

"Noon on the Frazer"

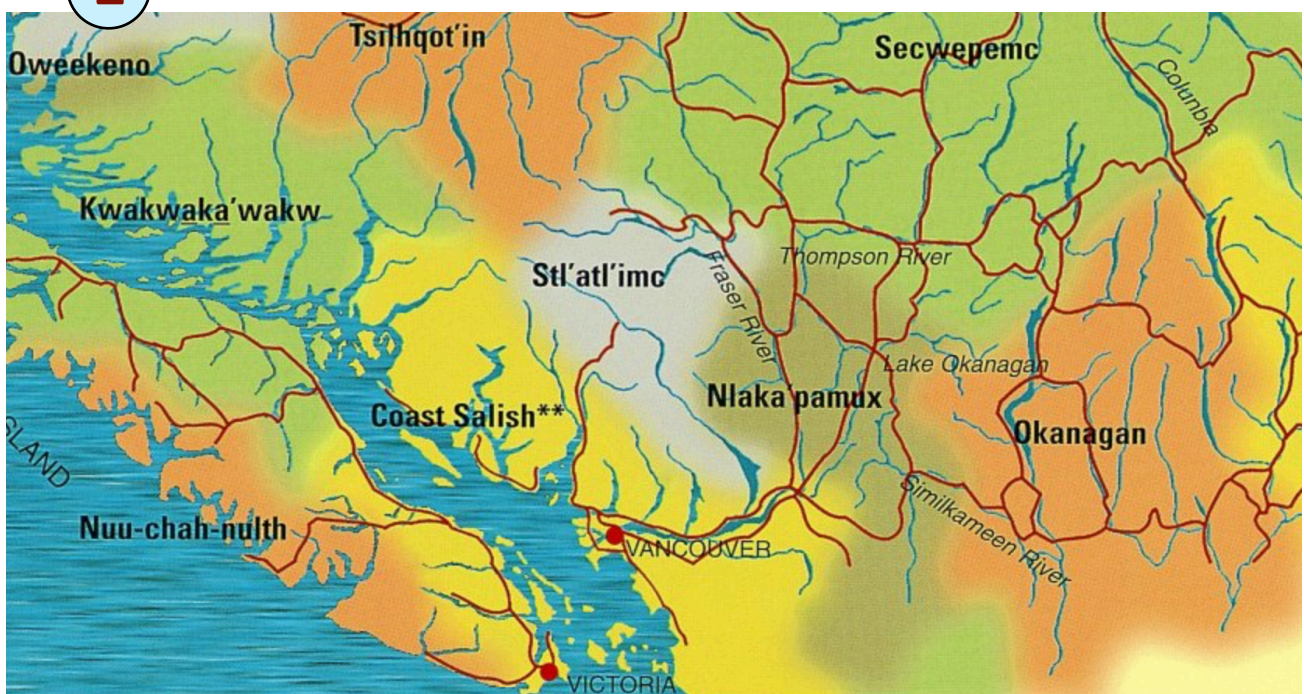
from Kinahan Cornwallis, *The New El Dorado; or, British Columbia* (London: 1858)

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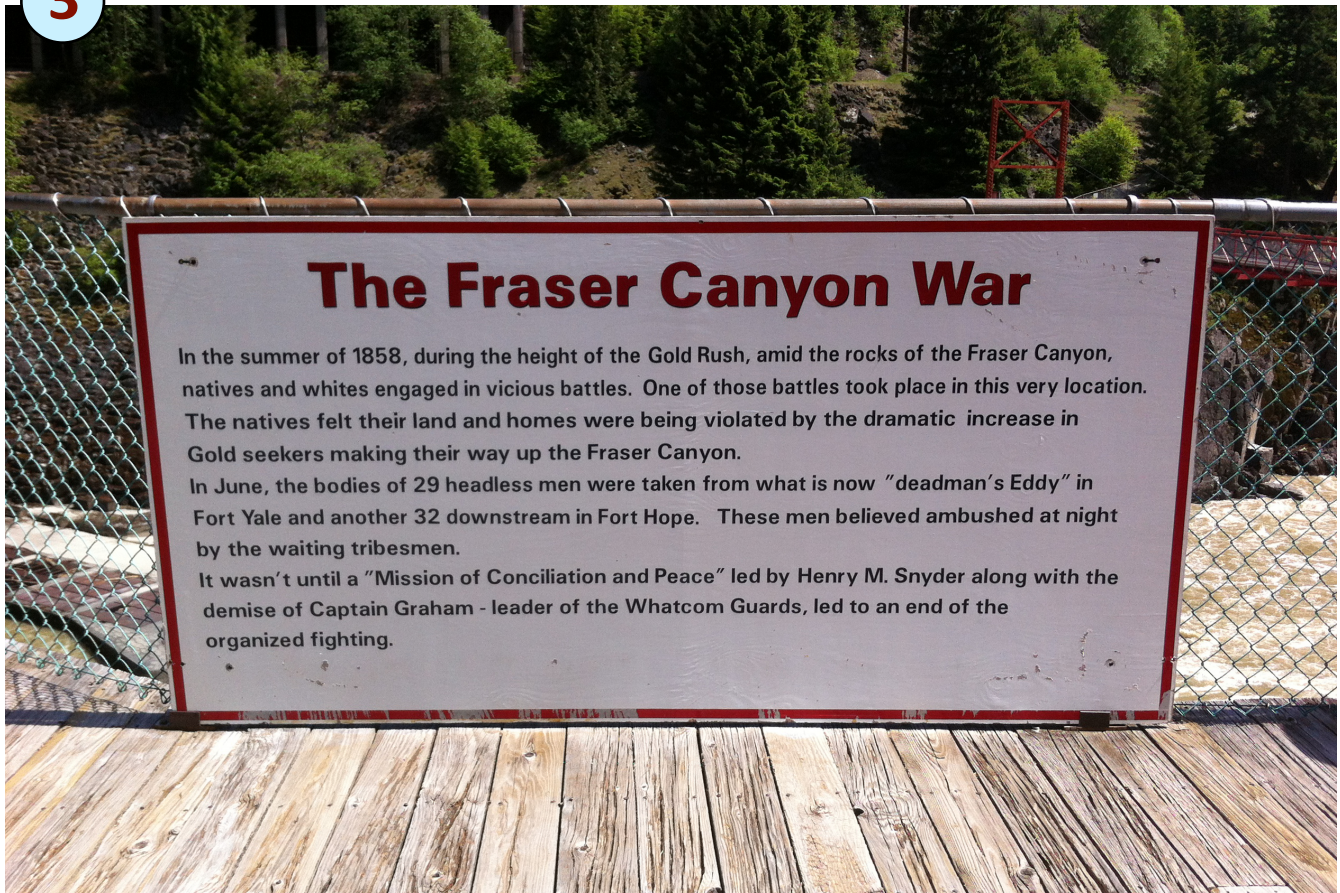
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Traditional First Nations Territories in Southwestern BC



3

Sign posted at the Hell's Gate observation deck in the Fraser Canyon



4

Statement from H.M. Snyder, Captain of the Pike Guards (1858)

"We proceeded to the Indian Rancherie [Spuzzum] above some five miles further up. There we found two other companys and quite a large number of miners that had been driven from their claims above. We camped here for the night and held a counsil [sic] of war with some sixty Indians, and pease [sic] was made with them at this place. I had a consultation with the 2 captains that we found at this place as their views were different from mine and the Austrain [French] Company. They wished to procede and kill every man, woman & child they saw that had Indian blood in them. To such an arrangement I could not consent to. My heart revolted at the idea of killing a helpless woman, or an innocent child was too horrible to think of. They requested me to state my views to the crowd which consisted of six to seven hundred. I consented to do so and after I was through, and on taking the vote, I found that they were almost unanimous in supporting my course."

"We ware on our march by sunrise. This day we made pease with 4 different Chiefs and camped within seven miles of the Thompson River. Here we was met by Spintlum. The war chief of all the tribes for some distance up & down Frazer River. . . Here I proceded at once to hold our grand counsil which consisted of Eleven Chiefs and a very large number of other indians that had gathered from above and below. We stated to them that this time we came for pease, but if we had to come againe, that we would not come by hundreds, but by thousands and drive them from the river forever. They ware much supprised and frightened to see so many men with guns & revolvers. For marching along in single file they looked to be three times the number their was. . . . I feel well satisfied that the Treaty was the best that could be made under the circumstances, and think it will be held sacred by the Indians."

5

Account of Mary Williams, an Nlaka'pamux [Thompson First Nations] Elder, to whom a story was passed down from previous generations about the meeting of the Pike Guards with the Thompson peoples at Lytton.

"They arrived with one of their headmen, and told the Lytton people to gather at the place where the Canadian National Railways station is now situated. That was where they were all to be shot. Every one of the White men had loaded rifles, ready to shoot the people of Lytton. Chief Sexpínlhemx [Spintlum] spoke up, asking, 'What are you going to do?' The Whites said that all the old people were going to be killed off -- only the young woman were to be kept. 'Stop right there!' commanded Chief Sexpínlhemx. 'End that talk right there! I am going to give you some land!' Chief Sexpínlhemx stood up and stretched out his arms to the sundown and the sunrise, saying, 'This side will be yours and this side will be my people's. You are not to kill anyone. . . This is what Chief Sexpínlhemx said. The White people agreed. They put down all their guns and shook hands with the Indian people and went back to where they came from, back to Yale."

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Quote from B. A. McKelvie, Pageant of BC: Glimpses into the Romantic Development of Canada's Far Western Province

The bearded, red-shirted miners having passed the taxation barrier at the river mouth, stopped at Fort Langley to seek information and get what supplies they could obtain from the store; then they went on, hurrying, toiling at oars or canoes to get higher and higher up the stream... They milled about Fort Yale, waiting for the river to go down, and then pushed up through the canyons, where the river tossed and foamed between rock walls, working every bar and flat. The Indians objected; there was a short, sharp, vicious war fought between Fort Yale and the Forks, where the Fraser and Thompson met. Many died -- how many will never be known. But the trouble was soon settled, and on an on the adventurous men pushed.

7

Quotes from Margaret Ormsby, British Columbia: a History

"At the end of 1858, the Colonial Office learned that the gold region was more extensive than earlier reports had indicated, and that immigration was likely to assume new proportions. American miners were entering the area without bothering to take out mining licenses and there was danger of trouble with the Indians."

"When news reached Victoria of an outbreak of serious trouble above Yale, where the Indians were attempting to expel the miners from the diggings, the Governor immediately requisitioned marines and sappers from the Boundary Commission and started out in their company on August 30. By the time he reached Fort Hope, order had been restored by the miners themselves, who had organized themselves into military units, taken punitive action, then entered into treaties with the Indians."

**Memorial for Chief Spintlum at Lytton.
The following text is attached to the
base of the memorial:**

“When the White Men first discovered British Columbia the Indians were using the land and this caused bloodshed. David Spintlum did not want this loss of life and succeeded in stopping the war. He saw Queen Victoria who was visiting Canada and reported to her what he had done. Her Majesty was glad to hear this and said, ‘There shall be no more war in Canada.’ She presented him with a flag and a hunting knife and told him he should be Chief for ever. David Spintlum made



Quote from Henry Labouchere, British Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1855-1858

“The natives, whose country we choose to take possession of, have a good right to dig for gold; & I suppose it will be difficult to make them understand the right of the crown to minerals in a Country which they regard as their own.”

Quote from Lord Lytton, British Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1858-1859

“The most pressing and immediate care in this new colony will be to preserve peace between natives and foreigners at the gold diggings.”

Quote from Arthur Blackwood, Senior Clerk in the British North American Department

“There was one circumstance which constituted the main danger of disorder, and that was the strong aversion which the Indians entertained towards the Americans.”

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“Powerful tribes of Indians own that country and will be jealous of its despoilation. They are unlike the Diggers of California, in comparison being athletes – robust, hardy, brave and warlike, well armed, and by no means a common foe. Man to Man, in more than one conflict hereafter, Americans will find them hard to whip. It is reasonable to calculate that in these battles – which will inevitably come – and by the usual casualties of an adventure to such a rugged country, death will overtake at least one out of every five persons who go there during the first twelve months.” – San Francisco *Bulletin* (1858).

Governor Douglas warned that the Nlaka’pamux were actively protecting their lucrative gold trade having “taken the high-handed, though probably not unwise course, of expelling all parties of gold diggers . . . who had forced an entrance into their country.” Douglas predicted “that serious affrays may take place between the natives and the motley adventurers who . . . may probably attempt to over power the opposition of the natives by force of arms.”



11

“Never was there so large an immigration in so short a space of time into so small a place”

– Alfred Waddington, *The Fraser Mines Vindicated* (1858).

More than 30,000 gold seekers joined the Fraser River Rush.

Painting by William Hind

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Prospecting for gold with the requisite pick, pan and shovel

"Picks and shovels, washing cradles, packing saddles, pans and bags – On they rush by every steamer, 'Packed like pickled pork in kegs'"

"The New Yellow-Fever," *San Francisco Bulletin* (1858)



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"A marvelous thing is now going on here . . . That will prove one of the most important events on the Globe"

– Edwin Stanton, President Abraham Lincoln's future secretary of war, 1858.

At the height of the rush north, British Columbia threatened to replace California as the 'New El Dorado.'

Major Mortimer Robertson *"said if he could make up a company of 300 men with plenty of arms, ammunition, horses and mules and provisions, he would take us to Fraser River if we had to fight the Indians every day."*

"Most of my men seem eager for a fight with them," claimed Robertson, "and I am disposed to think their desire will be gratified before one week has elapsed."

"The old Californian miners and Indian-fighters were the worst" as they believed "they could travel in small parties and clean out all the Indians in the land."

-- H. F. Reinhart (1858)

"The Oregonians have got to Thompson River and they clear out the Indians where ever the[y] come across them."

"Indian report says that they kill all siwashas that they see."

-- Captain George Beam (1858)

"We had to fight our way through and we burned every rancherie and every salmon box that we could get a hold off. They shot at us when ever they got a chance and we did the same. They did their best to cut us off and we had a very hard trip as we had to keep clear of the river as much as possible. I was shot in the arm and breast and a number of our men were killed and wounded. On the way down we came across an Indian who stood on a rock and waved defiance at us. He was shot by one of our men. . . . I do not know just how many white men were killed during these fights, but there were thirty six at least."

-- Ned Stout (1858)

They "declared war against [sic] the whites but we some put and [sic] end to it, but many Hundred lives lost."

-- Radcliffe Quine (1858)

Marie Brent, the great granddaughter of N'kwala, Chief of the Okanagan, recalled the early attempts to unite against their common foe.

"During the Fraser River trouble between the Thompsons [Nlaka'pamux] and the whites in 1858 and 1859," she stated, "he advocated peace, although preparing for war had the affair not been settled. The Thompsons were against the miners and settlers. Although he was begged by the Spokanes and Thompsons to join them in war against the whites, he refused to allow his people to join them."

As Jason Allard, son of Chief Trader Ovid Allard in charge of Fort Yale at the time, put it: *"Agitations were started to clean up the Indians . . . The irregular troops started for vengeance, in military formation, the stars and stripes at their head."*

Captain Charles Rouse, an old Texas Ranger, *"routed the Indians [near Spuzzum], who took refuge in the mountains; they then burnt three of their rancheries, destroying all of their provisions, which consisted of salmon and dried berries. . . . There have been, in all, five of their rancheries burnt; three above the Big Canon, and two below."*

-- Victoria Gazette (1858)

Rouse returned to Yale, just twelve miles below the scene of the action, *"having in custody an Indian Chief [Kowpelst]. . . and the crowd were for lynching the Indian first and inquiring what he had done afterward."* While White miners claimed that they had killed nine Natives including a Chief during the conflict, it was later confirmed *"from the Indians themselves"* that in fact thirty-one Natives and an additional five Chiefs had been massacred.

-- Victoria Gazette (1858)

"There had been an Indian War lower down Fraser River and the Indians had cut off the heads of many miners, 'Bostons,' or Americans, until . . . the miners just quit work and organized into companies and went out to fight and kill all the Indians they could find, and found several camps of them, and just killed everything, men, women and children."

-- H. F. Reinhart (1858)

"We have just been attacked by a party of Indians. Their chief led them. They all come with their guns and knives in their hands, and wished us to leave immediately. But as soon as we got our pistols and knives ready, they began to quiet down. . . . The band have driven every miner from this bar who attempted to locate on it."

-- Captain Henry Snyder (1858)

"It was reported yesterday that the Indians was coming down in thousands from Fraser & Thompson, they did come down as far as the Big Canon killing all they met so consequently we had to bury our provisions and come to this place. There now is not one white man above the Big Canon which is 20 miles above this place, there was about 100 men left here this morning armed & equiped [sic] to fight the Indians, also a host left yesterday, killing 15 Indians & wounding several whites. . . . There is scarcely a day passes but some person looses [sic] their lives & boats."

-- Tom Todd (1858)

"Some of the White men are frightened to death. They think there [sic] day has come and they are not ready to go." Just three days later Beam further penned in his diary that "at Union Bar they got five men out of the River that was shot by the Indians. They had their heads cut off."

-- Captain George Beam (1858)

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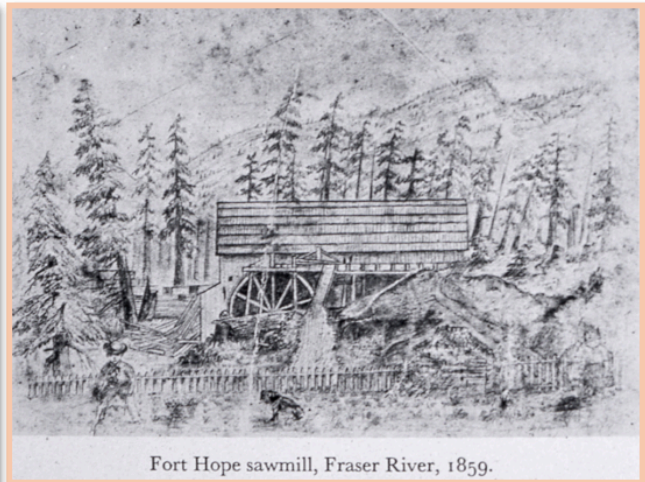
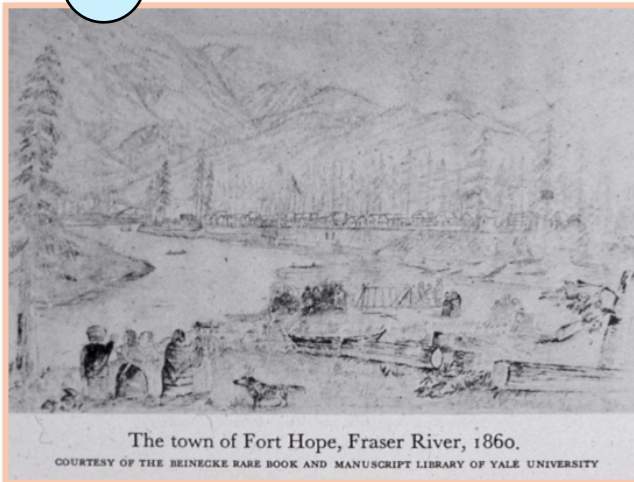


Gambling dens were widespread in the New El Dorado

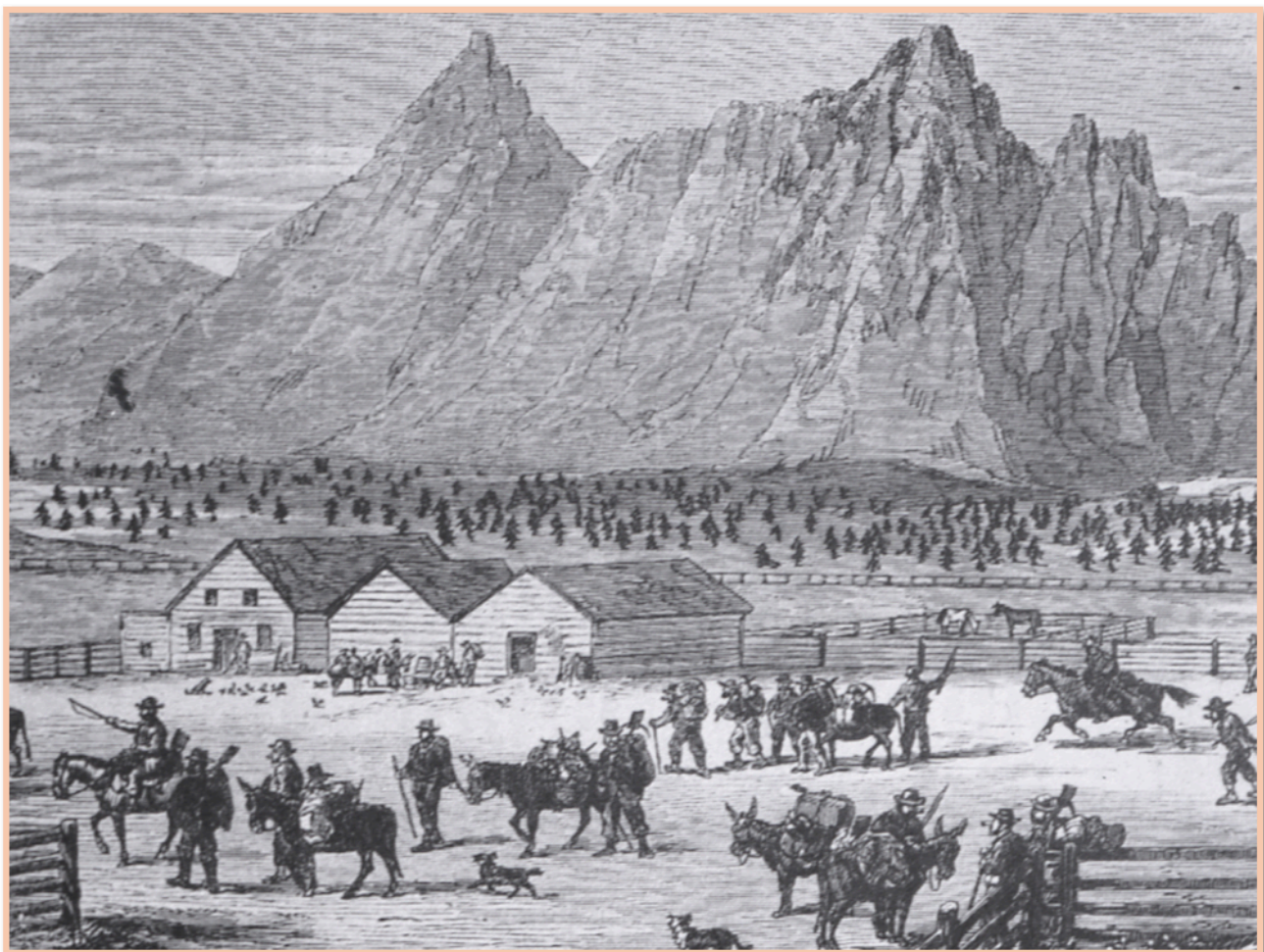
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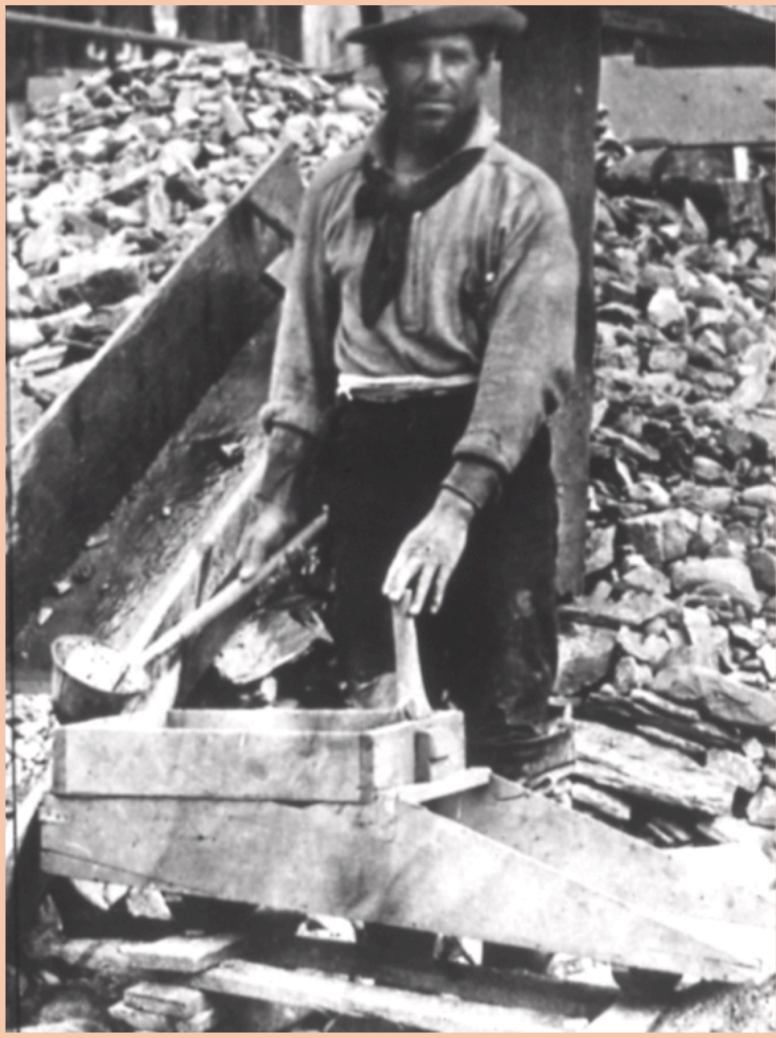
Fraser River saloons were found throughout the goldfields in 1858



California gold rush society was transplanted north of the 49th parallel



Parsonville or 'The Fountain' north of Lillooet (*London Times*, 1858)



“Picks and shovels, washing cradles, packing saddles, pans and bags – On they rush by every steamer, ‘Packed like pickled pork in kegs’”

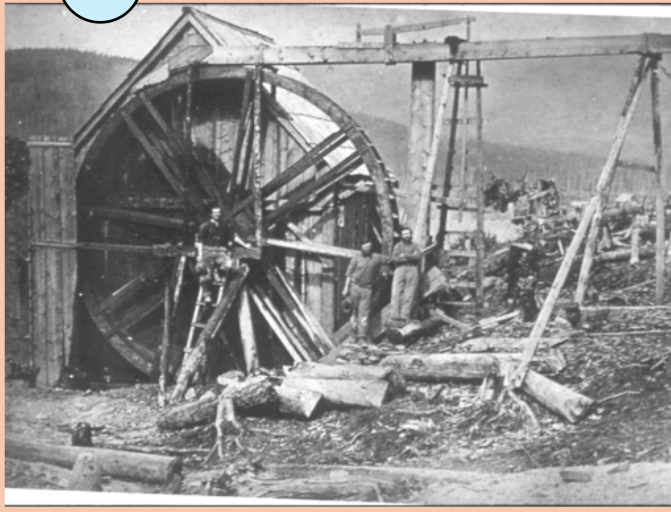
-- “The New Yellow-Fever,” *San Francisco Bulletin* (1858)

In 1858, \$1 a day was the standard wage in the Eastern United States while mining on Fraser was paying anywhere from \$5 to \$250 per day



Early views of the gold rush towns of Yale (L) and Hope (R)

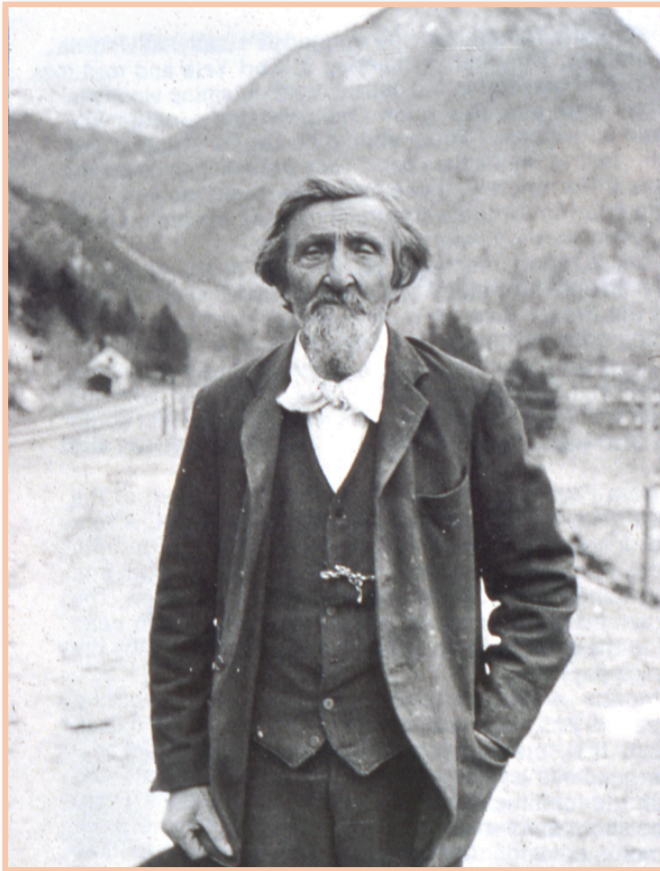
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Before stage coaches, Native trails were taken by gold seekers until the Cariboo Wagon Road was completed (as shown above).



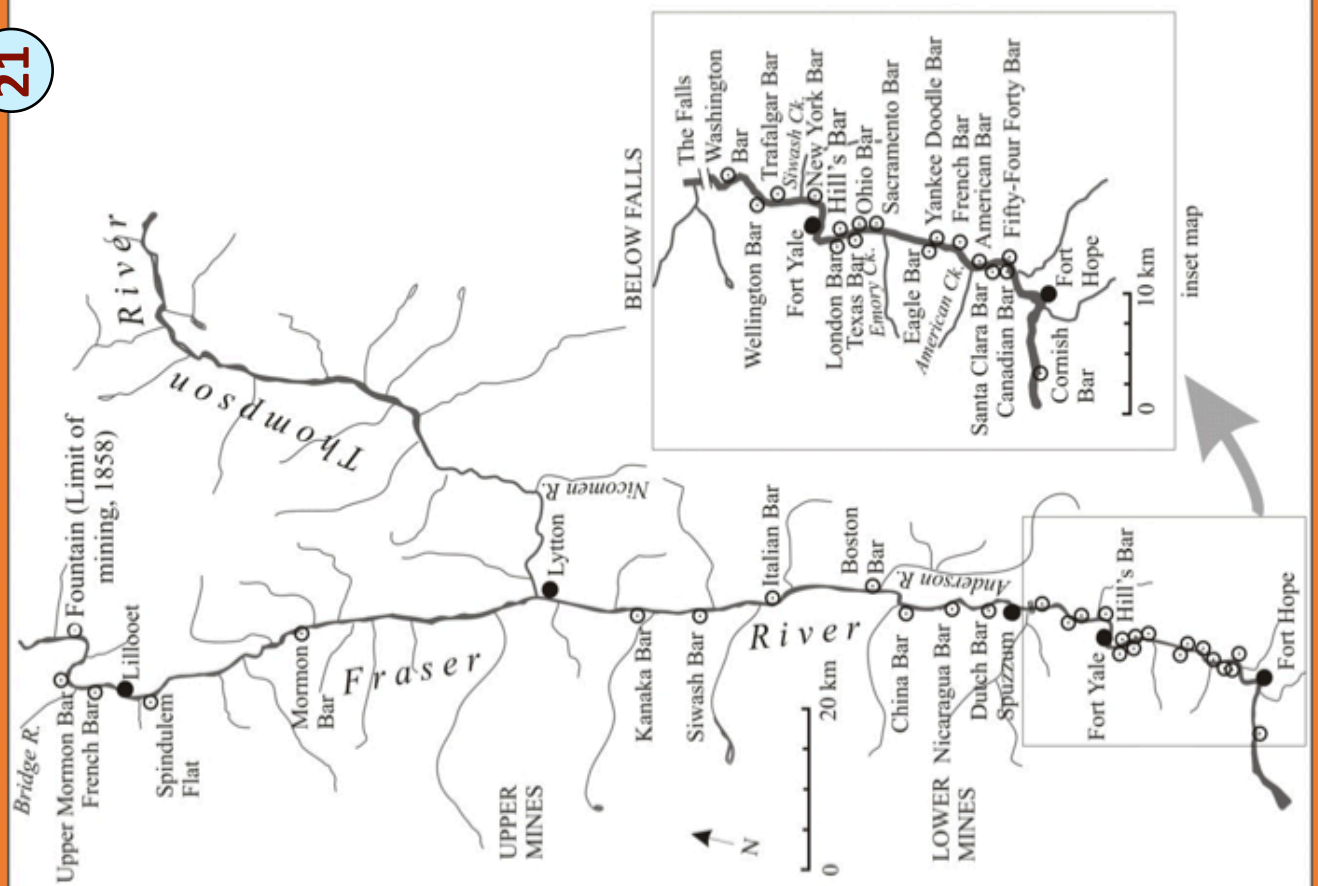
The US Army abandoned its use of camels in 1857 and these were subsequently used in British Columbia





"knots of old experienced miners, verdant new-comers, excited youths, wild speculators, with a sprinkling of 'Micawbers' and bummers, were seen . . . discussing the chances of making a 'pile' by a few months of hard toil."

-- San Francisco Bulletin (1858)

Ned Stout was both a Californian 49'er and a British Columbian 58'er. Stout fought in the Fraser River War of 1858 – one of the great untold stories of this province.



Frazer's River,
PUGET SOUND.
MERCHANTS' ACCOMMODATION LINE

FOR
VICTORIA,
PORT TOWNSEND AND BELLINGHAM BAY
 THE WELL KNOWN STEAMSHIP
 **COMMODORE,** 
 (1,000 Tons Register)
 GEO. W. STAPLES, Commander,
 WILL SAIL FROM PACIFIC WHARF,

TUESDAY JUNE 8, 1880,
 AT 10 O'CLOCK, A. M.
 FOR THE ABOVE PORTS,

Steamship "Sea Bird,"

Port Townsend,

ALL THE PORTS OF COAST TRADE.

FRAZER RIVER MINES!



Buy Your Groceries and Provisions
BEFORE YOU START.
THIS IS THE CHEAPEST, SAFEST,
ACURST POLICY!

HOWE & CO., 116 BAYSONG STREET, have
 the FINEST QUALITY OF TEA, GROCERIES,
 PROVISIONS, etc., to be found in San Francisco, which they
 will not only sell CHEAP, but PACK IN A GRAPE PITABLE FOR

Transportation to the Mines.
 The FINEST LIQUORS always on hand.
HOWE & CO.

UNITED STATES MAIL LINE

FOR
Victoria and Bellingham Bay.

 THE STEAMSHIP 
PANAMA,
 (1,000 Tons)
 W. L. DALL, COMMANDER,
 Will leave Victoria street wharf for the above ports
ON THURSDAY JUNE 10, 1880,
AT 4 O'CLOCK, P. M.
 For freight or passage, apply on board, or to the Agents of the
 Pacific Mail Steamship Company, corner Sacramento and Larkin.

TO THE FIRST-FLOOR BRICK BUILDING,
 No. 121 Clay street,
 between Montgomery and Laidlaw streets,
FOR FRAZER RIVER.
A SMALL INVOICE
GOLD SCALES,
 consisting of
 POCKET, TIN AND MOROCCO-COVERED,
 AND STANDING SCALES.
 For sale by
 J. GREENBAUM & CO.,
 121 Clay street,
HAY, GRAIN, AND FEED,
 OF ALL KINDS,
 FOR SALE, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.

GOT THE GOLD FEVER,

AND
BOUND FOR FRAZER RIVER!

KNOW ALL MEN, BY THESE PRESENTS,
 (emigrants for the new Gold Diggings especially,) That
 we, the undersigned, Proprietors of the famous

QUINCY HALL CLOTHING HOUSE,

having been suddenly attacked with the prevailing Gold Fever,
 have determined to

CLOSE OUT

IMMENSE STOCK

FOR FRAZER RIVER.
WINES AND LIQUORS,
PUT UP EXPRESSLY FOR MINERS' AND
 Travelers' use, in small packages, in lots to suit, at whole-
 sale prices, by
J. G. FRIEHL,
 109 Clay street,
 between Sansome and Battery.
 Nearly opposite F. Baker.

FRAZER RIVER,
 WILL BE FORWARDED
By Every Steamer.

 **HAVING A REGULAR MESSENGER**
 on the Sound steamer, and Agents at the
 principal points, we are prepared to give prompt attention to all
 business in our line.
 J. G. FRIEHL, WELLS, FARGO & CO.
NICHOLS & CO.'S EXPRESS

BELLINGHAM BAY

THE NEW EL DORADO:
 OR,
BRITISH COLUMBIA.

BY
KINAHAN CORNWALLIS,
 LONDON OR "DARBY TALK," "NEWSPAPER," &c., &c.

"On the way up, I passed two Indian ranches [villages], which had been burned to the ground by the whites, one of them a large one. . . Turning off the main trail, I found several deserted Indian lodges, with baskets, balls of twine for salmon nets, wooden pans for washing gold, etc., scattered around. . . The miners all seem determined to keep the Indians off the river, and as the Indians' sole resource here is salmon, they must come to terms, if they cannot succeed in driving the whites from the river. . . As I passed through the burned Indian ranches . . . I saw the bodies of some four or five dead Indians at two of the ranches . . . Being alone, I was by no means in safety, and involuntarily quickened my steps, as I trampled over the burnt remains of their houses."

-- San Francisco Bulletin (1858)

J.L. Morton, the agent for Kent & Smith's Express in Fort Hope, accused:

"Should the authorities [HBC] be found in anyway conniving at the bloody deeds of the savages, this will result not only in the sacking and burning of all their stockades and storehouses, but stripping this territory of every Vestige of British rule. I trust, however, that these suspicions are groundless. . ."

"Decapitated, denuded corpses of unfortunate adventurers are daily picked up on the river, while reports have reached us of the progress of retaliatory measures on the part of whites, involving indiscriminate slaughter of every age and sex."

-- S.W. Daggett (1858)

"The miners have sent Governor Douglass some strong talk a bout there protection from the Indians but the Governor cant do any thing he has not the Power."

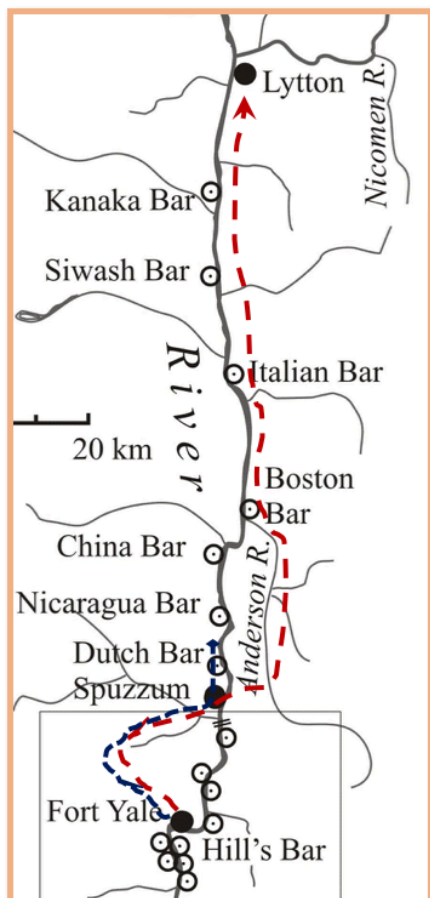
-- Captain George Beam (1858)

"That the Miners have abused the Indians in many instances particularly at what is called New York Bar by insulting there [sic] women after they had voluntarily given up there [sic] arms. I understand that the same thing has also occurred at 'Quayome.' From what I can learn I have reason to believe that some 15 or 20 Indians have lost there lives and three or four whites. Also as many wounded during the excitement and many are leaving for Victoria and other places."

-- Ovid Allard, HBC Trader (1858)

"The miners said 'You are a Hudson's Bay man?' I said yes. 'What kind of an Indian is this -- what kind of an Indian is this,' they yelled. I said I did not know -- he was good as far as I knew. A party from the outside called me a liar and they dragged me and the Indian off from the Hudson's Bay store into the crowd. . . I went to Hill's Bar that night and stopped all night with Judge Perry [Perrier]. The Judge took me over so as to stop the trouble."

-- William Yates, HBC employee (1858)



Fraser River War, 1858

Volunteer Miner-Soldier Militias:

The Troop Movements of the Pike and Whatcom Guards (16-25 August 1858):

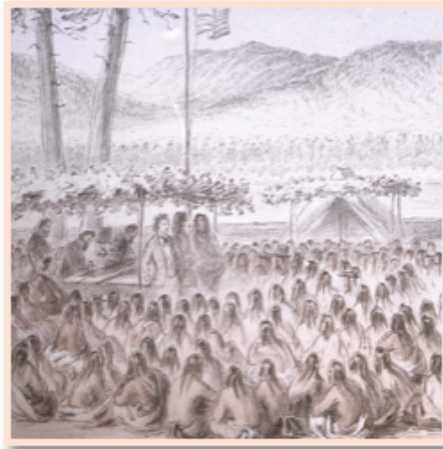
- Campaigns begin at Fort Yale
- Captains Snyder and Graham meet at Spuzzum
- Captain Graham & 1st Lieutenant killed near Chapman's Bar
- Captain Snyder holds Grand Council of War with Chief Spintlum. Final Treaty of Peace concluded at Lytton.

---→ Captain Snyder's Route

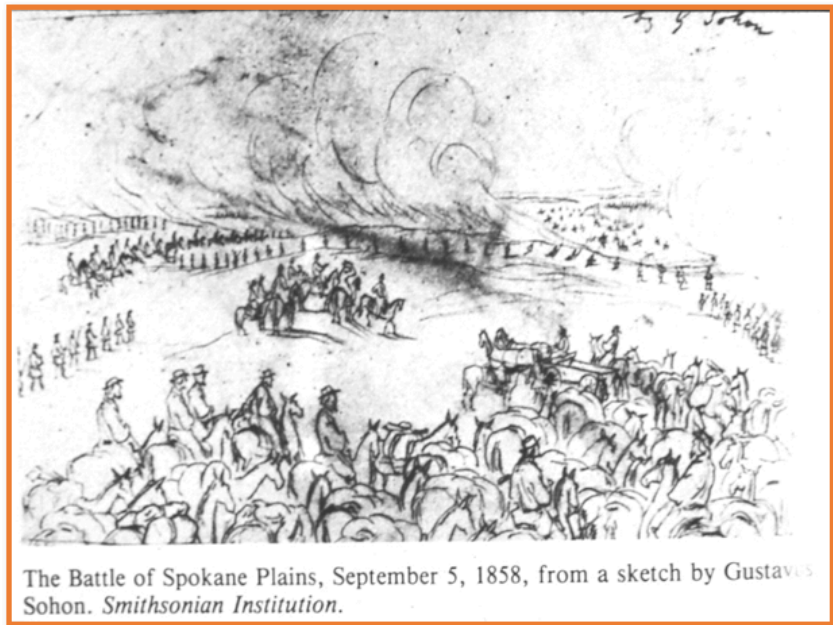
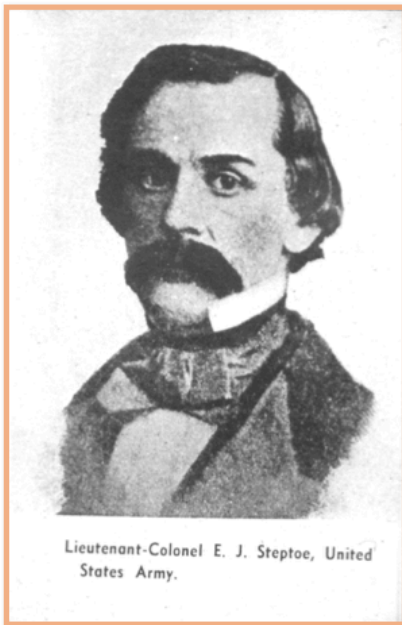
---→ Captain Graham's Route

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Governor Steven's pre-1858 treaty-making, Washington Territory



South of the 49th parallel, Governor Isaac Stevens concluded a whirlwind of treaty-making with First Nations, Treaties that were not ratified by the U.S. Congress until well after 1858.



Since the American Treaties had not been ratified, Stevens decreed that no non-Native peoples should travel east of the Cascades, but Fraser River bound gold seekers from California ignored the prohibition and pushed through setting on the 1858 'Indian Wars' of Washington State. In one such engagement, the U.S. Army under Lieutenant-Colonel Steptoe was defeated by First Nations who were determined to protect their land from invasion.



Governor James Douglas believed that it would require “the nicest tact to avoid a disastrous Indian War.” With only the Royal Navy to assert British sovereignty at the mouth of the Fraser (such as the gunboat HMS *Satellite* shown above), the British presence was largely minimal throughout the interior regions of BC.

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Quote from the diary of James Douglas after the events of 1858

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“It appears from the reports of miners who have lately returned from the upper country that the Indians are thievish and without being positively hostile plunder the miners in the most shameless manner. Drew up a proclamation prohibiting the sale or gift of intoxicating drinks to Indians, to be published immediately, and also a plan for the administration of justice; and otherwise establishing order & government in Fraser’s river.”

"Hundreds of warriors from all parts of the upper Thompson country had assembled at Lytton with the intention of blocking the progress of the whites beyond that point, and, if possible, of driving them back down the river."

"The Okanagan had sent word, promising aid, and it was expected that the Shuswap would also render help. In fact the Bonaparte, Savona, and Kamloops bands had initiated their desire to assist if war was declared. For a number of days there was much excitement at Lytton, and many fiery speeches were made. CuxcuxesqEt, the Lytton war-chief, a large, active man of great courage, talked incessantly for war."

"He put on his headdress of eagle feathers, and, painted, decked and armed for battle, advised the people to drive out the whites. At the end of his speeches he would dance as in a war dance, or imitate the grisly bear, his chief guardian spirit."

"Cunamitsa, the Spences Bridge chief, and several other leading men, were also in favor of war. CexpentlEm [Spintlum], with his great powers of oratory, talked continually for peace, and showed strongly its advantages. The people were thus divided as to the best course to pursue, and finally most of them favoured CexpentlEm's proposals."

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View of Fraser Canyon at Hells Gate looking downstream, c.1955