorders. However, as discussed previously, artists of sketches and paintings were still mediated by stylistic conventions.

As summarized in Figure 1, drawings, sketches and paintings cover a greater time period than do photographic collections from the colonial period (since photography came late to the Pacific coast—approximately the late 1850s).



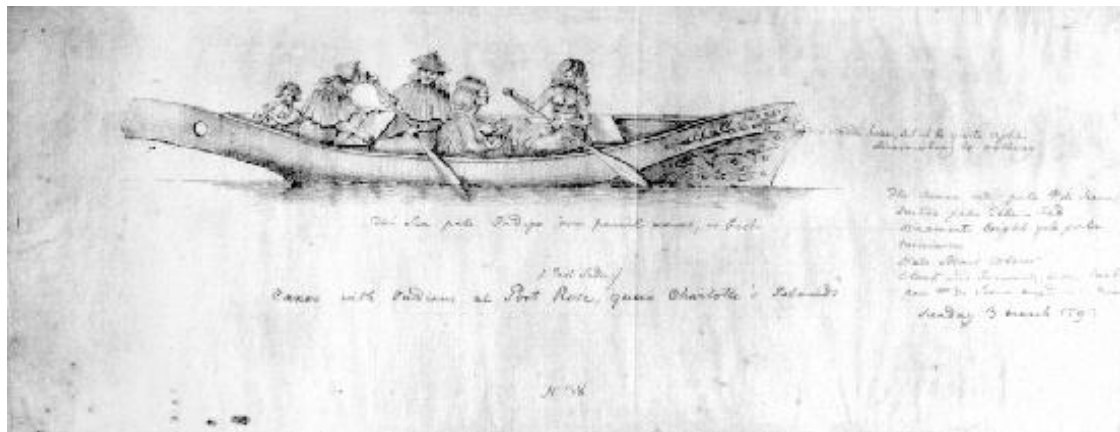
**Figure 1: Distribution of photographs and non-photographs through time**

The scope of this analysis extends from 1845 into the twentieth century and is focused on Vancouver Island and later British Columbia, to more closely follow the development and changes in colonial representation of the dugout canoe. It must be remembered, however, that the image data set examined here are only a fraction of images available and it has been greatly winnowed down to include only sources that document European engagement with the dugout canoe. These unique European engagements with dugouts include, but are not limited to, support of canoe use by Europeans (as support of European driven activities like mail delivery), dugout canoe use by Europeans directly (for example, canoe travel), and the use of the abstracted dugout canoe by European artists to set a particular scene (for example, illustrations, including romanticized canoes).

## **6.2 Before 1849**

The explorers and traders who visited the Pacific Northwest prior to 1849 produced very few images. The physician and artist, Sigismund Bacstrom (see Fig. 2), and John Webber, the official artist on Captain Cook's third voyage to the Pacific (1776-80), both created representations of First Nations peoples and life-ways from Nootka Sound and Haida Gwaii. These images, often depicting the dugout canoe, served to illustrate the New World to the late eighteenth-century metropole (Crowley 2011:97; Gilmore 1980:12; Tippett and Cole 1977:18). However, the imperial representations of Bacstrom and Webber will not be analyzed given the focus here on colonial representations. Rather, I take as my starting point the visual representations produced by European guests of Fort Victoria beginning in 1845.





**Figure 2: Canoes with Indians at Port Rose, Queen Charlotte Islands. March 4, 1792**  
**Sigismund Bacstrom. Call/Cat: PDP01332. Courtesy of the BCA.**

Visitors to Fort Victoria, such as Lieutenant Henry J. Warre, Paul Kane, and Lieutenant John Haverfield, provide intriguing illustrations of fort life and First Nations peoples and cultures. Lieutenant Henry J. Warre travelled throughout the Pacific Northwest in 1845 with his colleague Lieutenant Mervin Vavasour, of the Royal Engineers, in disguise as leisured men, deriving entertainment from hunting, fishing and travel. Warre and Vavasour were in fact on a secret mission to assess British interests in the Oregon Territory and determine how best to defend these possessions against a purported encroachment by American settlers (Gilmore 1980:27- 28). Hosted by the Hudson's Bay Company, Warre and Vavasour often accompanied canoe expresses, travelling between forts. Warre created several paintings of canoe travel in Puget Sound aboard an express canoe used for mail delivery, paddling between HBC company interests at Fort Nisqually and Fort Victoria in 1845 (Deaville 1928:21; Mackie 1993:363). Warre's watercolour sketch, *Mount Baker—12,000 ft. from Puget's Sound* (Fig. 3) depicts an express dugout canoe underway with at least ten paddlers, and perhaps Warre himself as a passenger, framed beneath the imposing landscape of snow-capped

Mount Baker. The canoe and its occupants are the focus of the sketch, but the landscape has its own awe-inspired presence. Although a trained artist, Warre's canoe is ambiguous in its lines, placing it typologically somewhere between a Nuu-chah-nulth style canoe with a sharp, square stern, and a Northern style canoe with a high swooping bow. This lack of detail suggests a training in technique that was focused more upon terrain and geography than foreign watercraft.



**Figure 3:** *Mount Baker—12,000 ft from Puget's Sound. Straits of Juan de Fuca, B.C. Oct. 9, 1845 near Protection Island. Henry James Warre; Watercolor; (6 1/2 x 9 7/8 in) (16 1/2 x 25 cm); from Box 2; Matte 29; [Imprint Society number: 51]. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society.*

Many artists with connections to the Royal Military and Navy, such as Warre, John Haversfield, W.H. Hills and E.P. Bedwell, were likely trained in draughting techniques that focused on producing topographical representations of landscapes. This training enabled them to produce detailed and accurate representations of natural and artificial

features, such as mountains, shorelines, villages and docks (Peters 1979:12). In a time before photography was widespread, portable and accessible artistic skills were essential to record the landscape for development and defense.

In 1847, the artist and writer Paul Kane also created many watercolour and graphite sketches of the Pacific Northwest during his two-year journey across North America (from 1846 to 1848). Many of these were developed later into oil paintings (Gilmore 1980:33). Kane's written accounts and illustrations of this journey provide important information about First Nations peoples and life-ways. An edited compilation of his journey was published in 1849, including Kane's account of his canoe crossing, depicted in Figure 4, and is addressed in the previous section analyzing written sources. It is unclear from Kane's accounts what role he played in the operation of the canoe, whether he paddled or assisted in any way, but judging by Figure 4, we can assume he sat in the middle of the canoe and offered, if any, only occasional help at paddling. Figure 4, *Crossing the Strait of Juan de Fuca, 1847*, is a self-portrait of Kane's harrowing crossing of the strait in an open Nuuchahnulth style canoe outfitted with a square sail. Here the canoe and its seven occupants are made insignificant and dangerously fragile in the grips of the tremendous ocean rollers they are attempting to negotiate, as the Olympic Mountains range rest above them, untroubled by their personal chaos. Kane's framing of the mountains here is similar to Warre's in Figure 3, where the magnificence of the mountain scape appears detached and unconnected to the focus of the image—namely, the canoe and its occupants. According to Maria Tippett and Douglas Cole (1977:30-32), the images of both Kane and Warre demonstrate their conformance with the early colonial discomfort in the wilderness, where landscapes needed to become “humanized,”

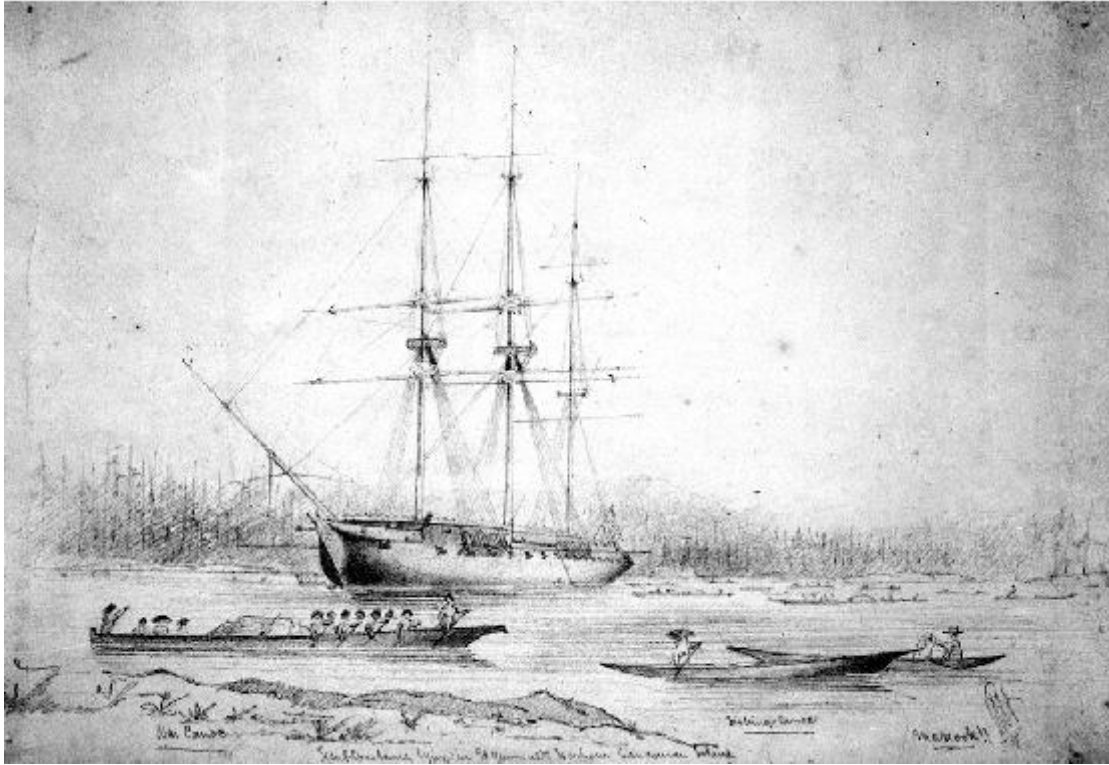
both physically and through artistic representation, by the presence or indications of people, such as houses, fences and even dugout canoes. This use of canoes as a humanizing influence is seen throughout the images produced in the colonial period (Tippett and Cole 1977:38).



**Figure 4: *Crossing the Strait of Juan de Fuca, 1847* [Paul Kane's self portrait of his own frightening crossing]. Paul Kane. Courtesy of the Stark Museum of Art, 31.78.70**

The artist, Lieutenant John Haverfield, from the frigate *H.M.S. Constance* contributed graphite and watercolour sketches of canoe use and life at Fort Victoria in 1848 (Gough 1984:27). In one sketch, the *H.M.S. Constance* is being unloaded (or loaded?) by canoe in Esquimalt Harbour (Fig. 5). Interestingly, along the bottom of this sketch are handwritten labels by the artist describing the scene. One such marking, below two Coast Salish style canoes, reads “Makook!” A Mowachaht word that became part of the Chinook jargon, *makúk*, has been (roughly) translated as “let’s trade” (Lutz 2008:ix). Lutz (2008:ix) argues *makúk* was likely one of the first words exchanged between First Nations peoples

of the Pacific Northwest coast and Europeans. It is significant that Haverfield records this word here, as perhaps it indicates that the canoeists in this image were engaged in trade with the sailors aboard the *H.M.S. Constance*.



**Figure 5: *HMS Constance* Lying in Esquimalt Harbour, Vancouver Island. August, 1848. John Turnstall Haverfield. Call/Cat: PDP01182. Courtesy of the BCA.**

Other images by Haverfield include three landscapes depicting Fort Victoria as seen from what is now the Songhees causeway, watching the approach of *H.M.S. Constance*'s boats to the Fort. Of these images, one is a sketch (Fig. 6) and the other two (Figs. 7 and 8) are presumably painted versions of the sketch. These images provide a clear demonstration of the artist's process of reworking a sketch through painting. In these three iterations of this scene, there are different placements of canoes, almost as if the canoe adds a decorative feature or motif. The original sketch (if one can assume that is

what it is) depicts only the prow of a canoe obscured by the rocky shoreline (Fig. 6).

Figure 7 depicts the canoe in a similar arrangement to the sketch, but here it is slightly more visible. In this image there are more First Nations peoples pictured. Figure 8 depicts a more prominent canoe, placed on the beach in front of the rocky shore, along with paddles and other accoutrements of canoeing on the shore beside it. In this image there are more First Nations individuals depicted and possibly also a European. What is revealing about these images is the possible use of canoes as decoration to these scenes by the artist, perhaps as a contrast to the other naval boats pictured in this image; or as a representation of the assemblage of the First Nations (Delanda 2006:14), so as to verify for the viewer through depiction of canoes that the people in the image were indeed First Nations. Nevertheless, the prevalence of the canoe in all three images suggests that it was an original part of the scene.



**Figure 6: *Fort Victoria, Vancouver Island. August, 1848. John Turnstall Haverfield.***  
**Call/Cat: PDP01180. Courtesy of the BCA.**



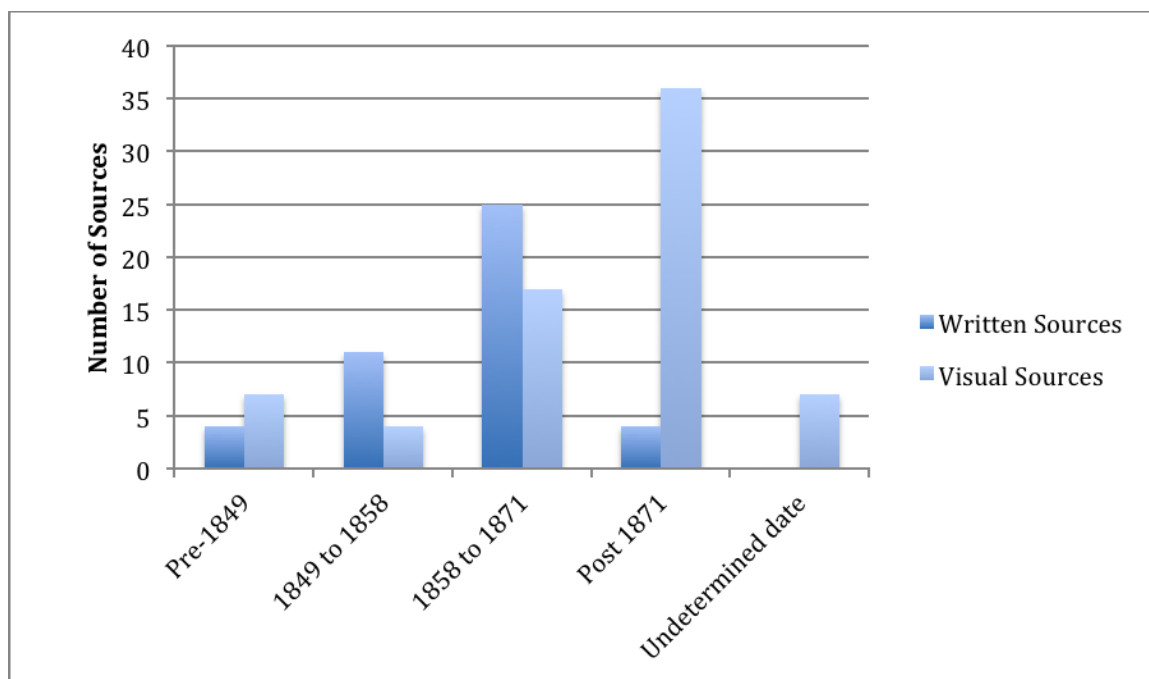
**Figure 7: *[Fort Victoria]*. August, 1848. John Turnstall Haverfield. Call/Cat: PDP04464. Courtesy of the BCA.**



**Figure 8: *Fort Victoria, Vancouver Island*. August, 1848. John Turnstall Haverfield. Call/Cat: PDP01183. Courtesy of the BCA.**

### 6.3 1849 to 1858: The Early Colonial Period

This next decade marks the advent of the Colony of Vancouver Island and the beginning of a colonial presence on the Pacific Northwest coast. Image data for this period does not as evenly cover the colonial period as does the written accounts (see Figure 9). The time period from 1849 to 1859 is surprisingly sparse of images (both non-photographic and photographic) that are useful to this research (total N=4 for images from 1849 to 1858).



**Figure 9: Distribution of written sources and visual sources through time**

Although the camera made it to Victoria in the late 1850s (Savard 2010:67), photographs from this time period do not offer much information about the Europeans' use of the canoe, except to indicate its ubiquity in the water scenes that photographers chose to represent. This ubiquity is seen in the non-photographs, as the artists and Royal Navy men, paymaster William H. Hills of the *H.M.S. Virago* (Akrigg and Akrigg



1992:16) and surveyor Staff-Commander Edward Parker Bedwell of the *H.M.S. Plumper* (Peters 1979:66) demonstrate (Figures 10 to 13).

Hills' illustration (Figure 10) of the *H.M.S. Virago* on the rocks of the Cowichan Gap (now Porlier Pass) surrounded by at least 13 dugout canoes of various sizes, carrying at least 60 First Nations peoples, provides a very conflicting example of the ubiquity of the dugout canoe. This image was created by Hills to illustrate the account of his journey aboard the *H.M.S. Virago*. This illustration, and excerpts of Hills journal, appear in Akrigg and Akrigg's *H.M.S. Virago in the Pacific, 1851-1855* (1992:108<sup>49</sup>). Hills' sketch recognizes the presence of First Nations peoples and their canoes, but in Hills' original text this recognition is strongly flavoured with denigration, as Hills records in his personal journal on April 30, 1853:

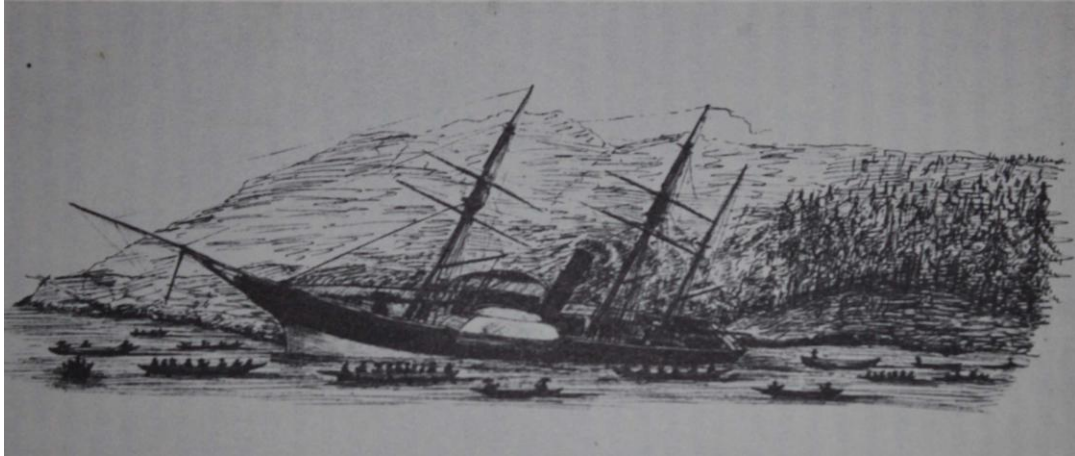
The vessel [was] keenly watched by numbers of Indians in their canoes and on shore, evidently looking forward to 'something to their advantage.'<sup>50</sup>

This combination of quote and image indicates the fear Hills felt at being surrounded by First Nations people and their canoes, especially when his ship, the *H.M.S. Virago* was in such a compromised position. As is seen in this chapter's earlier analysis of Hills' writing, this fear is repeated throughout his journal as he travels up the Pacific coast to Haida Gwaii.

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<sup>49</sup> The original is housed at the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Australia.

<sup>50</sup> William Henry Hills, April 30, 1853, Journal- *H.M.S. Virago* & *H.M.S. Portland*. Microfilm, Mitchell Library, Sydney, Aus. Y12 ML MSS. 1436/1. Copy in, Philip and Helen Akrigg fonds, In Microfilms Part A, # 20-3. UBC Library's Government Publications Division. Call # AW 1 R 7720. Slide 171; P. 149.

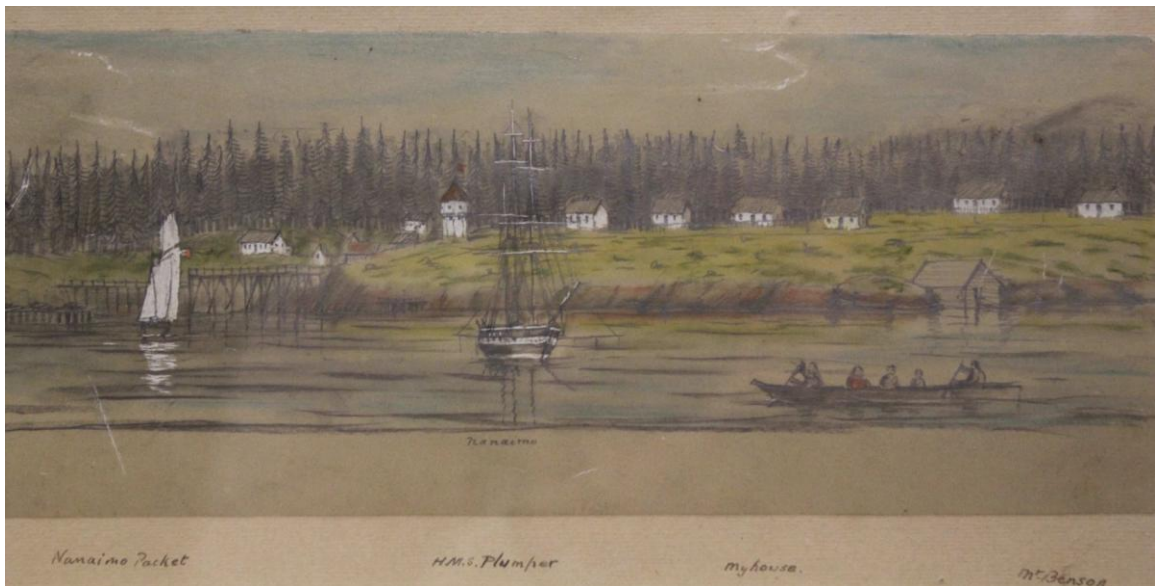


**Figure 10: *HMS Virago on rocks, Cowichan Gap (Porlier Pass)*. April, 1853. William H. Hills. Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales ML 1436/2.**

Bedwell's work provides a good example of the ubiquity of dugout canoes in water scenes along the coast. Figures 11 and 12 depict Nanaimo Harbour and, like Haverfield's images (Figs. 6 to 8), show an artist's fascination with a specific location. Unlike Haverfield's images of Victoria Harbour they are not from the same vantage point with minor modifications. Rather, Bedwell illustrates two busy pencil and watercolour scenes of Nanaimo Harbour. Although that in Figure 11 shows canoe use by what appears to be only First Nations individuals, the image is interesting for illustrative purposes, since it also shows the Nanaimo coal yard. The coal industry allowed Nanaimo to develop as a thriving city as this fuel source was in high demand by the ships of the Royal Navy stationed in Esquimalt (now the new British port for the Northern Pacific British colonies) and to the American steamers operating a mail route that extended from Panama to the Oregon Territory (Barman 1996:54). As discussed above (Gordon 1846), First Nations labour and exploration was important to the development and working of the Nanaimo digs and those at Fort Rupert (near Port McNeil).

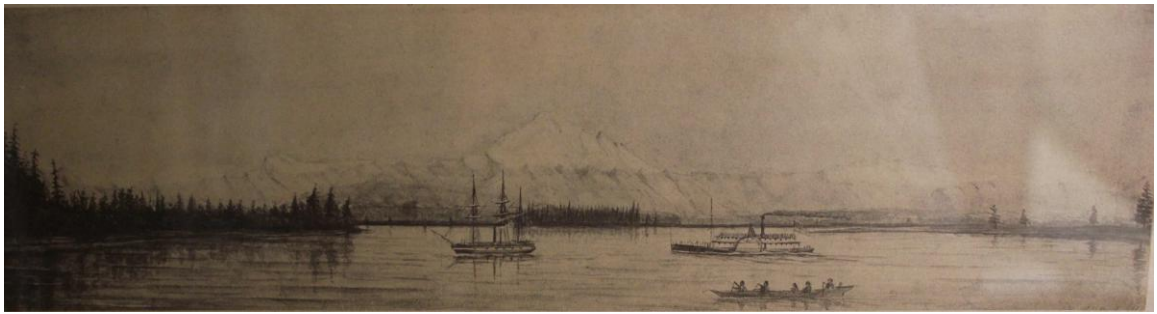


**Figure 11: *Nanaimo*. Between 1856 and 1863. Edward Parker Bedwell. Call/Cat: PDP02614. Courtesy of the BCA.**



**Figure 12: *HMS Plumper in Nanaimo Harbour; identification of residences on original*. 1858. Edward Parker Bedwell. Call: A-08794; Cat: HP023797. Courtesy of the BCA.**

Bedwell's 1858 pencil sketch, "*H.M.S. Plumper*" (Figure 13), illustrates three water transport vessels available to early colonists: the naval ship using steam and sail, the paddlewheel steamer, and the dugout canoe. In the image, the vessels are arranged as if they were contenders in a race or a regatta, all travelling in the same direction, with the naval ship *H.M.S. Plumper* in the front followed by the paddle wheel and canoe "neck in neck." This may be a visual commentary on the abilities of the dugout canoe's speed and capability, as it is portrayed as an equal contender with the paddlewheel, or perhaps it is simply another example of the ubiquity of the canoe, as nearly every sketch of coastal water scenes includes a dugout canoe.



**Figure 13: *HMS Plumper, Captain G.H. Richards. 1858. Edward Parker Bedwell. Call/Cat: PDP00073. Courtesy of the BCA.***

#### **6.4 1858 to 1871: The Mid-Colonial Period**

The year 1858 marked the beginning of the Fraser River Gold Rush, bringing a huge population surge of mostly American gold miners from all walks of life accompanied by increased image making of all types. This in flux of population prompted the creation of the Colony of British Columbia in 1858 in a time of boom and bust conditions. The period saw the political changes brought about by the end of Douglas' reign as Governor

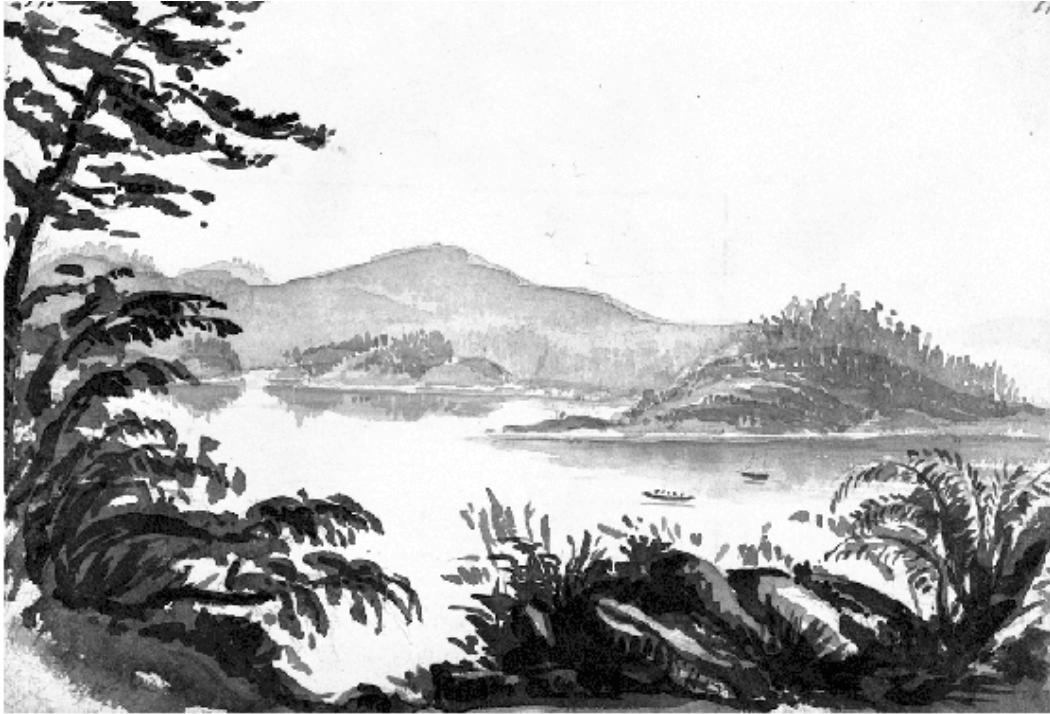
in 1864 as well as economic depression that forced the amalgamation of the two colonies (1866) and later prompted British Columbia to join Confederation in 1871.

Generally, the images from this period (N=17 images) demonstrate the ubiquity of the dugout canoe in the European view of the colony. Numerous sketches and drawings depict scenes of canoe travel. Amateur artists such as William G. Hind (Fig. 14), Sarah Crease (Figs. 15 and 16), Edward C. Hall (Fig.17), Edward Richardson (Fig. 18), Vincent Colyer (Fig 19) and William H. Newton (Fig. 20) created colourful landscapes.

According to Maria Tippett and Douglas Cole (1977:38), the dugout canoe became a “cliché” in images during the colonial period, often serving as a human-interest element in a wilderness landscape scene. Peters (1979:20 and 30) points out how the dugout canoe, along with other ships, animals, trees and people, were often used by artists of the colonial period as an “auxiliary” to add interest and aid with the creation of perspective in an image.



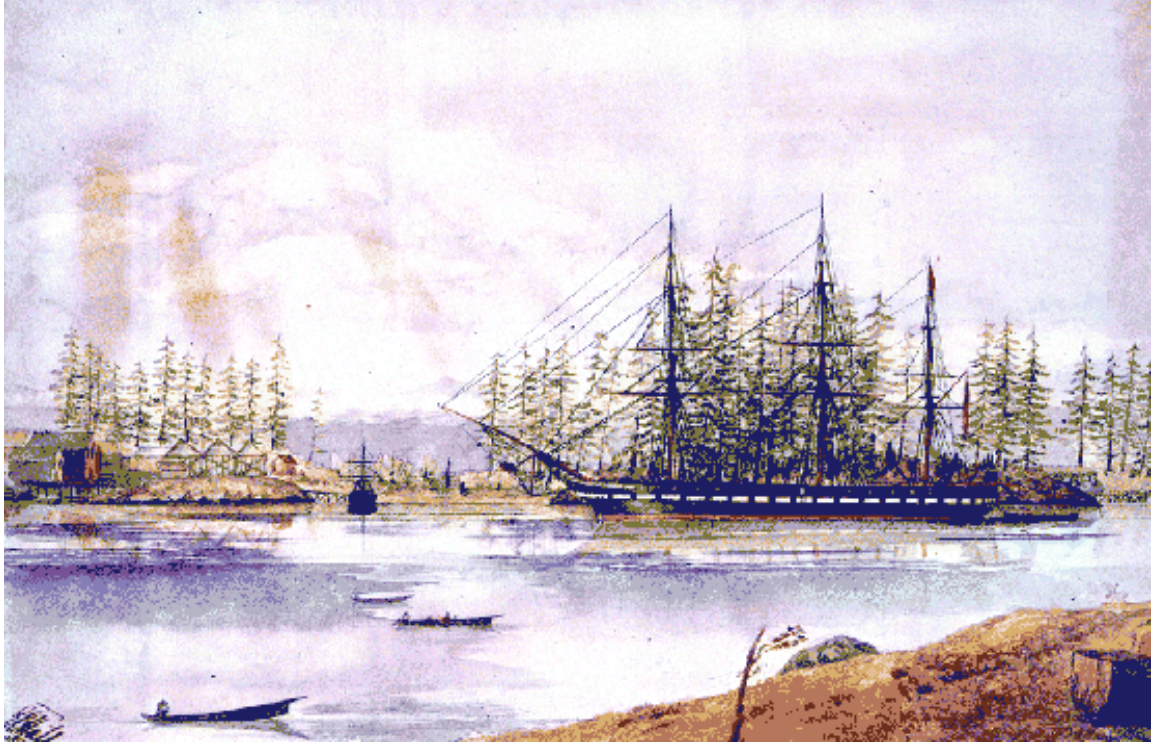
**Figure 14: *Victoria*. 186-? William George Richardson Hind. Call/Cat: PDP02611. Courtesy of the BCA.**



**Figure 15:** *Esquimalt Harbour from near the hospital (Naval)- No. 11. September 23, 1860. Sarah Crease. Call/Cat: PDP02901; Acc: 199104-002. Courtesy of the BCA.*



**Figure 16:** *Bridge Leading to Red Government Building from the top of which this view is taken-No. 8. October 1, 1860. Sarah Crease. Call/Cat: 02898. Courtesy of the BCA.*



**Figure 17:** [*HMS Sutlej, Constance Cove*] Between 1863 and 1866. Edward C. Hall.  
Call/Cat: PDP00092. Courtesy of the BCA.



**Figure 18:** [*Victoria, looking northeast from west side of Laurel Point*]. 1864. Edward Richardson. Call/Cat: PDP 00114. Courtesy of the BCA.



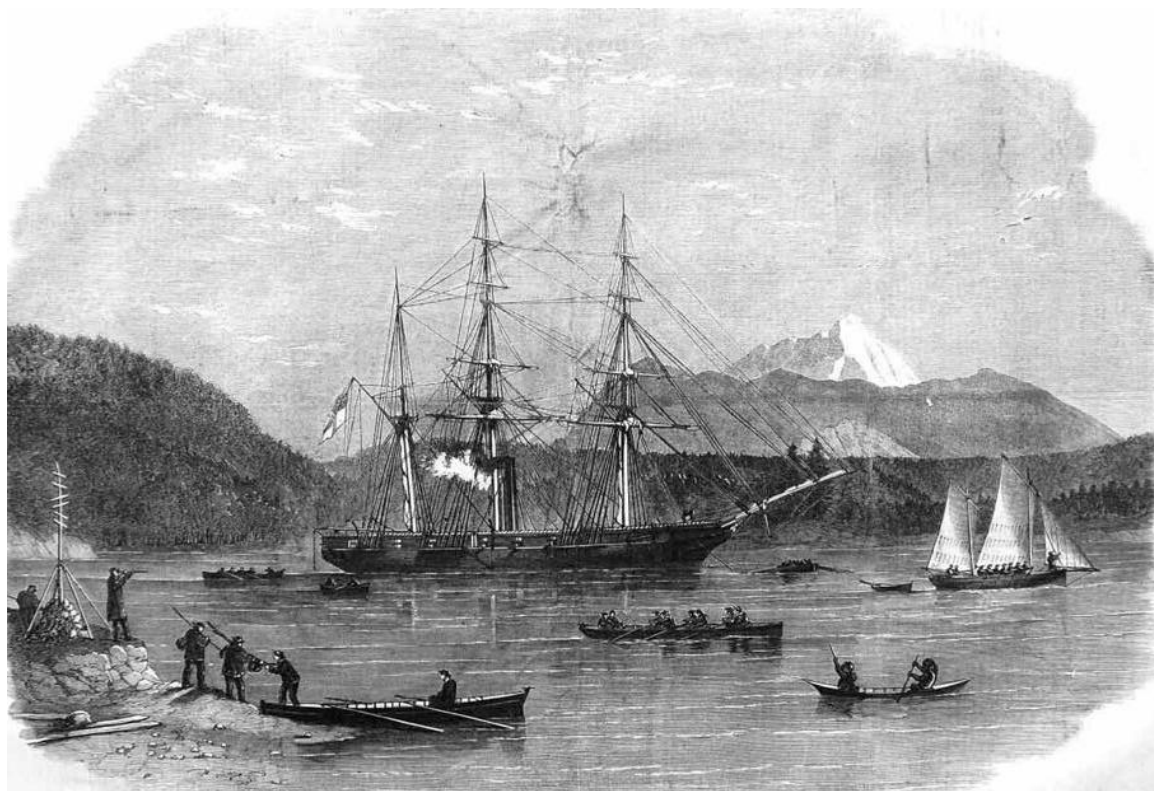
**Figure 19:** *Dock and landing in Esquimalt Harbour, Vancouver Island. 1869. Vincent Colyer.*  
Call/Car: PDP00965. Courtesy of the BCA.



**Figure 20:** *Fort Langley. 1870. William Henry Newton.* Call/Cat: PDP00035. Courtesy of the BCA.



Sarah Crease was often considered an amateur, though her work reached a wide audience. Her work appeared in the 1862 International Exhibition in London (Bridge 2005) and two of her sketches, alongside several of E.P. Bedwell's sketches, were published as lithographs to serve as illustrations for Richard C. Mayne's work *Four Years in British Columbia* (1862)<sup>51</sup> (Gilmore 1980:39-40). Some of Bedwell's sketches were also converted into etchings for illustrations in the *Illustrated London News* (see Fig. 21). This demonstrates the metropolitan appetite for images of colony, and also shows how persuasive and dominating these seemingly innocent paintings and sketches could become as they shaped the image of colony for the metropole and newcomer alike.



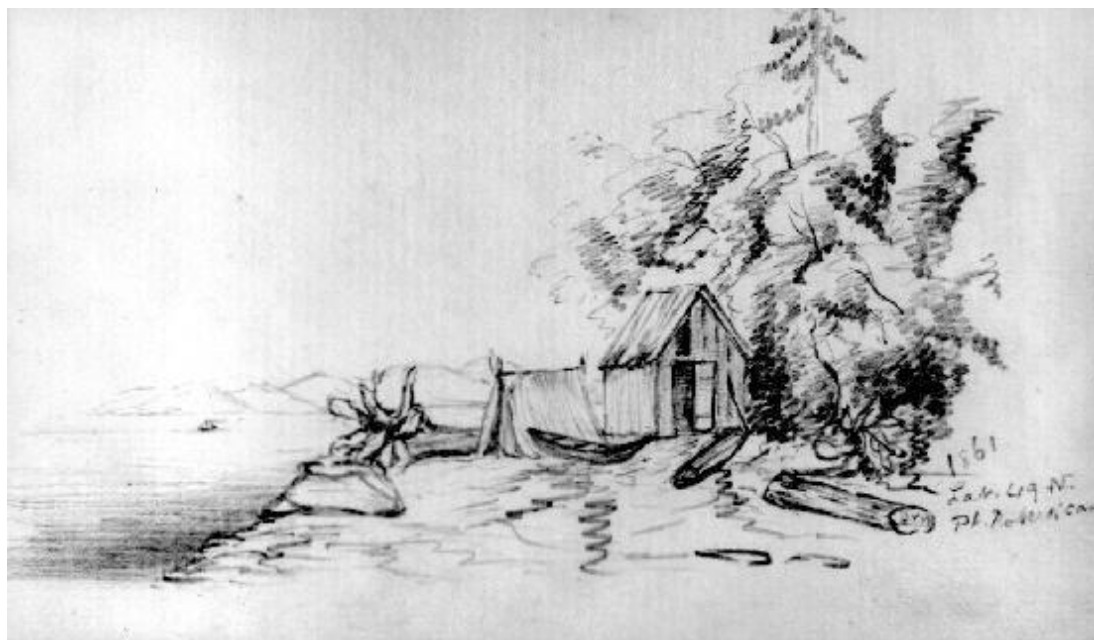
**Figure 21: Exploring Expedition Along the Coast of Vancouver's Island and British Columbia—HMS Plumper in Port Harvey, Johnston's Strait: Start of the Surveying-Boats. March 1, 1862. Edward Parker Bedwell. *Illustrated London News*, p. 211.**

<sup>51</sup> Mayne's (1862) volume is analyzed in the above section detailing the written sources of canoe use.

Photographers, such as Francis G. Claudet and Frederick Dally also demonstrate the ubiquity of the dugout canoe in numerous beach and harbour scenes. In his eagerness to create images, Claudet kept a sketchbook documenting his travels. At the British Columbia Archives (BCA) there exists a companion photograph (Fig. 22) to his sketch of Point Roberts (Fig. 23). This offers an interesting glimpse of the process behind image making for one artist. Both sketch and photograph indicate the presence of canoes, but the photograph also includes First Nations people in the scene. The Coast Salish style canoe, around and in which the First Nations people are sitting in the image, is partly in the ocean, indicating they are freshly landed or about to leave. Up the beach within the high tide zone is another larger canoe pulled up next to the camp. This canoe is present in both the sketch and photograph, perhaps this is the canoe in which Claudet travelled.



**Figure 22: *Boundary Bay near Point Roberts*. 1861. Francis George Claudet. Call: G-01085; Cat: HP033712; Acc: 198201-079. Courtesy of the BCA.**



**Figure 23: *Point Roberts Camp, sketch from diary*. 1861. Francis George Claudet. Call: B-02685; Cat:HP031887I; Acc: 193501-001. Courtesy of the BCA.**

Dally's photographs demonstrate a curio[sity] or a precursor to the ethnographer's fascination with the First Nations subject, indicating that there was a market for his photographs of First Nations subjects and material culture (Blackman 1981-82:107; Francis 1996:5), including dugout canoes. Not only are there images of beaches from up and down the coast covered in dugout canoes (Figs. 24, 25, 26), but there is also an image of a canoe burial.<sup>52</sup> In a few of the beach scenes photographed (Fig. 25 and 26), Dally, or perhaps someone else who wrote titles on the photographs, identified the different canoes in the image, specifically the "Chinook canoes," or Nuu-chah-nulth style canoes as they are known today (see comparison of different canoe styles seen on west coast in Map 1, Appendix A). This awareness of canoe typologies among Europeans is not surprising, since, as discussed above, the different styles of canoes were valued by Europeans for different uses as they were by their First Nations makers and users. Europeans valued the Nuu-chah-nulth canoe for open sea travel since its high stern handled a following sea well (Waterman and Coffin 1920:15).

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<sup>52</sup> For reasons of cultural sensitivity this image is not reproduced in this research, but it can be found at the BC Archives: Titled: *First Nations Chief Buried in his Canoe; San Juan Islands*; call number: C-09280; Cat: HP057609; Accession: 198509-002.



**Figure 24: "Indian distribution feast, or potlatch." Between 1866-1870. Frederick Dally. Call: C-09284; Cat: HP057613; Acc: 198509-002. Courtesy of the BCA.**



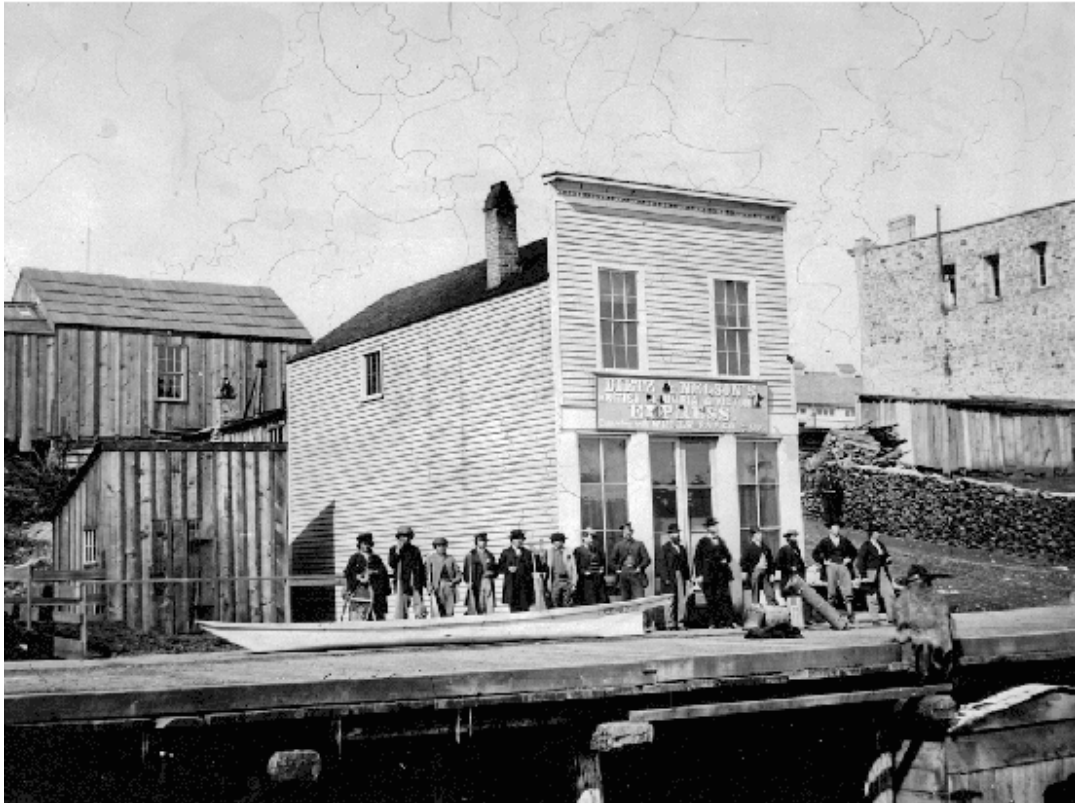
**Figure 25: "Indian canoes - Chinook shape - Vancouver Island." Between 1866-1870. Frederick Dally. Call: C-09273; Cat: HP057602; Acc: 198509-002. Courtesy of the BCA.**



**Figure 26: *Esquimalt Harbour, showing Chinook canoes. Between 1866-1870. Frederick Dally. Call: C-09288; Cat: HP057617; Acc: 198509-002. Courtesy of the BCA.***

Mail delivery by dugout canoe is emphasized in Claudet's photograph of the Deetz and Nelson Express office in New Westminster (Fig. 27). This 1864 image depicts a New Westminster scene of an office front, a Coast Salish style canoe and a small crowd of people, including six First Nations canoeists who worked to deliver the mail to and from Victoria (Keddie 2003:84). This photograph serves to illustrate how the canoe and the First Nations canoeists were valued for their speed and reliability as they were employed to deliver mail, packages and "treasure" (usually in the form of gold from miners). This image speaks to the enduring use of dugout canoes by Europeans even when more "modern" and western modes of transport became available, for example, the steamship, which was operational at this point between Victoria and New Westminster. When examined in comparison with Warre's 1845 image (Fig. 3) of the canoe express

delivering mail between Fort Victoria and HBC interests at Nisqually, Claudet's photograph (Fig. 27) demonstrates an almost twenty year continuation of mail delivery by dugout canoe and First Nation canoeists. Furthermore, when combined with written evidence of canoe use for mail delivery for the HBC since 1815, this photograph demonstrates nearly a fifty-year legacy of delivery by dugout canoe.



**Figure 27: Dietz and Nelson express office. New Westminster. 1864. Francis George Claudet. Call: E-07739; Cat: HP087822; Acc: 198201-079. Courtesy of the BCA.**

Frederick Whymper's 1865 sketch of a camp on Cowichan Lake gives further illustration to a European dependence upon First Nations dugout canoes and guides. Serving as artist to Robert Brown's Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition (VIEE) in 1864, Whymper, in his 1865 painting (Fig. 28) offers a polished rendition (taken from sketches made on the journey) of camp life. The VIEE relied on a dugout canoe and

several First Nations men poling, paddling and portaging to carry the supplies for most of the expedition, while the rest of the exploratory crew (Brown, Whympers and others) walked the journey, travelling inland on Vancouver Island. Figure 28 offers a nice companion to the analyzed written accounts (above) of the VIEE's ventures, described separately by both Robert Brown (Brown 1864; Hayman 1992) and Whympers (1868). In this image, a relaxing camp life is illustrated, with tents set up, supper on the boil and the Coast Salish-style supply canoe pulled up and unloaded of its goods. This image is in contrast to other sketches Whympers created of this journey, where tugging canoes up the Cowichan River meant strained muscles and wet clothes (Hayman 1991:74; Tippett and Cole 1977:42). An art exhibit of Whympers's 33 images produced during the journey was held in November of 1864, celebrating the company's exploratory mission with the elite of Victoria. Like Bedwell and Sarah Crease, Whympers's work appeared in the *Illustrated London News*<sup>53</sup> and several published books, including Brown's *The Countries of the World* (1876-81), *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* (1868) by Gilbert Malcolm Sproat (1868),<sup>54</sup> as well as several of his own publications (Hayman 1992). Whympers published a written account of his work with the VIEE (albeit not as completely or with as much detail as Brown) in his book *Travel and adventure in the territory of Alaska* (1868).

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<sup>53</sup> 1866. *Illustrated London News*, November 24: 497.

<sup>54</sup> Sproat's (1868) work analyzed in the above section detailing the written sources of canoe use.





**Figure 28:** *Camp, Cowichan Lake, Vancouver Island. 1865. Frederick Whymper. Call/Cat: PDP01704. Courtesy of the BCA.*

Towards the late 1860s, regattas became part of the recreational pastimes of European newcomers, with First Nations dugout canoe races included as a major event. Started in Victoria in 1858, these canoe and boats races served as a light-hearted celebration of the Queen's birthday, and served as an expression of British loyalty in a reaction to large populations of American miners holding canoe races in Victoria's Inner Harbour to celebrate American holidays (Dewhist 1967:43; Keddie 2003:117). Here dugout canoes, and the rallying of public appreciation for sporting events, were tapped into by the colonial government to articulate and emphasize a particular British identity. In this way the dugout canoe and the men and women who served on their racing teams (both First Nations men and "klootchman" [women] raced) were used to build up the colonial

enterprise. Later, as the colonies joined Confederation, canoe regattas were welcomed into the nation building schemes of the new government.

Jane Needham's dramatic 1867 painting (Fig. 29) illustrates the heightened emotion and nationalistic fervour that was part of the canoe regattas. This colourful painting is full of action and movement, as sixteen large Nuu-chah-nulth style canoes (or possibly adapted Coast Salish racing canoes) with British Columbia flags affixed to their bows and filled with brightly clothed paddling First Nations men, raced by Government House on the shore of the Fraser River at New Westminster. Perhaps these flags decorating the canoes were part of Governor Seymour's official gifts for "good Indian chiefs" as Fisher (1971:8) quotes Governor Seymour ordering in a despatch to Cardwell in London in 1864, after a politically successful week of canoe regattas and celebration on the Queen's Birthday (Ormsby 1958:206). Along the shore several Royal Navy ships are also dressed in celebratory garb with flags flying. The excitement in this image is palpable; the canoeists are depicted to appear larger and closer to the viewer as they occupy the foreground with the colonial presences of the Royal Navy's ships and Government House serving as an ever-present background. Strangely, this image lacks the crowds present in later images of canoe regattas in Victoria (e.g., Figs. 39 and 40).



**Figure 29: *Indians Racing in front of Government House, British Columbia, on Queen Victoria's Birthday 1867...* Jane Needham. Call/Cat: PDP00252. Courtesy of the BCA.**

Claudet's early (1860s unknown specific date) photograph (see Fig. 30) of the canoe regatta at New Westminster also lacks crowds. This image appears to depict First Nations competitors seated in their canoes, perhaps watching a race, as none of the subjects are looking at the camera and nearly all have their faces turned towards the Fraser River. The composition of this image offers a unique perspective of 'behind the scenes' of the race, as it ignores the main attraction of the regatta itself, which Needham (Fig. 29) concentrated upon, focusing instead on the audience of the races and the competitors in waiting.



**Figure 30: *Regatta on the Fraser River at New Westminster. 186-? Francis George Claudet. Call: F-04434; Cat: HP033693. Courtesy of the BCA.***

This time period marked many changes to the way in which First Nations people were treated by shifting colonial governments and settlers, but as these images indicate, the dugout canoe's use and prevalence in the making of this colony was constant. The expediency and convenience of the dugout canoe allowed it to be a ubiquitous part of the economic, political and social landscape of these colonies. These representations of the colonial landscapes in British Columbia were also far reaching, colouring the metropolitan vision of colony too as images produced were shared in the *Illustrated London News* and art exhibits of the colonies.

## 6.5 Post 1871: The Confederation Period

Following Confederation image making proliferated (N=43), with cameras becoming more accessible for use by amateurs and, as the newly completed CPR railroad opened up British Columbia to artists from Central Canada, images of canoe use increased. The previous analysis of written accounts does not extend past 1901; however, the image data analyzed here extends until 1962. These data comes from a later period, but I would argue that these images are indicative of earlier trends of dugout canoe use, as I indicate throughout this analysis.

As sketches (Figs. 35, 36, 37, 38) and photographs (Figs. 31, 32, 33, 34, 39, 40) show, documentation of recreational use of the dugout canoe continued to increase after 1871. Images of picnicking and day trips by settlers travelling by dugout canoe are numerous, for example, the 1908 photograph (Fig. 31), of Frederick Maitland-Dougall and a group of picnickers stepping out of two large Nuu-chah-nulth style dugout canoes. Frederick Maitland-Dougall and his picnic ventures via canoe were often guided by the accomplished canoeist Fred Thorne of Somena (Hodding 1998:66-67). Historian Hodding classifies Maitland-Dougall as one of the local British upper class settlers, or “longstockings” (1998:67), of the Cowichan Valley. Many of these gentrified settlers were known for their keenness for British past times, such as boating, sailing, picnicking, hunting and fishing. Maitland-Dougall, likewise, is known for his leisure contributions. He is remembered historically for starting in 1888 the South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club—one of the oldest running tennis clubs in the world (second only to Wimbledon; Hodding 1998:73).



**Figure 31: *Canoeing in a dugout on the Cowichan River. 1908. Undetermined artist. Call: E-00464; Cat: HP077850; Acc: 198201-006. Courtesy of the BCA.***



**Figure 32: *James, Herbert and Hugh Matthews in a canoe on the south shore of False Creek. 1902. James Skitt, Major Matthews. Reference code: AM54-S4-: Dist N15.1. Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives.***

Fishing and hunting trips also grew in popularity, as seen in photographs from the Dunsmuir family collection (Fig. 33 from 1911 and Fig. 34 from 1913). Here too, First Nations guides were employed to transport the holidayers. Robert Dunsmuir's two sons, Alex and James, were avid fishermen and hunters, taking long trips up the coast in their yacht (the *Thistle*) to Knight Inlet— their favourite spot. From here they would plan excursions ashore, bargaining in the trade language, Chinook, to hire canoes and First Nations paddlers (Reksten 1991:139 and 221). The Dunsmuir family made their wealth from coal mining, land speculation and the Vancouver Island Railroad construction. These projects made use of First Nations labourers and land (Gallagher 2003; Hodding 1998:37-39; Keddie 2003:107; Peterson 2002:207)—much of which arguably<sup>55</sup> was not obtained in legal or fair fashion. Robert Dunsmuir, the original coal baron and later, his son James, were the biggest employers in British Columbia in their day. Both this and the fact that James served as premier and later lieutenant governor, gave the family plenty of political power along with their monetary muscle.

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<sup>55</sup> Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group, *The Great Land Grab in Hul'qumi'num Territory*. p. 11, Electronic document, <http://www.hulquminum.bc.ca/pubs/HTGRailwayBookSpreads.pdf>. Accessed October 18, 2014.



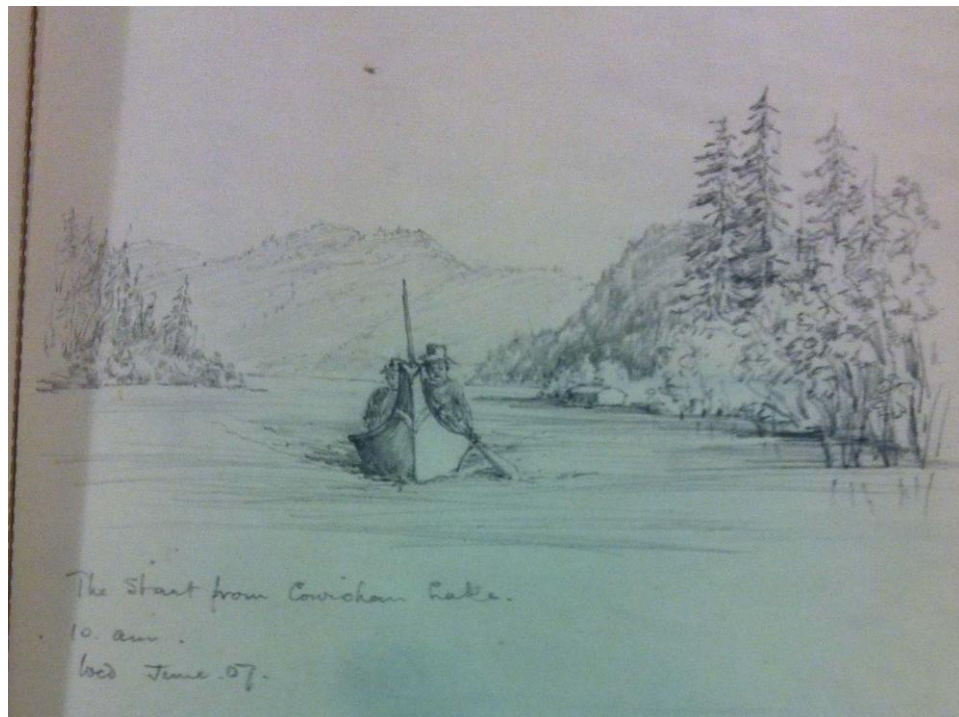
**Figure 33:** *"Canoes returning from Nimpkish Lake, Aug. 25th, 1911."* Undetermined artist, from Dunsmuir family's personal photo album. Call: I-51860; Acc: 197910-004. Courtesy of the BCA.



**Figure 34:** *Dunsmuir canoes off Dutchman Head, Knight Inlet. September 9, 1913.* Undetermined artist. Call: I-51860; Acc: 197910-004. Courtesy of the BCA.



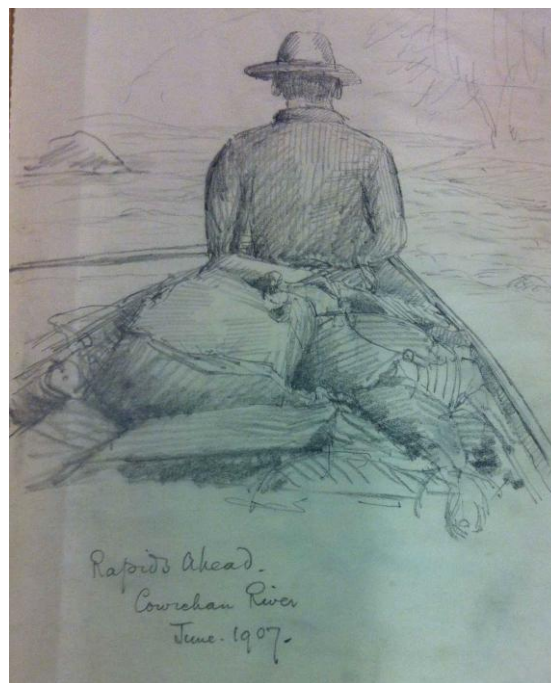
The lawyer, and second generation British Columbian, Lindley Crease (the aforementioned Sarah Crease's son), was similar to the Dunsmuir sons, as a keen, albeit a more modest, canoeist. Often embarking on dugout canoe trips around the Victoria area, Lindley Crease undertook a dugout canoe trip up the Cowichan River in 1907, keeping a sketch journal of his journey (Figs. 35, 36, 37). Several sketches from this series reveal the seating in the canoe and Lindley Crease's image making process, as several sketches are made from the perspective of someone seated in the centre of the canoe (Figs. 36 and 37). There are several direct portrayals of the First Nations guide/paddlers (e.g., Fig. 36). These images reveal the intimate interactions that must have been part of canoe travel as all were seated close as well as being active participants of the voyages.



**Figure 35: *The start from Cowichan Lake: 10 AM: [?] June - 07.* Lindley Crease. Call/Cat: PDP6610. *From Sketchbook of Lindley's Ventures: Victoria Area, the Okanagan, Cowichan River canoe trip/ also 2 sketches fr... 1904 to 1907.* Lindley Crease. Call/Cat: PDP06522; Acc: 199104-002. Courtesy of the BCA.**



**Figure 36:** [No title]. June, 1907. Lindley Crease. Call/Cat: PDP6612. *From Sketchbook of Lindley's Ventures: Victoria Area, the Okanagan, Cowichan River canoe trip/ also 2 sketches fr... 1904 to 1907. Lindley Crease. Call/Cat: PDP06522; Acc: 199104-002. Courtesy of the BCA.*



**Figure 37:** *"Rapids Ahead. Cowichan River, June. 1907."* Call/Cat: PDP6616. *From Sketchbook of Lindley's Ventures: Victoria Area, the Okanagan, Cowichan River canoe trip/ also 2 sketches fr... 1904 to 1907. Lindley Crease. Call/Cat: PDP06522; Acc: 199104-002. Courtesy of the BCA.*

Lindley Crease and Alex and James Dunsmuir were all second generation British Columbians whose parents helped secure the colonial future of the province financially, politically and socially. To see these Canadians enjoying the outdoors and using the dugout canoe as an object of relaxing recreation fits well with Erickson's argument (2013:7) about the development of the "canoe nation" in Canada. Here the canoe was and is used to establish a colonial and personal connection to the land through recreational pursuits, such as hunting, fishing and painting. These outdoor adventures though apparently harmless opportunities to "unwind" for these key second generation colonists were also possibly a method of legitimizing their actions of taking over First Nations lands and denying First Nations peoples their rights (Erickson 2013:8,12).

It is apparent that the Creases were a very artistic family. Sarah Crease, her husband Henry P. Pellew Crease, and many of their progeny, including Josephine and the aforementioned Lindley Crease, were avid hobby artists. For them, art was often a social process with picnicking sketch parties and amateur art shows (Tippett and Cole 1977:65-66). Josephine Crease's work produced in the late nineteenth century was very similar to her mother's pretty water scenes from the Victoria area. Josephine Crease's work was often complemented by the romantic inclusion of lone canoes with or without canoeists (e.g., Fig. 38). Josephine Crease's images strongly harken to the British landscape painting tradition of pastoralism, but instead of the typical sheep or farm hands, we see lone canoes.



**Figure 38: *Cowichan Canoe*. 189-? Josephine Crease. Call/Cat:PDP03372; Acc: 199104-002. Courtesy of the BCA.**

Josephine Crease's motif of the empty canoe perhaps is simply a method of establishing perspective (Peters 1979:30), but perhaps her motivations were more subconsciously compelling. Perhaps she worked to dissolve the threat to European identity and hegemony posed by the colonist's attraction to the other (Maxwell 1999:11). This was a politically challenging time for First Nations' rights as the growing population of Europeans continued to demand First Nations' land and resources, yet these Europeans still required First Nations labourers and technologies—often including, but not limited to, the dugout canoe (Edmonds 2010a:9; Knight 1978:8; Lutz 2008:36). Perhaps this conflict over land, resources and labour (as well as the possible guilt plaguing these colonialists) was lessened through these paintings, as the First Nations peoples and their

dugout canoe were made into a romantic motif. Maybe her depictions of the dugout canoe worked to “fetishize” colonial justification, by making the canoe as a marker of First Nations peoples and their way of life while disappearing the First Nations presence from the image (Erickson 2013:6). Josephine Crease's work was produced in concert with the late nineteenth to early twentieth-century myth of the “vanishing Indian” popularized in colonial cultures (both American and Canadian) in works of art, music and later even film (for example, the work of Edward Curtis, Figs. 64 and 65). Here Indigenous peoples were depicted as outside of time and history (Fabian 1983:4), fading into the mythologic past (Gidley 2003:131; Hauser 2001:31).

This interpretation of mediating a colonial identity through art fits with what is historically understood about Josephine Crease and her family. The Crease family was known for their very British, middle-class roots, which they were keen to articulate in this new colony (Bridge 2005). Anxieties about losing their claim to British identity were worked out publicly, as Josephine and Lindley Crease's father, the colonial lawyer, Sir Henry P. Pellew Crease, was a staunch opponent to the union of British Columbia with Canada, fearing that Confederation would take them farther away from Mother England (Elliott 1971-1972:65). It seems likely, that at this more personal level of private landscape painter, Josephine Crease was asserting her British colonist identity as she painted this new landscape.

As the growing number of photographs of canoe regattas from this time show, regattas continued to rise in popularity throughout the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century (e.g., Figs. 39 and 40). The crowds of people and boats present in these images demonstrate the increased popularity of these games and events. These images

also offer clear examples of the long, narrow Coast Salish Racing canoes adapted during the turn of the century for these competitive races (Dewhurst 1967:45; Lincoln 1991:23). The earlier images of Needham (Fig. 29) and Dally (Fig. 30) do not offer such a definitive typology. As argued earlier, these races were a nationalistic enterprise that tapped into the publics' appetite for sporting events, but this does not mean that these events were not meaningful for the First Nations and European competitors and spectators. These races exemplify how complicated the notion of “nation” and “nationalism,” or “colony” and “colonist,” are and how, as Stoler (1989:136-137) argues, colonial directives and policies of the metropole or the nation are reinterpreted and worked at on the ground by the general public, who may or may not be aware of the nation building projects around them (Edmonds 2010b:16; Loren 2001:175; Perry 2001:14; Pratt 1992:10; Stahl 2010:165; Stoler 1989:136, 2001:847; Thomas 1991:10; Trouillot 1995:96).



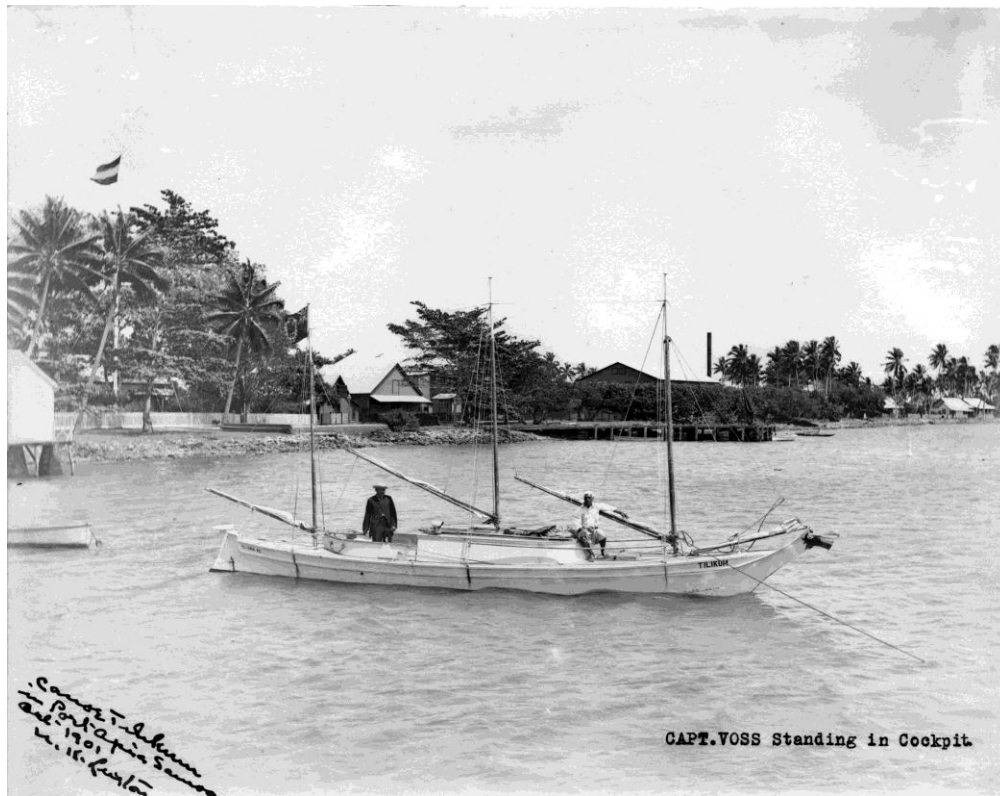
**Figure 39: *Canoe Race Gorge Regatta, Victoria. 1900. A.G. Franklin. Call: H-02417; Cat: HP098854; Acc: 198208-026. Courtesy of the BCA.***



**Figure 40: Regatta of canoes in Victoria Inner Harbour. May 24 (Victoria Day), 1904. Stephen Allen Spencer. Call: A-07202; Cat: HP020270; Acc: 193501-001. Courtesy of the BCA.**

At the beginning of the new century, the attributes of the dugout canoe as a worthy oceangoing vessel were acknowledged in the widely publicized voyage of the *Tilikum*. As discussed above, a large Nuu-chah-nulth canoe of unknown age was bought in 1901 from a possibly Coast Salish individual in the Victoria region (Voss 1926:47; Luxton 2002:33). Re-christened the *Tilikum*, she was converted to a sailing vessel to make her fit for circumnavigating the globe. Although powered by sail, this is argued to be the farthest distance covered by a canoe and at its time was the smallest ship to circumnavigate the globe. Figure 41 shows the *Tilikum* bobbing in bright, South Pacific waters of Port Apia in Samoa. Of all European uses of the canoe, this has been the most legendary, making an enduring name for the dugout canoe worldwide as seaworthy and hardy. The *Tilikum*, is

on display today (over a hundred years since her extensive voyage) at the Maritime Museum in Victoria, B.C.



**Figure 41: Sailed canoe 'Tilikum' at anchor. Oct. 1901. James Skitt, Major Matthews. Reference Code: AM54-S4-: Bo P369. Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives.**

Although lacking a date, Figures 42 and 43 offer good examples of the dugout canoe's earlier (perhaps between 1860 and 1890) use by Euro-colonials as transportation. The 1907 sketch by the renowned B.C. artist, Emily Carr, depicts a possibly fictionalized account of travelling by dugout canoe at Sitka, Alaska much to the apparent disgust of her fellow travellers (see Fig. 44). Although this image may be fictionalized, Emily Carr's writings document her as no stranger to dugout canoe travel as demonstrated by her non-fiction work, *Klee Wyck* (2004:149; Cole 2000:155).





**Figure 42:** *Landing a large canoe at the riverbank; the dog appears eager to help;* miscellaneous E album. N.d. Undetermined artist. Call: I-55613; Acc: 198604-010. Courtesy of the BCA.



**Figure 43:** *Herbert E. Beckwith in a dugout canoe with his dog; Victoria Harbour.* N.d. Undetermined artist. Call: C-09362; Cat: HP057734. Courtesy of the BCA.



**Figure 44:** *"Being led forth by 'la totem' for a prodigiously long walk, I became weary, and beguiled a old kloochman to paddle me back to Sitka in her stout canoe; to the horrification and alarm of poor la totem."* 1907. Emily Carr. Call: I-68060; Cat: HP036254; Acc; 193501-001. Courtesy of the BCA.

Dugout canoes maintained an active part of the economic pursuits of Europeans. This is attested in images ranging from an 1895 photograph (Fig. 45) of a dugout canoe tending to a steamer on Harrison Lake, to two images of canoe tending at Clo-oose from the BC Archives and the Logan Family Collection (Fig. 46 from 1946 and Fig. 47 of unknown date; Wells 1988:15). When taken in comparison with Haverfield's 1848 image (Fig. 5), they offer visual proof of almost 100 years of the use of dugout canoes as ship tenders used to unload and load ships.



**Figure 45:** *The SS Trasfer at Douglas, near Harrison Lake. June 2, 1895. Undetermined artist. Call: A-00684; Cat: HP001470. Courtesy of the BCA.*



**Figure 46:** *Canoes at Clo-oose. 1946. B.C. Government. Call: I-27595; Cat: 02665; Other Cat: B11-A0051; Acc: 199003-004. Courtesy of the BCA.*



**Figure 47: *Canoe landing supplies at Clo-oose.* N.d. Undetermined artist. Cat: P-Z01.112. Courtesy of the Bamfield Community Museum and Archives, Logan Family Collection.**

Photographs from 1894 (Figs. 48, 49) highlight the dugout canoes imperative use as part of the pelagic sealing industry—not to mention the integral role of First Nations sealers (Crockford 1996:51). In these photographs can be seen the specialized canoes with lowered gunwales and bowsprits that developed out of this industry (Arima 1974:88; Crockford 1996:51; Dewhirst 1967:43; Forester and Forester 1975:168). Canoes were loaded onboard of sealing schooners to travel to the offshore hunting grounds (see Fig. 48). Canoes and First Nations fishermen were also a major part of the fishing industry, as seen in Figure 50 of the S.S. Muriel in Lowe Inlet with canoes in tow (Forester and Forester 1975:159; Thompson and Freeman 1930:17). Here canoes were often towed to the fishing grounds and, as in the method of pelagic sealing, the bigger steam powered

ship acted as a central camp, carrying the catch and supplies for the satellite fishermen and their canoes.



**Figure 48:** *"Pelagic sealing, hoisting canoe aboard schooner, 1894."* [Archival Photographer Stefan Claesson]. Image ID: fish7466, NOAA's Historic Fisheries Collection; Credit: Gulf of Maine Cod Project, NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries; Courtesy of the National Archives.



**Figure 49:** *Pelagic sealing, American Schooner Columbia, with sealing canoes. 1894.* [Archival Photographer Stefan Claesson]. Image ID: fish7468, NOAA's Historic Fisheries Collection; Credit: Gulf of Maine Cod Project, NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries; Courtesy of the National Archives.



**Figure 50:** *Low Inlet. SS Muriel with canoes in tow. ca. 1905.* Undetermined artist. Call: E-03687; Cat: HP082102; Acc: 193501-001. Courtesy of the BCA.

Not only did the dugout canoe act as a speedy transport vehicle that collapsed physical space for its passengers, or conveyed communications quickly via mail delivery, the dugout canoe also played a role in the collapsing of global space by aiding the laying of telegraph line. Photographs such as the 1900 image of the surveying crew working on the Atlin-Quesnel telegraph line in a large, richly decorated Northern Style canoe (Fig. 51), and the 1901 image of a man laying the Pacific Cable Line in the Alberni Canal in a Nuuchah-nulth style dugout canoe outfitted with a sail and rudder (Fig. 52), document the dugout canoe's continuing necessity in surveying and connecting the nation of Canada to the global network via telegraph communication. The All Red Line brought Canada and other commonwealth colonies along the route (Norfolk Island, New Zealand, and so on) to Great Britain through fast communication—collapsing global space (Harris 2000:165).



**Figure 51:** *Chief Shake's canoe; Atlin-Quesnel telegraph line. 1900. Burdon Lance. Call: F-05014; Cat: HP013261; Acc: 193501-001. Courtesy of the BCA.*



**Figure 52: *Canoe used for the Pacific cable station survey in the Alberni canal. June, 1901. Frank Cyril Swannell. Call: I-33640; Cat: SW1701; Acc: 198002-017. Courtesy of the BCA.***

Canoe travel and transport were an enduring part of surveying projects. The 1896 photograph by Edgar Flemming of a canoe on Nimpkish lake (Fig. 53) taken during Rev. W.W. Bolton's expedition exploring Vancouver Island demonstrates the continued, active use of the canoe on exploratory missions. Frank Cyril Swannell's (1880-1969) diverse collection of photographs document surveyors using canoes. In addition to laying the Pacific cable line in 1901 (Fig. 52), Swannell collections of photographs include the comical photograph entitled, "Many surveyors in a small canoe on Fraser Lake" from 1908 (Fig. 54), as well as a photograph of his fellow crewmen<sup>56</sup> carving a possible

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<sup>56</sup> One crewman is identified as Jim Alexander, who may be the same Jimmy Alexander, a First Nations man who guided a crew of surveyors and E.M. Cotton in 1911 in a large (55 1/2 foot long) cottonwood canoe from Fort St. James to Quesnel (Cotton 1975:24-25).



cottonwood dugout canoe in 1913 (Figs. 55), and a photograph that depicts a group of surveyors christening a freshly made dugout canoe in 1925 (Fig. 56). Although these last three images indicate the use of cottonwood dugout canoes (a typology outside of this study's research area), they nonetheless indicate the canoe's pervasiveness and the intimacy that these surveyors must have established in connection with this method of transport to be able to construct canoes themselves.



**Figure 53: *Canoe on the Nimpkish River*. July, 1896. Edgar Fleming. Call: I-31536; Cat: LAI-009; Acc: 198703-003. Courtesy of the BCA.**



**Figure 54:** *Many Surveyors in a small canoe on Fraser Lake. October, 1908. Frank Cyril Swannell. Call: I-59875; Cat: sw3684; Acc: 198002-017. Courtesy of the BCA.*



**Figure 55:** *The survey crew making a canoe near Fort Grahame. September 17, 1913. Frank Cyril Swannell. Call:F-08608; Cat: HP094620; SW4505; Acc:198002-017. Courtesy of the BCA.*



**Figure 56:** *Christening a canoe at Nanika River. 1925. Frank Cyril Swannell. Call: I-33834; Cat: SW2750; Acc: 198002-017. Courtesy of the BCA.*

Swannell's photograph of apparently European and First Nations surveyors working together to manufacture a canoe (Fig. 55) provides a contrast to subsequent images of solely First Nations carvers making dugout canoes (see Figs. 57, 58, 59, 60 and 61). Nineteenth-century photographers were drawn to documenting the manufacturing process of the dugout canoe; what in technology studies has been referred to as the *chaîne opératoire* (Gosselain 1998:78). Anthropologists have long been fascinated with technological process and operational sequence, but these historical pictures of First Nations carvers constructing canoes (Figs 57, 58, 59, 60 and 61) were often taken by photographers who presumably had no anthropological inclinations, other than commercial ones, since images of First Nations peoples and practices were often sought after in the tourist and postcard trade as curios (Blackman 1981-82:107; Francis 1996:5; Savard 2010:53). Was Swannell making a parody of this earlier photographic fascination with process, or was he simply another photographer documenting a process as he saw it?



**Figure 57:** *Metlakahtla Indians Hollowing Out a Canoe.* N.d. Undetermined artist. Call: C-08103; Cat: HP055797; Acc: 193501-001. Courtesy of the BCA.



**Figure 58:** *Carving a canoe at Otter Point, Sooke, B.C.* N.d. Undetermined artist. Call: E-02375; Cat: HP080382. Courtesy of the BCA.

Figures 59, 60 and 61 of the Indian Mission at Burrard Inlet offer an example of this photographic tradition of documenting process, but with a twist as these images are in a way contrived, since they do not in actuality represent time passing. However this series of photographs do capture various stages of dugout canoe manufacture.<sup>57</sup> These figures by an unknown hand are of an undetermined age, perhaps from the late nineteenth century judging by dress. Yet despite these limitations, the images are intriguing, as they appear to document a photographer's attempt to manipulate time to fit with a narrative of operational sequence. At first glance, the images appear to document the various stages of canoe manufacture through time, but upon more careful examination of background objects, all these different stages of the canoe are contemporaneous. Located on the boardwalk in the background of Figure 59 are a wheelbarrow and two dugout canoes, one on its side, and one on the beach below the boardwalk, and in the area between the canoe being manufactured and the boardwalk lies what appears to be a partially completed dugout canoe. Figure 60 depicts a First Nations child sitting with an axe in this partially completed canoe—as if this canoe was the next stage of development of the dugout canoe under construction in the first image (Fig. 59). On the boardwalk above and behind this partially completed canoe are the wheelbarrow, and two dugout canoes, one on its side, unmoved between Figure 59 and Figure 60. These background objects indicate that these photographs were taken on the same day in the same area and thus do not depict the same canoe form undergoing different stages of manufacture. This is a potent warning of the power that photographs have in their seeming realism to mislead the viewer, especially in regards to temporality.

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<sup>57</sup> Figure 57 and 58 both document the manufacture process of the dugout canoe.



**Figure 59:** *Commencing a log canoe, Indian Mission, Burrard Inlet.* N.d. Undetermined artist. Call: F-07440; Cat: HP093981; Acc:198007-005. Courtesy of the BCA.



**Figure 60:** *First Nations child and partially completed canoe; Indian Mission, Vancouver.* N.d. Undetermined artist. Call: F-07450; Cat:HP093991; Acc: 198007-005. Courtesy of the BCA.



**Figure 61:** *Completed dug-out canoe, Indian Mission, Burrard Inlet, Vancouver. N.d. Undetermined artist. Call: F-0745; Cat: HP093992; Acc: 198007-005. Courtesy of the BCA.*

Although Indigenous people are often temporally distanced in representations by Europeans and made to seem unconnected to European histories (Maxwell 1999:3), this does not happen with these photographs. Only notions of process and temporality are stretched. The First Nations carver is not “out of time” as he is pictured working in a rather Westernized context (on the beach at a white-walled, missionized Indian reserve) with a European man in the frame, viewing the process. Here, the process of manufacture is documented through photographs, albeit misleadingly, while the fascination Europeans have for this process is also apparent through the record of this European witnessing the carving.



Figure 62 is a staged photograph portraying two Huu-ay-aht elders, Sa'sawatin and his wife Yima'uk.<sup>58</sup> It shows Sa'sawatin with a penknife and a small, carved canoe and paddle in his hands (Bridge 2004:57). Perhaps these items are included in this image to demonstrate that Sa'sawatin was a carver. Small model canoes were often part of the canoe making process, used to test new canoe designs for full scale dugout canoes and as a teaching toy to instruct children (Arima 1974:99); however, they were also often made and sold to tourists as “curios” (Glass 2011:17; Keddie 2003:112; Knight 1978:15; Lutz 2008:89). This image is interesting in that it combines two modes of curio collecting; as a photograph that satiates Europeans’ fascination with First Nations peoples themselves and; as a photograph depicting examples of First Nations’ curio-crafts that were in high demand by Europeans collectors (Blackman 1981-82:107; Francis 1996:5; Glass 2011:17; Savard 2010:53).

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<sup>58</sup> Figure 62 is undated, but since these Huu-ay-aht elders were informally interviewed in 1922 by Alfred Carmichael (Bridge 2004:56), it can be assumed this photograph is from the early 20th century.



**Figure 62:** *Huu-ay-aht elders Sa'sawatin and his wife Yima'uk; he is holding a small carved canoe in his lap and a pen knife and small paddle in his hands.; MS 2305, box 1, file 10. N.d. Undetermined artist. Call: I-61566; Cat: MS 2305. Courtesy of the BCA.*

Photograph by Charles F. Newcombe (Figs. 63), Edward S. Curtis (Figs. 64 and 65) and John D. Leechman (Figs. 66) offer a burgeoning anthropological perspective on canoes and canoe use. Newcombe's 1912 photograph (Fig. 63) documents a gigantic and iconic Nuu-chah-nulth style canoe that, measured 55' long and 6' wide and deep. Generally, Newcombe's photographs tend to focus on form and technology (see, for example, his photograph of repairing a canoe with pitch and wooden pegs; Savard 2010:12). By contrast, Curtis' images are romanticized, “pictorialist” portrayals of First Nations peoples, complete with bark clothes (Hauser 2001:34; Savard 2010:13). His subjects are portrayed separate from history and modern contact, to appear as though they were using canoes as they would “before the white man” (e.g., Figs 64 and 65). In a different fashion, Leechman's photographs focused on belief systems and cultural representation. Figure 66 illustrates the symbolic “Sbetetdaq ceremony” undertaken by

several people of the Snoqualmie tribe from Carnation (then Tolt), Washington. This ceremony appears to dramatize the paddling and poling of a canoe, or perhaps a Salish Paddle dance and welcome song, and suggests Leechman was striving to visually document the symbolic worldview of the people he was studying.



**Figure 63:** *Nitinat* - cedar canoe - length about 55', beam about 6', depth 6'. Survey party. 1912. Charles Frederic Newcombe. Call: AA-00286; Cat:PN04626; Other Cat: E-0898. Courtesy of the BCA.



**Figure 64:** *Skokomish fishing camp; two natives on beach, canoe in foreground; Volume 9; Plate No. 302.* 1912. Edward Sheriff Curtis. Call: D-08249; Cat: HP074443; Acc: 193501-001. Courtesy of the BCA.



**Figure 65:** *The wedding party; Qagyuhl or Kwakiutl; newly married couple stand on a painted "bride's seat" in the stern of the canoe; Volume 10; Plate No. 344.* N.d. Edward Sheriff Curtis. Call: D-0829; Cat: HP074485; Acc: 193501-001. Courtesy of the BCA.



**Figure 66:** *Paddling upstream in the "canoe" prepared for the Sbetetdaq ceremony at Tolt, Washington; box 6, file 12. July 12, 1920. J.D. Leechman. Call: I-61919; Cat:MS-1290; Acc: 198501-014. Courtesy of the BCA.*

With the 1885 completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), British Columbia became more physically connected to Canada and its nation building projects (Harris 2000:166). As a promotional ploy, the CPR gave free passage and payment to artists from eastern Canada who travelled west to create paintings and sketches that advertised the West. Tippet and Cole (1977:49) following J.A. Fraser (1887) in characterizing this as Canada's "Rocky Mountain period of painting." Once beyond the Rocky Mountains, favourite coastal scenes of these artists often included west coast First Nations villages with countless beached canoes, for example, the paintings of Alert Bay by Frederic M. Bell-Smith (e.g., Fig. 67). One artist, Lucius O'Brien was so taken with the dugout canoe and the Pacific, he hired a canoe and two First Nations paddlers to travel around Bute Inlet with him as he sketched and painted (Reid 2003; Tippet and Cole 1977: 52-53).

Several sketches for his greater works were created on this trip (for example, his famous work “A British Columbian Forest” held in the National Gallery of Canada). The British Columbia Archives includes several of his watercolour sketches of different canoe types. Especially beautiful are his sketches of canoes under sail (Figs. 69, 70). O'Brien labeled the example depicted in the bottom of Figure 70, perhaps a Coast Salish style dugout, as “our canoe”—suggesting this is an illustration of the canoe he used on his tour.



**Figure 67: *Alert Bay*. 1908. Frederic Marlett Bell-Smith. Call/Cat: PDP02812. Courtesy of the BCA.**



Figure 68: *Sketch 20: Squamish Canoe, Howe Sound. June 21, 1888. Lucius O'Brien. Call/Cat:PDP02849. Courtesy of the BCA.*

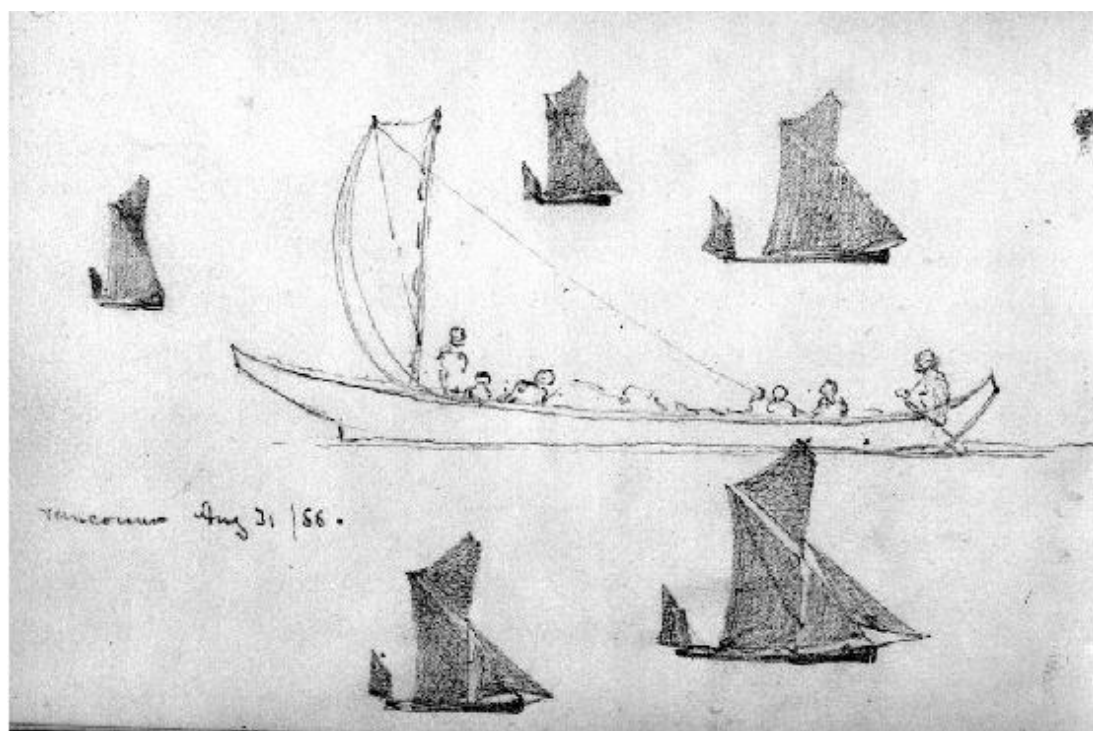


Figure 69: *Sketch 23A: Vancouver. August 31, 1888. Lucius O'Brien. Call/Cat:PDP02855. Courtesy of the BCA.*

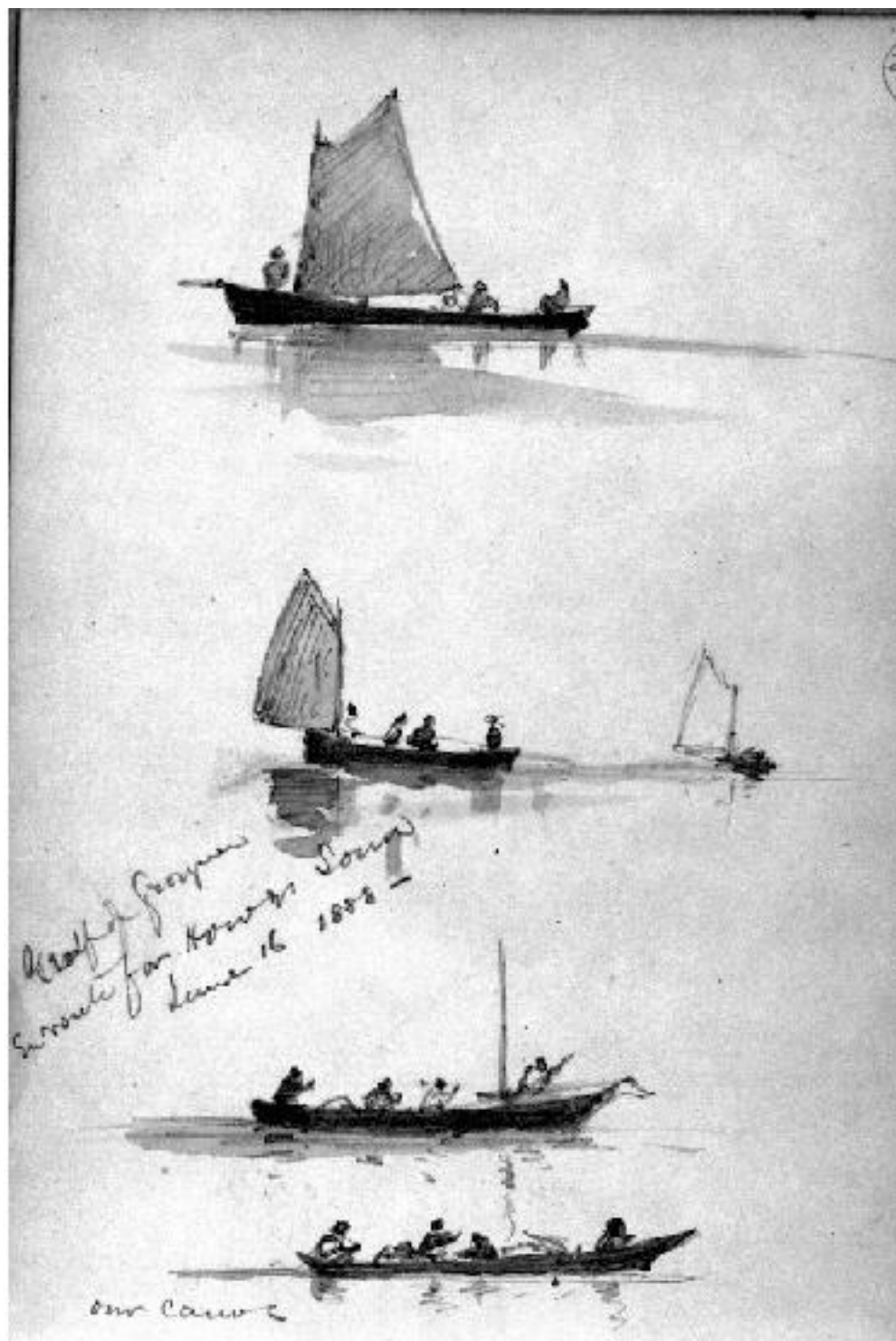


Figure 70: *Sketch 18A: Gulf of Georgia (sic) entering Howe Sound. June 16, 1888. Lucius O'Brien. Call/Cat: PDP02846. Courtesy of the BCA.*



As Lindley Crease's sketches, the Dunsmuir family photos and these sketches by O'Brien suggest, 'touring' by dugout canoe was a growing recreational past-time in British Columbia, and more generally Canada (Erickson 2013:12).<sup>59</sup> Canoes were quickly becoming part of Canada's accepted, subconscious identity (Erickson 2013:12), with widespread use in industry and entertainment. The dugout canoe played a part in political positioning too. In 1876 the visiting Governor General of Canada, Lord Dufferin and his wife toured British Columbia, where they were greeted by First Nations dugout canoe parades at Metlakahtla (see watercolour sketches published in Gilmore 1980:62). In 1924, the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, Walter Cameron Nichol was gifted a dugout canoe carved by seventy year-old "Old Jim" of the Ehattesaht/Chinehkint First Nation, and gifted by his son. This 13 m (42 foot) Nuu-chah-nulth style dugout canoe is pictured in Figure 71 with nearly twenty-five passengers aboard, floating high in the water, despite all the weight aboard her. According to Kirk (1986:114) this canoe is now on display at the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria. The use of the canoe as a diplomatic gift is telling of the shared importance of the dugout canoes to both First Nations cultures and European cultures, since it was a valuable gift to give and to receive (Mauss 2000:7; Thomas 1991:174; Weiner 1985:210). The symbolism behind the dugout canoe had in a way developed into a shared cultural economy. Even today in contemporary political exchanges the gift of a paddle (even a miniature paddle) is a prestigious gift to give and to receive—for example, the recent gifting of a miniature

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<sup>59</sup> Of course, outside of British Columbia other styles of canoes were used.

paddle by the Ditidaht First Nations to the visiting Earl and Countess of Wessex, Prince Edward and Princess Sophie (Steel 2014).<sup>60</sup>



**Figure 71:** *Friendly cove; canoe presented to Lieutenant Governor William S. Nichol<sup>61</sup> for preservation at Government House. August 13, 1924. W.R. Lord. Call: A-06091; Cat: HP016017; Acc: 193501-001. Courtesy of the BCA.*

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<sup>60</sup> Deborah Steel, 2014, Ditidaht receives British Royals to open new library. September 16. *Ha-shilth-sa*. Published by the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council. Electronic document, <http://www.hashilthsa.com/news/2014-09-16/ditidaht-receives-british-royals-open-new-library>. Accessed September 20, 2014.

<sup>61</sup> Correction: Hon. Walter Cameron Nichol, Lieutenant governor of British Columbia (1920-1926)]

## Chapter 7: Pulling Together: Comparative Analysis

### 7.1 Introduction

Dual lines of evidence, offered by the analysis of both visual and written sources, yield unique data that create a composite picture of dugout canoe use in British Columbia's early colonial period, with influence into later periods. Importantly, they work together to develop themes<sup>62</sup> of dugout canoe use. The variety of sources bring to light trends that would not have been obvious if only one source set had been analyzed. For example, visual data made apparent the long reaching and wide use of dugout canoes as ship tenders, not only for the early sailing ships such as the *H.M.S. Constance* in 1848 (Fig. 5), but also the stern-wheel ships operating on Harrison Lake (Fig. 45) in the nineteenth century, and even to unload ships on the west coast of Vancouver Island at Cloo-ose (Figs. 46 and 47) in 1946. Other examples of canoe use that the visual sources illustrate are mail delivery (Figs. 3 and 27) and pelagic sealing (Figs. 48 and 49). These varied uses of the dugout canoe are attested in the visual sources in a way that the written documents do not— they bring these occurrences to life. Written sources too yield insight that the images cannot, for example the opinions of the colonial author. Analysis of the visual and written sources highlighted separate trends, which are only seen in one line of evidence, and corroborative trends, which are seen in both the visual and written sources of canoe use over time.

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<sup>62</sup> These are in no way the only themes encountered and they are not pointed out to in some way “define or codify” (Pratt 1992:11) these colonial encounters between First Nations and Europeans in British Columbia.

## 7.2 Separate Trends

Trends that could only be established through the visual records include choices made by the artist in visual representation. The use of canoes as a humanizing element in the works of early colonial artists, such as Warre (Fig. 3) and Kane (Fig. 4) is one example. This trend was also observed by Tippett and Cole (1977:30-32). Another telling motif is that of the lone canoe, seen in the work of Josephine Crease (Fig. 38). This theme reflects the English landscape tradition and, perhaps, growing colonial anxieties (Erickson 2013:6; Tippett and Cole 1977:65-66).

Examples of separate trends within the written sources include: the discomfort some passengers felt at travelling by canoe; detailing the importance of the canoe for enhancing accessibility to diverse waterways by some explorers and surveyors; the frustration felt with the “leisured” (Leighton 1888:30) pace of First Nations paddlers by many colonial travelers; and the development of the negative-compliment, discussed in greater detail below. These trends are prevalent over time, but the negative compliment appears to increase and develop into an accepted attitude through time.

Starting with the overtly racist comments of gold seekers in the late 1850s who were forced to rely upon First Nations guides and their technology of the dugout canoe, the negative-compliment appears to grow in prevalence among established colonists, such as Brown (1864), Sproat (1868), Whymper (1868) and Powell (1873), who appear to be working through these racist thoughts with their articulations of negative-compliments. As discussed previously these negative-compliments are constructed as though they are praises, such as exalting the dugout canoe’s designs and capabilities, but then a denigratory modifier is tacked on to the statement, which pulls the rug out from under the

compliment, for example, the statement that First Nations peoples were not advanced enough to develop a technology such as the dugout canoe (see Sproat 1868:85). This harkens to the push and pull effect of articulating empire in a changing colonial context (Cooper and Stoler 1997:7), where the identification of the colonized is in juxtaposition to the identity of the colonizer (Cohn 1996:111; Comaroff and Comaroff 1997:217; Stahl 2014b:484; Stoler 1989: 136-137, 2001:836). In this construction, the dugout canoe often is somewhat free from the criticisms given to their First Nations makers and paddlers. The material culture or ‘thing’ in this relationship is separated with praise as the people the object is associated with are negatively labeled. This creates interesting implications for thoughts about appropriation of material culture. Perhaps in some situations this process requires a subsequent denial of origin and manufacturer, or a “fetishization” (Erickson 2013:9) that separates the product from the labour (Kopytoff 1986:67), and the way this denial was accomplished with the dugout canoe was through the active denigration of First Nations dugout canoe manufacturers and crewmen.

These negative-compliments increase over time and become even more difficult to spot as they slide into institutional racism. This is seen in the paternalistic machinations of Powell as he commended First Nation’s technology and labour contributions, at the same time as he called for schools and policies to be set up to ensure the “elevating [of] them [the First Nations peoples] from a savage and degraded state ” (1873:15).

Other researchers have noticed this denigratory trend in historical constructions of Indigenous peoples (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997:219; Lutz 2008:36; Thomas 1991:132-133). Lutz (2008:36) discusses European historical representations of First Nations labourers in British Columbia as they appear inconsistently as both “hard

working” and “lazy” (as discussed above), creating a contradiction in representation. Thomas (1991:132-133) observes a similar pattern in his analysis of European written constructions of Pacific Islander’s material culture. Here Thomas (1991:131-133) demonstrates that material culture was described by these newcomers to the Pacific, like the dugout canoe in this research, in a somewhat impartial, empirical manner. Meanwhile the representation of the cultural group from which the material culture originated was “bestialized” (Thomas 1991:133), or described as less than human. This commonality between Thomas’ (1991) research and that of this thesis would suggest that despite great differences in these two historical colonial projects (the Pacific Islands and the Pacific Northwest coast), they share similarities. Perhaps these commonalities are because, in both colonial contexts, the written accounts were written for consumption in the same British metropole? As Brettel (1986:129) observes, travelers abroad “were the receivers and carriers of current literary, aesthetic, and cultural ideas; they traveled with these and saw accordingly...When abroad, their eyes saw no more than their minds, shaped at home, were prepared to accept.” Thomas (1991) also outlines how these representations of the Pacific Islanders were worked at to further racial hierarchies and the ‘othering’ process. For example, Thomas (1991:145-146) discusses how a description of a carving was written to emphasize the Indigenous peoples’ late adoption of metal tools. Comaroff and Comaroff (1997:219) take apart the notion of material conversions, whereby the adoption of Christian, civilized goods marked the conversion of the colonized in southern Africa. Here, they argue, missionaries operated under the premise that “[m]oral degeneracy had to be reversed by material self improvement” (1997:8). Problematically, as seen through Comaroff and Comaroff’s (1997) work, Thomas’ (1991 and 2000)

publications and this research on the dugout canoe, this process only appears to work one way, as Indigenous peoples may be materially changed, but Europeans in their interest and use of Indigenous goods are apparently not physically or morally affected. This is demonstrated in the writings of Barrett-Lennard (1862:117), Mayne (1862:242-243) and Sproat (1868:23), where each discuss the purported physical disfigurements First Nations peoples experience as a supposed result of canoe travel, yet the European recorders who spend plenty of time in dugout canoes are not affected.

Since the space within the dugout canoe allows for such close and intimate confines between First Nations crew and European passengers one might expect Europeans to experience a “rubbing off” of certain canoe comportments (such as sitting positions, paddling techniques, etc.), or a change in “body techniques” (Mauss 1979:97). However, with the exception of Barrett-Lennard’s preference of using the paddle rather than the oar (1862:117), this research was unable to demonstrate a change in these behaviours. Perhaps if there were changes they were unconscious, part of the adapted, unexamined “habitus” (Bourdieu 2010:18; Mauss 1979:11) of these Europeans and were not discernibly recorded through the sources analyzed. Another possibility for absence of change comes from Mauss’ (1979) thoughts upon the transference of “body techniques.” Here Mauss describes this process as “a prestigious imitation” (1979:101) where “body techniques” are only adopted by people (be they children or adults) copying people that they admire or respect, so perhaps imitation in this context of the dugout canoe was actively suppressed by Europeans for fear of becoming too much like First Nations, or the other (Edmonds 2010a:8; Erickson 2013:30; Fabian 1983:31; Dirks 1997:200; Hall 1996:287; Perry 2001:12; Said 1989:207; Stoler 1989:135; Trouillot 1995:96).

European dugout canoe users are transformed, however, in their sense and understanding of landscape. The dugout canoe enabled exploration, was an earlier marker of water depths (to Douglas in 1852) and later served as a symbolic connector to the environment through leisurely recreation (as seen in the photographs of James Dusmuir's fishing trips, Figs. 33 and 34, and Lindley Crease's sketches, Figs. 35 to 37). The change seen over time in the written descriptions of First Nations peoples and their material culture fits with Stoler's argument for the mutability of the characterization of the colonist, the colonized and the colonial project itself (1989:136-137). It is likely that this racist attitude developed and hardened as the settler population increased, growing more confident and demanding more First Nations land and resources (Edmonds 2010b:16; Perry 2001:14; Pratt 1992:10; Thomas 1991:10; Trouillot 1995:96).

Negative-compliments seem to be part of a greater trend of colonization that reinforces the othering of the colonized by denigrating the othered's ability (Lutz 2008:36; Pratt 1992:6; Thomas 1991:145-146). By twisting together fact and stereotype, the spinners of a negative-compliment create tapestries of contradictions that become accepted truths and eventually policy. This malignant writing, although comprised of words, takes control, creating policy that finds ways of impressing these officially sanctioned stereotypes upon the general public, including those that it has othered. This is a similar process to that observed by Trouillot (1995:96) in his analysis of the history of erasure in Haiti, where all traces of the Haitian revolution were considered "unthinkable" and not recorded in the dominant histories of the west, since the true narrative, of African slaves successfully rising up against their owners, threatened European bourgeois, world views (Cooper and Stoler 1997:2). Here too, the technological abilities of the First



Nations peoples and their skills as canoeists and navigators were potentially dangerous to the stereotypes created by Europeans to subjugate and legitimize the takeover of First Nations lands and resources, as Erickson (2013:3) observes:

Having delivered the land to the European settler population through exploration, the canoe was then drafted to re-inscribe the newly born nation's legitimacy in the land. (Erickson 2013:3)

The uses—simultaneously practical and symbolic—of the canoe to secure British colonial claim reflect a central “tension of empire” (1997:7) associated with rising racism and segregation inflicted by the settling colonists during this time. In his *Canoe Nation* (2013), Erickson argues that the canoe is used in the narrative of Canadian culture to legitimize the European settler's claim to the land of Canada, securing a pioneer history of conquering the environmental unknown and untouched, and thereby undermining a First Nations claim, by essentially “nativizing” (Edmonds 2010a:16) the settler and making alien the First Nations. By claiming the canoe as a cultural symbol of Canada, the Canadian settlers naturalize “their”<sup>63</sup> history and their presence on stolen land (Erickson 2013:3). Although Erickson focuses discussion on eastern Canada (i.e. the birch bark canoe commonly associated with the voyageurs), his work is pertinent to the study of the dugout canoe on the west coast, where, during the transformative period of the colonial era, similar logic and practices prevailed.

Following Erickson's analysis of the symbolic role of the canoe in justifying Canada's narrative of the settler (2013), the dugout canoe served as a poignant symbol to newly arrived European settlers desperate to legitimize their claim to the First Nations land upon which their colony was built. Using the symbol of the canoe in races, envoys, and

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<sup>63</sup> A history that actively erases First Nations involvement or interaction.

the increasing business of tourism, which presented the face of “British Columbia” to the world, meant that the dugout canoe came to be subverted into a colonial narrative of legitimization, yet also of obscuration (Trouillot 1995:96)—hiding and also controlling the skilled First Nation designers and builders and canoeists embodied by a dugout.

### **7.3 Corroborative Trends**

The general ubiquity of the dugout canoe in recorded water scenes demonstrates one of the strongest corroborative trends among written and visual sources. Both lines of evidence underscore the canoe’s central role in British Columbia’s economy, used as it was for exploration, freight, fishing and sealing, to name just a few commercial uses. The dugout canoe provided an accessible “distance-diminishing technology” (Harris 2000:167) to easily collapse space and allowed European penetration of First Nations land. The expedience and convenience of the dugout canoe is emphasized in both the images and the written accounts. Table 5, below, offers a detailed list of uses of the dugout canoe and the corresponding images and written sources.

**Table 5: Recorded uses of the dugout canoe and supporting sources**

<b>Use:</b>	<b>Supporting Visual Sources:</b>	<b>Supporting Written Sources:</b>
<b>Ship's tenders</b>	Figs. 5, 45, 46, 47	Carr 2004 [1941]; Crosby 1914; Gordon 1846; Wells 1988
<b>Travel</b>	Figs. 3, 4, 22, 23, 28, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 41, 42, 43, 44, 53, 70, 71	Banfield 1858; Barneby 1884; Blanshard 1852; Carr 2004 [1941]; Cheney 1949 [1853-1854]; FitzGerald 1848; Hills 1996 [1860]; Leighton 1888 [1865]; Lord 1866; Lugrin 1928; Mayne 1862; McElroy 1853; Plummer 1858 <sup>64</sup> ; Rattray 1862; Sehden 1858 <sup>65</sup> ; Sproat 1868; Staines 1852; Swan 1998 [between 1852 and 1857]; Whymper 1868; Winthrop 2006 [1863]; Woods 1858 <sup>66</sup>
<b>Exploration</b>	Figs. 28, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56	Brown 1864, 1992 [1864]; Douglas 1854 [1852]; Downie 1859; Moffat 1852; Mayne 1862
<b>Towing less maneuverable watercraft</b>		Barrett-Lennard 1862
<b>Emergency responders</b>	Fig. 10 [possibly]	Larkin 1861; Stamp 1861 <sup>67</sup>
<b>Recreation</b>	Figs. 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 [possibly], 39, 40, 41, 54, 70, 71	Barneby 1884 [1883]; Leighton 1888 [1865]; Luxton 2002 [1901]; Seymour 1864; Voss 1926 [1901]
<b>Fishery (sealing, etc.)</b>	Figs. 48, 49, 50	Easthope 1976 <sup>68</sup> ; Swan 1998 [between 1852 and 1857]; Lord 1866;
<b>Communication</b>	Figs. 3, 27, 51, 52	Brown 1858 <sup>69</sup> ; Kane 1968 [1847]; Swindle 2001 [1858]
<b>Ethnographic Curiosity</b>	Figs. 24, 25, 26, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66	Sproat 1868; Swan 1998 [between 1852 and 1857]; Waterman 1920

<sup>64</sup> Swindle 2001: Kindle locations 705-707.

<sup>65</sup> Swindle 2001: Kindle locations 2886-2893.

<sup>66</sup> Swindle 2001: Kindle locations 1395-1396.

<sup>67</sup> 1861. Supposed Loss of the Gunboat Forward; Total Loss of the Brig Consort; Arrival of the Florencia's Crew. Another Wreck. Statement of John Larkin. The British Colonist, January 11. Accessed from BCA.; and Edward Stamp 1861. Report of Inquest held at Somass— Barkley Sound on the body of the late Edward Hammond King; Edward Stamp acting coroner, and twelve jurors heron named. March 8. Colonial Correspondence, File 1643. Accessed from BCA.

<sup>68</sup> White 1976:255-256

<sup>69</sup> Swindle 2001: Kindle locations 524-525.

Recreational use of the dugout canoe increased over the colonial period, likely because of an increase in a middle-class settler population with money and time for leisurely pursuits like camping, hunting, recreational fishing and day trips. Regattas that included canoe races grew in popularity over time. Canoe regattas were held on Queen Victoria's Birthday as a statement of the colony's British identity in the face of encroaching American miners celebrating their national holidays. This political use of the dugout canoe was further underscored when Governor Seymour called First Nations chiefs of the area for a canoe regatta to celebrate and acknowledge his governorship on the Queen's Birthday in 1864 (Harvey 2013:65-68; Ormsby 1958:206; Williams 1996:85). These examples demonstrate the use of the dugout canoe in politics—to articulate identity and to acknowledge leadership. Seymour's active inclusion of First Nations chiefs in this canoe regatta was not just about getting official First Nations recognition of his rule; it was also to demonstrate to First Nations leaders that Seymour was governing the First Nations public as well as that of the European settlers. Jane Needham's 1867 painting (Fig. 29) of a dramatic canoe regatta with British Columbia flags affixed to canoes in front of Government House in New Westminster offers an interesting companion to Seymour's political maneuvering, since as discussed above these flags were likely a political gift of good faith from Seymour.

This example of Seymour's regatta also offers a good place for me to visit a theoretical contradiction of this thesis, specifically how this thesis works to analyze both the dugout canoes' central role in the development of the colony as well as serving as lens to frame "entanglement" (Thomas 1991:10) between Europeans and First Nations. Although a slight contradiction in metaphors—this research has shown that the dugout

canoe can both demonstrate “entanglement” between First Nations and Europeans and the dugout canoe is central to the colonial development of British Columbia. Throughout colonial history the dugout canoe was both central and “entangled.” In this case of Seymour using the regatta as a political means to demonstrate his role as Governor and a way for First Nations people to recognize his role, the dugout canoe demonstrates a very complicated engagement, or “entanglement” (Thomas 1991:10), without having Europeans even enter the physical space of the First Nations dugout canoe. As well, the political symbolism actively accessed by Seymour aided in the colonial development of British Columbia as it helped establish his rule.

Further shared trends include the ethnographic fascination with First Nations craftsmanship and life ways, seen in European written descriptions (Sproat 1868; Swan 1998; Waterman 1920) and in the more technical photographs and sketches that depict the dugout canoe (see Table 5 for list of images). As well, the circulation in Great Britain and the United States of America of the images and publications produced during this time, indicate a metropolitan hunger among both British and American publics to know more about this colony (Francis 1996:1). Britain had an obvious colonial investment in what became British Columbia, and American interest in the Fraser River and later Cariboo gold fields prompted their appetite for information from gold seekers in the late 1860s.

#### **7.4 Summing Up**

Together these lines of evidence work to address the central question of this thesis:

*Was the First Nations' dugout canoe essential to colonial development in British*

*Columbia and if so were the First Nations acknowledged for this valuable contribution?*

As can be seen from its ubiquitous presence in the images produced in the colonial period, the First Nations' dugout canoe was essential to the colonial development of British Columbia, but as this analysis of the written sources from this time period demonstrates, First Nations peoples were differentially acknowledged for their contribution. Visual sources underscore the central role that the dugout played in the development of colonial British Columbia, used to deliver mail, commercially hunt seals and lay telegraph cables. Yet written sources increasingly obscure this through the device of the negative-compliment as the colonial period progresses. The development of the negative-compliment through time underlines the increasing denigration of First Nations peoples and rising racial tensions in colonial British Columbia.

This research uses the dugout canoe as a particularized lens (Hicks and Beaudry 2010:16) to demonstrate the "entangled relationship" (Pratt 1992:10; Stahl 2010:165; Thomas 1991:10) that existed between First Nations peoples and Europeans in the colonial development of British Columbia. Europeans relied upon the dugout canoe in a utilitarian way for communication, travel and economic development, as well as recreationally, through regattas, picnics and fishing excursions. Indirectly this reliance implied a dependence upon First Nations carvers to produce these dugout canoes, and generally, First Nations guides or paddlers who assisted European use of the dugout canoe. But as already discussed their presence was not always acknowledged in a positive way. This research demonstrates this "entangled" relationship between First Nations and Europeans, but it also indicates that this was not an easy relationship. By following European practice (Stahl 2002:835), or representation—through images and documentary

sources—of dugout canoe use (a practice), not only can patterns of European consumption of the dugout canoe be tracked, but also changes in European perceptions of First Nations peoples and the dugout canoe can be followed. Heightening racism and misrepresentations of First Nations life-ways are uncovered as colonial intentions shifted (Cooper and Stoler 1997:7; Pratt 1992:6; Stoler 1989:136-137) from a mercantilist, “middle-ground” form of colonialism (Gosden 2004:36)—where amiable trade relations between First Nations and Europeans were paramount—to an emphasis on European settlement and the acquirement of First Nations lands—where British Columbia was transformed into a “terra nullius” in a bid to erase First Nations peoples and their claims (Edmonds 2010a:12, 2010b:105; Fisher 1971:12; Gosden 2004:30; Harris 2002:xxi; Lutz 2008:7-8; Perry 2001:14; Pratt 1992:10; Tennant 1990:40). In addition, by demonstrating this “entangled relationship” (Thomas 1991:10) between First Nations peoples and Europeans, this research works to counteract these misrepresentations and the obscuring of the First Nations presence in history (Trouillot 1995:82) to build a more inclusive narrative.

As well, this research offers a new venue for inquiry—the analysis of the process by which colonists adopt (to the point of necessity) the technology, or the useful material culture, of the colonized. Further research is needed to understand how this process would work in other contexts, but in this case the dugout canoe appears to be separated (in description) from the negative descriptors simultaneously attached to First Nations peoples (the dugout canoes manufacturers, operators and designers).

## Chapter 8: Going Ashore

### 8.1 Summary Conclusions

[First Nations peoples][h]ad no science or scientific discoveries... Had no sails for boats (only had canoes)... Created virtually no mechanical devices... Possessed almost nothing that required hard manual labour over a period of time, i.e.: building with or carving out of stone... Made almost no inventions... Have a history that is notable only for underachievement.<sup>70</sup>

This ignorant and racist letter by Don Olsen is easy to counter and dismiss as one man's misinformed opinions, but it is disturbing to know that this letter was published and cleared by the editors of the *Nanaimo Daily News* in March of 2013. Needless to say, it elicited a public outcry and the *Nanaimo Daily News* quickly retracted and apologized. But the fact that this letter was able to get as far as it did through the public media is an indicator of the entrenchment of colonial histories. The large number of supportive online comments this letter received demonstrates the lasting and damaging effects of colonialism and the perpetuation of racism and ignorance about First Nations histories and current realities. For example, one online commentator wrote: "The first Indians were immigrants from Siberia. My folks came from Europe. I was born in Canada, this is my 'Traditional Land.' Therefore... I want a cheque every month and 100 acres of land!!!" ("Mike");<sup>71</sup> and another wrote: "The comments by Mr. Olson [sic] certainly reflect the

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<sup>70</sup> Don Olsen, 2013, letter to editor, *Nanaimo Daily News*, March 27, reprinted in: Travis Lupick, 2013. Letter titled "Educate First Nations to be modern citizens" sparks debate on racism. March 28. Electronic document, [www.straight.com/blogra/366901/letter-titled-educate-first-nations-be-modern-citizens-sparks-debate-racism](http://www.straight.com/blogra/366901/letter-titled-educate-first-nations-be-modern-citizens-sparks-debate-racism). Accessed March 30, 2013.

<sup>71</sup> "Mike," Comment on Travis Lupick, 2013. Letter titled "Educate First Nations to be modern citizens" sparks debate on racism. March 28. Electronic document, <http://www.straight.com/blogra/366901/letter-titled-educate-first-nations-be-modern-citizens-sparks-debate-racism>. Accessed March 30, 2013.



opinion of a vast majority of tax paying Canadians. Enough of the guilt blanket mentality. Get them educated and get them to work.” (“Ajax”).<sup>72</sup> These modern day observations confirm that efforts like this thesis, which work to “construct” (Wood 1990:83) a history of British Columbia that is inclusive and “entangled” (Pratt 1992:10; Stahl 2010:165; Thomas 1991:10) placing First Nations and Europeans together in the past, are productive and necessary to counteract our racist colonial heritage (Lutz 2008:36; Wickwire 2005:471) and build a joint future.

By analyzing the written and visual sources created by colonial European newcomers from 1843 to the early 1900s, this research traces the European “taste” (Stahl 2002:835) for dugout canoe transport in relation to the question: *Was the First Nations' dugout canoe essential to colonial development in British Columbia and, if so, were the First Nations acknowledged for this vital contribution?* The First Nations' dugout canoe was essential to the colonial development of British Columbia, but First Nations carvers, canoeists and navigators were often not acknowledged for their labour and technological contributions. As the colonial period advanced (from the late 1850s with the Fraser River Gold Rush) the dugout canoe continued to be essential to European development and was lauded in European written sources, but increasingly these texts constructed these praises with an opposing derogatory representation of First Nations peoples or individuals. These “trivializing” representations (Trouillot 1995:82), or *negative-compliments* as I term them, increased over time (Stoler 1989:136-137) as the colonial project in British Columbia shifted from a mercantilist, fur-trade based economy (or “middle ground” method of colonialism [Gosden 2004:36]) to a settler focused project that emphasized the

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<sup>72</sup> “Ajax,” Comment on Travis Lupick, 2013. Letter titled “Educate First Nations to be modern citizens” sparks debate on racism. March 28. Electronic document, <http://www.straight.com/blog/366901/letter-titled-educate-first-nations-be-modern-citizens-sparks-debate-racism>. Accessed March 30, 2013.

permanent occupation of First Nations' land by Europeans. This shift resulted in a colonial rebranding of First Nations' rights to land and self-government (Edmonds 2010a:12, 2010b:105; Fisher 1971:12; Gosden 2004:30; Harris 2002:xxi; Lutz 2008:7-8; Perry 2001:14; Pratt 1992:10; Tennant 1990:40), as a form of "terra nullius" came into effect in British Columbia.

Until the advent of steamship technology and infrastructure, canoe transportation was frequently not only the most available, but also the speediest, most maneuverable method of transport open to Europeans. Tapping into First Nations' established canoe-marts, Europeans were able to access this transport service and product. First Nations canoeists and pilots gave Europeans access to an intimate knowledge of the Pacific Northwest coast. During the fur trade the dugout canoe connected Forts with a canoe brigade that delivered goods and mail (Kane 1968:171-172; Mackie 1993:363, 1997:20; See Fig. 3), beginning an over 50 year legacy of using the dugout canoe for mail delivery for letters, dispatches and express goods during the Fraser River and Cariboo gold rush (Keddie 2003:84; See Fig. 27). The canoe was vital to the exploration of British Columbia, used by fur traders and later by geologists and surveyors mapping the resources of the colony. Dugout canoes were important ships tenders, a role that the visual research demonstrates, at locations like Clo-oose on the West coast of Vancouver Island, and continued to be valuable even into the early twentieth century (see Figs. 45 and 46; Wells 1988:15). Industries such as fishing and pelagic sealing also relied on skilled First Nations fishermen and sealers, as well as their adapted dugout canoes (Arima 1974:88; Crockford 1996:51; Dewhirst 1967:43; Forester and Forester 1975:68; Lutz 2008:200). Dugout canoes became important recreationally too, in regatta races celebrating colonial holidays

(Keddie 2003:117) and for tourists and picnickers (Hodding 1998:66-67) the dugout canoe came to be seen as a symbol of British Columbia and later even Canada (Erickson 2013:3).

Since reliance upon First Nations' technologies and labour were a contradiction to the developing colonial stereotypes of First Nations peoples, as “lazy” and “value less in the labour market” (Harvey 1867:9), it is likely the European reliance upon the First Nations' dugout canoe, to build the colonial project during this period, threatened this colonial project (Erickson 2013:3; Singleton 2001:2). These stereotypes are undermined by the First Nations' important contributions to colonial development as labourers and dugout canoe providers. Othering stereotypes and representations of First Nations people as “lazy,” “handicaps to progress,” and “savage,” abounded during this period, and as Olsen's letter (2013) demonstrates, continue to this day (Edmonds 2010a:15; Lutz 2008:36; Pratt 1992:7; Trouillot 1995:96). Positive descriptions of the dugout canoe provided the European representer the opportunity to demonstrate his or her liberality at the same time “as they assert[ed their] European hegemony” (Pratt 1992:7) through the negative-construction of First Nations individuals and peoples, using the representational style Pratt (1992) has described as the “anti-conquest.” In this thesis the “anti-conquest” is observed through the construction of the negative-compliment, as positive European descriptions of dugout canoe use are mediated by denigrating and disenfranchising constructions of First Nations peoples. This thesis uses the written and visual sources of European dugout canoe use to break down these stereotypes of the “lazy” and “vanishing Indian” by anchoring First Nations and Europeans together in history through their transactions of dugout canoe user and provider (Stahl 2010:152; Trouillot 1995:96).

Moral mission archaeology, popularized by African activists in the 1960s and 1970s offers a similar approach as it strives to challenge popular history “to tell a story of Americans—poor, powerless, and ‘inarticulate’—who had been forgotten in the written record” (Singleton 2001:1).

In addition to aiding in the exposure of historical “silences” of First Nations labour and technology, this research works to understand the effects of colonial adoption of the colonized’s *utilitarian* material culture. Although material culture studies have produced much constructive research into the colonists’ use of the colonized’s *sacred* material culture (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997:219; Thomas 1991:174), surprisingly, the colonists’ adoption of the colonized’s material culture for a utilitarian purpose is a neglected line of enquiry (c.f. Loren 2001:184-185; Maskiell 2002:29; Stahl in press). As discussed above, what was found in the examination of the European use of the colonized’s utilitarian material culture was that it was often described in a positive way, but most laudatory descriptions of the First Nations dugout canoe were immediately bracketed with a negative description of First Nations peoples and/or cultures. This is similar to both the European travel writer’s style of the “anti-conquest” (Pratt 1992:7) and also parallels Thomas’ findings in his research of the European “entanglement” with Indigenous Polynesian sacred objects, where these objects are described in an almost neutral way, but they are often paired or offset with negative descriptions of the Polynesian (1991:133). In these ways there appears to be a pattern developed, where European colonists separate any positive connections between First Nations dugout canoes and First Nations peoples and cultures. This separation may be due to an increase in colonial prejudices and a greater need for these prejudices to exist as colonists were

striving to find more ways of alienating First Nations peoples from their lands and their human rights. This very real connection between First Nations and their advanced and useful technology of the dugout canoe was “disappeared” or “vanished” as European colonial stereotypes increasingly denied First Nations peoples the abilities to produce any technology (Erickson 2013:12). Similar findings appear in the visual research in the medium of painting and sketching as artists, such as Josephine Crease (Fig. 36), increasingly portrayed romanticized canoes often empty, perhaps visually symbolizing the active European separation of First Nations peoples from their technological achievements. Photographic research, however, does not contribute to these patterns, as Europeans were increasingly portrayed using the dugout canoe and First Nations people often appear in these images (for example, those of the canoe races at regattas in the late 1890s, see Figs. 37 and 38). Photographic data demonstrate further the late use of dugout canoes for laying telegraph lines, adding another use of the dugout canoe to further communication with the province and connecting it to other colonies around the world.

This research is significant to anthropology since it uses a particularized lens (Hicks and Beaudry 2010:16) of the dugout canoe to bring together two seemingly disparate groups (Trouillot 1995:96) of people (the European newcomers and the First Nations peoples) to reveal their historical connections (Thomas 1991:174). As well it demonstrates the potential productivity of further research into the colonizer’s adoption of the colonized’s material culture. Besides demonstrating the historical importance of the dugout canoe to British Columbia’s colonial development, this research also exposes and undermines damaging stereotypes that targeted and obscured these contributions by First Nations peoples.

## 8.2 Limitations

By using the particularized lens of the dugout canoe, however, my research is limited to a demonstration of First Nations technological and labour contributions to the development of British Columbia only through the involvement in the transportation of Europeans by dugout canoe. Other researchers, such as Knight (1978) and Lutz (2008), have demonstrated how extensive and integral First Nations labourers were to the colonial development, but the ignorant words of Olsen (2013) demonstrates how much more publicizing work of this information is needed. My work, though limited, has the strength of a case study in the detail and contextualization it provides in its examples of how important the First Nations expertise and technology of the dugout canoe were to European colonists. In a supplemental way, this research contributes to other work by Indigenous labour researchers (Knack and Littlefield 1996; Knight 1978; Lutz 2008) and explores the role of the dugout canoe in the creation and maintenance of the “colonial imagination” as described in the more generalized work of Erickson (2013:11) about the canoe’s role in the development of a nationalist Canadian identity.

Likewise, the way in which this research focuses upon the European colonist and not the First Nations peoples—examining solely European produced sources—is potentially dangerous, since this method of research may perpetuate the dominant European voice (Wickwire 2005:471; Lutz 2008:16-17). Indeed, research that actively uses First Nations’ oral histories and perspectives is productive and necessary to understand colonial processes (Wickwire 2005:471; Lutz 2008:16-17). However, I strive to analyze the European voice in a way that does not contribute to colonial processes of silences (Trouillot 1995:82), but in a way that problematizes the development of this dominant

voice and its creation and maintenance of silences. It is important for me to turn the gaze inward and examine the colonizers' past (Cooper and Stoler 1997:4; Stoler 1989:136-137) to understand better the legacy I carry as an English-Norwegian-Canadian-British Columbian researcher (Kovach 2010:110).

Another limitation within this research is the subjective nature by which the research is done. Like all historical study, the data used by this research are limited by the material left behind by past generations, collected by the curator and then further bounded by this thesis' research design. Each of these filters contributes to the restriction of data available to analysis, resulting in an imperfect "construction" (Wood 1990:83) of history and not a more powerful "*reconstruction*," since too much information is missing. No doubt there are likely conscious and unconscious "silences" and "mentions" within this research (Trouillot 1995:82), but these will one day be pointed out by future researchers adding to the thrilling field of the construction of knowledge (Kovach 2010:110) to the best of their ability.

### **8.3 Further Research**

Like all interesting research, this thesis concludes with more questions than answers, leaving a call for further research. The dugout canoe is only one example of First Nations peoples' technological and labour contributions to the development of British Columbia. There are hundreds more contributions that could be examined, such as the First Nations technological insights and labour provided to the production of oil for lighting, the fishing industry, farming, bridge building and mariculture, to name just a few, but this thesis is constrained to the particularized analysis of the dugout canoe to reveal the specific European "taste" for this transport technology (Stahl 2002:835). This thesis

studied the dugout canoe in the colonial context and with a specific question constraining my research, but this research has exposed many questions that could further anthropology's understandings of material culture and the colonial context. A closer analysis within a colonial context of the colonist's adoption of technology from the colonized's material culture for a utilitarian purpose would be productive for additional inquiry. The study of the colonist's adoption of foreign material culture holds potential to reveal complex interactions that could provide a window for further study of body comportment, identity construction, othering, as well as furthering material culture, technology, colonial and Indigenous studies (Stahl in press).

Perhaps further research into the colonists' adoption and consumption of the colonized's material culture could reveal more about the dynamics and constructions of the negative-compliment. Understanding of the negative-compliment, or the colonists' "schizophrenia" (Lutz 2008:36) could be enhanced through additional research to understand how this process worked (and works) in different colonial contexts and to understand how it may be an attempt to mollify the metropole (Edmonds 2010b:16; Loren 2001:175; Perry 2001:14; Stahl 2010:165; Steiner 1985:100; Stoler 1989:136, 2001:847; Thomas 1991:10; Trouillot 1995:96), or a way to mediate the inner, individual colonists' conflicts, such as the "anti-conquest" (Pratt 1992:10). This line of inquiry could contribute to a greater understanding of representation and the identification process within the colonial context.



## 8.4 Concluding Thoughts

The dugout canoe enhanced the colonial development of British Columbia. Delivering the first independent colonist, transporting the first governor and the first schoolteachers, not to mention missionaries, miners, settlers and allowing for the exploration of the colony—the dugout canoe mediated many firsts in the colonial context. The dugout canoe connected the developments through the delivery of mail and people, and later through its assistance with the laying of telegraph lines. These observations undermine a dominant history of British Columbia that has traditionally obscured First Nations technological and labour contributions (Wickwire 2005:471; Trouillot 1995:95; Lutz 2008:16-17; Knight 1978:15). This European lack of acknowledgement of First Nations contributions to colonial development has been traced to the late 1850s with the increase of the negative-compliment and the rise in European colonial anxieties about settling and removing First Nations peoples from the land. These anxieties are still worked at today, as Olsen's comments demonstrate (2013).

In the last thirty years, however, there has been an increase in First Nations led decolonization projects furthered by the reclamation of the dugout canoe. According to Neel (1995:2), the 1985-86 construction of the fifty-foot Haida dugout canoe, *LooTaas* (Wave Eater), by head carver Bill Reid with the help of Guujaaw and Simon Dick as well as others, initiated the dugout canoes resurgence through the process of its construction, display, use and adaptation to fiberglass. Also in this year, Frank Brown and a number of paddlers from Bella Bella paddled to Vancouver's Expo celebrations in 1986— marking one of the first long distance, open water dugout canoe journeys (Marshall 2011:24) in recent times. This was followed by a series of “paddles,” most importantly the 1989

Paddle to Seattle, held to celebrate Washington's centenary and to bring an awareness to the newcomer settlers established in Washington of their inherited responsibilities as stewards of the land (Neel 1995:3). Here, not only was the dugout canoe used to strengthen cultural resurgence, but also this paddle was used politically to point out the role and responsibilities the non-Indigenous people of Washington have to the environment. At the 1989 Paddle to Seattle, the Heiltsuk canoeist, Frank Brown, invited all canoe nations to journey to Bella Bella in four years' time, beginning the the Qatuwus Festival (Qatuwas translates as "people gathered together in one place"). In 1993, the Heiltsuk Nation hosted 23 canoes from along the coast, with close to 2000 people attending the week-long celebrations in Bella Bella. The following year, the 1994 Tribal Journey paddle started in Wuikinuxv Traditional territory from, Oweekeno (near Rivers Inlet), paddling to Victoria for the commencement of the Commonwealth Games. With over 20 Tribal Journeys since its beginning, host nations in both Canada and the United States and participating canoes from across the globe (the Maori of New Zealand, the Ainu of Japan, Alutes from the Aleutian Islands, the Crees and the Metis from the boreal forests and plains),<sup>73</sup> the Qatuwus Festival recently hosted its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In this way the dugout canoe has come to be a symbol of cultural resurgence for the "canoe nations" (Neel 1995:3) along the Pacific coast.

An understanding of the dugout canoe's cultural and technological significance continues to grow and this thesis aims to contribute to this resurgence by offering a history that highlights the dugout canoes' active role in the colonial development of British Columbia and an anthropological analysis that works to uncover the colonial

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<sup>73</sup> Marilyn Slett, Chief Councillor, Heiltsuk Tribal Council. brochure from <http://www.tribaljournays.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Glwa-Ocean-Going-Canoe-History-and-Culture-Page-Nav-Bar-for-about-us.pdf>

processes that originally obscured the involvement of First Nations labourers, canoeists, carvers and dugout canoes in history. As Huffington Post blogger, Danica Denomme responds to Olsen's 2013 letter:

For 200 years the canoe was used universally by European explorers, missionaries, traders, and soldiers. First Nations people also developed two other outstanding forms of travel for the Canadian landscape: the snowshoe and the toboggan, which we used for survival and practical purposes, and which also allowed early settlers to explore and enjoy our vast territories.... [First Nations peoples h]ave a history that is notable for creativity, adaptability, and longstanding resistance strategies in the face of oppression and genocide. (Denomme 2013)<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Danica Denomme, March 28, 2013, Racist Nanaimo Newspaper Letter Rebuttal: Educate Canadians To Be Knowledgeable Citizens, Huffpost Canada, B.C. [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/danica-denomme/nanaimo-daily-news-don-olsen-letter-racist-first-nations\\_b\\_2975065.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/danica-denomme/nanaimo-daily-news-don-olsen-letter-racist-first-nations_b_2975065.html). Accessed October 4, 2013.

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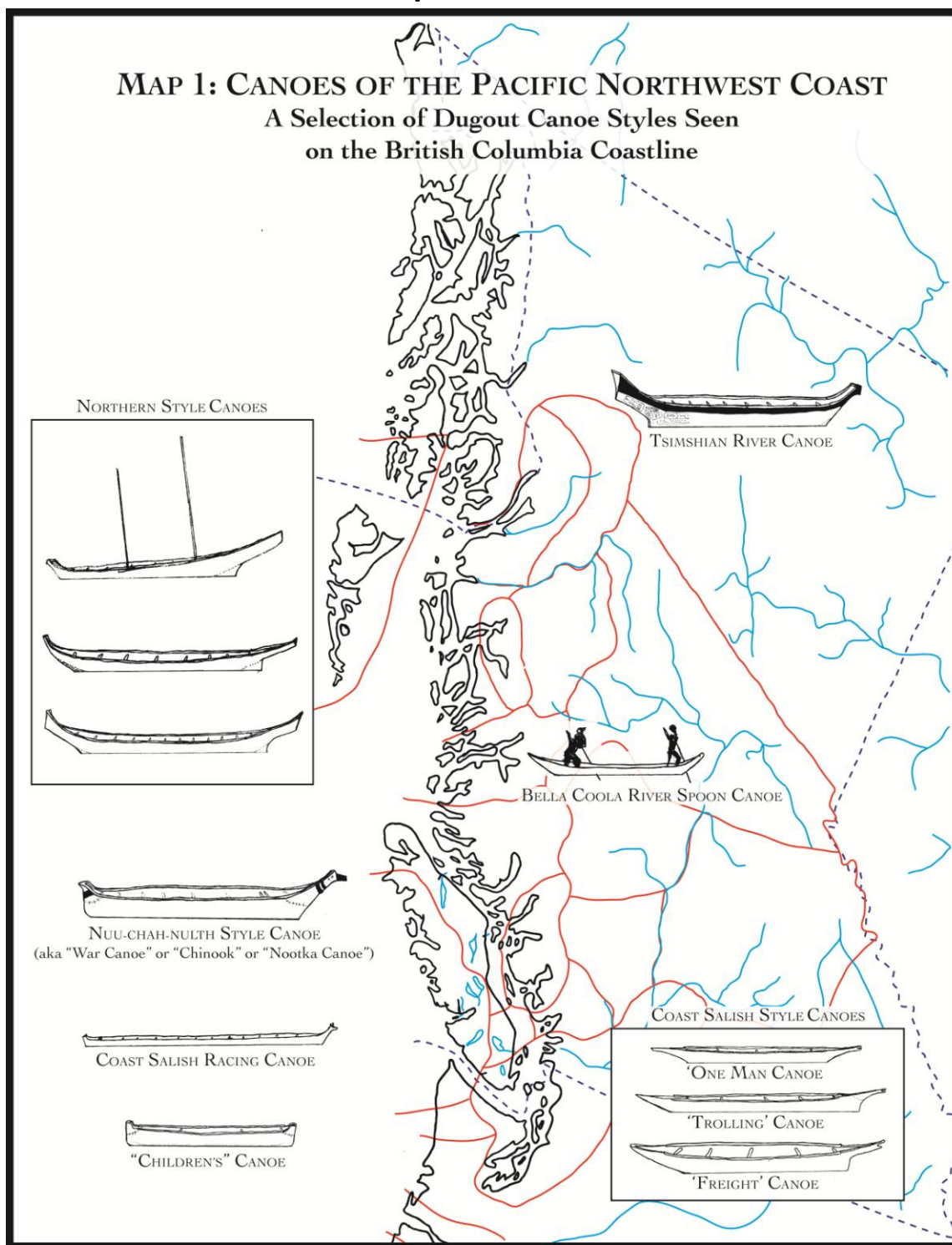
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## Appendix A Maps and Table



(Adapted from Lincoln 1991:22-23; Waterman and Coffin 1920:Plate 1)

**Table 6: List of canoe types with corresponding figures**

<b>Canoe Type</b>	<b>Corresponding Figures</b>
<b>Northern Style Canoe</b>	Figs. 18, 33, 34, 42 (possibly), 44 (possibly), 50, 53, 65, 67 (possibly)
<b>Tsimshian River Canoe</b>	Figs. 51, 57 (possibly)
<b>Bella Coola River Spoon Canoe</b>	Figs. 21 (possibly), 43 (possibly)
<b>Nuu-chah-nulth Style Canoe</b>	Figs. 11, 12, 18, 24, 25, 26, 29 (possibly), 31, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 47, 48, 49, 52, 62, 63, 67, 70, 71
<b>Coast Salish Racing Canoe</b>	Figs. 29 (possibly), 39, 40
<b>“Children’s” Canoe</b>	Fig. 46
<b>“One man” Canoe</b>	Figs. 5, 8, 10, 14, 32
<b>“Trolling” canoe</b>	Figs. 17, 19, 22, 27
<b>“Freight” Canoe</b>	Figs. 13, 26, 27, 28, (possibly), 61 (possibly), 64, 68, 70

### MAP 2: PACIFIC NORTHWEST COAST

- ① Southwestern Coast Salish
- ② Quileute
- ③ Central Coast Salish
- ④ Hul'qumi'num
- ⑤ Squamish and Tseil Waututh
- ⑥ St'at'imc
- ⑦ Shishalh, Sliammon, Homalco and Klahoose
- ⑧ Kwakwaka'wakw
- ⑨ Nuu-chah-nulth
- ⑩ Tsilhqot'in
- ⑪ Oweekeno, Nuxalk and Heiltsuk
- ⑫ Haisla and Henaaksiala
- ⑬ Wet'suwet'en
- ⑭ Tsm's'yen (Tsimshian)
- ⑮ Nisga'a
- ⑯ Gitksan

