Fathoming Empire:

Marine Knowledge and Colonial Navigation in an Indigenous Seascape, 1825-1906

by

Jesse Robertson

B.A., University of King's College, 2011

M.A., Carleton University, 2015

A Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
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We acknowledge and respect the Lək^{w}əŋən (Songhees and X^{w}sepsəm/Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands and the Lək^{w}əŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

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Abstract

Oceans connected populations and markets to an unprecedented degree in the era of sail and steam, but intricate coastlines, dense fogs, powerful tides, and hidden hazards made marine environments potentially devastating spaces for the uninitiated. Seldom considered in recent scholarship, the navigational infrastructure introduced to alleviate such risks was fundamental to imperial efforts to incorporate the vast stretches of North American coastline to which the United States, Britain, and Canada laid claim in the nineteenth century. This dissertation presents a new history of waterborne colonialism in the Northeastern Pacific, including coastal waters from the Columbia River to Haida Gwaii. Where previous scholars have examined naval power and marine harvesting, this study innovates by focusing on the exchange of navigational knowledge and practices between Indigenous and colonial mariners in what became known as the "Graveyard of the Pacific." The earliest European and American mariners to arrive on this uncharted and treacherous coast understood better than most that "knowledge is power." The opposite is also true, however. Geographic ignorance shaped and restricted the unfolding of colonialism in coastal spaces that were often illegible to newcomers. This project looks past received narratives of "exploration" to evaluate four stages in imperial efforts to "fathom" the coast: early voyages of reconnaissance, hydrographic charting, the lighthouse service, and marine lifesaving, arguing that Indigenous knowledge, labour, and technologies underpinned the success of colonial navigation at every turn. By revealing how these interventions allowed colonialism to take hold and thrive, "Fathoming Empire" exposes the long-term consequences of maritime imperialism while showing how colonial aspirations were modified according to local circumstances and Indigenous agendas. In doing so, it provides a crucial historical perspective on recent Indigenous assertions of jurisdiction over the management of marine traffic in these still contested waters.

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Acknowledgments

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events large and small. The imprint of his scholarship is attested to by my copy of his manuscript, *The Sea Is My Country*, which, like a well-loved cookbook, bears the signs of my constant thumbing through it and always rewards another glance.

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It's been a long ride. Thank you to everyone who received unsolicited historical anecdotes with patience, humoured me when I told them this time I was *really* in the final stretch (no, *really!*), or

simply asked me how my day at the archives went. Beyond scholarship, my life these six years has been shaped by countless friendships, communities, and relationships. Thank you to those who journeyed the way with me, offering comfort in connection, wisdom to keep me in check, solace in times of stress, and shared joy in the miraculous and mundane. Above all, I am indebted to my family, especially my sister, Eliza Robertson, and my mother, Kathryn Cass. I dedicate this work to the memory of my late father, John C. Robertson (1948-2013).

Introduction. Not Waving, but Warning

The morning began predictably enough. A shift in winds had brought more moderate weather and a welcome reprieve from the recent spring gale. But the day's tasks were interrupted, and a wave of excitement rippled through the village as a large, two-masted vessel was seen on the incoming tide. Foreign ships had become a more common sight over the past two decades, arriving with ever-increasing numbers in an apparently insatiable quest for sea otter pelts. The Nuu-chah-nulth referred to these waterborne itinerants as *mamaƛn'i* – "those living on the water and floating around, like they have no land" – and regarded them warily, even as they competed over the varied goods proffered from these floating emporiums.[1] Still, it was unusual for a *mamaƛn'i* ships to venture past the "infinity of islands" into the protected waters below the village. Several villagers launched canoes and paddled towards the ship but found themselves unable to communicate given its considerable pace. The flood tide was now roaring into the sound, drawing the brig past the village at a dizzying pace. Men, women, and children ran to the shore, waving, gesticulating, and shouting wildly to the puzzled men returning their gaze from the deck.

A young Thomas Manby watched the scene from aboard ship, wondering about the "violent gestures" and "dismal" yells pouring forth as the HMS *Chatham* "appeared to fly past the land." Their meaning soon became apparent, however, as those aboard noticed the foaming danger ahead: a torrential rapid, thirty yards wide, created by the tide as it surged through the narrows ahead. Manby and those with him discovered – alas, too late – "this good tribe [...] were using every exertion to warn us." Sail and rudder were powerless against the gushing stream. Those aboard braced themselves; those ashore probably winced. The ship tumbled down the cascade, spun wildly in the eddy, and came to a sudden halt in the branches of a colossal cedar – dangerously close to shore, but miraculously

[1] E. Y. Arima and Alan L. Hoover, *The Whaling People of the West Coast of Vancouver Island and Cape Flattery*, Revised ed. (Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 2011), 161; Joshua L. Reid, *The Sea Is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makahs, an Indigenous Borderlands People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 30; Daniel Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 253n24.

unscathed. Manby reported an "awful silence [...] as every eye remained fix't on the furious cataract, that a few seconds before, had threatened our destruction."[2]

It was a dramatic start to the 1793 season in which the *Chatham* (Commander Peter Puget) and *Discovery* (Captain George Vancouver) were to continue their survey of the northwest coast of America. Nor was it their first brush with disaster. The *Discovery* had narrowly avoided "immediate and inevitable destruction" after it struck submerged rocks in Queen Charlotte Sound the previous summer. The *Chatham* came to its assistance, only to be driven onto the rocks *twice* in the following afternoon and night.[3] Such were the hazards of mapping an uncharted coast. Countless perils lay concealed beneath the surface, unknown to those aboard ship, but too readily "discovered" by their exposed hull. Cartography by collision was a common feature of early surveys in the Pacific West. Fortunately, the coast was not altogether unknown. Puget and Manby had learned of an inland passage to Nootka Sound by means of a crude Spanish map and believed they were entering it when they encountered the tidal rapids that day in 1793. The Nuu-chah-nulth villagers knew better and endeavoured to warn the oblivious *mamaƛn'i* as they careened toward danger. Later, one of the villagers boarded the *Chatham* as it waited in the basin for the tide to turn, and chalked a map on the deck showing the inland passage they ought to have taken, while giving various signs to show that it, too, was "thronged with dangers."[4] Such intelligence was pivotal to staying afloat. The HMS *Chatham* escaped the inlet on their second attempt the following morning and wisely chose to proceed to Nootka Sound via the outside coast.

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[2] Thomas Manby, 10 Apr 1793, "Voyage of HMS *Discovery* and *Chatham*: To the Northwest Coast of America," WA MSS 325 (hereafter cited as Manby, "Voyage of HMS *Discovery* and *Chatham*"), Beinecke Library, Yale University.
[3] George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean: And Round the World*, vol. 2 (London: J. Stockdale, 1801), 299–305, https://books.google.ca/books?id=IezA33scnggC.
[4] Manby, 10 Apr 1793, "Voyage of HMS *Discovery* and *Chatham*."

Casting our gaze over the history of colonialism, it is easy to forget that what historian John Weaver describes as the "great land rush" of the past four hundred years was, in fact, a seaborne phenomenon.[5] Literary and political theorist Edward Said captures the longstanding emphasis on land acquisition and control in an often quoted passage: "To think about distant places, to colonize them, to populate them or depopulate them: all of this occurs on, about, or because of land. The actual geographical possession of land is what empire in the final analysis is all about."[6] But in the Pacific Northwest, struggles for and against empire have often been fought on, or over, the ocean. From time immemorial, coastal Indigenous people have created vibrant seascapes, "communities of kinship" that connect human and more-than-human lifeworlds through migration, voyaging, kinship, and stories, according to Rachel Yacaaʔał George and Sarah Marie Wiebe.[7] Beginning in the eighteenth century, Indigenous peoples like the Makah deployed seapower to counter early European incursions when sea captains disregarded local protocols, and subsequently combined new technologies with customary practices like whaling, sealing, and fishing to assert authority over marine environments in the face of growing settler interference, as Joshua Reid argues.[8] The ocean was no less important for European traders, navies, settlers, who saw in these Indigenous seascapes opportunities for profit, social advance, and imperial aggrandizement. Ships were a primary means of long-distance travel until jetliners supplanted ocean liners in the late 1960s.[9] Settlers, capital, and military forces had to transit vast oceans and navigate intricate coastlines before taking root on new lands. Already apparent in the age of sail, the oceanic dimensions of colonialism, capitalism, and globalization reached new heights with the advent of steam transportation in the nineteenth century. Transoceanic networks reshaped

[5] John C. Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).
[6] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 78.
[7] Rachel Yacaaʔał George and Sarah Marie Wiebe, 'Fluid Decolonial Futures: Water as a Life, Ocean Citizenship and Seascape Relationality', *New Political Science* 42, no. 4 (December 2020): 503–19.
[8] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 53–57, 165; Joshua L. Reid, 'From "Fishing Together" to "To Fish in Common With": Makah Marine Waters and the Making of the Settler Commons in Washington Territory', *Journal of the West* 56, no. 4 (Fall 2017): 48–56.
[9] Helen M. Rozwadowski, *Vast Expanses: A History of the Oceans* (London: Reaktion Books, 2018), 205.

the world anew as unprecedented numbers of people boarded ships in hopes of establishing a new life "overseas." Settler colonialism, like capitalism and globalization, was a maritime spectacle in its origins and culmination.[10]

"Fathoming Empire" offers a new history of waterborne colonialism in the Pacific West. The earliest imperial mariners to arrive on this uncharted and treacherous coast understood that "knowledge is power." Countless vessels made the months-long voyage from Europe and New England to founder in minutes on a hidden rock or shifting sandbar within sight of their destination. Shifting tides, powerful currents, and impenetrable fogs conspired to sink many an imperial enterprise. By the same token, identifying a protected passage, prominent landmark, or safe harbour could spell the difference between success and failure, life and death, power and impotence. The acquisition of this navigational knowledge allowed colonialism to take hold and thrive, but it resulted from a prolonged exchange between Indigenous and colonial mariners. Official charts and published narratives often conceal the nature of these exchanges. We are fortunate to have, in Manby, an observer who was candid about the warnings and shipboard geography lessons he received from local Nuu-chah-nulth mariners. Vancouver's well-known published narrative and resulting chart omit any reference to the entire exchange.[11] This dissertation reconsiders received narratives of "exploration" to evaluate four stages in imperial efforts to "fathom" the coast: early voyages of reconnaissance, systematic hydrographic charting, the formation of a lighthouse service, and marine lifesaving initiatives, revealing how Indigenous knowledge, labour, and technologies underpinned the success of colonial navigation at every turn. Attending to the exchange of labour and knowledge at each stage, "Fathoming Empire" uncovers the contingency and long-term consequences of maritime imperialism, while showing how colonial aspirations adapted to local circumstances and Indigenous priorities. In doing so, it provides a

[10] Liam Campling and Alejandro Colas, *Capitalism and the Sea: The Maritime Factor in the Making of the Modern World* (Verso Books, 2021).
[11] George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean: And Round the World*, vol. 3 (London: J. Stockdale, 1801), 422–23, https://books.google.ws/books?id=419jAAAAMAAJ.

crucial historical perspective on recent Indigenous assertions of jurisdiction over the management of marine traffic in these shared and contested waters.

Imperial regimes require considerable assistance to project power onto foreign shores. Julius Caesar's invasion of Britain in 55 BCE was nearly ruined by his failure to anticipate the damage high tides would render his fleet. Emperor Caligula prefaced his own intended invasion in 40 CE by ordering the construction of a lighthouse to guide his ships across the English Channel.[12] Lacking a navy of his own, Kublai Khan relied on Southern Song (Chinese) and Korean fleets for his 1281 CE invasion of Japan. Korean sailors' familiarity with local weather patterns may have helped them to anticipate and avoid the punishing typhoon that decimated the Song fleet and ended the invasion.[13] Such incidents point to the awful consequences that attend ignorance of tides, weather, and safe landing places. Seen in this light, marine charts, sailing guides, and fixed aids to navigation (lighthouses, buoys, foghorns) represent a corpus of imperial knowledge that was integral to imperial mobility and access to resources, land, and water around the world. In *Fathoming the Ocean*, historian Helen Rozwadowski shows how imperialism and industrialization encouraged the US and Britain to cooperate in their efforts to understand the deep sea. "Fathoming Empire" takes a cue (and title) from that work, showing how coastal hydrography and navigation required these same countries to seek assistance from the same Indigenous seafarers they sought to dispossess.[14] The navies of Spain and Britain took the initiative in charting unknown shores in the Pacific Northwest because theirs were

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[12] T. Rice Holmes, *Ancient Britain and the Invasions of Julius Caesar* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1907), 319–20. Scholars debate whether Caligula's lighthouse was actually constructed, though many associate it with the Tour d'Ordre in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France. Caligula's invasion was abandoned. Some scholars argue his lighthouse emboldened Emperor Claudius's troops to cross the ocean on their successful campaign four years later. Joëlle Napoli and Corinne Boulinguez, 'Rendons la Tour d'Odre à Caligula: des documents au monument', *Revue du Nord* 408, no. 5 (2014): 21–23; Richard Hingley, *Conquering the Ocean: The Roman Invasion of Britain* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2022), 63–64.

[13] Another theory speculates that the smaller Korean vessels were more easily beached to weather the storm. Historical and archaeological evidence suggests the Song fleet, having traveled 1000 km from the Yangtze River, accounted for the vast majority of wrecked vessels. Casualties are estimated to have numbered from the thousands to tens of thousands. Randall James Sasaki, *The Origins of the Lost Fleet of the Mongol Empire* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2015), 24–30, 143–45; Thomas D. Conlan, 'Mongol Invasions of Japan', in *The Encyclopedia of War*, ed. Gordon Martel (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2012), 1–3, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781444338232.wbeow425.

[14] Helen M. Rozwadowski, *Fathoming the Ocean: The Discovery and Exploration of the Deep Sea* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 213.

the vessels responsible for projecting imperial power around the world. Naval ships were the vanguard of martial technology in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, self-contained fortress communities independently traversing oceans for months, even years, at a time. But the loss of an entire French expedition under the Comte de La Pérouse (1788), the foundering of Vancouver's ships (1793), and the wreck of the United States Exploring Expedition's USS *Peacock* (1841) attest that these floating fortresses were vulnerable to every rock or sandbar shallower than the depth of their keels.

Although often overlooked by historians, charts, guides, and lights were indispensable components of imperial efforts to incorporate and "metabolize" the vast stretches of North American coastline to which the United States, Britain, and Canada laid claim over the course of the nineteenth century.[15] Surveys, charts, and navigational aids were essential for ships and empires to project power, deliver settlers, supply colonies, and extract resources. "Fathoming Empire" examines the navigational strategies imperial and settler regimes used to shape the marine environments ostensibly under their control in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While this was a global phenomenon, I focus on the Northeastern Pacific – coastal waters from the Columbia River to Haida Gwaii – where Indigenous and settler societies have wrestled over strikingly different conceptions of marine space from first contact to the present day. This geography offers a broad setting in which to study European knowledge acquisition in its local variability and to follow historical records (captains' logs, remarks books, and travel narratives) that were mobile at the point of their creation. Certain areas (notably the Juan de Fuca Strait) emerge as focal points within the narrative, facilitating a degree of ethnographic specificity that would be otherwise impossible. From these vantages, I expose an intricate relationship between navigability and colonialism that has crucial implications for international scholarship on Indigenous and maritime history, historical geography, and settler colonialism.

[15] The concept of territorial metabolism is drawn from Megan Black, *The Global Interior: Mineral Frontiers and American Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 7, 253n10.

Oceans connected populations and markets to an unprecedented degree in the eras of sail and steam, but impenetrable fogs, powerful tides, and hidden hazards made marine environments potentially devastating spaces for the uninitiated. In attending to navigation, I demonstrate how the "illegibility" of coastal spaces to outsiders obstructed direct control and afforded Indigenous societies a measure of autonomy from foreign interference. This thesis takes geographic ignorance seriously as a factor that shaped the unfolding of colonialism in illegible coastal spaces, one that settlers experienced for themselves when traversing unfamiliar environments. Arriving to an irreligious San Francisco in 1874 and warned that steamships to Puget Sound "were not considered very safe," Reverend Samuel Greene compared himself the Biblical Abraham, "of whom it is said, 'He went out not knowing whither he went.' [...] I was going into 'a far country,' in its remoteness and its strange surroundings so foreign to my former life."[16] The fact that surveyors, traders, missionaries, and settlers went, not knowing whither, had significant consequences for their ability to assume control of Indigenous land and seascapes. The dual role of marine environments – facilitating and frustrating colonialism – reveals a productive tension at the core of my argument. Navigational strategies were instruments of the colonial state but also occasions for intercultural contact and negotiation. "Fathoming Empire" adds a needed layer of complexity by foregrounding Indigenous peoples' roles guiding reconnaissance surveys and charting expeditions; provisioning, constructing, and operating lightstations; and rescuing sailors in disaster's wake.

To be clear, drawing attention to Indigenous people's presence aboard ships, around lighthouses, and within lifesaving crews does not mean these individuals were responsible for the colonization that took place as a consequence of these imperial interventions. In many instances, Indigenous people rightly considered colonial interlopers – fur traders, surveyors, and lightkeepers – as little more than bit-players, late arrivals to a story that had been unfolding on the coast for untold

[16] Samuel Greene, "A Sketch of my Life," pp. 44-45, book 2, MsSC 187A (hereafter cited as Greene, "A Sketch of my Life"), Washington State Historical Society (WSHS), Tacoma, WA.

generations. The Pacific Northwest was a complex and evolving borderland region, where local rivalries and geopolitics often mattered more to Indigenous participants than imperial ambitions that only became obvious in hindsight. It must have been hard for Indigenous guides and pilots to take too seriously traders who traveled in schooners smaller than war canoes, seamen who "did not much understand using paddles," surveyors who struggled to feed themselves on a bountiful coast, or lightkeepers who had to be carried ashore.[17] Later, as imperial confidence and power became a more formidable threat, Indigenous mariners shared their knowledge carefully, when they saw benefits in doing so, obstructing imperial endeavours in some cases while pursuing strategic entanglement in others. They were no more capable of foreseeing future consequences than anyone else at the time. People "make their own history [...] under circumstances not chosen by themselves," Karl Marx famously observed.[18] Describing Indigenous people's participation in British Columbia's legal apparatus, historian Tina Loo observes "the powerless can and do act in accordance with their own interests in conditions designed to prevent just that."[19] Indigenous guides, pilots, seafarers and knowledge holders were seldom powerless, but participated in imperial endeavours when they felt doing so would advance their interests and those of their families and communities. Charts, guides, and lighthouses were tools of colonial trade and settlements, but Indigenous people were not. By examining their assistance to colonial navigation, I seek to exposes countless ways Indigenous peoples leveraged their knowledge, labour, technologies, and social networks to preserve individual and collective autonomy from encroaching colonial regimes.

At its broadest level, "Fathoming Empire" seeks to reveal how Indigenous peoples possessed, and colonialism dispossessed, marine spaces. It reorients our understanding of settler colonialism by

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[17] For "paddles," see Journal of Lt Edwin J. De Haven aboard the *Peacock* and the *Oregon*, 4 Aug 1841, Journals and Logs Kept by Expedition Members, NAID 74205957 (hereafter cited as De Haven journal), Records of the Hydrographic Office (hereafter cited as RG 37), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC (NARA-DC): https://catalog.archives.gov/id/74205957.

[18] Quoted in Tina Loo, 'Tonto's Due: Law, Culture, and Colonization in British Columbia', in *Essays in the History of Canadian Law: The Legal History of British Columbia and the Yukon*, ed. Hamar Foster (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 129.

[19] Loo, 129.

considering history from the vantage point of North America's coasts. It offers an original contribution by illuminating the colonization and control of marine environments, an aspect that has been largely overshadowed by attention to the control of land. By reconceptualising marine charts, guides, and lighthouses as essential tools of colonialism, this study offers fresh opportunities to engage the public in conversations about our complicated history. As such, this project offers a new set of interpretations to enrich both scholarly and popular understandings of our shared colonial past.

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In recent decades, scholars of Indigenous history and colonialism have turned their attention to the sea. Freed from the "terrestrial habit of thinking," historians have found in the ocean a powerful lens for re-interpreting the colonial past. Maritime, coastal, and saltwater "frontiers" abound.[20] Historians have uncovered transatlantic Indians, Amerindian Atlantics, and pan-Pacific "*kanaka*doms."[21] Andrew Lipman argues that the coast was a "central setting for frontier interaction" between Algonquians and Europeans in New England. David Chang presents Kānaka Maoli seafarers as active agents of oceanic exploration.[22] We should no longer be surprised to encounter Oceanians in Nantucket, Cherokees in London, or Seminoles in Fiji.[23] These and other Indigenous peoples have been

[20] For oceanic "frontiers," see David A. Chappell, *Double Ghosts: Oceanian Voyagers on Euroamerican Ships* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 73, 177; John R. Gillis, *The Human Shore: Seacoasts in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012), 3; David F. Arnold, *The Fishermen's Frontier: People and Salmon in Southeast Alaska* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008); Catherine Cangany, *Frontier Seaport: Detroit's Transformation into an Atlantic Entrepôt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

[21] Kate Flint, *The Transatlantic Indian, 1776-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Paul Cohen, 'Was There an Amerindian Atlantic? Reflections on the Limits of a Historiographical Concept', *History of European Ideas* 34, no. 4 (December 2008): 388–410; Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 177.

[22] Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 6; David A. Chang, *The World and All the Things Upon It: Native Hawaiian Geographies of Exploration* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2016), vii.

[23] Edward D. Melillo, 'Making Sea Cucumbers Out of Whales' Teeth: Nantucket Castaways and Encounters of Value in Nineteenth-Century Fiji', *Environmental History*, Making Sea Cucumbers Out of Whales' Teeth, 20, no. 3 (July 2015): 4; Jace Weaver, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 155–66; Nancy Shoemaker, *Native American Whalemen and the World: Indigenous Encounters and the Contingency of Race* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 132–44. See also Susan Lebo, 'Native Hawaiian Whalers in Nantucket, 1820-60', *Nantucket Historical Association* (blog), 2007, https://nha.org/research/nantucket-history/history-topics/native-hawaiian-whalers-in-nantucket-1820-60/; Frances Ruley Karttunen and Cameron Texter, 'William Owen: Holokahiki', *Nantucket Historical Association* (blog), 2021, https://nha.org/research/nantucket-

recast as active participants in processes of globalization since at least 1492.[24] The enthusiasm with which historians have embraced the "oceanic turn" is evident in the pace of this conceptual shift. The division between Indigenous and oceanic histories was still apparent little more than a decade ago, as Paul Cohen observed in a 2008 article.[25] The integration of these fields in the intervening years is a considerable accomplishment in recent Indigenous and colonial historiographies. Understandably, there is a tendency in many such studies to characterize the ocean as a fundamentally international space that eschews territorial possession. But in casting the ocean as *mare liberum*, a legal concept with a distinctly European pedigree, historians have occasionally adopted a "blithe transnationalism" that reproduces paradigmatic Western constructions of the ocean as borderless common property.[26] Such conceptions are not held universally and risk directing attention away from forms of Indigenous marine tenure.[27] This project builds on a nascent body of scholarship to show that marine environments are not fundamentally transnational or borderless, but were made so through identifiable historical processes.[28]

Naturally, the oceanic turn has a particular resonance for the Pacific West, where historians have paid considerable to maritime dimensions of colonialism. Several scholars have examined naval-

history/history-topics/william-owen-holokahiki/; Coll Thrush, *Indigenous London: Native Travelers at the Heart of Empire*, The Henry Roe Cloud Series on American Indians and Modernity (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016).

[24] Jace Weaver locates the origins of the 'Red Atlantic' in the meandering of Vikings circa 1000. Weaver, *Red Atlantic*, 16.

[25] Cohen, 'Was There an Amerindian Atlantic?', 400.

[26] Campling and Colas, *Capitalism and the Sea*, 19. For recent characterizations of the ocean as borderless space, see: David Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (New York: Oxford University Press USA, 2013), 8; Jason W. Smith, *To Master the Boundless Sea: The U.S. Navy, the Marine Environment, and the Cartography of Empire* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 3; Lipman, *Saltwater Frontier*, 8.

[27] For Western constructions of the ocean as eschewing borders see, see Philip E. Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 78 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001); David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 103–22. For non-Western conceptions of ocean space and marine tenure, see Masao Nakayama and Frederick L. Ramp, *Micronesian Navigation, Island Empires and Traditional Concepts of the Ownership of the Sea* (Saipan, Mariana Islands: Fifth Congress of Micronesia, 1974); John Cordell, ed., *A Sea of Small Boats*, Cultural Survival Report 26 (Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival, Inc., 1989); Epeli Hau'ofa, 'Our Sea of Islands', *The Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (1994): 148–61; S.E. Jackson, 'The Water Is Not Empty: Cross-Cultural Issues in Conceptualising Sea Space', *Australian Geographer* 26, no. 1 (May 1995): 87–96; Steinberg, *Social Construction of the Ocean*, 39–67; Chang, *World and All the Things Upon It*; Karin Amimoto Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); Rozwadowski, *Vast Expanses*, 38–70.

[28] Campling and Colas, *Capitalism and the Sea*; Reid, *Sea Is My Country*.

and sea-power as proxies for understanding the reach and limits of imperial control.[29] A robust subfield has scrutinized colonial fisheries law and enforcement as a crucial facet of Indigenous-settler history in the region.[30] Imperial powers have long sought to control the sea as a space of immensely profitable, three-dimensional resource extraction, but they also did so, as Liam Campling and Alejandro Colás argue, because of its function as the quintessential space of two-dimensional surface transport, capital circulation, and trade flows.[31] Sean Fraga frames US westward expansion as a "terraqueous process" that used railways and Pacific ports to accommodate the exchange of resources, people, and commodities across North America and the oceans that surround it.[32] "Fathoming Empire" charts new waters by examining the navigational interventions that ultimately rendered ports across the Pacific Northwest accessible to the mobility of settlers and capital. Although it had significant local consequences, the effects of these interventions spanned well beyond the immediate coastlines of this crucial gateway region, helping to consolidate global networks of immigration and investment that spanned oceans and continents alike.

Navigational technology and infrastructure have received scant attention in global histories of imperialism and are almost entirely overlooked in studies of settler colonialism. This omission is striking considering the sizeable literature on the cartography of empire. Previous studies devote substantial attention to the map as the prerequisite discursive representation of future colonies.[33]

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[29] Barry M. Gough, *Gunboat Frontier: British Maritime Authority and Northwest Coast Indians, 1846-90* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1984); Chris Arnett, *The Terror of the Coast: Land Alienation and Colonial War on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, 1849-1863* (Burnaby, BC: Talonbooks, 1999); Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 53–87.

[30] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*; Arnold, *Fishermen's Frontier*; Douglas C. Harris, *Fish, Law, and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Lissa K. Wadewitz, *The Nature of Borders: Salmon, Boundaries, and Bandits on the Salish Sea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012); Reid, 'From "Fishing Together" to "To Fish in Common With"'; Douglas C. Harris, *Landing Native Fisheries: Indian Reserves and Fishing Rights in British Columbia, 1849-1925* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); Dianne Newell, *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

[31] Campling and Colas, *Capitalism and the Sea*.

[32] Sean Fraga, '"An Outlet to the Western Sea": Puget Sound, Terraqueous Mobility, and Northern Pacific Railroad's Pursuit of Trade with Asia, 1864–1892', *Western Historical Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (Winter 2020): 458.

[33] Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (London: Faber, 1987); J B Harley, 'Deconstructing the Map', *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization* 26, no. 2 (1 June 1989): 1–20; David Turnbull, *Masons, Tricksters and Cartographers: Comparative Studies in the Sociology of Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge* (Oxford, YK: CRC Press LLC, 2000), 107–17; Clayton, *Islands of Truth*; Jeffers Lennox, *Homelands and Empires: Indigenous Spaces, Imperial*

Although indebted to this literature, I am mindful of its limitations. Colonial power is misunderstood when it is reduced to matters of representation. Reading maps primarily as discursive representations can have the unfortunate effect of focusing our attention on the gaze of White male elites to the exclusion of other essential actors, as others observe.[34] Similarly, privileging culture as the "primary locus of colonial power" can deflect scrutiny from local spaces and environments where colonialism was actually practiced.[35] As such, I am only secondarily interested in the ways charts and guides informed metropolitan conceptions of distant colonies. Instead, my focus on such publications flows from a desire to reveal the underappreciated ways in which navigational knowledge and ignorance shaped the practical mechanics of colonialism. So doing, I also draw attention to the myriad ways Indigenous knowledge and skill interacted with Europeans' thirst to navigate and control the coast. By returning attention to their function as navigational instruments, this project shows how charts worked in tandem with other navigational tools to reconfigure local colonial relationships "on the ground" – and, as it were, the water.

Historians have been less attentive to marine charts in their studies of imperial cartography.[36] Michael Reidy and Helen Rozwadowski observe that hydrographic offices in Britain and the United States were among the "imperial arsenal [...] that enabled users to define the natural world in a manner commensurate with their imperial and commercial objectives."[37] Studies by Daniel Clayton and Jason

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Fictions, and Competition for Territory in Northeastern North America, 1690-1763 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017); Bruce Braun, *Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture, and Power on Canada's West Coast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 30–65.

[34] Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 36; Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 18. Alice Te Punga Somerville pointedly satirizes this tendency in her response to the 250th anniversary of Captain James Cook's arrival in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Alice Te Punga Somerville, 'Two Hundred and Fifty Ways to Start an Essay about Captain Cook', *New Zealand Journal of History* 53, no. 1 (2019): 3–49.

[35] Cole Harris, 'How Did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94, no. 1 (2004): 165–66; Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 9.

[36] Smith, *To Master the Boundless Sea*, 9; Philip E. Steinberg, 'Sovereignty, Territory, and the Mapping of Mobility: A View from the Outside', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99, no. 3 (8 July 2009): 489.

[37] Michael S. Reidy and Helen M. Rozwadowski, 'The Spaces In Between: Science, Ocean, Empire', *Isis* 105, no. 2 (2014): 340, https://doi.org/10.1086/676571.

Smith show, respectively, how British and US naval hydrography laid discursive and practical foundations for overseas imperialism.[38] Shorter studies apply similar insights to Southeast Asia and the Australian coast.[39] Fewer scholars still have sought to understand lighthouses as imperial technologies. Eric Tagliacozzo shows how British and Dutch lights on the Straits of Malacca functioned as technologies of maritime control by increasing marine surveillance and channeling marine traffic along preferred corridors.[40] Robert Bickers describes lighthouses as overlooked aspects of "infrastructural globalization" that wove China more tightly into global networks.[41] Though limited in number, these studies offer a rich starting point from which to reinterpret histories of imperialism. This study develops and extends their insights in two respects. First, it takes the intuitive but novel step of placing a suite of navigational tools under the same analytic lens. Marine charts, sailing guides, and aids to navigation were sometimes developed separately, but it was by virtue of their combination that imperial regimes fostered dependable access to new marine environments. Relative to histories of imperialism, research on lighthouses and shipwrecks indicates that scholars studying charts in isolation from fixed navigational aids have overemphasized the pace at which European cartography relieved newcomers' dependence on Indigenous intermediaries and so exaggerated the pace of colonial control over claimed spaces.[42]

Second, where Clayton, Smith, and Tagliacozzo focus on overseas imperialism, I examine navigational infrastructure within the historical and theoretical context of settler colonialism. Navigational devices were among the arsenal of seemingly non-violent strategies by which settler states extended control over Indigenous lives, lands, and waters according to what John Lutz

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[38] Clayton, *Islands of Truth*; Smith, *To Master the Boundless Sea*.
[39] Jordan Goodman, 'Making Imperial Space: Settlement, Surveying and Trade in Northern Australia in the Nineteenth Century', in *Maritime Empires: British Imperial Maritime Trade in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. David Killingray, Margaret Lincoln, and Nigel Rigby (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press in association with the National Maritime Museum, 2004), 128–58; Eric Tagliacozzo, *In Asian Waters: Oceanic Worlds from Yemen to Yokohama* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022), 344–68.
[40] Tagliacozzo, *In Asian Waters*, 313–43.
[41] Robert Bickers, 'Infrastructural Globalization: Lighting the China Coast, 1860s–1930s', *Historical Journal* 56, no. 2 (2013): 431–58.
[42] See, for example, Harris, 'How Did Colonialism Dispossess?', 175; Clayton, *Islands of Truth*, xi–xii.

describes as "peaceable subordination."[43] Gunboats secured a toehold for settler colonialism on the coast, but charts, guides, and aids to navigation were the more consequential and permanent intervention. At the same time, marine disasters and persistent dependence on Indigenous intermediaries exposed ambiguities in settler claims to sovereignty over coastal regions.[44] By increasing marine safety and alleviating the need for Indigenous intermediaries, navigational infrastructure ultimately helped to establish what Laura Ishiguru describes as the "settler colonial everyday" in the Pacific Northwest. Ishiguru suggests that it was the "quotidian power to be bored in British Columbia" that bolstered British settlers' sense of personal belonging and collective security.[45] Yi-Fu Tuan suggests space becomes place when it feels thoroughly familiar to those who move through it.[46] "Fathoming Empire" shows how navigational infrastructure reinforced settler experiences of belonging on the coast by gradually transforming it from an unpredictable space of cultural encounter to a more mundane and predictable *place* of transport, industry, and leisure.

Nonetheless, by drawing attention to the ongoing, if less outwardly visible, role of Indigenous intermediaries, I hope to challenge theoretical constructions that assume settler colonies were always immune to the withdrawal of Indigenous labour. "Settler colonialism" has become an unavoidable concept since it was introduced by Patrick Wolfe, finding an increasingly wide circulation among academics, activists, and even mainstream media.[47] Building on the work of Indigenous activists and scholars, Wolfe coined the phrase to draw a necessary distinction between minority-ruled colonies that extract surplus value from the labour of an Indigenous majority (e.g., franchise or dependent colonies) and those premised on the permanent seizure of land and elimination of Indigenous societies

[43] John S. Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 8.
[44] Forthcoming – Coll Thrush, *Wrecked: Unsettling Histories from the Graveyard of the Pacific* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2025).
[45] Laura Ishiguro, *Nothing to Write Home about: British Family Correspondence and the Settler Colonial Everyday in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 95–96.
[46] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 73.
[47] Jennifer Schuessler, 'What Is "Settler Colonialism"?', *The New York Times*, 22 January 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/22/arts/what-is-settler-colonialism.html.

by the settler majority (i.e., settler colonies).[48] By drawing attention to the formative structure of settler colonies, Wolfe offered a necessary reminder that states like Australia, the United States, and Canada were as much sites of colonialism, past and present, as the former colonies in tropical Africa, South and Southeast Asia which had hitherto captured the attention of postcolonial theorists. At the same time, unmoored from historical grounding, "settler colonialism" risks conflating distinct historical periods (e.g. the fur trade and subsequent agricultural settlement) and flattening the hybridized social economic, and political worlds that often emerged in borderland regions where settler majorities predominate today.[49] I use the term here to draw attention to the systemic and ongoing dispossession that attended the resettlement and seizure of Indigenous territories, while emphasizing that such dispossession did not characterize European encounters with Indigenous peoples at every stage, and qualifying Wolfe's claim that settler colonies are always immune to the withdrawal of Indigenous labour.[50] John Lutz and other historians show how putatively "settler" economies depended on Indigenous labour into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[51] Turning seaward, I hope to add an additional layer of complexity by demonstrating how a range of colonial actors, including settlers, depended on Indigenous knowledge to live, work, and move across an unfamiliar coast.[52] Settlers ultimately marginalized Indigenous labour through immigration, technology, and restrictive economic policies, but Indigenous knowledge remained an enduring facet of colonial navigation as ships sought profit in new quarters or wrecked on unfamiliar shores.

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[48] Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999), 1–3; J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, 'False Dilemmas and Settler Colonial Studies: Response to Lorenzo Veracini: "Is Settler Colonial Studies Even Useful?"', *Postcolonial Studies* 24, no. 2 (3 April 2021): 292.

[49] For a discussion of these critiques, and an effort to offer a more historical framework for settler colonialism and the logic of elimination, see Allan Greer, 'Settler Colonialism and Beyond', *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 30, no. 1 (2019): 61–86.

[50] Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism*, 2.

[51] Lutz, *Makúk*; Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1848-1930*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996); Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2017), 47–49, 53–55; Paige Sylvia Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 74–97.

[52] For another take on settler colonialism at sea, see Reid, 'From "Fishing Together" to "To Fish in Common With"'.

So doing, my study promises to provide an important intervention in regional debates between scholars who emphasize disruption between the fur trade and settlement eras, and those who find continuity across these periods.[53] Cole Harris notes that steam-engines, railroads, and other "distance-diminishing technologies" lessened settlers' dependence on the Indigenous intermediaries in the mid to late nineteenth century.[54] Such assessments might better reflect the perspective of White tourists than the more complicated realities of industrial transportation. Here my interpretive focus takes a cue from recent work on the production of state space in South Carolina. According to Ryan Quintana, enslaved men and women provided the "knowledge and material power necessary for the creation of the state and the production of its territory." Enslaved labourers constructed roads and bridges, dug canals, and erected causeways, and thereby created the infrastructure that delineated and bound the state. The dire circumstance of their lives demonstrates that cooperation is not a precondition for the co-production of space by distinct cultural groups. Quintana's work might therefore alert historians of the Pacific West to the possibility that settlers continued to rely on Indigenous intermediaries in eras when mutually beneficial exchange no longer characterized their relationship.[55]

Imperial regimes depended on Indigenous knowledge to claim and control marine environments in far flung colonies. Geographer Bernard Nietschmann reminds us that "Sea territories are not just bounded sea space, but areas named, known, used, claimed and sometimes defended. A social group's familiarity with an area creates a territory."[56] The converse is also true: a social group's

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[53] For the former, see Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, 1990 ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1977); Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 161–93; Bruce Braun, 'Colonialism's Afterlife: Vision and Visuality on the Northwest Coast', *Cultural Geographies* 9, no. 2 (April 2002): 202–47. For the latter, see Lutz, *Makúk*; Knight, *Indians at Work*. Douglas Harris sides with Knight and Lutz, with qualifications. Daniel Clayton straddles these perspectives by showing how the geographies of the exploration and fur trade eras anticipated more direct expressions of imperialism that followed in their wake. Harris, *Fish, Law, and Colonialism*, 53–55; Clayton, *Islands of Truth*, 234.

[54] Harris, *Resettlement of British Columbia*, 167, 182. See also Braun, 'Colonialism's Afterlife', 220.

[55] Ryan A. Quintana, *Making a Slave State: Political Development in Early South Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 2–4. This suggestion is bolstered by recent work on the surveying and demarcation of the Canada-US border: Benjamin Hoy, *A Line of Blood and Dirt: Creating the Canada-United States Border across Indigenous Lands* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).

[56] Bernard Nietschmann, 'Traditional Sea Territories, Resources and Rights in Torres Strait', in *A Sea of Small Boats*, ed. John Cordell (Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival, Inc., 1989), 60.

ignorance of a given area limits its ability to control it. James Scott offers a simple formula for determining whether a state has the ability to project power on a foreign landscape: "ask if an outsider would have needed a local guide (a native tracker) in order to find her way successfully."[57] My project follows the circuitous process by which imperial regimes appropriated, and subsequently displaced, Indigenous knowledge at various stages of their effort to reconfigure marine environments through a variety of navigational technologies. By attending to the myriad ways Indigenous and state actors combined to translate local knowledge into colonial power, my research provides new insights into the ways colonial policy transformed, and was transformed by, local realities. On one level, this project can be regarded as tracing the deceptively mundane process by which imperial and settler regimes assumed the knowledge they required to navigate and govern marine environments independent of Indigenous intermediaries. But this process was far more convoluted, contingent, and gradual than previous scholars have implied. Even today, Indigenous communities often constitute a first line of response to marine disasters in their territories.[58] The colonial seizure of Indigenous seascapes remains unfinished, incomplete, and permeable.

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Numerous factors conspired to frustrate outside attempts to fathom the coast. Certainly, doing so was easier said than done. In 1876, Canada's Governor General characterized it as an "interminable labyrinth of water lanes and reaches that wove endlessly in and out of a network of islands, promontories, and peninsulas for thousands of miles."[59] Countless islands and inlets line the coast, forming a veritable and unbroken maze that stretches from Puget Sound to Alaska. We can forgive the

[57] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 54. For another perspective on the way geographic ignorance shaped empire, see Paul W. Mapp, *The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713-1763* (Chapel Hill, NC: Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture and the University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
[58] See, for example, Adrienne Mason, 'The First First Responders', *Hakai Magazine*, 24 December 2024, https://hakaimagazine.com/features/the-first-first-responders/; 'Indian Villagers Come to Rescue', *Spokesman-Review*, 23 March 2006, https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2006/mar/23/indian-villagers-come-to-rescue/.
[59] Quoted in Thomas Crosby, *Up and down the North Pacific Coast by Canoe and Mission Ship* (Toronto: Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, Young People's Foreward Movement Department, 1914), 4–5.

mining engineer Francis Poole's parochialism in complaining, following his 1863 voyage to Haida Gwaii, that such a quantity of islands in so small an area could not possibly exist anywhere else in the world.[60] The innumerable islands above water mirror the infinity of reefs, rocks, and ledges hidden beneath the surface, as is reflected in the irregularity of sounding in many parts of the coast. A sounding line with a depth of eight fathoms (15 m) at the bow might report as many as sixty (110 m) at the stern.[61] Sounding the east coast of Vancouver Island in 1862, a leadsman "moving as quickly as possible" reported soundings of thirteen, eight, four, and one half fathoms, all within the length of a single ship.[62] The relentless depths posed their own challenges. Returning from Haida Gwaii in 1852, Captain Augustus Kuper reported waters that were relatively free from hazards, but so deep as to make render it "difficulty and dangerous for sailing vessels of any size [...] there being no anchorage except in a very few places, too close to the Rocks."[63] Such factors made the work of sounding and charting the coast an iterative and interminable task.

The dramatic topography – innumerable islands, colossal mountains rising straight from the seafloor, and narrow inlets – produce unpredictable winds, tides, and currents that have confounded generations of colonial mariners who described them as "unsteady and partial," "uncertain," even "wild and lawless."[64] Offshore banks refract waves, producing sloppy conditions in some areas while magnifying the intensity of the swell in others.[65] Winds and current systems vary according to season

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[60] Francis Poole, *Queen Charlotte Islands: A Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in the North Pacific*, ed. John W. Lyndon (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1872), 174.
[61] A fathom is equivalent to six feet, or 1.8 metres. Charles Edward Barrett-Lennard, *Travels in British Columbia: With the Narrative of a Yacht Voyage Round Vancouver's Island* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862), 16, http://archive.org/details/cihm_27936.
[62] Edmund Hope Verney, *Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-65*, ed. Allan Pritchard (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), 100. Manby observed a similar phenomena hours before running over the tidal rapid: shoal water one moment, and depths surpassing 100 fathoms just ten minutes later. Manby, 10 Apr 1793, "Voyage of HMS *Discovery* and *Chatham*."
[63] Augustus Kuper to Fairfax Moresby, 23 Jul 1852, enclosed in George Alexander Hamilton to Herman Merivale, 27 Sep 1852, CO 305:3, no. 8866, 269, *The Colonial Despatches of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1846-1871*, Edition 2.4, ed. James Hendrickson and the Colonial Despatches project (Victoria: University of Victoria) (hereafter cited as *Colonial Despatches*): https://bcgenesis.uvic.ca/V525AD07.html.
[64] Kuper to Fairfax Moresby, 23 Jul 1852, *Colonial Despatches*; Joseph Despard Pemberton, *Facts and Figures Relating to Vancouver Island and British Columbia: Showing What to Expect and How to Get There* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), 12; Barrett-Lennard, *Travels in British Columbia*, 16.
[65] R.E. Thomson, *Oceanography of the British Columbia Coast* (Ottawa: Department of Fisheries and Oceans, 1981), 120.

in the northeastern Pacific. The southeast-flowing California Current courses along the continental shelf during summer, but a shift in prevailing winds increases the relative force of the northwest-flowing Davidson Current come winter. The annual rhythm of the Fraser River's discharge, meanwhile, contributes to a distinct northwest "counter-current" that hugs the coast of Vancouver Island from spring to fall. The complexity of these seasonal variations is compounded by tidal streams that alter surface speed in mere hours, depending on location.[66] Nor is the behaviour of wind, tide, and current any more dependable along the "protected" waters of the Salish Sea and Inside Passage. Cold air plummets from glacial mountains into narrow inlets, producing unique winds known as squamishes that can reach up to 130 kilometres an hour.[67] Poole wrote sympathetically of the unsuspecting navigator who, pursuing his course, "is surprised by the wind suddenly describing a circle round of these islets, then bowling down a funnel-like channel straight at him, and, after having literally turned a corner, sweeping madly up another gullet or ravine, from which it again descends upon him with quadruple force."[68] Surveyors reported currents that roared "like a gale through a forest."[69] Others observed "violent" shifts in tides, where what had been "a glassy smoothness" was soon "boiling up in the middle and foaming most dangerous whirlpools and eddies."[70] Even careful navigators could be caught off guard in such conditions.

The complex topography also renders weather patterns extremely variable, even within a confined area. Round a point, enter a cove, and the weather may be drastically different.[71] Gale force

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[66] R.E. Thomson, 61–63, 194–95, 230–34; Diane Masson and Patrick F. Cummins, 'Numerical Simulations of a Buoyancy-Driven Coastal Countercurrent off Vancouver Island', *Journal of Physical Oceanography* 29, no. 3 (1 March 1999): 418–20; T.A. Okey and A. Dallimore, 'Overview of the Climate and Oceanography of the West Coast of Vancouver Island, Canada', in *Social-Ecological Assessment of the Marine and Coastal Areas of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, ed. T.A. Okey and L.A. Loucks (Port Alberni, BC: The Tsawalk Partnership, West Coast Aquatic, 2011), 2. For a historical perspective on these currents, see R. C. Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island: An Account of Their Forests, Rivers, Coasts, Gold Fields, and Resources for Colonisation* (London: J. Murray, 1862), 19–22.
[67] Thomson, *Oceanography of the British Columbia Coast*, 144.
[68] Poole, *Queen Charlotte Islands*, 174–75.
[69] United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey Showing the Progress of the Survey during the Year 1855' (Washington, DC: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1856), 176–77.
[70] James Prevost to Fairfax Moresby (transcript), 7 Jun 1853, Correspondence relating to the Royal Navy, GR-1309 (hereafter cited as GR-1309), box 1, file 2, British Columbia Archives (BCA), Victoria, BC; Pemberton, *Facts and Figures*, 14.
[71] Jeff Renner, *Northwest Marine Weather: From the Columbia River to Cape Scott* (Seattle: The Mountaineers, 1993), 113.

winds prevail throughout much of winter, generating dangerously steep waves when faced with opposing currents.[72] From October to March, the tropical air current known as the North Pacific Jet Stream collides with cool air and seawater, and the slopes of coastal mountain ranges that stretch from northern California to Southern Alaska. These dramatic storms give way to interminable drizzle and impenetrable fog in the "dry" season.[73] No fewer than five types of fog are known on the coast, and nineteenth-century accounts are rife with mariners' complaints about the "density and duration" of fogs that made it impossible to determine one's position, discern the shore, or the bow of one's ship.[74] Such precipitation made the coast "unfavorable" to discovery, as British fur trader John Meares complained in 1788, and contributed to early mariners' difficulty locating and entering safe harbours when fleeing violent weather. The results could be fatal. Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) pilots made it a practice never to pass an anchorage on the approach of fog, unless there was another known one within certain reach.[75] A similar effect was sometimes produced when Indigenous peoples ignited fires to manage forests, cultivate camas bulbs (a critical staple food), and create browsing grounds for deer and other prey.[76] In 1868, an US surveyor reported smoke so thick with ash that a vessel 100 yards

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[72] Renner, 144.

[73] Corey Lane Rowlett Griffis, 'Rainfall and the Resettlement of the Pacific Northwest' (Bozeman, MT, Montana State University, 2023), 43–44.

[74] Renner, *Northwest Marine Weather*, 71–76. For nineteenth-century accounts, see Renner, 71–76; James Gibson, ed., *'Opposition on the Coast': The Hudson's Bay Company, American Coasters, the Russian-American Company, and Native Traders on the Northwest Coast, 1825–1846* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 2019), 118; John Dunn, *History of the Oregon Territory, and the British North-American Fur Trade; with an Account of the Habits and Customs of the Principal Native Tribes on the Northern Continent* (London: Edwards and Hughes, 1846), 275–76; Berthold Seemann, *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Herald During the Years 1845-51, Under the Command of Captain Henry Kellett*, vol. 1 (London: Reeve and Company, 1853), 112; Edmond S. Meany, 'Diary of Wilkes in the Northwest (Continued)', *Washington Historical Quarterly*, III, July 1926, 225; Alexander G. Findlay, *A Directory for the Navigation of the Pacific Ocean; with Description of Its Coasts, Islands, Etc., from the Strait of Magalhaens to the Arctic Sea, and Those of Asia and Australia*, vol. 1 (London: R.H. Laurie, 1851), 393, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006553927; James Lawson, 'Autobiography of James S. Lawson', National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) History, 16 September 2008, https://web.archive.org/web/20080916213823/http:/www.history.noaa.gov/stories_tales/jlawson.html; George H. Richards, *The Private Journal of Captain G.H. Richards: The Vancouver Island Survey (1860-1862)*, ed. Linda Dorricott and Deidre Cullon (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 2012), 188–89. Corey Griffis provides an insightful analysis of the ways precipitation shaped colonial mariners' impressions, experience, and knowledge of the coast in the three centuries preceding 1800. Griffis, 'Rainfall and the Resettlement of the Pacific Northwest', 58–120.

[75] Journal of William H. Hills on HMS *Portland* and HMS *Virago*, 7 May 1853, MLMSS 1436 (hereafter cited as Hills journal), Mitchell Library, Sydney, Australia: https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/nV2qWJzn.

[76] United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey Showing the Progress of the Survey during the Year 1858' (Washington, DC: William A. Harris, 1859), 102; Lawson, 'Autobiography'; Pemberton, *Facts and Figures*, 11; Brenda Raye Beckwith, '"The Queen Root of This Clime": Ethnoecological Investigations of Blue Camas

away could not be seen and lamps had to be lit.[77] His colleague confessed that fogs and fires of this sort rendered the chart "almost useless."[78] Even the "cartographic eye" had its limits.[79]

The region's colossal biota were a hazard all their own. Following his circumnavigation of Vancouver Island in 1860, one traveller warned of enormous logs and extraordinary beds of kelp that could bring ships to a sudden standstill: "I have seen a vessel of forty or fifty tons, with a fair breeze, brought up dead, as if at anchor, by coming suddenly on a bed of kelp, and woe betide the hapless wight whose fate it may be to get entangled [...] he is caught, like a fly, in the meshes."[80] The danger was so great that Admiralty surveyors made it a practice to inscribe kelp forests on their charts (to the gratification of twenty-first century historical ecologists).[81] Ubiquitous forests of hemlock, spruce, fir, and cedar also disoriented seafarers. In 1887, one government agent ominously described the shores of Vancouver Island as "densely covered with woods down to the very water's edge, making the appearance of the land very much alike in all directions and rendering it extremely difficult for the Mariner to distinguish one headland from another." The consequence for vessels seeking shelter was sometimes disastrous, "and alas: in too many cases – nobody left to tell the tale."[82] It didn't take much under such circumstances – a damaged vessel, dense fog, or driving wind – to make the difference between reaching harbour and running aground. These myriad factors combined to give substance to the bleak moniker that settlers attached to the coast: "the Graveyard of the Pacific."

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(Camassia Leichtlinii (Baker) Wats., C. Quamash (Pursh) Greene; Liliaceae) and Its Landscapes on Southern Vancouver Island, British Columbia' (PhD dissertation, Victoria, University of Victoria, 2004), 54–56.

[77] James Lawson to Benjamin Peirce, 5 Oct 1868, Records of the Coast and Geodetic Survey (hereafter cited as RG 23), Superintendent's files, box 360, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (NARA-CP).

[78] George Davidson, *Pacific Coast, Coast Pilot of California, Oregon, and Washington*, 4th ed. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1889), 624, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100256671.

[79] Ryan, *Cartographic Eye*.

[80] Barrett-Lennard, *Travels in British Columbia*, 17.

[81] Maycira Costa et al., 'Historical Distribution of Kelp Forests on the Coast of British Columbia: 1858–1956', *Applied Geography* 120 (1 July 2020), https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0143622819312160.

[82] John Devereux to George Foster, 24 Mar 1887, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol. 1532, file 7904-V1, Department of Transport fonds (hereafter cited as RG 12), Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, ON.

Such, in any case, were the challenges faced by colonial mariners. Indigenous navigators faced an environment that was no less dangerous, but had learned to identify, avoid, and mitigate many of these risks through millennia of experience, observation, and innovation.[83] Such knowledge, passed through generations, and captured in countless historic logbooks, journals, and letters, is a pivotal part of this history, and will be described further in following chapters. A sketch is provided here, however, to highlight the disparity in marine knowledge that characterized and shaped Indigenous peoples' encounters with ships and seafarers for more than a century after Captain Vancouver's foray on the coast. Outside observers were quick to observe Indigenous seafarers' skill engineering and handling the canoes in which they traversed the coast and approached unfamiliar vessels. Canoes were adeptly engineered for particular conditions and usages and could be augmented with sealskin floats for additional buoyancy and propelled by sails.[84] Canoes were carefully worked over with flat stones, giving them "a smooth and highly polished finish [...] to slip through the water with greater ease." These hydrodynamic craft were essential for hunters to silently approach whales and fur seals without disrupting the surface of the water.[85] While speeds varied considerably according to size and condition, Ruth Kirk estimates that Northwest Coast canoes averaged six or seven knots, fast for any

[83] For an introduction to Indigenous knowledge, its relationship to other knowledge systems, and its limitations as a conceptual frame, see David M. Gordon and Shepard Krech III, 'Introduction: Indigenous Knowledge and the Environment', in *Indigenous Knowledge and the Environment in Africa and North America*, ed. David M. Gordon and Shepard Krech III (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012), 1–24, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uvic/detail.action?docID=1743716; Fikret Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, 3rd ed (New York: Routledge, 2012); R. F. Ellen and Holly Harris, 'Introduction', in *Indigenous Environmental Knowledge and Its Transformations: Critical Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. R. F. Ellen, Peter Parkes, and Alan Bicker (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 2000), 1–33; George J. Sefa Dei, Budd L. Hall, and Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg, 'Introduction', in *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts: Multiple Readings of Our World*, ed. Budd L. Hall, Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg, and George J. Sefa Dei (Toronto: OISE/UT, published in association with University of Toronto Press, 2000), 3–17; Arun Agrawal, 'Dismantling the Divide Between Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge', *Development and Change* 26, no. 3 (1995): 413–39; Gordon and Krech III, 'Introduction'.

[84] Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* (London: Smith, Elder and co, 1868), 82–83; Stella Wenstob, 'Canoes and Colony: The Dugout Canoe as a Site of Intercultural Engagement in the Colonial Context of British Columbia (1849-1871)' (MA Thesis, Victoria, University of Victoria, 2015), 68–73.

[85] Norman Kenny Luxton, *Tilikum: Luxton's Pacific Crossing, Being the Journal of Norman Kenny Luxton, Mate of the Tilikum, May 20, 1901, Victoria, B.C. to October 18, 1901, Suva, Fiji.*, ed. Eleanor Georgina Luxton (Sidney, BC: Gray's Publishing, 1971), 41; United States. Indian Claims Commission, 'Makah Indian Tribe, a Corporation, Plaintiff, v. United States of America, Defendant', in *Indian Claims Commission Decisions*, vol. 7 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1959), 494, https://cdm17279.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17279coll10/id/528/rec/18; Wenstob, 'Canoes and Colony: The Dugout Canoe as a Site of Intercultural Engagement in the Colonial Context of British Columbia (1849-1871)', 72.

vessel prior to the use of engines; by contrast, ships mastered by captains Cook and Vancouver probably averaged closer to four or five knots.[86] European mariners admired these canoes and recognized the skill of their builders. In the late nineteenth century, Commander (later Admiral) James Prevost of the Royal Navy remarked that Haida canoes were as "perfect in outline" as the rapid steamers then crossing the Atlantic.[87] Others noted that canoes had a particular advantage on the region's intricate coastlines, able to "go where schooners cannot" and thus better equipped to seek shelter in countless coves and bays given the approach of adverse weather or potential aggressors.[88]

Indigenous boatbuilding acumen was matched by their handling skills. In an 1874 report, former HBC officer George Blenkinsop remarked that Nuu-chah-nulth canoe-handling was "truly wonderful," their defiance of danger rivalling that of "any boatmen in the world."[89] Reading and responding to wave motions was critical. Specific paddle strokes were employed to brace canoes amidst turbulent breakers, and handlers carefully timed landings to wait for an ideal set of waves to carry them to shore. Crossing a stormy Juan de Fuca Strait in 1847, the artist Paul Kane observed S'Klallam pullers deftly coordinating strokes to guide spray harmlessly over their heads to the other side of the canoe.[90] Similarly, Gilbert Sproat observed how Nuu-chah-nulth canoers seemed "to accommodate themselves readily to every motion of their conveyance, and if an angry breaker threatens to roll over the canoe, they weaken its effect quickly by a horizontal cut with their paddles through the upper part of the breaker when it is within a foot of the gunwale."[91] Landing required a

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[86] Ruth Kirk, *Wisdom of the Elders: Native Traditions on the Northwest Coast, the Nuu-Chah-Nulth, Southern Kwakiutl and Nuxalk* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1986), 117, http://archive.org/details/wisdomofeldersna0000kirk.

[87] W.H. Collison, *In the Wake of the War Canoe* (Toronto: Musson Book Company, 1916), 142. Similarly, Indigenous seafarers saw in European vessels an echo of their own canoes. In 1874, Makah Chief Peter told a missionary about an expert canoe builder "a long, long time before – perhaps a hundred years" who traveled to educate and train the "Boston men [Americans] away over on some other waters," showing them how to construct the great ships with which they eventually reached the Pacific. Far from being over-awed, Chief Peter saw European ships as derivative of his own canoe building traditions. Greene, "A Sketch of my Life," pp. 77-78.

[88] Poole, *Queen Charlotte Islands*, 289–90.

[89] George Blenkinsop, "Reports on the West Coast of Vancouver Island and of Barclay Sound," 23 Sep 1874, p. 19, Black Series, vol. 3614, file 4105, RG 10, LAC.

[90] Paul Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist Among the Indians of North America: From Canada to Vancouver's Island and Oregon Through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territory and Back Again* (Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859), 235.

[91] Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 83–84.

similar technical proficiency and capacity to read waves. In 1907, Makahs explained to a young settler that ocean waves came in sets, increasing in size from the first and smallest wave to the ninth and largest. These could be harnessed to ensure a safe and effective landing: "when the big one came along, everybody dug their paddles and oars with power, and as this giant wave passed under us we followed it in and by the time the small one took us we were nearly on the beach."[92] These sets were site specific – Sproat noted as many as twenty minutes could pass while waiting for the appropriate moment to "dash for the shore." – varying in number according to the particularities of beach, tide, and season, thus demanding an intricate knowledge of the ocean on the part of canoe captains.[93] Where conditions were unfavourable, Indigenous communities adapted the seascape to facilitate safe launches and landings by building wooden skids or clearing channels through rocky beaches.[94] The fact that colonial mariners were ignorant of local oceanography and infrastructure greatly increased the risks of navigating the coast unassisted, particularly in canoes and other small craft.

Indigenous seafarers were aided by their navigational ability. Nearer the coast, fishers could identify their position – and that of the fishing banks beneath them – by lining up familiar landmarks like mountains, islands, and points. Hopaqso:ʔis (Seven Mile Bank), for example, is a valuable salmon bank that Huu-ay-aht fishers found by aligning an island with a gap in the mountains of Vancouver Island, on the one side, and a second island with a prominent headland, Chi·mataqsaɬ (Cape Beale), on the other.[95] Pacheedaht Chief Queesto (Charles Jones), born 1876, reported that experienced fishers like his father could locate submerged banks even in foggy weather by tracking the time as they travelled and by taking soundings to inspect the depth and character (e.g. gravel or sand) of the ocean floor beneath them.[96] Knowledge of these banks were reinforced by stories of historic floods. In the

[92] Vinton Newbert, "My story," 1950, pp. 25-26, Vinton Newbert collection, box 3, file 11, WSHS.
[93] Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 83.
[94] Arima and Hoover, *Whaling People*, 97.
[95] Denis St. Claire, 'Barkley Sound Tribal Territories', in *Between Ports Alberni and Renfrew: Notes on West Coast Peoples*, ed. E. Y. Arima et al. (Hull, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1991), 174, 177.
[96] Charles Jones, *Queesto, Pacheenaht Chief by Birthright* (Nanaimo, BC: Theytus Books, 1981), 30.

1960s, Huu-ay-aht Chief Louis Nookmiis recounted how mountainous offshore halibut banks were revealed to his forebears when the tide withdrew prior to a tsunami:

> The tide was receding in the morning all day came evening still tide receding. Next day came tide still receding the beach was now dry. There was nothing of what we see now all that could be seen then was sand and gravel no water could be seen. All that could be then seen was mountains where the sea had been. The halibut banks could then be seen where the halibut had their homes they lived there.[97]

The account appears to exaggerate the actual ebb of historic tsunamis for instructive purposes, indicating the location of particular banks and the nature of the ocean bottom (sand and gravel) that characterized them – both details that Indigenous navigators might require when departing on fishing trips.[98] Farther from shore, mariners used astronomical features, winds, and currents to calculate their position. Sealing and whaling expeditions sometimes ventured eighty kilometres off the coast in open canoes (and later schooners).[99] Makah sealers observed changes in colour between shallow inshore waters and deeper "blue sea" offshore to locate areas where migrating seals slept.[100] In the 1920s, an anthropologist noted that Makah whaling expeditions "often go clear out to sea, out of sight of land," steering by the North Star. In fog, these navigators could calculate their position by the general heave of the Pacific (typically west and east) and wind directions respectively associated with stormy and clear weather.[101] These capabilities – and the expectation that others shared them – sometimes led

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[97] E. Y. Arima et al., eds., *Family Origin Histories: The Whaling Indians: West Coast Legends and Stories, Part 11 of the Sapir-Thomas Nootka Texts*, Ethnology Paper 145 (Gatineau, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2009), 305–6.

[98] Chief Nookmiis' account, probably refers to the megathrust earthquake that struck the coast on January 26, 1700, producing a two to three metre wave that inundated homes and rice paddies on the west coast of Japan some ten hours later. The event probably caused a depression of about five metres on the coast of Vancouver Island, meaning the ocean would have receded to the five metre depth line before returning again in a monstrous wave as tall as ten metres above normal surface levels. Michael Foreman, email message to author, 16 Sep 2022; Kenji Satake et al., 'Time and Size of a Giant Earthquake in Cascadia Inferred from Japanese Tsunami Records of January 1700', *Nature* 379, no. 6562 (1996): 247–48, https://doi.org/10.1038/379246a0; Ruth S. Ludwin et al., 'Dating the 1700 Cascadia Earthquake: Great Coastal Earthquakes in Native Stories', *Seismological Research Letters* 76, no. 2 (1 March 2005): 142–43.

[99] Olympic Peninsula Intertribal Cultural Advisory Committee, *Native Peoples of the Olympic Peninsula: Who We Are*, ed. Jacilee Wray, 3rd ed. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 132; Earl Maquinna George, *Living on the Edge: Nuu-Chah-Nulth History from an Ahousaht Chief's Perspective* (Winlaw, BC: Sono Nis Press, 2003), 89; Jones, *Queesto*, 35; Kirk, *Wisdom of the Elders*, 117.

[100] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 142.

[101] Thomas Talbot Waterman, 'The Whaling Equipment of the Makah Indians', in *University of Washington Publications in Anthropology, 1920-1927*, vol. 1 (Seattle: University of Washington, 1927), 47, https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/lctext/id/7097/rec/17.

mariners to jeer disoriented counterparts. Ed Ricketts, marine biologist (and an inspiration for John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*), recorded such an incident taking place in 1945 aboard a Canadian Pacific Railway steamer outside Clo-oose, Vancouver Island, when an Indigenous canoer asked the captain to point him back to land. "The other Indians just hooted," according to Ricketts. "They shouted him down. They said, 'You know from which direction the wind is coming, you know how the waves are hitting, don't be asking the skipper for information self-evident to any boatman."[102] It does not take much to imagine similar exchanges taking place aboard European barques and brigs a century prior.

Such knowledge enabled Indigenous navigators to avoid hazards that rendered the coast so treacherous to the uninitiated. Accustomed to the tides that so baffled Manby, Indigenous mariners timed their journeys to avoid dangerous whirlpools and to harness the tidal ebb and flood as required for efficient travel.[103] They made similar use of the kelp beds that stranded colonial ships, tying canoes to familiar patches to wait out winter storms or time an attack.[104] Other hazards were coded into placenames. Chi·mataqsał was named for a canoe-swallowing monster that occupied the area. Nearby Chi:t-sa:wpshi:ł refers to a strong current that sucked canoes and other floating objects into the rocks. Huu-ay-aht navigators who knew these names were careful to avoid the perils they described.[105] Knowledge of weather patterns and their portends was particular asset on the exposed outer coast. Makahs rounding Cape Flattery listened for strange noises emanating from the rocky caverns at the foot of the cliffs or to the "shrill screams" of eagles and ospreys that warned of impending storms.[106] Makah Elder Harry McCarty told Ruth Kirk you could hear the southeast wind from "little swells going on the beach," and see whether wind was coming on from the west or east depending on which side of the mountains the clouds formed. Another Makah, Charles Peterson, reported that the quality

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[102] Quoted in Kirk, *Wisdom of the Elders*, 118.
[103] Greene, "A Sketch of my Life," pp. 71-72; Henry Trevan journal, 7 May 1853, MG24-F40, Henry Trevan fonds, LAC (hereafter cited as Trevan journal); Kirk, 117–18.
[104] James G. McCurdy, *Indian Days at Neah Bay, from an Unfinished Manuscript*, ed. Newell, Gordon (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1961), 103, http://archive.org/details/indiandaysatneah0000mccu; Lawson, 'Autobiography'.
[105] St. Claire, 'Barkley Sound Tribal Territories', 103–4.
[106] James G. Swan, 'Cape Flattery, Washington Territory', *Washington Standard*, 20 June 1863, 1.

of the stars and rising sun "pretty much tell what the weather's gonna be like."[107] Navigators carefully attended to such details before and during ocean voyages. In 1877, a missionary observed Haida pilot Edenshaw making a sudden change in itinerary after observing "a small cloud moving rapidly from the northeast," an early sign of the winds that soon lashed the Hecate Strait.[108] Such knowledge, born from millennia of patient observation, gave Indigenous navigators a crucial edge over the outsiders who began to arrive in the late eighteenth century.

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Thomas Manby's misadventure in the tidal river along Nootka Island took place as the maritime fur trade sparked renewed imperial interest in the northeastern Pacific. Nootka Sound, on the west coast of what became known as Vancouver Island, emerged as a fixture of European maps and imaginations after the arrivals of captains Juan José Pérez Hernández in 1774 and James Cook in 1778. Cook's published journals alerted the world to the vast profits to be made on this distant coast. Sea otters bear the densest furs on the planet – as many as a million hairs per square inch – and their pelts fetched incredible prices in Guangzhou (Canton) and other Asian markets. It was on their backs, almost literally, that the first modern trans-Pacific trade routes emerged.[109] British and US traders were soon plying the coast, threatening existing Russian and Spanish claims to the region. Spain responded in 1789 by establishing a fort at Nootka Sound and seizing British ships in what it considered to the northern extension of Nueva España. Its actions infuriated British politicians and merchants who took for granted their right to free navigation and nearly sparked global war before calmer heads prevailed. Captain Vancouver was despatched to the coast in 1791 (arriving the following

[107] Kirk, *Wisdom of the Elders*, 118. In the nineteenth century, James Swan described Makahs observing the stars prior to traveling to offshore fishing grounds: "if the stars twinkle brightly they expect a strong wind, but if there is but a slight scintillation they are certain of a light wind or calm." James G. Swan, *The Indians of Cape Flattery at the Entrance to the Strait of Fuca, Washington Territory*, Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge 220 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1870), 92, https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/19016.
[108] Collison, *In the Wake of the War Canoe*, 144–45.
[109] John Darwin, *Unlocking the World: Port Cities and Globalization in the Age of Steam, 1830-1930* (Penguin UK, 2020), 135. See also James Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods: The Maritime Fur Trade of the Northwest Coast, 1785-1841* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992); Igler, *Great Ocean*.

year) to negotiate the terms of a convention with Spain and, while there, to determine, for once and for all, the existence or not of the fabled Northwest Passage. The result was an exhaustive, three-year hydrographic survey of nearly every navigable landward inlet from the Juan de Fuca Strait to southern Alaska, and the most accurate and detailed map of the northeastern Pacific produced to that date. The result, Daniel Clayton argues, was a facsimile that allowed European diplomats to appropriate the coast into an abstract imperial discourse that operated at immense distance from its object, safely removed from Indigenous villages, voices, and objections.[110]

Vancouver's accomplishments were necessarily limited by his focus on discovering or disproving the existence of a northern seaway to Europe. His purpose was to determine the general outline of the mainland coast, a considerable undertaking that left little time for exploring small harbours, rivers, or the "infinity of islands" that Manby had observed along the coast. The charts Vancouver produced are revealing in this respect (Map 1). The crisp contours of the mainland coast stand in stark contrast to the fuzzy, unfinished outlines of Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii. The traders who continued to arrive found little to assist them here. Instead, they pried each other for details when encountering one another at common anchorages or the emerging port cities that linked transoceanic trade routes to inland markets. A handful of published narratives offered imperfect ethnographic and geographic observations, but these remained limited in scope and number even as the trade waned in the first decades of the nineteenth century. What knowledge could not be discerned from existing charts, word of mouth, or traders' tales – a great deal – had to be gained from personal experience and what Clayton describes as "local, intensely corporeal, geographies of interaction" with Indigenous seafarers infinitely more familiar with the coast.[111] European captains and crews interacted with coastal people using signs, gesture, and a small repertoire of shared vocabulary to communicate across an immense linguistic and cultural gulf. Scholars debate the origin of the

[110] Clayton, *Islands of Truth*, 192.
[111] Clayton, xi–xii, 77–80.

Map 1. Details from Captain Vancouver's charts, published 1798

Captain Vancouver's charts betray his single-minded efforts to prove the existence or not of the fabled Northwest Passage to Europe. Mainland inlets, where the passage could possibly be found, are crisp and detailed compared with the fuzzy contours of "Queen Charlotte's Island" (Haida Gwaii) and what was still amicably referred to as "Quadra and Vancouver's Island." George Vancouver, Charts shewing part of the Coast of N.W. America [details] (London: G.G. & J Robinson, 1798), David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries (hereafter cited as David Rumsey Map Collection).

Chinook jargon (or Chinuk Wawa) that served as a lingua franca between language groups on the coast, but it took time for colonial traders to adopt this medium in their exchanges with their Indigenous trading partners.[112] Few maritime traders visited the region more than twice, but those who did gradually acquired a working acquaintance with its linguistic customs and marine geography. Experience, an HBC official reported in 1828, "has made the masters of these vessels generally good pilots for the coast and given them a knowledge of a many good ports." Indigenous pilots played a dual role in this process, as Joshua Reid observes, extending the sphere of imperial trade while exhibiting authority over vessels by literally bringing them into their sovereign waters. Colonial traders bypassed such exchanges at their peril; many vessels were wrecked or damaged and near escapes were a common occurrence.[113]

One might think that the need for Indigenous assistance waned as traders acquired Vancouver's charts and became familiar with the coast. In fact, the opposite was true. Fierce competition drove captains to arrive on the coast during the stormy winter season, when prevailing currents shifted direction and identifying safe anchorages was particularly critical. Familiarity with one port led to overharvesting of sea otters and the consequent need to explore new regions. Eventually, depleted otter populations forced traders to locate river mouths where they could secure beaver, river otter, and other inland furs. Beginning with the HBC steamship *Beaver* in 1836, changing technologies led captains to pursue direct routes nearer to shore and to enter channels and inlets hitherto inaccessible to sailing craft. Seen from this light, Vancouver's maps did not so much end local geographies of interaction as accelerate and prolong them.

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[112] For two contrary perspectives on this enduring linguistic debate, see F.W. Howay, 'The Origin of the Chinook Jargon', *BC Historical Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (October 1942): 225–50; Henry B. Zenk and Tony A. Johnson, 'Uncovering the Chinookan Roots of Chinuk Wawa: A New Look at the Linguistic and Historical Record', in *University of British Columbia Working Papers in Linguistics (Papers for the International Conference on Salish and Neighbouring Languages*, ed. J.C. Brown and Tyler Peterson, 39, 2004.

[113] Gibson, *Opposition on the Coast*, 118; Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 32; Clayton, *Islands of Truth*, 77.

Nonetheless, Captain Vancouver and his successors entered a world that already been profoundly disrupted by the spread of European disease. At least five waves of smallpox tore through different portions of Pacific Northwest between 1782 and 1862, decimating Indigenous populations from Oregon to Alaska.[114] Scholars debate the timing and origin of the earliest epidemic. One credible theory suggests it derived from an outbreak in central Mexico in 1779 and spread to the northern plains through Indigenous trading networks before reaching the lower Columbia River in 1782. The airborne disease subsequently passed through densely populated coastal societies as far north as Nitinat on the west coast of Vancouver Island, and the northern extremity of the Salish Sea on the island's east coast. Historian Keith Carlson suggests anywhere from 60 to 90 percent of Coast Salish people died during the 1782 smallpox epidemic.[115] As Vancouver entered the Salish Sea in 1792, he found deserted villages, beaches strewn with human skeletons, and survivors still scarred by the disease.[116] Other outbreaks followed. Historian David Igler observes that growing maritime trade and shipping meant disease transmission routes became more efficient and widespread with every decade after 1800, a morbid reflection of an increasingly interconnected Pacific world.[117] Malaria killed 75 to 90 per cent of the Indigenous population on the lower Columbia River in 1830 to 1833, driving desperate families to camp outside a HBC fort to ensure proper burial by the traders inside.[118] Smallpox reached the northern coast above Vancouver Island in 1835 to 1838, where trader John Work reported that in ten houses among the Nass River Ts'msyen "there is not a man left alive only some women and children have escaped."[119] Makahs brought the disease with them while returning home from San

[114] John S. Lutz and Keith Thor Carlson, 'The Smallpox Chiefs: Bioterrorism and the Exercise of Power in the Pacific Northwest', *Western Historical Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (1 June 2024): 87.
[115] Cole Harris, 'Voices of Disaster: Smallpox around the Strait of Georgia in 1782', *Ethnohistory* 41, no. 4 (1994): 604–7; Lutz and Carlson, 'Smallpox Chiefs', 92. Robert Boyd contends the disease traveled north via Spanish ships in 1775. Robert Boyd, 'Commentary on Early Contact-Era Smallpox in the Pacific Northwest', *Ethnohistory* 43, no. 2 (1996): 307–28.
[116] Harris, 'Voices of Disaster', 599–601.
[117] Igler, *Great Ocean*, 44.
[118] Robert Boyd, 'Another Look at the "Fever and Ague" of Western Oregon', *Ethnohistory* 22, no. 2 (1975): 138; James Gibson, 'Smallpox on the Northwest Coast, 1835-1838', *BC Studies*, no. 56 (Winter 1982-1983): 61–62.
[119] Gibson, 'Smallpox on the Northwest Coast', 73.

Francisco aboard the brig *Cynosure* in 1853, killing over half the population, and leaving survivors "almost frantic with grief and fear."[120] Smallpox returned to the region yet again in 1862, breaking out on a San Francisco steamer shortly before its arrival in Victoria and spreading to encampments of Indigenous peoples from the northern coast. The colonial government exacerbated an already catastrophic situation by evicting the northern encampments and sending infected families back to their home communities.[121] The social and cultural cost of successive epidemics must have been excruciating for survivors and the generations that followed. Yet Carlson notes that the 1782 outbreak, while "completely unprecedented in terms of its biological expression, was not incomprehensible in terms of its demographic effects, nor was the social response without indigenous precedent."[122] In the aftermath of devastating diseases, Coast Salish and other Indigenous peoples drew on myth-age flood stories, historical narratives, and genealogies to adapt to an upturned world. The colonial mariners who helped spread these diseases bore witness to the devastation they wrought but also the persistence of peoples accustomed to navigating worlds turned upside down.

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"Fathoming Empire" begins in the pre-settlement era, showing how geographic ignorance shaped early colonial encounters between the Columbia River and Haida Gwaii between 1825 and 1841. It was in this period that the HBC organized successive surveys to establish a working knowledge of passable channels, river outlets, and anchorages in the region. Logbooks, journals, and corporate correspondence show how mariners undertook voyages of reconnaissance and charted strategic seascapes in competition over the region's remaining furs. The seafarers who served aboard

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[120] Robert Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence: Introduced Infectious Diseases and Population Decline among Northwest Coast Indians, 1774-1874* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 167–68; United States Office of Indian Affairs, 'Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1858' (Washington, DC: William A. Harris, 1858), 231–32, https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/A3YVW4ZRARQT7J8S; Samuel Hancock, *The Narrative of Samuel Hancock, 1845-1860* (New York: Richard M. McBride and Company, 1927), 181–83.

[121] 'Small Pox', *British Colonist*, 19 March 1862; Robert Boyd, 'Demographic History, 1774-1874', in *Northwest Coast*, ed. Wayne Suttles, Handbook of North American Indians 7 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 140.

[122] Keith Thor Carlson, 'Precedent and the Aboriginal Response to Global Incursions: Smallpox and Identity Reformation Among the Coast Salish - University of Victoria', *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 18, no. 2 (2007): 180.

HBC and other foreign ships were all too aware that they were outnumbered in a strange land and sought protection by outfitting ships with boarding nets and guns. But any security experienced aboard ship could be thwarted in an instant if that ship ran aground – a singular possibility on an unforgiving and largely uncharted coast. Indigenous power produced a "geography of fear," as Joshua Reid observes; chapter one argues that geographic ignorance provided the conditions for its flourishing.[123] Ironically, successful traders learned that disaster could be mitigated by soliciting Indigenous seafarers with coveted local marine knowledge. Aboard ship, local chiefs astutely converted geographic ignorance into political power by acting as guides, envoys, and interpreters to disoriented newcomers. In tracing these encounters, this chapter shows how geographic ignorance heightened the real and perceived threat of Indigenous violence and strengthened the hand of local leaders seeking power, prestige, and profit from these maritime encounters.

Chapter two further examines the relationship between geographic knowledge and colonial power by considering the concurrent onset of settler colonialism and sustained hydrographic charting (1841-1871). Hydrographic surveys were generally precipitated by geopolitical concerns, and charts were commonly leveraged to support imperial claims to the region. As they wrangled over the disputed Oregon Country, US and British statesmen set about to systematically chart every kilometre of coastline that fell under their imperial gaze. Charting expeditions by the United States Exploring Expedition, US Coast Survey, and British Admiralty were critical to the success of imperial projects of mobility and access to land, water, and resources. But geographic ignorance continued to constrain imperial endeavour and produce opportunities for enterprising Indigenous mariners who served as guides, informants, and crew. These intermediaries helped produce a facsimile of the coast that was legible to seafarers around the world. Chart and sailings guides extended the reach of imperial ships, allowing them to avoid hazards, navigate intricate passages, and arrive safely to port. In the process,

[123] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 56.

these two-dimensional aids extended the reach of imperial claims, extractive industries, and naval gunboats. By detailing the consequence of these exchanges, this chapter argues that geographic knowledge, as much as military might, provided the grounds on which colonial mariners established control over the coast.

One of the most powerful tools of imperialism and settler colonialism has been hidden in plain sight, overlooked by scholars despite its towering form, flashing lights, and resounding bellows. Although the two processes are infrequently examined together, hydrographic expeditions provided the foundational knowledge on which fixed navigational infrastructure would be built. Chapter three discusses the extensive efforts to establish and maintain lighthouses in the second half of the nineteenth century (1854-1885). Largely overlooked by academic historians, lighthouses and their keepers extended the reach of the state to new stretches of the coast and frequently constituted its earliest permanent presence. By the late nineteenth century, the Indigenous foundations of marine transport had been rendered largely invisible to the casual visitor. The concurrent growth of steam travel and state-sponsored navigational aids shaped the perceptions of coastal itinerants by allowing them to bypass the Indigenous intermediaries that were central to marine travel in previous eras. But a different story emerges when we shift our attention from steamships to the shore-based aids to navigation they depended on. Lighthouse logs, government records, and unpublished reminiscences reveal continued dependence on Indigenous knowledge in these unlikely contact zones. Indigenous canoes and seafaring skills were martialed to build and provision lights. Forbearing men carried keepers and the material fabric of lighthouses to shore. Lightkeeping families learned the Chinook jargon and relied on Indigenous neighbours to communicate with the outside world. Tensions between keepers and Indigenous people over missing livestock, compensation, and rotting whale carcasses occasionally resulted in physical confrontation and intervention from state authorities. Perceptions of the coast were shifting, but this chapter exposes the enduring Indigenous foundations of coastal travel in the industrial era.

Charts, guides, and lighthouses rendered marine space amenable to outside settlement, investment, and control, transforming the coast from an unwieldy contact zone to a mundane arena of transport, industry, and leisure. But charts and aids could not eliminate the risk of marine accident altogether. Chapter four (1859-1906) argues the coast quickly reverted to a less predictable space of cultural encounter when shipwrecks washed sailors ashore and Indigenous mariners were called to their aid. Settler governments' uneven capacity to prevent and respond to highly publicized marine disasters was an embarrassing reminder of fissures in their "control" of marine space. In the late nineteenth century, successive US and Canadian administrations took steps to aid imperiled seafarers. Such developments continued to draw significantly on Indigenous labour, technologies, and local knowledge. Government agents presented presidential medals and material rewards to Indigenous rescuers who risked life to save others. The first US lifesaving stations in the region depended on irregular crews from nearby reservations. Early Canadian proposals followed suit, suggesting Indigenous seafarers accustomed to navigating rough waters in dugout canoes could provide "a primitive life saving service" north of the Juan de Fuca Strait. These and similar initiatives forced state officials to adapt to longstanding Indigenous practices. In an era where settlers sought to repress and extinguish Indigenous cultures, state agents responsible for overseeing maritime safety engaged local practices of gift exchange and acknowledged titleholder's possessory rights in order mitigate the disasters unfolding along their shores. This chapter traces these remarkable encounters, examining the profound consequences of maritime imperialism, while showing how shipwrecks exposed ambiguities in competing claims to marine space.

These ambiguities have yet to be resolved. The history of encounter I am tracing sets the stage for recent Indigenous reassertions of jurisdiction over maritime activity in the shared and contested waters of the Pacific Northwest. From the Heiltsuk on BC's Central Coast to the Lummi on Puget Sound, Indigenous nations are re-asserting sovereignty over the very movement of marine traffic in

their territorial waters.[124] Such claims may alarm those who take for granted what many settlers consider their right to freely navigate marine spaces, but this assumption of novelty is belied by the history presented here. "Fathoming Empire" shows how merchants, mariners, politicians, and leisure-seekers gradually came to assume and take for granted our ability to navigate coastal waters independent of Indigenous consent or assistance. This assumption required an extensive network of navigational knowledge and infrastructure that gradually transformed the coast from an unpredictable space of cultural encounter and occasional marine disaster to a more predictable arena of transport, industry, and leisure. Recent headlines suggest the tides are shifting again today, making this the ideal time to reflect on how we arrived at this juncture.

[124] See, for example, Emily Gilpin, 'Heiltsuk Sue Canada on Behalf of Their Nation, "the Coast and All Canadians"', *National Observer*, 10 October 2018, https://www.nationalobserver.com/2018/10/10/news/heiltsuk-sue-canada-behalf-their-nation-coast-and-all-canadians; Isaac Stone Simonelli, 'Lummi Nation Opposes BP's Purchase of Cherry Point Parcels', ICT News, 3 January 2024, https://ictnews.org/news/lummi-nation-opposes-bps-purchase-of-cherry-point-parcels.

Chapter 1. Geographies of Fear and Ignorance: Surveying the Coast, 1825-1841

The sky was thick with clouds one late-spring morning as a two-masted, 161-ton cedar brig approached Nootka Sound bearing an unfamiliar flag. The ship had an uneventful passage from the Columbia River, sailing under intermittent rain and attended to by curious albatrosses. Peering over the gunwale, those aboard observed an expanse of velellas, jellyfish-like creatures, skirting across the ocean with their sapphire sails. Overcast skies prevented the sailors from determining their latitude against the angle of the sun, but the captain judged they were nearing their first port of call. The crew set to organizing their cargo and readying the ships' guns.[1]

Constructed in Bermuda seven years earlier, the *William & Ann* was purchased by the fur-hungry Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in hopes of extending its trade north to the foggy coastline between the Columbia River and Russian Alaska. The brig rounded Cape Horn and arrived safely to the HBC's base of operations on the Columbia River in April 1825. The ship departed again two months later under the command of Captain Henry Hanwell Jr., tasked with acquiring the intelligence required to expand the HBC's commercial empire.[2] The Muchalaht at Nootka Sound had had numerous encounters with *mamaƛn'i* traders and explorers in the previous three decades – the Nuu-chah-nulth children who witnessed the *Chatham*'s clumsy arrival had now grown to adulthood – but this was the first time the HBC's Red Ensign would cast a shadow on their homewaters.

On June 8, the clouds dissipated enough for the sailors aboard the *William & Ann* to sight land and determine their position southwest of Nootka Sound, where the traders hoped to court local leaders' favour while assessing the availability of furs, terms of trade, and degree of competition. A fine breeze rustled the air, raising clerk Alexander McKenzie's expectation that they would soon turn for

[1] "Journal of Alexander McKenzie on board brig William & Ann," 5-8 Jun 1825, Columbia District travel journals, file B.223/A/1 (hereafter cited as McKenzie journal), Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA), Winnipeg, MB; John Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal of a Voyage to N. W. America. [1824-'25-'26.] II. Leaving the Galapagos Islands for the North Pacific Coast', *Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* 6, no. 2 (1905): 177; Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, 'William & Ann (Ship History)', 2000, https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/ships_histories.html.
[2] McKenzie journal, 28 May 1825; Society for the Registry of Shipping, *Lloyd's Register of Shipping for the Year 1823* (London: W. Marchant, 1823), Supplement, W.

the harbour. His hopes were quickly frustrated. Captain Hanwell kept offshore, directing his men to repair boarding nets (ropes hung from the masts to prevent others from climbing aboard) and rig guns to the masts, squandering the daylight until it was too dark to approach the land. The *William & Ann* continued to dally outside the sound the next morning. McKenzie's impatience grew as he watched the anxious captain dither within sight their first port of call. Like other transpacific mariners, Hanwell understood that he was outnumbered in a strange land. Traders circulated stories of Indigenous violence to warn away competitors and exaggerate their own daring. Recent attacks on the *Boston* in Nootka Sound (1803) and the *Tonquin* in Clayoquot Sound (1811) were stark demonstrations of Indigenous power and lingered on the minds of Hanwell and his men as they approached the foreboding coast of Vancouver Island. It was afternoon before the captain worked up the courage to proceed landward. His resolve was short lived. Hanwell abruptly directed the brig to change course and proceed north, abandoning the idea of entering Nootka altogether. McKenzie despaired of the captain's timidity, complaining that Hanwell hardly dared come within five leagues (28 kilometres) of the land, and watched as the sound receded from view. So began the HBC's inaugural effort to enter the maritime fur trade: not with a bang, but a whimper, having failed to secure a single skin.

Hanwell's fear of the coast may seem perplexing given the number of foreign vessels that had entered these waters since Captain Pérez's visit fifty years earlier. Nootka Sound had once been the centre of the maritime fur trade, but that status had diminished with declining sea otter populations and tales of the *Boston* and *Tonquin* incidents. Joshua Reid shows how traders' itineraries were shaped by experiences and expectations of violence, anxieties that Indigenous leaders were keen to exploit to their own advantage.[3] But it was not fear of the Nuu-chah-nulth alone that steered Hanwell away. McKenzie observed that the captain was "alarmed no less with the coast than its inhabitants."[4] Boarding nets and firearms provided some protection, but any security experienced aboard ship could

[3] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 56–57.
[4] McKenzie journal, 8-9 Jun 1825.

be thwarted in an instant if that ship ran aground – a singular possibility in the absence of charts, lighthouses, or personal experience. Indigenous power produced a "geography of fear," as Reid suggests, but geographic ignorance provided the conditions for its flourishing. Fear of the coast and its people were inextricably linked in the minds of Captain Hanwell and his contemporaries. Firepower meant little on a sinking ship.

This chapter shows how shifting geographies of fear and ignorance shaped transpacific mariners' encounters with Indigenous peoples in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The risk of shipwreck on an unforgiving and largely unfamiliar coast reinforced foreign mariners' dread of Indigenous violence. Simultaneously, however, these seafarers understood the risk of disaster could be mitigated by onboarding Indigenous guides and pilots with coveted local marine knowledge. By understanding the dual nature of the "geography of fear," we can see more clearly the range of strategies Indigenous leaders undertook to pursue their interests amidst imperial incursions. Eric Tagliacozzo argues that charts and lighthouses served as "technologies of maritime control" that enabled emerging colonial states to encourage trade, facilitate surveillance, and direct marine traffic.[5] This chapter flips and extends those arguments, showing how Indigenous leaders deployed (and sometimes withheld) navigational knowledge to influence the movement of vessels within their homewaters. Chiefs learned they could convert geographic ignorance into political power by offering selective assistance to disoriented outsiders, indicating safe passage where trade was desired, for example, or noting submarine hazards where coveted goods might fall into the hands of rival groups.

To make the point, this chapter focus on surveys of reconnaissance between the Columbia River and Haida Gwaii, showing how Coast Salish and Haida pilots leveraged their knowledge to HBC and Royal Navy navigators in search of strategic ports and rivers. The HBC's shifting position on the coast can be shown by comparing the experiences of three successive captains: Henry Hanwell Jr.,

[5] Tagliacozzo, *In Asian Waters*, 342.

Aemilius Simpson, and William Henry McNeill. Examining their tenures reveals the extent to which the HBC's acquisition of geographic knowledge depended on cooperation with Indigenous leaders. Even so, HBC mariners were of little help to the Royal Navy ships that arrived to uphold British claims to Haida Gwaii in the early-1850s. Instead, naval officers solicited the assistance of Edenshaw and other Haida pilots who saw an opportunity to capitalize on renewed outside interest in the region. These exchanges show how Indigenous leaders leveraged enduring geographies of fear and ignorance into the mid-nineteenth century, helping to sustain and increase their influence in an increasingly crowded imperial context.

Trading Knowledge: The Hudson's Bay Company in the Northeastern Pacific

The Hudson's Bay Company was a relative late comer to the Pacific West. Founded in 1670 to extract furs from its namesake bay, the company seldom ventured inland until forced to do so a century later by a new, Montreal-based competitor. The North West Company (NWC) was founded in 1779. By 1813, the "Nor'Westers" had expanded their network of trade posts, canoe routes, and Indigenous associates to the Columbia River, edging into territory the HBC had come to regard as its own. Decades of pitched and sometimes violent competition drew down the resources of both companies until the NWC conceded to merge with its rival in 1821. The injured, but victorious HBC quickly embarked on a restructuring of the North American fur economy and turned its attention to its new assets on the Pacific slope, including Fort George at the mouth of the Columbia River. Sea otter populations were already in decline, but independent maritime traders had begun soliciting terrestrial pelts from their Indigenous counterparts, driving up prices and diverting trade away from inland HBC posts. The HBC responded by launching into the Pacific trade, hoping to shore up its traditional profit-base (furs), cut out competitors (Russian and US), and use its privileged geographic and commercial position to diversify and expand into new markets across the Pacific.[6]

[6] Richard S. Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific, 1793-1843* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 27–30, 38–39.

The HBC's efforts on the Pacific were also shaped by an unfolding geopolitical context. An expansionist President Thomas Jefferson laid the groundwork for intensified US interest in the Pacific West following the Louisiana Purchase (1803) and subsequent Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804 to 1806). Commercial investment followed as John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company founded Fort Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1811. Poor management was compounded by a series of misfortunes that beset the outfit in the next two years: the Tla-o-qui-aht destruction of the *Tonquin*, severe storm damage to a supply vessel, and the wreck of yet another ship off Maui. Poorly supplied, and unable to ship furs to market, Astoria's Scottish officers opted to sell the operation to the NWC in 1813.[7] That detail did not prevent HMS *Racoon* from entering the Columbia River to "take possession" of the fort a month later. War had erupted between the US and Britain the previous year, and Captain William Black was orders to "destroy, and if possible, totally annihilate any settlements which the Americans may have formed." Instead, a disappointed Black meekly ordered the Union Jack hoisted above the already British fort, smashed a bottle of Madeira on the flagstaff, and renamed the place Fort George in honour of the king.[8] Anglo-American relations normalized following the War of 1812, in part because of the growing quantities of cotton and manufactures exchanged between the two countries. In 1818, the United States and Britain agreed to a western border at forty-ninth parallel from Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains. The status of the Oregon Country on the Pacific remained contested, but the two nations agreed to defer the matter, leaving either free to settle and conduct trade in the reign. The congenial agreement did not end rivalry over the region, however. The terms of the treaty meant the HBC would face ongoing competition from US maritime traders and bear the primary responsibility for strengthening British claims to the region.[9] Imperial competition over the Pacific Northwest was to be decided by trade, not war.

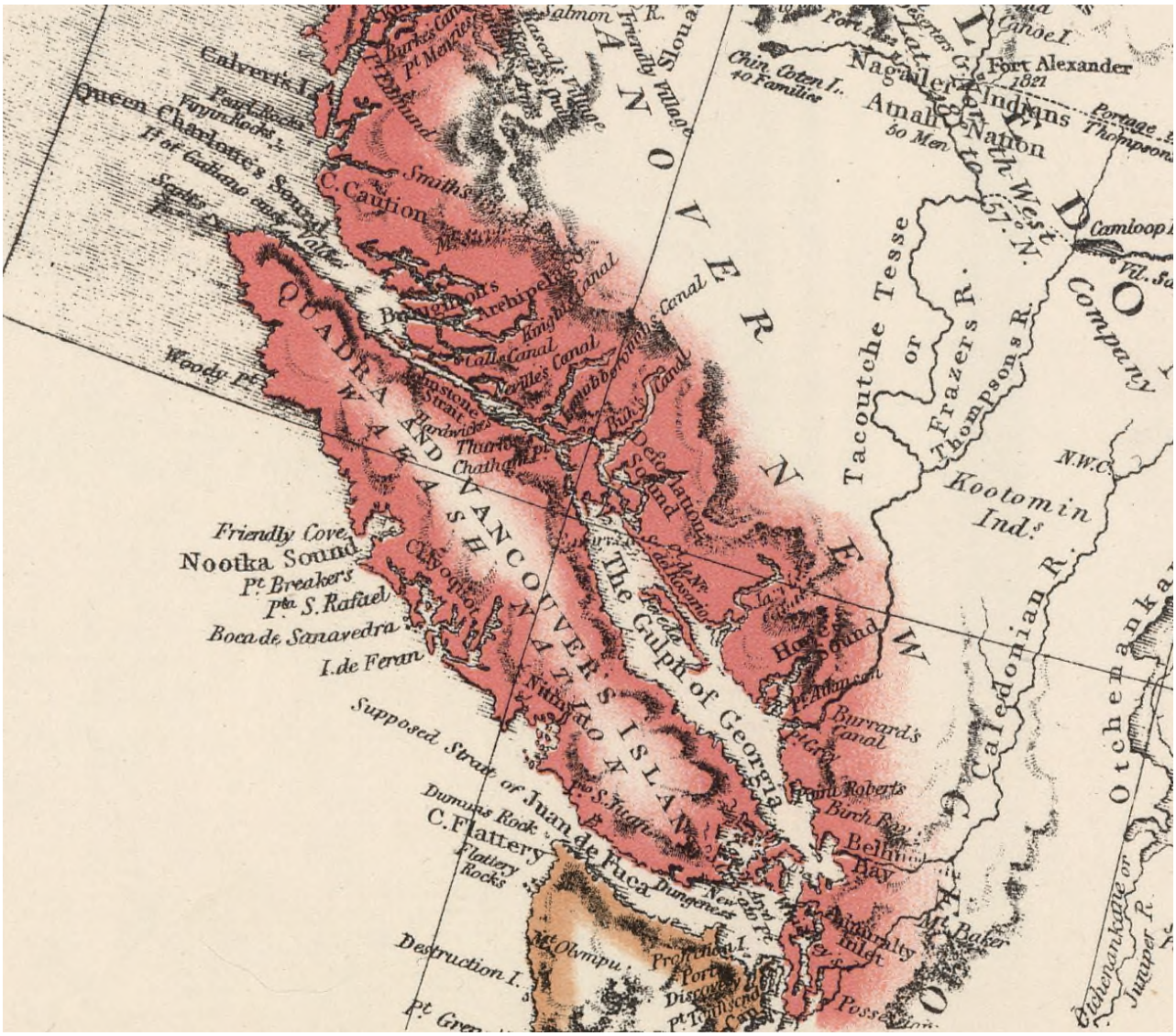
[7] Mackie, 13–16.
[8] James Finley, 'HMS Racoon', 4 August 2022, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/hms_racoon/.
[9] Jerald A. Combs, *The History of American Foreign Policy: To 1920*, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 2015), 68, 86–87.

In 1824, HBC Governor George Simpson traveled overland to inspect the newly acquired Columbia District via the York Factory Express, a 4500 km patchwork of canoe and portage routes that connected company posts across subarctic muskeg, vast plains, the continental divide, and Pacific rainforest. He quickly perceived on arrival that geographic ignorance was a liability to the company's ambitions in a region of the world known only dimly to outsiders and newcomers. Captain Vancouver's charts were meticulous but fastidiously focused on coastal shores and inlets, bypassing the islands and river mouths from which the HBC hoped to launch its Pacific trade. Opposition traders were luring furs from the inland posts, but the company had little knowledge of the northern rivers and Pacific outfalls that allowed them to do so. Nor had Vancouver's charts been meaningfully integrated with the "discoveries" made by overland NWC traders. The HBC knew that furs were being diverted from its forts in the Nechako region (near the geographical centre of present-day British Columbia), but contemporary maps provided only speculative information about the river by which the furs traveled (see Maps 2-3) . Simon Fraser had ventured through the Rockies to his namesake river in 1808, but the location of its terminus on the Pacific was known only by "Indian report," according to Simpson "as neither Cook, Vancouver, nor any of the traders on this coast take any notice thereof." David Thompson reached the lower Columbia in 1811, but the governor grumbled that his officers remained ignorant of the adjacent coastline some fourteen years later, having scarcely ventured twenty miles (32 km) from the river's mouth.[10]

The zealous governor set about using the company's financial and organizational heft to sponsor expeditions of reconnaissance and trade north of the Columbia River. The first such party provided an early indication of the way Indigenous knowledge holders leveraged their abilities to these new interlopers. Upon arriving at the Columbia, Simpson ordered a canoe party to locate the mouth of the Fraser River and establish communication with Fort Kamloops. Departing Fort George in

[10] George Simpson, *Fur Trade and Empire; George Simpson's Journal, 1824-25*, ed. Frederick Merk (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 73–76, 93.

Map 2. Detail from an 1824 "Map of North America"



An 1824 map shows the limits of imperial knowledge of the Pacific Northwest Coast. Vancouver Island's eastern shore has expanded to include the southern Gulf Islands. The HBC would soon learn that the "Caledonian River" shown emptying into the Salish Sea bore little resemblance to the comparatively modest Nooksack and Skagit rivers. Facsimile of "Faden's Map of North America." Alaskan Boundary Tribunal, Maps and Charts Accompanying the Case and Counter Case of the United States *(Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), David Rumsey Map Collection.*

November 1824, the party was led by Chief Trader James McMillan – a steady man with a "plain blunt manner" – in company with three clerks and several dozen French Canadian, Hawaiian, and Haudenosaunee men.[11] Among them were independent Haudenosaunee trader George

[11] Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, 'McMillan, James (Biographical Sheet)', March 2011, https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/index.html.

Map 3. Second detail from an 1824 "Map of North America"

A second detail shows the speculative "McDougalls & Simpsons R" draining into Observatory Sound, which the HBC was desperate to find to prevent furs from flowing away from its interior forts towards to the coast. Facsimile of "Faden's Map North America." Alaskan Boundary Tribunal, Maps and Charts, *David Rumsey Map Collection.*

Tewhattohewnie and his unnamed slave. Tewhattohewnie was acquainted with the coast at least as far Gray's Harbor, having hunted and perhaps married into a local Chehalis family. Tewhattohewnie probably guided the party to that juncture, leading them up the coast by portages and protected bays, and teaching them to tow their boats between the breaking waves and the shoreline "as the Indians do

their canoes."[12] From Gray's Harbor the company proceeded inland, up the Chehalis River and over a portage to Puget Sound, where they spent over an hour soliciting assistance at Steilacoom. Villages likes this were closely linked to other Lushootseed-speaking peoples through marital, economic, and ceremonial ties, and the traders were lucky to find Snohomish Chief Sinoughton and his Chinook-speaking wife visiting, or perhaps residing, at Steilacoom. Sinoughton and his wife eventually agreed to accompany the party as guides and interpreters as they ventured north towards Snohomish country.[13]

As was often the case, these and other "interpreters" fulfilled critical roles beyond translation. They provided important local knowledge, indicating the names of rivers, and location of fresh water, portage routes, and the Fraser River itself. They also served an important diplomatic function by informing other Indigenous people of the party's "friendly intentions" and courting additional Indigenous assistance as the expedition proceeded northward up Puget Sound.[14] The son of a Skagit chief was given a blanket and engaged, ostensibly as guide and interpreter, McMillan recorded, but "principally for the purpose of introducing us to the strangers." His father and two other chiefs also volunteered to join the expedition after each received a looking glass and a knife.[15] These gifts, exchanged before an assembly of over fifty Skagit men and following "a speech as long as the Sound itself," helped to ensure the expedition's safe passage through Skagit homewaters. French-Abenaki

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[12] John Work, 'Journal of John Work, November and December, 1824', ed. T. C. Elliott, *Washington Historical Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (1912): 200–203; Bruce McIntyre Watson, *Lives Lived West of the Divide: A Biographical Dictionary of Fur Traders Working West of the Rockies, 1793-1858*, vol. 3 (Kelowna, BC: Centre for Social, Spatial and Economic Justice, UBC Okanagan, 2010), 919; Jean Barman, *Iroquois in the West* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019), 120–21.

[13] Work refers to "Chilacoom" (Steilacoom) as "a village of the Nisqually Nation," probably in reference to the Lushootseed language spoken at Nisqually, Steilacoom and other villages near the head of Puget Sound. He later refers to Steilacoom as "Sinoughtons, our guides' village," suggesting he understood Sinoughton's presence there as more than a passing visit. Work specifies that Chief Sinoughton and another man were "both of the Sanahomis [Snohomish] tribe," but Sinoughton's wife could have been from Steilacoom. Sinoughton (and presumably his wife) returned to the village with the McMillan party later that month. Work, 'Journal of John Work', 212, 225; Jean Barman, *Abenaki Daring: The Life and Writings of Noel Annance, 1792-1869* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 267–68. For "marital, economic, and ceremonial ties," see Wayne Suttles and Barbara Lane, 'Southern Coast Salish', in *Northwest Coast*, ed. Wayne Suttles, Handbook of North American Indians 7 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 488.

[14] Work, 'Journal of John Work', 214–15, 217, 220; Barman, *Abenaki Daring*, 267–70.

[15] Work, 'Journal of John Work', 215.

clerk Francois Noel Annance recognized the gifts as necessary tolls, "for we find Customs house officers in this country as well as on the way from Montreal to Canton."[16] The Snohomish and Skagit leaders accompanying the party were clearly cognizant of territorial protocols at play as they moved through this borderland region. Guides deserted the expedition on two separate occasions as it ventured too far into other nations' territory.[17]

By engaging local assistance, acknowledging chiefly influence, and presenting conspicuous gifts, McMillan and his men wound their way through Indigenous seascapes under the direction of their Indigenous informants. Rather than proceed directly to the Fraser's mouth, guides convinced the expedition to travel overland by the Nicomekl and Salmon Rivers. The party's canoes finally touched the "noble and majestic Stream" near present-day Fort Langley, almost a month after their departure from the Columbia River.[18] The traders ascended as far as Harrison River (about 100 kilometres from the mouth of the Fraser) over the following two days and were greeted by dozens of Kwantlen villagers on their return journey. McMillan respectfully distributed fishhooks to each of the "common men," and a looking glass and vermillion pigment to each of several leaders. Chief Whotleakenum, bearing a European blanket and richly ornamented "Chinook hat," returned the gesture by sharing valuable knowledge with the reconnaissance party. Etching a map into the sand, the chief outlined the course of the river, listing as many as sixteen tributaries and nearly as many tribes on its banks. McMillan intended to proceed as far as Fort Kamloops, but the chief counseled against attempting the journey so late in the season.[19] Bombarded by "Rain without mercy," the party turned downriver, identified a site where a fort might be established, and confirmed that seagoing vessels could enter the

[16] Barman, *Abenaki Daring*, 268–69.
[17] Work, 'Journal of John Work', 214, 221; Barman, *Abenaki Daring*, 268, 271.
[18] Barman, *Abenaki Daring*, 270.
[19] Work, 'Journal of John Work', 221; Barman, *Abenaki Daring*, 271; Simpson, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 216. Work refers to the assembled villagers as "Cahantitt." Wayne Suttles identifies these with the Kwantlen Nation. Keith Carlson concurs but notes lower-Fraser River Indigenous communities had complex and often heterogenous identities. HBCA; Morag Maclachlan, ed., *Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1976), 170; Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 107–11.

river. McMillan also determined the Fraser River's would-be location on Captain Vancouver's charts, expressing some surprise that the celebrated navigator had overlooked "a River of such magnitude." This critical work done, the men returned to their Columbia River headquarters, no doubt pleased to be back in time for the customary New Year's carousing: dancing, drinking, and shooting.[20]

The McMillan party showed that the Fraser River could accommodate a new HBC establishment north of the Columbia. They took soundings by lowering a cord with an attached lead weight near the river's entrance and found depths ranging from four to seven fathoms (5 to 13 m) at high tide – enough, McMillan later reported, to accommodate vessels of up to 150-200 tons' burden (carrying capacity). Annance and the other clerks produced maps of the expedition's path along the protected waters of the Columbia, Puget Sound, and Fraser, showing their respective locations.[21] Such evidence was sufficiently favourable for Governor Simpson to order a fort established on the Fraser as soon as practicable.[22] In the meantime, the governor set about establishing a new fort, which, in a few years, would emerge as the HBC's central Pacific depot, a node connecting the overland route from York Factory (Hudson Bay) with vessels bound to London, Guangzhou, and the Northwest Coast. Hoisting the ensign in March 1825, Simpson smashed a bottle of rum on the flagstaff for luck, distributed drams to attendant Indigenous people and traders, and christened the establishment Fort Vancouver, "to identify our claim to the Soil and Trade with his discovery of the River and Coast." The HBC's commercial empire would not be confined to the Columbia River for long.

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[20] Barman, *Abenaki Daring*, 271–72; Simpson, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 249–50. For New Year's festivities, see Carolyn Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World: Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 269–71.

[21] Simpson, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 118, 248; Barman, *Abenaki Daring*, 272. One of the charts, made by John Work, accompanied Alexander Roderick McLeod's party through Puget Sound in 1828 during their punitive venture to S'Klallam territory (see below). Frank Ermatinger, 'Earliest Expeditions Against Puget Sound Indians', *Washington Historical Quarterly*, 1907, 21.

[22] John McLoughlin, *The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee. First Series, 1825-38*, ed. E.E. Rich, vol. 1 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1941), xxix.

"Dread of the natives": The Voyage of the *William & Ann*

For all its benefits, McMillan's voyage did not produce charts suitable to navigation. Nor did it extend the HBC's knowledge of the outer coast beyond the Juan de Fuca Strait. Accordingly, the company sent the *William & Ann* the following summer to scout harbours, identify major river outfalls, and assess trade opportunities on the northern coast. Its captain, Henry Hanwell Jr., brought eighteen years of experience as boy-seaman, gunner, and mate on company runs across the Atlantic to Hudson Bay. In 1816-17 he had the unenviable fortune to survive an Arctic winter, trapped on a remote island some 2000 kilometres of sea ice from the North Atlantic. Most of these expeditions were captained by his father, Henry Sr., who appears to have encouraged his son and junior officers to practice hydrographic charting. This asset was probably a factor when the HBC promoted Henry Jr. to captain and despatched him to the Pacific aboard the newly purchased *William & Ann*.[23] The ship left the Thames River in July 1824 and made anchor in the Columbia the following April after a nine-month voyage.[24]

Captain Hanwell was a competent navigator but lacked knowledge of Indigenous peoples on this far-off coast. Chief Factor John McLoughlin recognized his want of experience "in dealing with the Indians," and sought to mitigate this liability by bolstering the *William & Ann*'s crew in preparation for its northern journey. Thirteen Pacific Islanders were hired for the voyage, along with a Chinook interpreter, Michael, who could speak Nuu-chah-nulth, and clerk Alexander McKenzie who had learned to speak Chinook through his marriage to an elite woman known as the Princess of Wales, granddaughter of Chinook Chief Concomly. While Hanwell carried command of the ship, McLoughlin instructed the captain "to allow Mr. Mckenzie to act as he thought proper from his knowledge of the

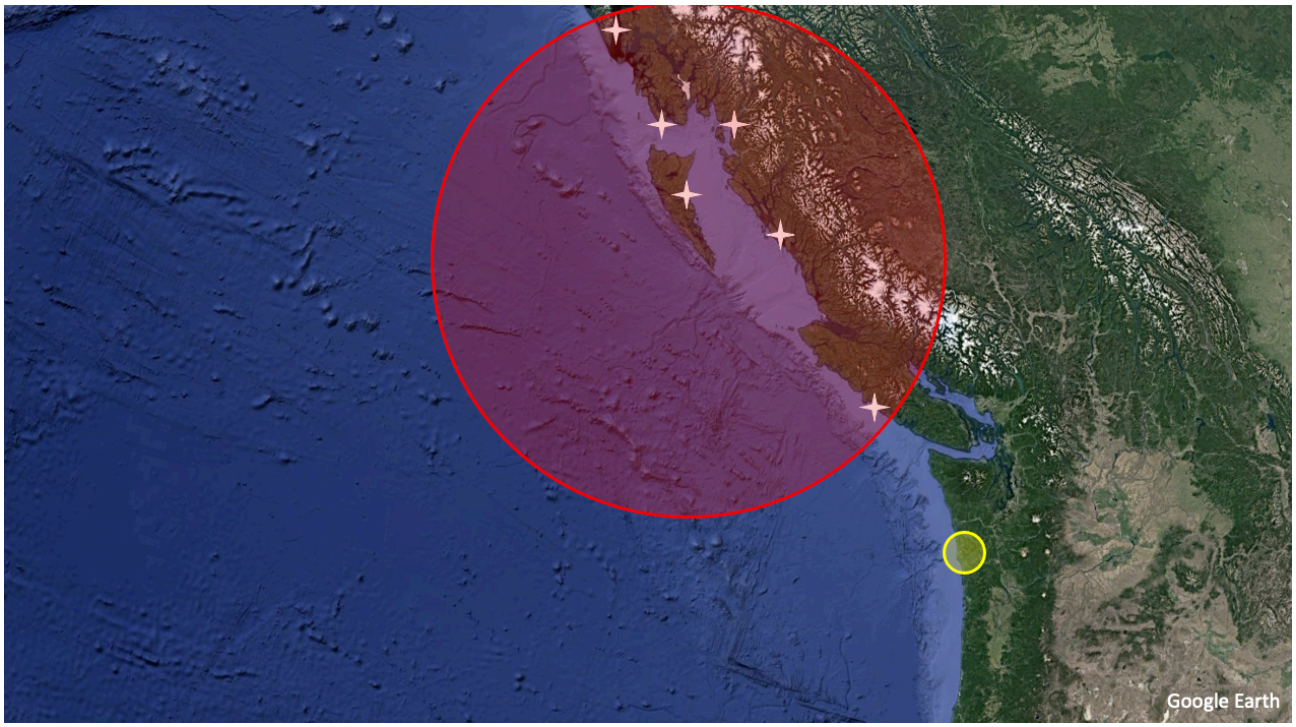
[23] Richard I. Ruggles, *A Country so Interesting: The Hudson's Bay Company and Two Centuries of Mapping, 1670-1870* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 72; Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, 'Hanwell, Henry Jr. (Biographical Sheet)', June 1985, https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/index.html.
[24] Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, 'William & Ann (Ship History)'.

Indian and the Nature of the Trade."[25] While necessary, under the circumstances, this direction had the inevitable effect of undermining the shipboard authority customarily bestowed in the captain, setting the stage for a palpable tension between the two men; maritime and cultural knowledge were not so easily bifurcated in the Pacific West. Captain Hanwell's apprehension of the coast and its people would prove a major inhibition to success.

After his dallying display off Nootka Sound, the captain ordered his crew to push northwards to Haida Gwaii. The *William & Ann* was anchored off Skidegate Harbour on June 25, 1825, when they were met by a canoe carrying four Haida men. Here was a turn of good fortune for the traders. One of the Haidas spoke English, having previously served as a pilot aboard American and Russian vessels. The man introduced himself as Tom and impressed the *William & Ann*'s crew as "thoroughly acquainted with all the harbours in this quarter," according to clerk McKenzie, mentioning a half dozen ports from Alaska to Nootka Sound and "laying down their different situations with a precision in English so plain as actually astonished us."[26] The breadth of Tom's maritime knowledge, reaching some 1000 km of coastline, stands in marked contrast to that of the Hudson's Bay Company, which Governor Simpson characterized in the same year as extending fewer than twenty miles from the mouth of the Columbia River (see Map 4).[27] Urged on by McKenzie, Captain Hanwell set about soliciting the pilot's assistance. Tom agreed to lend his services in return for a jacket, calico shirt, trousers, and a hat, and a promise to reward him "handsomely" upon return to Skidegate in return for good behaviour. A further stipulation suggests Tom also acted in order to secure trade for his village. The Skidegates had made several attempts in preceding days to draw the *William & Ann* to their village, where they reported having over 200 otter skins for trade. An American vessel was already anchored in their harbour, but

[25] Gibson, *Opposition on the Coast*, 89–91; McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:2–3; Simpson, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 86–87, 104. The interpreter's name is given in Hanwell's voyage log: *William & Ann* logbook, 30 Sep 1825, Ships' Logs, C.1/1066 (hereafter cited as Hanwell, *William & Ann* logbook), HBCA.
[26] McKenzie reports Tom as mentioning Milbanke Sound, Nootka Sound, Chatham Strait, Pearl Harbour (Tsimpsean Peninsula), Kaigani (Alaska), and Skidegates. McKenzie journal, 25 Jun 1825.
[27] Simpson, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 93.

Map 4. Spatial extent of Hudson's Bay Company and the Haida pilot Tom's knowledge in 1825



In 1825, Governor George Simpson represented the HBC as ignorant of the coast beyond twenty miles (32 km) north or south of the Columbia River, represented here by a yellow circle. The red circle gives an impression of Tom's knowledge, with white stars marking specific ports he was "thoroughly acquainted with" and/or produced charts of. Google Earth.

the Skidegates understood their bargaining position would improve if a competing ship arrived. Captain Hanwell declined the invitations but promised to visit on the return journey. Satisfied with the arrangement, Tom proceeded aboard the *William & Ann*, evidently "quite at home on board & pleased at the idea of our entering Skittegets on return."[28] Tom's prior experience aboard American and Russian vessel had probably impressed upon him the advantages of piloting a vessel laden with trade goods.

Tom proved to be a major asset to the *William & Ann*'s reconnaissance, interpreting with locals, sharing the names and features of particular islands, offering information about various harbours, and even making charts "of Nass & Skittigass which served to give a very good idea of the coast & of the different tribes settled along it."[29] Such information was particularly valuable given Hanwell's "dread

[28] McKenzie journal, 25 Jun 1825; Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal, II', 180.
[29] McKenzie journal, 27-28 Jun 1825; Scouler, 191.

of the natives" (McKenzie's words) and reluctance to venture close to shore. Vicarious knowledge would have to suffice in the absence of firsthand observation.[30] On the whole, Tom appears to have gotten along well with the crew, amusing them with his "broken English" and anecdotes about American captains.[31] Ship surgeon John Scouler observed his eagerness to learn to read and write, skills that would no doubt increase his value to incoming mariners by improving his ability to communicate and the charts he at their request.[32] In this sense, at least, the exchange of knowledge, geographic and linguistic, went both ways. This evidently amicable exchange was briefly interrupted when one of the Pacific Islanders accused Tom of peddling the ships' tobacco. Tom turned "pale as a sheet" as his box was searched, revealing calico shirts, red woolen cloth, Canton beads, vermillion pigment, and buttons – "in short a complete assortment he had stolen on one occasion or other." No punishment was forthcoming, however. The crew remained vulnerable as solitary transients in an Indigenous seascape and anticipated that any punishment inflicted on Tom "might ultimately be attended with bad consequences" upon their return to Skidegate. The captain revoked Tom's permission to enter the cabin at will but otherwise pardoned him for the thefts.[33]

The *William & Ann* reached the mainland on June 29 and proceeded cautiously in search of a river supposed to lie in the vicinity of Portland Canal. The brig ventured past the village of Gingolx (Kincolith) and conducted trade with the local Nisga'a, who conveyed (through Tom) "the danger that was likely to happen from sunken rocks" should the brig proceed further. The warning was sound, but it served the dual purpose of encouraging the HBC men to return to Gingolx "where there was no want of beaver."[34] Such exchanges, like Tom's consenting to join the party on condition they return to trade at Skidegate, indicate how Indigenous interlocutors sometimes deployed their knowledge to channel marine traffic to the benefit of their communities. Such knowledge could also be withheld. The HBC

[30] McKenzie journal, 20 Jul 1825.
[31] McKenzie journal, 27 Jun 1825.
[32] Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal, II', 191.
[33] McKenzie journal, 7 Jul 1825; Scouler, 191.
[34] McKenzie journal, 1 Jul 1825.

was desperate to find the mouth of the northern river by which Americans drew furs away from its interior posts. Tom does not seem to have mentioned the location of the Nass River as they passed its outlet just east of Gingolx. He had almost certainly guided US ships there previously and produced a chart of Nass Harbour aboard the *William & Ann* in 1825.[35] Perhaps Tom wanted to ensure its trade goods remained available for its return to Skidegate or feared some Nisga'a would recall his association with violent American traders. Dr. Scouler later characterized him as "at great pains" to assure them that the Nisga'a "were a bloody & treacherous people." Either way, his apparent silence at this crucial moment suggests he was content to let the omission stand. As it was, McKenzie explained, via Tom, that they were to proceed in search of a river at the head of the inlet, at which the visiting Nisga'a "appeared amazed" and insisted "there was nothing of the kind in that direction." Their claims convinced McKenzie of the matter, but not, evidently, Hanwell. The captain seems to have felt the elusive river emptied into the head of Observatory Inlet, as shown on the maps produced by his London-based contemporaries. He ignored the Nisga'a and proceeded onwards.[36]

Thus the *William & Ann* continued up Observatory Inlet. On July 3, the ship received a large party of Nisga'a women, men, and children who had followed the ship some thirty kilometres from Gingolx. The brig was boarded by four chiefs, who received gifts of molasses and biscuits and questioned the party's purpose for being there, reportedly "puzzled" at finding the ship so far up the inlet. The traders replied that they were searching out a reported river and were again informed "there was no River where we mentioned," to no avail.[37] The *William & Ann* proceeded up Observatory Inlet on July 5, intending to send out boats to scout the shoaling waters ahead. Before they could, the party was

[35] Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal, II', 191. Tom was aboard the *Hamilton* en route to Nass when a shore party was killed by Nisga'a in the spring of 1811. The *Hamilton* sailed to Kaigani, Alaska for assistance and returned in the company of the *Katherine*. Tom recounted that a party of Nisga'a were invited to board for a feast of bread and molasses, only to be massacred by the retributive traders. The *Hamilton* log is available at the Peabody Essex Museum's Phillips Library (Salem, MA) and may contain additional information about Tom. McKenzie journal, 21 Jul 1825; Frederic W. Howay, *A List of Trading Vessels in the Maritime Fur Trade, 1785-1825*, 1973, 89.
[36] McKenzie journal, 1 Jul 1825; Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal, II', 183.
[37] McKenzie journal, 3 Jul 1825; Scouler, 184.

joined by canoes carrying around twenty passengers, with others arriving as the day progressed. The expedition called off the boating party, fearing the possibility of attack if part of the *William & Ann*'s crew was sent away on sounding duties. Reports of sunken rocks and a mythic river competed for the traders' attention, but further examination seemed impossible in what Hanwell perceived to be a hostile Indigenous seascape. The captain resolved to turn back the next day, having failed to reach the head of the inlet.[38] Fighting unfavourable winds, a strong tidal current, and impenetrable fog, the brig took over two weeks to return to Gingolx, where muddy waters suggested a major alluvial river lay in the vicinity. Canoes pursued the brig's course until Hanwell promised to conduct additional trade after they had reached the head of the bay. Contrary to the agreement, however – indeed, contrary to the very purpose of the expedition – the fretful captain ordered the boat to turn around before inspecting the bay or engaging in further trade, opting instead to take advantage of a breeze to carry the brig back to Chatham Strait.[39] The sought-after northern river would remain unsurveyed. Fear of shipwreck heightened the real and perceived threat of Indigenous power, which in turn curtailed opportunities for colonial mariners to conduct requisite reconnaissance. Geographies of fear and ignorance were mutually reinforcing on the Northwest Coast.

The *William & Ann*'s return journey would also prove disappointing. Once again reneging on his word, Hanwell sent Tom ashore near some "Indian huts" seven miles north of Skidegate, leaving Haida Gwaii without entering a single harbour on the islands. The captain clearly failed to understand the importance of securing helpful allies like Tom, who had by now guided the ship some 500 kilometres with the understanding that the ship would visit his village. The party stopped at Nootka Sound on its return south, which Captain Hanwell finally consented to visit after a Mowachaht canoe invited them into their harbour, offered them cod and bream, and repeated "the friendly salutation of Wakash Wakash." The *William & Ann* anchored at Yuquot (Friendly Cove) for several days entertaining an

[38] McKenzie journal, 5-6 Jul 1825; Scouler, 185.
[39] McKenzie journal, 21 Jul 1825; Scouler, 184.

elderly Chief Maquinna and his sons on board. Maquinna could speak a few English words, and remembered meeting Spanish and British navigators, including Captain Vancouver, thirty years earlier during the height of the maritime fur trade. Few ships now stopped at Yuquot and Maquinna welcomed the possibility of renewed trade with these new British arrivals. Yet Hanwell and his men hardly ventured ashore, despite Maquinna's invitations. According to Dr. Scouler, the fate of the *Tonquin* "filled the minds of some on board with fearful apprehensions." Assurances from Maquinna that his people had nothing to do with the incident did little to calm the sailors' nerves.[40]

On August 8, the party arrived at Cape Flattery at the entrance to the Juan de Fuca Strait. En route, the brig encountered a large party of twenty Makah canoes fishing halibut and mullets over fifteen kilometres from shore. Clerk McKenzie describe the Makahs as "rather shy at first" and unwilling to board.[41] Their reticence was noteworthy, as ship-boarding and trading were customary ways of displaying authority over Indigenous homewaters in the northeastern Pacific. Like the McMillan expedition before them, the Hanwell party relied on Indigenous diplomacy to allay such misgivings. Their Chinook interpreter, Michael, was personally known to some of the fishers, "tolerable proficient" in their language, and eventually convinced two fishers to board.[42] As the *William*

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[40] McKenzie journal, 29 Jul 1825; Hanwell, *William & Ann* logbook, 30 Jul 1825; Scouler, 192–94; Frederic W. Howay, ed., *Voyages of the 'Columbia' to the Northwest Coast, 1787-1790 and 1790-1793* (Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1990), 103.

[41] McKenzie journal, 8 Aug 1825; Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal, II', 195.

[42] McKenzie journal, 8 Aug 1825; Scouler, 195–96, 205. The Makahs' reluctance to board the *William & Ann* was well founded. They explained that traders had "made a practice" of imprisoning unfortunate Makahs after inviting them to board. Most recently, a Captain Ayres had humiliated several chiefs by putting them in chains and sailing away. The *William & Ann* met one of Ayres' hostages (a chief relating to Tatoosh, Mameset, and Quy-lool-lich) when exiting the strait later in August 1825. Most escaped or were ransomed (probably at the Columbia River or in California) but written and oral accounts suggest not all managed to return home. Gabriele Franchère, a Pacific Fur Company apprentice, recounted an unnamed Indigenous man arriving at Fort Astoria with some Chinooks in August 1811. The man told Franchère that Captain Ayres had left him and other otter hunters on the Farallon Islands off San Francisco some months earlier, perhaps intending to come back with provisions. The abandoned men wrecked their canoe trying to reach the mainland. Eight were killed upon arrival at an unknown Indigenous village, the remainder enslaved and later ransomed free by Tillamooks. Makah oral histories recorded by Elizabeth Colson in 1941-42 offer accounts of Makahs being kidnapped – perhaps in retaliation for their earlier treatment of shipwrecked Europeans off Ozette – and brought either to California or Hawaii. One of Ayres' contemporaries, Captain William Smith of the *Albatross*, attributed to his callous behaviour the destruction of the *Tonquin* by Tla-o-qui-ahts on Vancouver Island in June 1811. McKenzie journal, 30 Aug 1825; Scouler, 205; Eric Blinman, Elizabeth Colson, and Robert Heizer, 'A Makah Epic Journey: Oral History and Documentary Sources', *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 68, no. 4 (1977): 153–63; Gabriel Franchère, *Journal of a Voyage on the North West Coast of North America during the Years 1811, 1812, 1813 and 1814*, ed. W. Kaye Lamb, trans. Wessie Tipping Lamb (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1969), 90.

& Ann sailed closer to Cape Flattery, it encountered "the principal chiefs of this place," Tatoosh and two brothers, Mameset and Quy-lool-lich. The last of these was known to McKenzie. Makahs regularly traded canoes, halibut, and other goods to Chinooks at the mouth of the Columbia River, and Chinook Chief Concomly had introduced Quy-lool-lich to his "Son In Law," McKenzie, when the Makah chief traveled to Fort George and a nearby Chinook village with a party of thirty men the previous summer (1824). The Quy-lool-lich now indicated that he was unable to board the ship due to a diseased limb. Instead, the chief invited the party to anchor near his village on Tatoosh Island, showing them where previous traders had safely done so, but Captain Hanwell regarded the place as "by far too dangerous" to consider anchoring in the vicinity. Not wishing to upset the men, McKenzie assured the chiefs he would visit their village on their return voyage out of the strait.[43]

Other chiefs extended similar hospitality as the ship proceeded up the Juan de Fuca Strait. S'Klallam chief Quiactin did "everything in his power to induce us to come nearer their fishing village," according to McKenzie, advertising the harbour as "perfectly deep for the vessel," but met with no more success than Quy-lool-lich.[44] Another S'Klallam Chief, Squastin, visited the ship every morning while it anchored off stətíɬəm (New Dungeness), provisioning them with salal berries, wild onions, shellfish, crab – "in short, everything the country afford" – for which he refused remuneration.[45] Even so, the S'Klallams rebuffed Captain Hanwell's efforts to secure a guide, perhaps unwilling to venture too deeply into Quw'utsun (Cowichan) waters. The traders, meanwhile, were equally reluctant to venture from their ship. No boats went ashore, and Dr. Scouler had to satisfy his naturalist proclivities by a purchasing a mouse he observed skittering about a canoe; one wonders what the S'Klallam vendor

[43] McKenzie journal, 8 Aug 1825; Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal, II', 195–96. For trade between the Makah and Chinook, see Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 30–31.
[44] McKenzie describes the habitation as a "temporary village" for the salmon season, "situated on the banks of a small River that discharges itself into the Straits on the west side about 40 miles from the entrance. Hanwell refers to the village as "Tlalum" and gives its position as six leagues southwest of New Dungeness. McKenzie journal, 9 Aug 1825.
[45] McKenzie journal, 9-11 Aug 1825; Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal, II', 198. The village is mentioned in David Brownell, 'A Glimpse of Sxʷčkʷíyəŋ, a S'Klallam Village at Washington Harbor', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5CfzARE_6Q.

made of the exchange.[46] Hauling off on August 14, the *William & Ann* received two canoes from the direction of Vancouver Island, including "a famous chief named Waskalatchy," a prominent Snohomish who, McKenzie wrote, "had wandered more over the N.W. coast than any Indian upon it." The party was fortunate to encounter another experienced guide and invited a willing Waskalatchy to accompany them up the strait. Like Tom and Michael, Waskalatchy translated, indicated the location of villages, and convinced other chiefs to board when they were reluctant to do so.[47]

The *William & Ann* was standing off Fraser River on August 21, waiting for their sounding boat to identify a navigable channel, when it was met by a large party of around seventy Quw'utsun (Cowichan) people. Like Chief Quiactin, the Quw'utsuns offered navigational knowledge to solicit trade at their nearby village, providing directions for entering the river and suggesting that a suitable channel could be found by going around the extensive sandbank. A boat containing McKenzie, Michael, and Waskalatchy, among others, was sent the following day to identify and sound the channel. They agreed that a passage was possible, if hazardous. Predictably, Captain Hanwell demurred, deciding to return to Fort George without entering the Fraser, breaking yet another promise to visit Quw'utsun Chief Chaseaw's village.[48] The party sailed south through Rosario Strait, where Waskalatchy took his leave, "highly pleased" with the tobacco, flint, a blanket, and other goods he received for his two weeks aboard the ship.[49] Favoured with a breeze, the *William & Ann* sailed without stopping past stətíɬəm and Tatoosh Island, crossing the Columbia Bar to Fort George on September 3 through a swirl of seagulls and pelicans.[50]

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[46] McKenzie journal, 10 and 12 Aug 1825; Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal, II', 197.
[47] McKenzie journal, 14-18 Aug 1825; Scouler, 199; Maclachlan, *Fort Langley Journals*, 11.
[48] McKenzie journal, 20-21 Aug 1825. The *William & Ann* received a visit from upriver Kwantlen Chief Whotleakenum before leaving the mouth of the Fraser River. The chief, who had met with McMillan's party the previous year, made efforts to distance himself from the Quw'utsuns, who, he asserted "had no business with the Quatlin [Fraser] River." McKenzie journal, 25 Aug 1825; Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal, II', 202.
[49] McKenzie journal, 29 Aug 1825.
[50] John Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal of a Voyage to N. W. America. [1824-'25-'26.] III. Departing Visit to the Columbia on the Return from the Voyage to the North and Homeward', *Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* 6, no. 3 (September 1905): 276.

The *William & Ann*'s far-reaching voyage has much to say about the nature of marine navigation for uninitiated mariners on the rim of the northeastern Pacific. Indigenous guides like Tom, Waskalatchy, and Michael, played an essential role interpreting, providing introductions, and brokering exchange with local nations. They also offered crucial navigational knowledge, drawing charts, describing harbours, sharing toponyms, and indicating the location of villages along the brig's path. These guides joined the expedition for personal and collective gain. Doing so enabled them to acquire new possessions (licitly or otherwise), solicit trade on behalf of their villages, and gain profitable new skills like language and literacy. Local chiefs were another consistent presence throughout the voyage, frequently accompanied by large numbers of canoe-borne followers. Chiefs' interactions with the *William & Ann* were to large degree shaped by their desire to secure trade. They frequently exchanged gifts and their own hydrographic knowledge – sunken rocks, a commodious harbour, or passable channel – to steer the brig's movement towards particular villages. Nisga'a, Makah, S'Klallam, and Quw'utsun chiefs secured agreements to be visited by the ship at their village, though Captain Hanwell proved exceptionally unreliable in this respect. Other motivations were clearly at play: securing potential military assistance, displaying their power and wealth, reinforcing their diplomatic authority, and satisfying basic curiosity.

The ship's deck was the locus of these intercultural encounters. Captain Hanwell and clerk McKenzie made frequent overtures to passing canoers, and especially chiefs, to board the vessel where they could more easily exchange goods and intelligence. The ship's interior held its own gravitas, it being customary among American traders to admit only chiefs below deck.[51] Captain Hanwell distinguished Chief Squastin and his daughter by receiving them in the cabin, and punished Tom for stealing by revoking his ability to enter that space at free will. Chiefs evidently wished to reciprocate the gesture by receiving Captain Hanwell at their villages. His almost universal failure to accept such

[51] Gibson, *Opposition on the Coast*, 120.

invitations did little to buoy the HBC's first efforts to secure trade relationships on the coast. In fairness, Captain Hanwell returned safely to the Columbia without damaging his ship, losing a single hand, or inflicting violence on the Indigenous villages he encountered. This was more than many of his successors could say. The mission also produced new charts of the Columbia River, Observatory Inlet, and southern parts of the Gulf of Georgia. These received wider circulation through their eventual incorporation in commercial charts and invited elaboration by a more competent company agent.[52]

By and large, however, fear of the coast and its people prevented the cautious captain from venturing too close to land or village. Weeks were lost searching for a mythical river that Nisga'a chiefs maintained did not exist, and too little time spent at Gingolx to determine the extent of the river emptying there. The brig bypassed S'Klallam and Quw'utsun villages which, their representatives insisted, could be safely reached by navigable waters. The decisions were made against the urging of McKenzie and would-be Indigenous allies like Tom, Quy-lool-lich, Quiactin, and Chaseaw, and the expense of Hanwell's own instructions. Chief Factor John McLoughlin named fifteen specific locations where he hoped the *William & Ann* might visit and collect sufficient intelligence to for the HBC to prosecute the trade.[53] The ship entered Observatory Inlet – "having failed doing anything Satisfactory," according to McLoughlin – and made Nootka Sound on its second attempt.[54] It reached the southern extremity of the Georgia Strait and sounded, but did not enter the Fraser River. Every other objective – Sitka, the Nass River, Milbanke Sound, and others – was bypassed. "It does not appear that any information of importance was collected," Governor Simpson reported to his London-based superiors: "from the extraordinary and I may add unnecessary caution observed by Capt[n] Hanwell it was impossible that much knowledge could have been gained as he had little or no communication with the natives and rarely ventured within a sufficient distance of the Land to run any risks [...] Captn

[52] Ruggles, *A Country so Interesting*, 90.
[53] As per Chief Factor John McLoughlin's letter of instruction to Captain Hanwell. Gibson, *Opposition on the Coast*, 91–92.
[54] McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:16.

Hanwell's prudence on that voyage amounted to pusillanimity."[55] A geography of fear had circumscribed corporate mobility to the few ports where Indigenous guides or invitations softened Hanwell's trepidation (Table 1). The captain made one more return voyage from England to the Columbia in 1826-27, before he was transferred back to his familiar runs across the Atlantic to Hudson Bay.[56]

Table 1. Locations the *William & Ann* was instructed to inspect, 1825

Outcome column coded to indicate success (green), partial success (yellow), or failure (red).

Location	Instructions	Outcome	Details
Sitka	Time permitting	Did not reach	
Portland Canal	Principle objective	Bypassed	
Observatory Inlet	Principle objective	Entered	Turned around before reaching the head of the inlet, "having failed doing anything Satisfactory." Tom onboard.
Nass River	Principle objective	Bypassed	Saw muddy discharge but did not locate entrance; Tom onboard.
Skidegate	If convenient	Bypassed	Anchored outside but did not enter harbour.
Princess Royal Islands	If convenient	Bypassed	
Milbanke Sound	If convenient	Bypassed	
Nawhitti	If convenient	Bypassed	
Nootka	Principle objective	Entered	Initially bypassed; visited on return voyage; invited by Mowachaht canoers.
Clayoquot	If convenient	Bypassed	
Barkley Sound ("Nitinat")	If convenient	Bypassed	
Cape Flattery	If convenient	Bypassed	Sailed past Tatoosh Island village and Neah Bay without anchoring.
Port Discovery	If convenient	Bypassed	
Fraser River	If convenient	Bypassed	Sounding boats identify navigable channel; brig did not enter; Waskalatchy onboard.
Strait of Georgia	Time permitting	Entered	Did not venture north of Fraser River; Waskalatchy onboard.

[55] George Simpson to the Governor and Committee of the HBC, 20 Aug 1826, Governor George Simpson official reports to the Governor and Committee, D.4/89, fol. 6 (hereafter cited as Simpson to the Governor and Committee), HBCA.
[56] Bruce McIntyre Watson, *Lives Lived West of the Divide: A Biographical Dictionary of Fur Traders Working West of the Rockies, 1793-1858*, vol. 2 (Kelowna, BC: Centre for Social, Spatial and Economic Justice, UBC Okanagan, 2010), 437.

"Benefits [...] from his scientific knowledge": Hiring a Company Hydrographer

The HBC continued to build on the McMillan and Hanwell expeditions over the following decade as it continued its Pacific reorientation. In June 1826, Governor George Simpson appointed his half-cousin, Aemilius Simpson to serve as a hydrographer and clerk in the Columbia District. Born in 1792, Aemilius was remembered by his younger brother as a "man of warm affections," though quick to anger and drawn to discipline. He joined the Royal Navy as volunteer at thirteen and rose to lieutenant through service in the Napoleonic Wars that took him from the West Indies to the Mediterranean.[57] Aemilius was among hundreds of Admiralty officers who were grounded in England at half-pay following Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo. Governor Simpson had previously mused that one of these could be snatched up by the HBC for a modest sum and now set about it.[58] Hanwell's fear of the coast had all but nullified his value to the company. Whatever hydrographic skills he acquired under his father's tutelage seemed to find little application during his 1825 reconnaissance. These skills remained sorely needed, however. The London-based Governor and Committee of the HBC applauded overseas Governor Simpson's to appoint Aemilius as "Surveyor and Hydrographer," anticipating "important benefits in many points of view from his scientific knowledge."[59] Aemilius was granted leave to serve the HBC, sailed across the Atlantic with Governor Simpson, and spent a month surveying in the Red River District before crossing the continent with the York Factory Express.[60] The energetic lieutenant reached Fort Vancouver in November 1826, where he supervised the construction of the schooner *Vancouver*, charted the Columbia River as far as Cape Disappointment, and reportedly introduced apples to the region. Lieutenant Simpson was given command of the schooner *Cadboro*

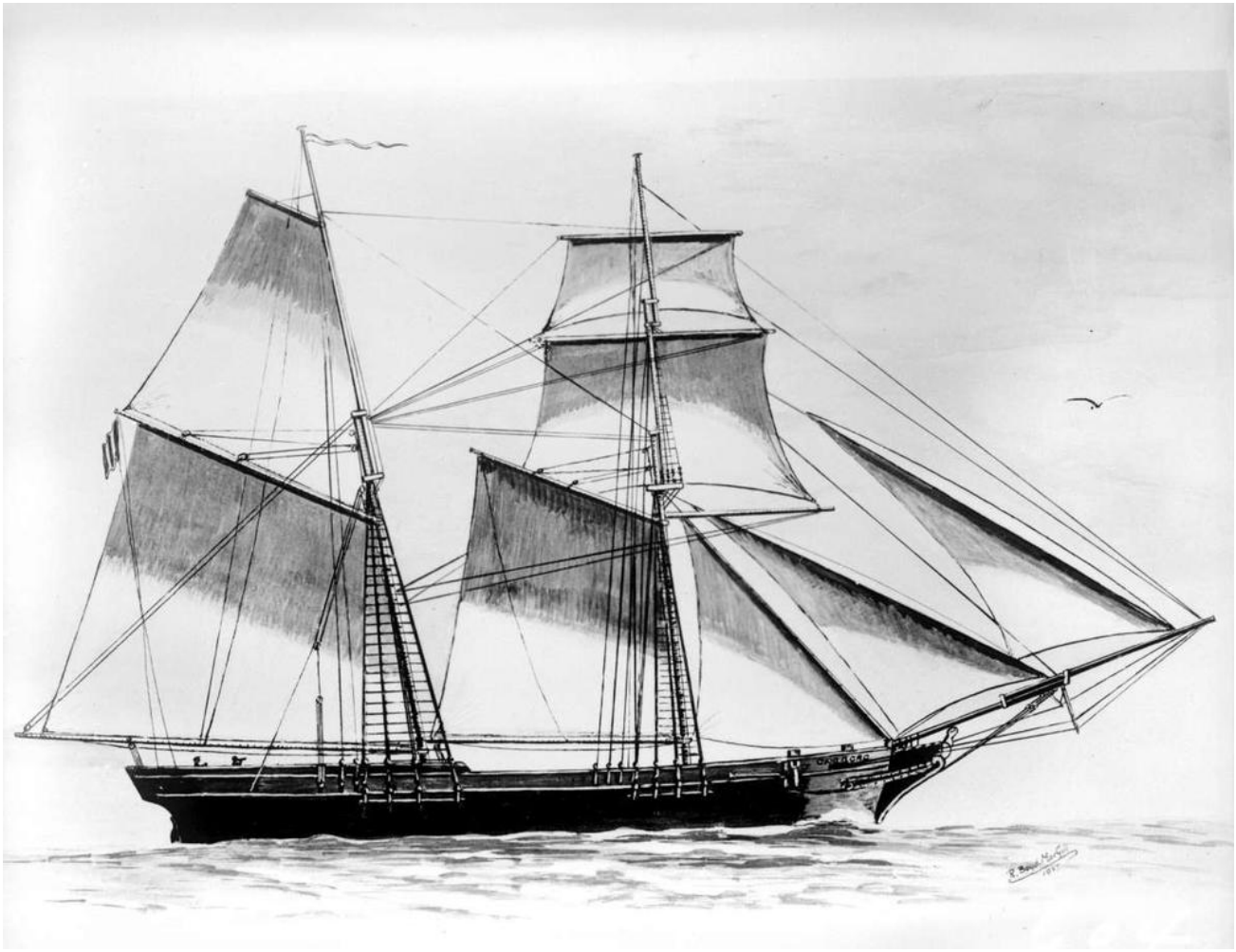
[57] Dorothy Blakey Smith, 'Simpson, Æmilius', in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/simpson_aemilius_6E.html; Alexander Simpson, *The Life and Travels of Thomas Simpson, the Arctic Discoverer* (R. Bentley, 1845), 8; William Barr and Larry Green, 'Lt. Aemilius Simpson's Survey from York Factory to Fort Vancouver, 1826', *Journal of the Hakluyt Society*, August 2014, 4, https://www.hakluyt.com/journal-of-the-hakluyt-society/.
[58] Simpson, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 81.
[59] Quoted in Barr and Green, 'Lt. Aemilius Simpson's Survey', 9.
[60] Barr and Green, 7.

(Figure 1) when it arrived the following June and immediately dispatched to provide transportation and naval protection during the construction of a new fort on the Fraser River. That done, the lieutenant was to proceed north to territory claimed by Russian, "touching at all the Ports & Villages" en route – in short, to finish what the *William & Ann* had failed to accomplish the previous year.[61] Plans for the erection of Fort Langley show how the reach of imperial firepower was a function of imperial hydrography. Chief Factor McLoughlin initially charged Captain Hanwell to undertake the mission aboard the *William & Ann*. Predictable as ever, the captain rejected the order.[62] His refusal to comply is indicative of Hanwell's aversion to risk, but also the very real hazard of piloting a 161-ton brig through the Fraser's poorly understood shoal entrance. McMillan, for one, thought it doubtful that a ship exceeding 150 to 200 tons could enter the river. Instead, McLoughlin assigned the task to the smaller, 71-ton *Cadboro* and its more cooperative commander. While better suited to river navigation, the *Cadboro* compared unfavourably to the region's colossal Indigenous war canoes, which Governor Simpson characterized as longer, higher out of the water, and bearing 40-50 hands each: in short, more than capable of forcibly boarding the *Cadboro*. By his estimate, the company required vessels of at least 200-250 tons' burden "to command respect in the Eyes of the Natives."[63] The *Cadboro* was hardly the best option for providing cover to the land party, but McLoughlin had little alternative in light of McMillan's assessment and the absence of hydrographic information to the contrary. The circumstances are indicative of the HBC's urgent need for a man of Lieutenant Simpson's skills.

Governor Simpson's London-based superiors rightly characterized their need of the lieutenant's "scientific knowledge." Such knowledge was indeed essential, but nonetheless insufficient when seen from the coast. Like McKenzie on the *William & Ann*, Chief Factor McLoughlin took steps to

[61] Simpson to the Governor and Committee, 20 Aug 1826; Barr and Green, 81–82; Smith, 'Simpson, Æmilius'.
[62] Maclachlan, *Fort Langley Journals*, 12.
[63] George Simpson, *Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia. Part of Dispatch from George Simpson, Esqr., Governor of Ruperts Land to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, London, March 1, 1829: Continued and Completed March 24 and June 5, 1829*, ed. E. E. Rich (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1947), 83–84.

Figure 1. Conjectural sketch of the Hudson's Bay Company schooner *Cadboro*, 1927



The small dimensions of the Cadboro *(in operation 1826-1850) meant that Indigenous people could easily board the schooner from their large war canoes. "Schooner Cadboro," 1927, A-00278, British Columbia Archives (BCA), Victoria, BC.*

ensure those aboard the voyage were capable of understanding the coast *and* its people. Cognizant of the *Cadboro*'s diminutive size, McLoughlin appointed an experienced trader, Alexander Roderick McLeod, to show Lieutenant. Simpson "the Manner of Dealing with Indians."[64] Governor Simpson would convey similar instructions to his cousin the following year, suggesting that three or four men accompany his northern survey who "understand the Language of the Natives about the Ports of Nass and Kigarnie and can [furnish] information as to the mode of dealing with those Indians."[65] Lieutenant Simpson's hydrographic knowledge was a significant asset on the largely uncharted coast, but such

[64] McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:43.
[65] Simpson, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 298.

precautions – and Hanwell's earlier record – suggest Atlantic experience was of limited value without a degree of local cultural acumen.

The *Cadboro* departed Fort Vancouver on June 27, 1827, with orders to rendezvous with a canoe party retracing McMillan's 1824 overland route to Puget Sound under that trader's command. Both parties complied with Indigenous diplomatic protocols by exchanging gifts with several chiefs as they passed through their marine territories. Makahs approached the schooner off Cape Flattery, singing a "chorus song" from their canoe. They had only a single otter skin with them, evidently more interested in monitoring local traffic and enacting welcoming protocols than trade. One Makah remained on board for a passage up the Juan de Fuca Strait.[66] The canoers – Canadien, Haudenosaunee, Pacific Islander, Scotch, Irish, Abenaki and Cree men – met two familiar Snohomish Chiefs, Sinoughton and Waskalatchy, at the rendezvous point, presenting each with beads, tobacco, and a looking glass.[67] The two parties met near Whidbey Island on July 11 and continued north to Point Roberts, where they were boarded by Quw'utsun Chief Chaseaw (Figure 2). The chief was "received in such a way that he went off to all appearances highly pleased," and later displayed his ease by sleeping a night on the schooner's deck. The expedition spent several days despatching boats to the mouth of the Fraser River before identifying a passable channel. The schooner proceeded with some difficulty. The ship grounded once, and anchor was nearly lost when it was loosed under the mistaken impression there was shallow water beneath. Even so, the *Cadboro* successfully entered the Fraser River on July 22, the first European vessel to do so. Indigenous chiefs continued to mediate its visit, however. Whotleakenum and other chiefs boarded the ship for trade, while Chief Chaseaw accompanied McMillan, McLeod, and Annance in search of an eligible establishment site. The leaders appear to have tolerated the new interlopers in their months. The *Cadboro* remained on site without incident until

[66] Aemilius Simpson, *Cadboro* logbook, 8 Jul 1827, Ships' Logs, C.1/218 (hereafter cited as Simpson, *Cadboro* logbook, C.1/219, etc.), HBCA.
[67] Maclachlan, *Fort Langley Journals*, 23–25.

Figure 2. Quw'utsun Chief Chaseaw, 1847

Paul Kane sketched an aging Chief Chaseaw when he visited the Juan de Fuca Strait in 1847. Kane describes him as the head chief of the Quw'utsun, an "inveterate gambler," and formerly great warrior who had "received an arrow through the cheek in one of his battles."[68] *Paul Kane, "Saw-se-a, Head Chief of the Cowichan," 1847, Stark Museum of Art, Orange, TX.*

[68] Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist*, 220.

construction ended in September – too long, alas, to venture any further north than the Strait of Georgia. The northern reconnaissance would have to wait.[69]

If European vessels provided a venue for diplomatic exchange in the emerging maritime contact zone, they were also always armed and ready for conflict. Conforming to local protocols – trade, gift-giving, and gestures of hospitality – did much to procure safe passage through Indigenous seascapes. But as Joshua Reid observes, violent encounters emerged when outsiders "ignored or misunderstood the cultural rules in this particular borderland region." Under these circumstances, violence was not an aberration but had a productive quality insofar as it reinforced Indigenous laws and protocols.[70] Armed vessels offered a degree of safety to itinerant traders, but such protections diminished when crew left the ship in sounding boats or went ashore.[71] When the *Cadboro* left Fort Langley, it proceeded north for a brief reconnaissance in the still unfamiliar Strait of Georgia. A sailor was killed and a ship's boy injured after an Indigenous person snatched a gun while they were collecting water on the north tip of Texada Island.[72] Traders travelling by canoe were also exposed. S'Klallams killed clerk McKenzie and four others paddling between Fort Langley and Fort Vancouver in January 1828 and took McKenzie's Chinook wife, the Princess of Wales, captive. Oral traditions suggest the attack was led by two hired guides, Skóquai and his son Sioháb, who became "bitterly resentful" when McKenzie persisted in treating them like "camp slaves." Anthropologist Wayne Suttles speculates that a breach of protocols during the *William & Ann*'s 1825 voyage may have been a factor. The Hanwell expedition

[69] Maclachlan, 25–28; McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:lxxii, 53.
[70] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 21–22, 55.
[71] Shipboard encounters also remained risky for the uninitiated. While the *Cadboro* was helping to establishing Fort Langley, Chief Factor McLoughlin wrote to his superiors in London requesting they prohibit vessels from receiving Indigenous visitors on board, with the exception of "the very principal and best chiefs pointed out to them." A brief hostility had recently arisen after an Indigenous man died shortly after boarding the *William & Ann*. McLoughlin made his wishes clear locally. The protocol suited the nervous Captain Hanwell, who "at once" put it into effect. McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:47–48.
[72] McLoughlin, 1:53–54; Maclachlan, *Fort Langley Journals*, 247n47. To his credit, Captain Hanwell had foreseen the possibility of such violence on his 1825 voyage, hiring Lummi villages to bring freshwater "as I thought if our people went on shore for it they might give some offence, and cause a quarrel." Hanwell, *William & Ann* logbook, 27 Aug 1825.

had received considerable hospitality from the S'Klallams. Chief Squastin attended the ship daily with gifts of food and offered his daughter's hand in marriage. Chief Quiactin urged the ship to visit his village. McKenzie may have breached protocols by declining these invitations. The expedition also ignored S'Klallam exhortations to avoid their Quw'utsun rivals, instead receiving Chief Chaseaw aboard ship, trading, exchanging gifts, and establishing a fort near Quw'utsun villages on the Fraser River. When McKenzie chose to travel through Hood's Canal, he did so assuming he would have the protection of the S'Klallam. The error was fatal.[73]

Indigenous groups were not alone in using violence to effect what they regarded as legitimate legal and cultural protocols. British traders exacted retribution on Indigenous leaders and villages that did not conform to their notions of order and racial hierarchy. In June 1828, Lieutenant Simpson was sent to punish the S'Klallam for the attack on McKenzie's crew, which the HBC regarded as an affront to the principals of justice and "honour of the whites."[74] McLoughlin preferred to send the 193-ton *Eagle*, but feared doing so would nullify company insurance on the vessel, a reasonable prospect given the uncharted and hostile waters it would be required to enter. Once more the job fell to the *Cadboro*, in company with a sixty-man canoe brigade.[75] The schooner proceeded up to a village near Port Townsend, which a Makah interpreter on board identified as the winter residence of McKenzie's assailants. The Makah hailed a familiar Snohomish man passing by in a canoe, and this individual agreed to negotiate between the parties. The man failed to secure the Princess of Wales's release, however, and Simpson ordered him seized as a hostage.[76] The *Cadboro* and brigade proceeded to

[73] Suttles also raises the possibility that the Princess of Wales may have been the object of the S'Klallam's enmity, particularly if she had S'Klallams among her slaves. At the time, Chief Factor McLoughlin surmised that the attackers' motivation was simply to steal the party's clothes and arms. McKenzie journal, 9 Aug 1825; Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian*, ed. Frederick Webb Hodge, vol. 9 (Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1913), 24; Maclachlan, *Fort Langley Journals*, 213–14; Gough, *Gunboat Frontier*. See also Mary Ann Lambert, *Dungeness Massacre and Other Regional Tales* (Mary Ann Lambert Vincent, 1961), 9–12.
[74] Ermatinger, 'Earliest Expeditions Against Puget Sound Indians', 16.
[75] McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:58.
[76] The Snohomish man was considered a valuable hostage given his relations among the S'Klallam. Simpson, *Cadboro* logbook, 27 Jun to 1 Jul 1828, C.1/219.

another village, stətíɬəm (New Dungeness), where Chief Tokin agreed to deliver the Princess of Wales as soon her enslaver returned to the village. Tensions rose over the following days, however, and Simpson agreed to secure the chief as a hostage during one of his daily visits. A skirmish erupted when Tokin tried to leave, and the chief was shot dead and another S'Klallam wounded as they left the ship. Events unraveled quickly from there. The *Cadboro* cannonaded stətíɬəm, providing cover while a landing party lit fires and seized canoes, whale oil, and two child hostages. Their homes reduced to ruins, and as many as twenty-five killed, the defeated S'Klallams agreed to exchange the Princess of Wales for the *Cadboro*'s hostages.[77]

The assault provided a grim start to the HBC's third attempt to survey the north coast. The *Cadboro* left stətíɬəm in ruins, stopping at Fort Langley and Neah Bay, before turning north along Vancouver Island to fill the wide gaps in commercial knowledge still left after Captain Hanwell's expedition three years earlier. The *Cadboro* encountered four canoes off Barclay Sound, where Lieutenant Simpson presented a small gift of tobacco but gave offense by failing to comply with certain (unspecified) commands. The Nuu-chah-nulth canoers "became rather turbulent" when they were ordered to paddle away, throwing back the tobacco they had received, applying "abusive epithets," and fixing a gun on Lieutenant Simpson. The *Cadboro*'s crew opened fire, and the canoes hastily departed, apparently without injury. For all its value to the HBC, Lieutenant Simpson's Atlantic naval experience could not prepare him to understand the encounter. His description of the canoers as "clamorous beggars" suggests his tutelage under more experienced traders had incompletely impressed on him "the Manner of Dealing with Indians." French-Abenaki clerk Annance was closer to the mark four years earlier when he observed Skagit chiefs exacting tariffs on passing traders. That the Barclay

[77] The negotiations were conducted by Chief Waskalatchy, who arrived on July 4 with Chief Sinoughton to secure the release of their Snohomish compatriot held captive on the *Cadboro*. Simpson, 3-7 Jul 1828, *Cadboro* log, C.1/219; Maclachlan, *Fort Langley Journals*, 214; Ermatinger, 'Earliest Expeditions Against Puget Sound Indians', 28–29.

Sound canoers indignantly jettisoned the tobacco they received suggests their motives were not limited to material gain.[78]

Circumstances conspired to prevent similar occurrences between Barkley Sound and the Nass. A blanket of fog prevented the lieutenant from visiting other Vancouver Island ports. It had abated by the time the *Cadboro* reached Haida Gwaii, but no locals answered when the ship fired a gun to announce its arrival outside Cumshewa and Skidegate harbours.[79] The *Cadboro* was boarded by a chief (probably Haida) at Kaigani Point, and by the American captains of the *Volunteer* and *Griffon*, who helped pilot the schooner into a nearby harbour. Simpson had arrived too late in the season, and with too small a vessel, to interfere with their trade. As such, the captains obliged Lieutenant Simpson with valuable trade details, sketches of the harbours they frequented, and the description of a large outlet at Port Essington (the Skeena River). Captain Barker of the *Volunteer* admitted having "quite limited" knowledge of the muddy river at Gingolx (the Nass) despite visiting the port for the previous six years – the Nisga'a's "hostile disposition" and "great numbers" had rendered it "too hazardous to attempt anything in the way of a survey." But the river appeared navigable, and the Nisga'a informed Barker that it continued for some distance. The information convinced Simpson that this was the river he sought, and that it and the Skeena were the only major rivers by which Americans competed with the HBC's interior ports. It still remained to survey the river, but Lieutenant Simpson considered this untenable aboard the *Cadboro*, "being too small to admit of proper arrangements for her defence" and rotting, to boot. Satisfied with the intelligence he received, Simpson decided to return to the Columbia.[80]

Though he visited few ports, Lieutenant Simpson acquired more useful information than Hanwell simply by conversing with other, more experience mariners. The HBC's reliance on word-of-

[78] Gibson, *Opposition on the Coast*, 106–14.
[79] Gibson, 108–9.
[80] Gibson, 109–14; Simpson, *Journey to the Columbia*, 78.

mouth reports is indicative of the informal and decentralized networks by which knowledge of the coast spread, and of its captains' sober appraisal of Indigenous naval power. Like Barker, Hanwell and Simpson both considered the risk of Nisga'a attack too great for their sounding boats to conduct firsthand surveys of Observatory Inlet and the Nass River. But Simpson accepted Nisga'a reports regarding the Nass River (as transmitted by Barker), whereas Hanwell had ignored their warnings entirely. Second-hand reports were crucial under such circumstances, and it was by the very same channels that the geography of fear was spread. Lieutenant Simpson reported that experience had produced among the US opposition a number of competent pilots with knowledge of ports where they could anchor in foul weather. But the perceived risk of frequent gales, rapid tides, and "thick foggy weather" was heightened by the possibility that marine disaster would be attended to with Indigenous attack:

> a consideration which always acts upon the minds and works forcibly upon the apprehensions of a crew when placed in a difficult situation upon the coast is that if so unfortunate as to suffer shipwreck, they have little chance of escape from a cruel death by the hands of the savage natives or at least being reduced to the sad alternative of becoming their slaves.[81]

Lieutenant Simpson suggested that a steam vessel, less susceptible to the vagaries of wind and tide, be placed on the coast "and so arranged that no apprehension need be entertained from hostile attempt of the Indians."[82] Fear of the coast and its people remained intwined – even for those who dared approach.

Governor Simpson, in any case, was pleased with the outcome of the voyage, and decided on the basis of its findings to establish a post on the Nass to "intercept every skin that passes from the

[81] Gibson, *Opposition on the Coast*, 118.
[82] Gibson, 114–15. Unfortunately, Lieutenant Simpson's report and extant logs have little to say regarding the presence or absence of Indigenous guides aboard ship during these voyages, especially when compared with accounts of previous voyages left by seasoned traders like James McMillan, Francois Noel Annance, and Alexander McKenzie. The unnamed Makah interpreter accompanied the *Cadboro* at least as far Fort Langley in 1828 (see Gibson, 107) but his identity and place of disembarkation is unclear. It is possible that that he, or other Indigenous crew members, serve as guides, pilots, or mediators, but extant records have little say on the matter. Lieutenant Simpson's records are those of a naval officer focused on the orders set out by his superiors; the traders cut their teeth in the continental interior, where detailed knowledge of Indigenous interlocutors was key to survival and profit.

interior" and thereby undercut US competitors.[83] The *Cadboro* returned to sound Nass Harbour in August 1830, this time in company in with the larger brigantine *Eagle*.[84] Even so, sounding boats were instructed to remain close to the vessels "lest the Indians might feel inclined to act hostilely." Simpson was clearly mindful of the warnings Captain Barker had given him two years previously. Nisga'a guides indicated the whereabouts of a passable channel up the Nass and accompanied the *Cadboro* to the limit of navigation a short distance upriver.[85] Simpson had less success determining whether the river froze – a crucial detail if anchored ships were required to defend a prospective fort – nor its length and extent. These efforts were hindered, first, by Simpson's inability to speak Nisga'a, and second, by what he interpreted as their refusal to share information that would enable the HBC to bypass Gingolx to and engage their inland trading partners directly. As before, the Nisga'a probably offered local knowledge selectively in order to channel marine traffic to the benefit of their communities, as they had aboard the *William & Ann* in 1825. Simpson disparaged these "shellfish [sic] motives," but clearly had the company's own self-interest in mind. In any case, the lieutenant had finally – on the HBC's fourth attempt – succeeded in surveying the mouth of a great northern river, laying the groundwork for Fort Nass to be established the following year.[86]

Through Nisga'a reports, hydrographic surveys, and waterborne firepower, Lieutenant Simpson advanced the HBC's agenda far past what his predecessor had accomplished. The *Cadboro*'s boats sounded the Fraser's shoal entrance, allowing imperial vessels to breach the river and provide protection while Company labourers erected a bastion and stockade at Fort Langley. HBC seamen sounded and sketched a broad channel on the Nass three years later, enabling a second northern beachhead to be established in the heart of Nisga'a territory. In both cases, Indigenous guides pointed

[83] Gibson, 21.
[84] The *Cadboro*, under Lieutenant Simpson's command, also ventured north in 1829 for a visit with Russian Governor Chistyakov in New Archangel, Alaska. See Gibson, 127–30.
[85] Gibson, 138–40.
[86] Gibson, 138–41.

the way. The new coastal forts undercut American traders by interrupting the flow of pelts from the interior. They also challenged Indigenous leaders who had long exacted tariffs on the movement of furs as they moved towards the coast. Chiefs across the coast welcomed the opportunity for trade brought by transient ships and managed their presence and movements by withholding local knowledge, providing selective answers, warning traders from rival groups, and, when necessary, threatening or engaging in violent reprisal. Real or perceived, the Nisga'a's "hostile disposition" and "great numbers" prevented American and Hudson's Bay Company ships from sounding the Nass River for five years until the arrival of the *Eagle* in 1830. But with each survey, imperial firepower advanced further into Indigenous territory. Permanent, stockaded posts were not so easily managed, and chiefs recognized the threat these new establishments posed. Imperial incursions at the Fraser and the Nass had demonstrated that trader geographies of fear and ignorance could be allayed, with persistence.

An "Intimate knowledge": Hiring the Opposition

These initial advances on the part of the HBC overlapped with a series of setbacks. The *William & Ann* wrecked at the mouth of the Columbia River in March 1829. Its entire crew of twenty-five drowned, including Captain John Swan, who sailed as first mate on the vessel's 1825 voyage and helped sound the Fraser River's southern channel. Four bodies were found washed ashore, and a fifth – possibly Swan's – discovered buried in sand up to its face, "which had been eat up by the Birds." The Clatsop initially agreed to surrender the cargo they salvaged from their beaches but withdrew the offer when the HBC's envoy insisted on coming ashore without their consent. A skirmish ensued, in which company attacked and burned their village, Klaát-sop, to the ground. The traders gave chase to two armed Clatsops after discovering them near the HBC camp the following day, shooting one and stabbing the other to death after a dramatic pursuit.[87] Governor Simpson considered the "melancholy fate" of the ship and its company a severe blow to the HBC's coastal ambitions, "surrounded as we are

[87] McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:71–73.

by hostile Indians who are picking us off at all quarters."[88] It would fall to vulnerable smaller ships such as the *Cadboro* to carry on the coast trade until replacements arrived. Unfortunately for the Governor, a replacement, the brig *Isabella*, wrecked at the same location on its maiden voyage the following year, with loss of some cargo but no human casualties.[89] A third ship, the schooner *Vancouver*, was temporarily disabled after it ran aground in Portland Canal in 1832, and irrevocably wrecked when it was driven ashore on Haida Gwaii's Rose Spit two years later.[90] These losses were compounded by illness and death. In July 1830, a devastating malarial outbreak claimed three-quarters of the Indigenous population in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver. In September 1831, Lieutenant Simpson succumbed to inflammation of the liver at Fort Nass (subsequently renamed Fort Simpson in his honour). Chief Factor McLoughlin described his death as a personal and strategic blow in a letter to his superiors in London: "I suffer the loss of an acquaintance whose Gentlemanlike conduct and zealous discharge of his duty entitled him to my Respect and Esteem, and though his death at all times would be a loss still in the present situation of our affairs it is particularly so."[91]

These setbacks forced the company to innovate. Hiring naval captains had produced mixed results. Captains Hanwell and Simpson were sober leaders – an attribute not to be discounted in the Marine Department – and brought years of experience from their service in the Arctic and Atlantic.[92] Such experience, however, was of limited utility in the northeastern Pacific. McLoughlin lamented that the two were "unacquainted with the coast and had never seen an Indian till they came here."[93] A

[88] Simpson, *Journey to the Columbia*, 111.
[89] McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:83–85.
[90] Gibson, *Opposition on the Coast*, 32–33.
[91] McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:88; Igler, *Great Ocean*, 66–70.
[92] Governor Simpson complained of drunkenness in the Marine Department, saying of one captain that his "talent as a Navigator I know nothing about, but his talent as a Grog Drinker is without parallel and I shall be agreeably surprised if he and his Ship ever reach the Port of Destination." Simpson, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 119. See also John McLoughlin, *The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee. Second Series, 1839-44*, ed. E.E. Rich, vol. 2 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1943), xiiin3; Judith Hudson Beattie and Helen M. Buss, *Undelivered Letters to Hudson's Bay Company Men on the Northwest Coast of America, 1830-57* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), 131–32; Gibson, *Otter Skins*, 69.
[93] This was certainly an exaggeration for Captain Hanwell, who had a decade of experience aboard company runs to Hudson Bay (for all the difference it made). McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:117.

different sort of expertise was required if the company was to overcome its American competition. McLoughlin pressed this opinion with the Governor and Committee in London, arguing that they would have saved considerable money, "and me an immensity of trouble," if "we had in command of the Company's Vessels persons equally well acquainted with the coast and with the manner of dealing with the natives."[94] Pairing sea captains with fur traders – Hanwell and McKenzie, Simpson and McLeod – had proven an imperfect solution, creating conditions for conflict between senior officers. A decade of experience had taught McLoughlin that two knowledges, geographic and cultural, had to be more fully integrated to ensure the success of the HBC's marine department.

Fortunately, such a person was available. Born in Boston in 1800, William Henry McNeill had reportedly watched the battle of the USS *Chesapeake* and HMS *Shannon* from shore during the War of 1812. He would spend much of his adult life tacking between the two imperial belligerents. McNeill served aboard ships by the time he was thirteen, became a master mariner in his early twenties, and had made three fur trading voyages from Massachusetts to the Northeastern Pacific by the time he was thirty.[95] Equally relevant, McNeil had a very different relationship to the coast and its people than either of his predecessors. Following his 1828 voyage, Lieutenant Simpson reported that many American traders had partnered with Haida and Tlingit women. The children born of these liaisons had "formed a sort of tie or connexion between the shipping and these people," and, in Simpson's judgement, accounted for their "friendly disposition."[96] By 1831, McNeill had partnered with an elite Haida woman named Matilda, described by one contemporary as "a very large handsome Kigani

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[94] McLoughlin, 1:117.

[95] "Death of Captain McNeil," *Daily British Colonist*, 5 September 1875; Charles Weslie McCain, *History of the SS. 'Beaver', Being a Graphic and Vivid Sketch of This Noted Pioneer Steamer and Her Romantic Cruise for over Half a Century on the Placid Island-Dotted Waters of the North Pacific* (Evans & Hastings, 1894), 37, https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcbooks/items/1.0222545.

[96] Gibson, *Opposition on the Coast*, 120. These "tender ties" were, in fact, a staple of the fur trade, helping to shore up diplomatic and economic alliances between European and American traders throughout North America. See Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1980); Anne Farrar Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 1–145.

[Kaigani] woman, with all the dignity and carriage of a chieftainess, which she was."[97] Her status and local knowledge must have been a considerable asset to the aspiring trader.[98] But it was more than a practical arrangement. McNeill and Matilda had an enduring relationship. The two would remain together until Matilda's death in 1850, when a grief-stricken McNeill lamented her as "a good and faithful partner to me."[99] The bonds McNeill formed, and the knowledge acquired through them, were sorely needed by the HBC as it sought to recover from its string of losses. So was his ship, the 145-ton brig *Lama*. Both requirements were brought to stark relief by the *Vancouver*'s accident of 1832. "See what the Company pays for their servants ignorance of the coast," wrote a furious Chief Factor McLoughlin, "Mr. Ogden writes me there are three harbours in the vicinity of the place where the *Vancouver* was driven back, & to which Capt. Kipling might have gone [...] had he been acquainted with them." Instead, McLoughlin was on the hook for repairs and wages for a stranded crew. Rather than have them idle, McLoughlin set about to purchase a new ship, and, if possible, a captain.[100]

McLoughlin dispatched Chief Factor Duncan Finlayson to secure an agreement in the Kingdom of Hawai'i, where American traders like McNeill stopped to dispose of their remaining trade goods and purchase the fragrant sandalwood (used in incense and medicines) they hoped to barter alongside their furs in Guangzhou.[101] Finlayson, clearly perceived McNeill as having a degree of cultural and geographic acumen unlikely to be matched by yet another Atlantic transplant:

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[97] Local historian Peter Grant observes that McNeill made at least three visits to Kaigani between June 19 and July 16, 1831. Matilda and McNeill's first son, William, appears to have been born between October 1831 and October 1832. Peter Grant, 'McNeill's Kygarney Summer', Oak Bay Chronicles, accessed 10 October 2024, https://oakbaychronicles.ca/?page_id=44; Dorothy Blakey-Smith, ed., *Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1975), 108.

[98] For a thorough, if necessarily speculative, assessment of the broader political, economic, and cultural worlds in which Matilda lived, see Mary Catherine Greenfield, 'The Unending Conquest of the S.S. Beaver: Steam Power and the Myth of the White Anglo-Saxon Nation in the Nineteenth-Century Pacific Northwest' (PhD dissertation, New Haven, CT, Yale University, 2016), 61–68.

[99] In 1866, McNeill remarried to powerful Nisga'a woman, Martha, who shared Wolf clan leadership with her brother and was previously married to a Nisga'a Chief. Both women, Matilda and Martha, appear in Marius Barbeau's later research into totem poles on the northern coast. Sylvia Van Kirk, 'Tracing the Fortunes of Five Founding Families of Victoria', *BC Studies*, no. 115/6 (Autumn/Winter 1997): 221, 227–28; Marius Barbeau, *Totem Poles* (Ottawa: Roger Duhamel, Queen's Printer, 1964), 651; Marius Barbeau, 'Totems and Songs', *Canadian Geographical Journal* 50, no. 5 (May 1955): 180–81.

[100] McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:lxxxviii, 99.

[101] Gibson, *Opposition on the Coast*, 16–17.

> The experience he has acquired of the Natives, & his intimate acquaintance with the different Harbors, Bays & Inlets on the Coast, from cruising thereon for the space of fifteen Years – coupled with his activity talents & abilities as a Navigator & Trader,–render him eminently qualified to give affairs in that quarter a favorable turn.[102]

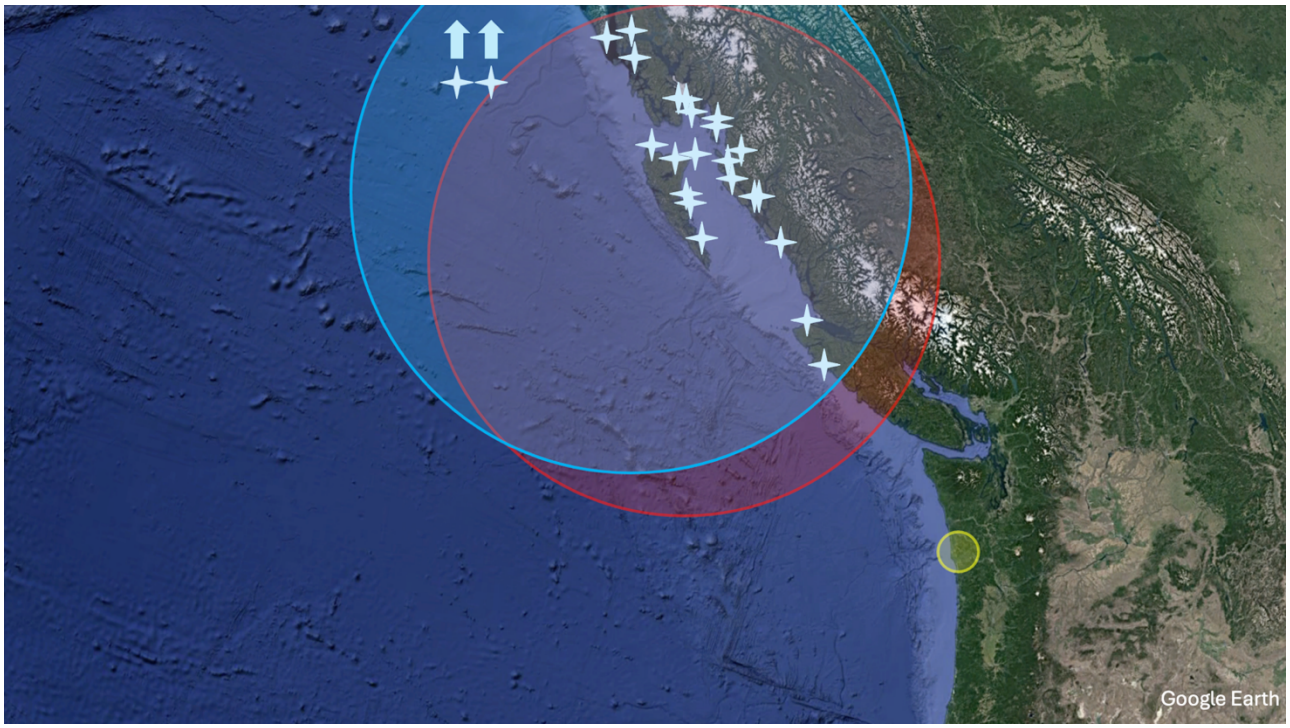
It is less clear, on the face of it, why McNeill agreed to the proposition. The HBC purchased the *Lama* for £1250 (£500 less than a previous offer McNeill had received) and hired its captain for £200 (£70 less than his previous salary).[103] Perhaps McNeill's "intimate acquaintance" with the coast and consent to join the HBC had the same origin: Matilda. American traders like McNeill had no permanent base in the region and structured their trade around grueling, multiyear voyages between New England and the Pacific. Few Boston traders undertook more than two such journeys in their lifetimes.[104] The HBC, by contrast, divided coastal trade and transoceanic transport, using its Pacific depot on the Columbia as a link between the two networks. As such, the company offered a pathway for McNeill to remain with Matilda and her Haida kin. Joining the British monopolists may have caused the Boston-born McNeill some discomfort, but the captain had other allegiances to consider.

The general extent of McNeill's navigational knowledge can be inferred from an informal catalogue of sailing directions he kept in the back of the *Lama*'s 1832 logbook. Based on reports from other captains, the list provides directions for entering some twenty-two harbours and passages around the Alexander Archipelago, Haida Gwaii, Milbanke Sound, and Vancouver Island. The names McNeill employs are indicative of the geography of interaction that brought Euro-American mariners alongside Indigenous trade partners. Only a third (eight) of the entries use names given by Vancouver or various traders; the remainder (fourteen) derive from Indigenous languages, often referring to the group or chief those mariners expected to find in a given locale. At times, McNeill refers to these interactions directly. Under his entry for "Clews Harbour" (southeast coast of Haida Gwaii), for example, we learn of a pilot, Cumshewa John, "a smart native and is good here as well as many other

[102] McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:337.
[103] McLoughlin, 1:lxxxviii, 337.
[104] Clayton, *Islands of Truth*, 77.

places on the coast." Under Enakanoel (near Point Ellis, Alaska), we learn "This is a well disposed Tribe and will generally come off to ships in the strait." Elsewhere, the geographies of interaction implied by these names must be inferred. The distribution of harbours may be indicative of the sphere of Haida influence, with Kaigani near at its centre: note its resemblance to the breadth of ports the Skidegate pilot Tom was "thoroughly acquainted with' in 1825 (Map 5). Kaigani itself is not listed in the directions – one presumes McNeill was sufficiently acquainted with it to forego other captains' reports – but Matilda clearly offered the captain a bridge to an Indigenous seascape at the heart of the maritime fur trade.[105]

Map 5. Spatial extent of Captain William Henry McNeill's marine knowledge, circa 1832



The blue circle indicates the extent of McNeill's knowledge, with overlapping white stars marking specific ports and passages included in his "Directions for entering the Principal Harbours on the North West Coast of America." The red and yellow circles indicate the range of knowledge held by Tom and the HBC, respectively, in 1825. Google Earth.

[105] The list is undated, but the enclosing logbook tracks voyages made to the Northeastern Pacific in 1824-5 (aboard the *Convoy*) and 1832 (aboard the *Lama*). The list refers to voyage of the *Rob Roy* through Clarence Strait, Alaska in March 1824, and to the *Atahualpa* and *Lascar*, which were in and out of the region between 1800-15 and 1820-25, respectively. McNeill probably started the list before 1831, when he annotated the entry for 'Enakanoel' to indicate the pitiful few furs received there – "sell from one to two ~~hundred~~ skins a season. *In 1831*" [italics and strike mark in pencil]. William Henry McNeill, "Directions for entering the Principal Harbours on the North West Coast of America by different Commanders," W.H. McNeill fonds, PR-1821, file A/B/20.5/C76, BCA; Howay, *List of Trading Vessels*, 188, 199.

One can only guess the extent to which Matilda aided McNeill as he expanded his knowledge of the coast. That she accompanied the captain on certain voyages is clear.[106] It is also evident that McNeill made a practice of soliciting Indigenous knowledge in unfamiliar corners. In his first year of company service, McNeill began examining the intricate interior canals and inlets on the coast between Vancouver Island and Fort Simpson. In April 1833, he boarded an Indigenous pilot at Land Otter Harbour (near Principe Channel) "to Pilot me into Seal Harbour – not having been at that place before."[107] An account book listing "Gratuities to Natives" for 1837 shows an individual (probably Heiltsuk) paid at Fort McLoughlin "for acting as Pilot to the Southward," and additional goods tallied under the heading "Surveying." The tobacco, rum, flints, and darning needles expended at Milbanke Sound the following year also included payment for a pilot.[108] This assistance must have contributed to McNeill's early success shadowing and outmanoeuvring the US opposition. "The manner in which he has performed this duty reflects much credit upon him," Finlayson reported in 1836, "having from his intimate knowledge of the harbours, and trading stations on the coast, on many occasions given them [American traders] the slip and secured all the skins before their appearance."[109] HBC traders had long suffered from their ignorance of the coast relative to that of their competitors. McNeill's "intimate knowledge" – acquired through personal experience, captains' reports, and Indigenous assistance – had at last changed the field.

A second fundamental shift steamed into the Columbia River on March 19, 1836.[110] Historian Richard Mackie describes the HBC paddlewheel *Beaver* as inaugurating "a spatial revolution in the coasting trade." The steamer is a perfect example of the feedback loops that fed British imperialism. An assemblage of British oak, Guyanese greenheart (*chloracardium rodiesi*), and African teak, fitted with

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[106] See, for example, George Simpson, *An Overland Journey Round the World: During the Years 1841 and 1842* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1847), 112, https://books.google.ca/books?id=TF4SAAAAYAAJ&.
[107] McNeill, *Lama* logbook, 7 Apr 1833, W.H. McNeill fonds, PR-1821, file A/B/20.5/L16j, BCA.
[108] *Lama* and *Beaver* accounts books, W.H. McNeill fonds, PR-1821, A/B/20.5/B38, BCA.
[109] McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:326.
[110] E. W. Wright, ed., *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest* (Portland, OR: Lewis & Dryden Printing Co., 1895), 16.

state-of-the-art engines manufactured by Boulton & Watt, the SS *Beaver* became the first steamer to enter the Pacific Ocean. So it was that raw materials from three continents, hammered together on the banks of the Thames, were deployed to extract furs from a fourth continent on the other side of the world. The *Beaver* significantly improved the regularity of shipping since it could forego the delays its predecessors endured waiting out headwinds and calms. It also performed more favourably in narrow channels and inlets, where surging tides and currents threatened to beat sailing vessels into the shore in dull winds. Sailing vessels previously required for the coasting trade could now be redeployed towards trans-Pacific voyages, positioning the company to diversify its export trade with local goods like timber, salmon, and grain. Henceforth, coastal voyages would primarily be undertaken by the *Beaver*.[111]

The new technology, however revolutionary, did not alleviate the need for Indigenous knowledge, especially since the company was now capable of examining remote channels and inlets previously inaccessible its sailing fleet. McNeill's "gratuities" to Indigenous pilots, described above, were given for services rendered aboard the steamer, after he assumed its command in 1837. Other Indigenous guides were employed for its inaugural tour of the coast in 1836. The *Beaver* left the Columbia River that June under Chief Factor Finlayson and Captain David Home to press further into the "numerous and intricate inlets (that interlace the whole country) as far as possible inland," as one trader put it, "in order to come as much within reach of the interior tribes as possible."[112] The steamer procured the services of an Indigenous interpreter at Milbanke Sound, who probably helped guide the steamer through the inlets to the east. The interpreter unsuccessfully tried to dissuade the steamer from venturing too far into the homewaters of another nation to the southeast (perhaps a Kwakwaka'wakw group). HBC trader John Dunn shared the interpreter's misgivings, but the expedition pressed on to their village at the head of an inlet, exchanged gifts, and departed without

[111] Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 136–37; McCain, *History of the SS. 'Beaver'*, 15–18, 32.
[112] Dunn, *History of the Oregon Territory*, 265–66.

incident.[113] An unnamed guide boarded the *Beaver* as it proceeded north "to show us the different harbours" on Laredo Sound and Principe Channel. On one occasion, the guide offered to dispel a dense fog in return for some tobacco. From his position on the quarterdeck – a part of the ship traditionally reserved for officers – the guide began to murmur and gather the fog into a large cedar hat. Without warning, he dropped his hat to the deck, held it downwards for several minutes, and presently declared the fog would soon dissipate. Dunn found little reason to quibble when the fog cleared as predicted. The vessel was, after all, "in a great degree under his guidance, in those intricate and narrow guts," and little could be gained by expressing incredulity. Dunn gave the guide his tobacco and attributed the charm's success to its practitioner's local knowledge, noting that the guide, "from his knowledge of the climate and the locality, was weather wise; and could tell the disappearance of those periodical fogs."[114] All these knowledges – linguistic, navigational, meteorological – enabled the HBC to extend its commercial reach aboard the *Beaver*.

HBC Governor George Simpson returned to Fort Vancouver in 1841, still energetic but showing his age. "He is a most indefatigable man," one clerk observed, "but I'm sorry to perceive he seems to be breaking down."[115] Seventeen years had passed since his first visit, when he had so categorically deplored the state of the company's marine knowledge. The old governor must have been gratified to see how their affairs had progressed under his tenure. Simpson and his party were saluted by the schooner *Cadboro* as they reached the fort's outlying grist and sawmills one sunset near August's end.[116] After a visit and inspection, Simpson traced McMillan's route over the Chehalis portage to Puget Sound and Fort Nisqually, which the company had established as an agricultural base in 1833. Two

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[113] Dunn describes the *Beaver* as proceeding "up a canal running out of Johnson's Straits, far into the mainland [...] It runs upwards of 100 miles inland, from Fort McLoughlin, in a south-easterly direction." Finlayson's report notes the ship "entered Johnstone's Straits and went up in them to the distance of 16 or 20 miles." Dunn, 264–71; McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:327.

[114] Dunn, *History of the Oregon Territory*, 275–76; Peter Kemp and I.C.B. Dear, eds., 'Quarterdeck', in *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

[115] G. P. de T. Glazebrook, ed., *The Hargrave Correspondence, 1821-1843* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1968), 362.

[116] Simpson, *Overland Journey Round the World*, 104.

days later, the governor joined Captain McNeill aboard the steamship *Beaver* to inspect the company's new northern forts, and to confer with Russian officials farther north. The steamer experienced some delays to allow for repairs and loading cords of wood fuel (generally assisted by Indigenous peoples), but Governor Simpson had no hesitation in declaring "the paddle is preferable to canvas in these inland waters."[117]

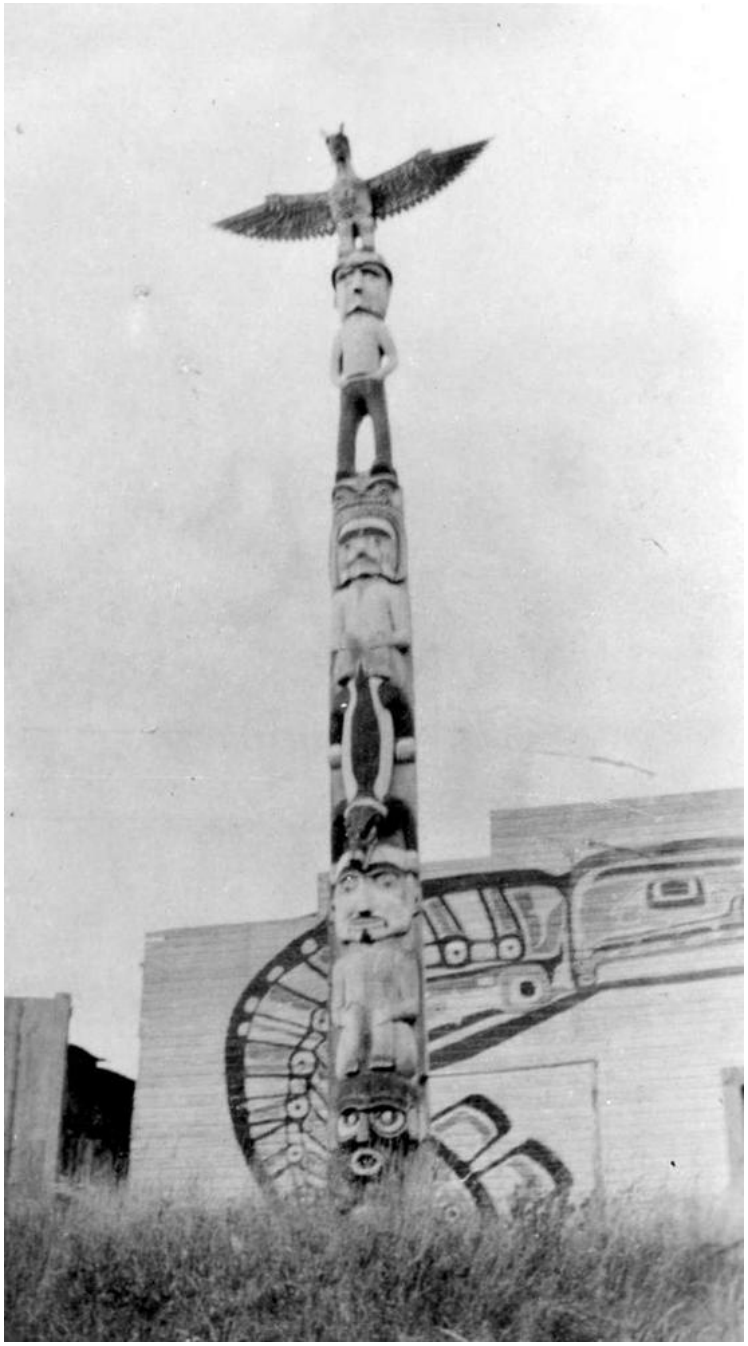
The journey underscored the relationships McNeill had forged on the coast. A Kwakwaka'wakw chief, known to McNeill and Matilda, boarded with his wife and child for passage to his village – evidently not his first time aboard the *Beaver*. Other Indigenous traders greeted McNeill by name – "Ma-ha-tell, Ma-ha-tell" – and dropped business to make jokes at his expense, evidently conscious of the "precise length to which they might go in teasing M'Neill."[118] McNeill made a lasting impression among certain Kwakwaka'wakw and appears to have exchanged names with at least one chief. "Matha Hill" became a valuable crest, or "keysoo," that was passed down through the Moon family, and the subject of a ritual repeated at family feasts until at least the turn of the century:

> the Matha Hill pantomime was repeated again and again. A messenger would arrive bearing a letter which he handed to the chief (Johnny Moon) [Chief Moon's grandson] in the manner of a courier, Johnny would scrutinize it carefully, pretending to read, and announce that Matha Hill had arrived. Matha Hill (Johnny Moon's eldest son) would then enter, between two guards, resplendent with sword, tightly buttoned, piped tunic, white shoes and trousers. After greetings had been exchanged the 'kleelala' [family feast] would begin.

In 1894, Walitsma (Salmon River) Chief Johnny Moon (Heywaukalees) raised a pole bearing the Matha Hill crest at H'Kusam, standing atop his two bodyguards and shown pocketing his hands "deep in the slash pockets of a seaman's trousers" (Figure 3). The origins of the crest were forgotten by the 1950s, but Kwakwaka'wakw Chief Martin Smith (Maqualahgulees) recalled Johny Moon "always said, 'Matha Hill was a very, very honorable man.'"[119] The keysoo offers compelling evidence of McNeill's character and the captain's readiness and ability to acculturate to local practices like name exchanges

[117] Simpson, 109–12.
[118] Simpson, 115–16.
[119] The story of the Matha Hell crest was recounted in the 1960s by Eric Sismey, drawing on his correspondence with Chief James Martin Smith (Maqualahgulees) and others. The connection to Captain McNeill was established in an article by A.F.

Figure 3. H'Kusam (Salmon River) pole displaying the Moon family's Matha Hill crest [c. 190–]



This pole at H'Kusam (Salmon River) bore the image of the Moon family's Matha Hill crest. Captain McNeill is represented by the trousered figure beneath the Thunderbird. Chief James Martin Smith (Maqualahgulees) was a young man when the pole was raised in 1894. He described the remaining figures, in descending order, as Beaver (Tsawi), "Matha Hill's first bodyguard," Wolf (Alanum), a "second bodyguard," and Dso-no-qua ("the wild woman of the woods").[120] *BCA, D-02331.*

Bucknam. I am grateful to Dr. Deidre Cullon for alerting me to this reference. Eric Sismey, 'The Mystery of "Matha Hill"', *The Islander: Daily Colonist Magazine*, 10 April 1960; A.F. Bucknam, 'Totem Pole Figure Mystery No Longer', *The Islander: Daily Colonist Magazine*, 1 May 1960; Eric Sismey, 'More about the Salmon River People', *The Islander: Daily Colonist Magazine*, 9 July 1961; Eric Sismey, 'End of a Mystery', *The Islander: Daily Colonist Magazine*, 25 March 1962; Eric Sismey, 'Johnny Moon Totem Pole', *The Islander: Daily Colonist Magazine*, 21 April 1968.

[120] Sismey, 'Johnny Moon Totem Pole', 6.

(coached, perhaps, by Matilda). These were precisely the qualities that enabled the HBC to navigate the intricate cultural and geographic contours of the coast.

Governor Simpson also reflected that the steamer had gone some ways to dispelling the fear that once conditioned encounters between Indigenous and imperial seafarers, and had little hesitation in joining a Nawhitti (Kwakwaka'wakw) chief on an evening's fishing excursion, alone: "Some few years back, no white man would have gone out alone amidst twenty or thirty native canoes; but [...] I had the mysterious prestige of the steamer and her guns in my favor."[121] Simpson certainly exaggerates Indigenous reactions to the steamer – historian Mary Greenfield suggests he "mostly pulled these ideas out of thin air" – but the statement reveals a rising imperial confidence.[122] From Nawhitti, the *Beaver* visited the necklace of forts the HBC had established since his last visit: Fort McLaughlin (1833), Fort Simpson (1831), Fort Stikine (acquired from the Russian American Company in 1838), and Fort Taku (1840). Simpson's itinerary was proof, if any was needed, that the company's successive surveys had begun to dispel the geographies of fear and ignorance that had hobbled its initial efforts on the coast.

The HBC's efforts also transformed the way other outsiders negotiated the region's unfamiliar marine environments. Simpson was not the only official inspecting the coast that year. On arriving at Fort Vancouver, the aging governor discovered that the United States Exploring Expedition had been in the region for the past four months, conducting their own surveys of the Juan de Fuca Strait, Puget Sound, and the Columbia River. The USS *Vincennes* and *Porpoise* had arrived in the Juan de Fuca Strait in May 1841. Wary of venturing too far into Puget Sound without assistance, Captain Charles Wilkes sent a letter by canoe requesting an HBC pilot to guide his ships through to Fort Nisqually.[123] Two days passed without response, however, until an impatient Wilkes accepted a Nisqually chief's offer to pilot them to the fort himself. The unnamed chief led the ships some 30 kilometres into Admiralty inlet

[121] Simpson, *Overland Journey Round the World*, 118.
[122] Greenfield, 'The Unending Conquest of the S.S. Beaver: Steam Power and the Myth Ofthe White Anglo-Saxon Nation in the Nineteenth-Century Pacific Northwest', 102.
[123] Richard W. Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes and the Exploration of Inland Washington Waters: Journals from the Expedition of 1841* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2009), 132, 252.

when they were met by a canoe carrying the *Beaver*'s first mate and an unnamed crew member. These boarded the *Vincennes* and *Porpoise*, respectively, and directed the ships the remainder of the distance to Fort Nisqually.[124] The "Ex Ex" continued to receive the assistance of the HBC as it probed the islands and inlets of Puget Sound. Thomas Wade (possibly the unnamed seaman who guided the *Porpoise*) joined the charting boats as pilot and interpreter.[125] Wilkes marked Neah Bay as "Port Scarborough" on his chart "after the master of a Sch[r] [schooner] in the employ of the H.B.C. service who had been greatly desirous of affording me the information that lay in his power."[126] Later surveyors, including those in the Royal Navy and United States Coast Survey, would also defer to the company's hard-won knowledge as they arrived to chart the region in decades to come. All of these surveyors continued to draw extensively on Indigenous marine knowledge, as we shall see, but the HBC had emerged as an important knowledge broker in a region where imperial ignorance had afforded Indigenous peoples a precious degree of control over the movement of foreign ships. Little is made of the Nisqually chief's dismissal in Wilkes' and others' accounts, but seldom before had a local White pilot displaced an Indigenous chief at the helm of a visiting ship between the Columbia River and Russian Alaska. Imperial ignorance had long bound coastal navigation to cultural encounter, but a crack had appeared in the mortar.

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[124] The expedition commemorated their arrival by bestowing a new name, Pilot Cove, on the adjacent shore. Edmond S. Meany, 'Diary of Wilkes in the Northwest (Continued)', *Washington Historical Quarterly*, II, 16, no. 2 (April 1925): 56–59; Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 218; George M. Colvocoresses, *Four Years in a Government Exploring Expedition* (New York: Cornish, Lamport & Co., 1852), 232, https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.33358/6.

[125] Thomas Wade is listed as a seaman attached to the *Beaver* in an 1841 HBC account book. Northern Department District Statements, 1840-41, p. 27, Northern Department district statements, file B.239/L/11, HBCA; Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 229.

[126] Meany, 'Diary of Wilkes [Part III]', 223.

Chapter 2. Searching for ƛ̓ušu·ʔa: Charting the Coast, 1841-1862

Imperial attention was elsewhere in August 1861. A vicious Civil War had erupted in the United States, the Union's defeat at Bull Run, Virginia, shattering the illusion of imminent peace. "Dutch Bill" Dietz struck gold at Williams Creek, drawing thousands of would-be miners deep into the interior of mainland British Columbia. Even so, the slow, patient work of colonialism continued apace aboard the HMS *Hecate*. The British survey steamer was returning to the Juan de Fuca Strait after a painstaking summer sounding the coast of Vancouver Island. A fresh breeze and moonlit sky seemed to herald favourable conditions, but fog enshrouded the steamer and obliterated its view of the shore as it approached the strait. The crew slackened speed and spent the night sounding at ten-minute intervals, confident that they would be back at port in a few hours' time. It was nearly sunrise when an unexpected sounding of 19 fathoms was reported. "This puzzled everyone," according to Lieutenant Richard Mayne. "We knew the water was much deeper than this on the south side of the Strait, and it was agreed by all that we must have got rather far onto the north shore." Captain George Richards reset the steamer's course to the south, anxious to avoid running aground on Vancouver Island. It took several more hours of cautious sounding before he was sufficiently assured of their position to slip below deck for breakfast. He had hardly sat down when the orders "Hard a port! Stop her! Reverse the engines!" signaled trouble. Richards ran to the deck in time to watch helplessly as his ship slammed into a gnarl of rock.

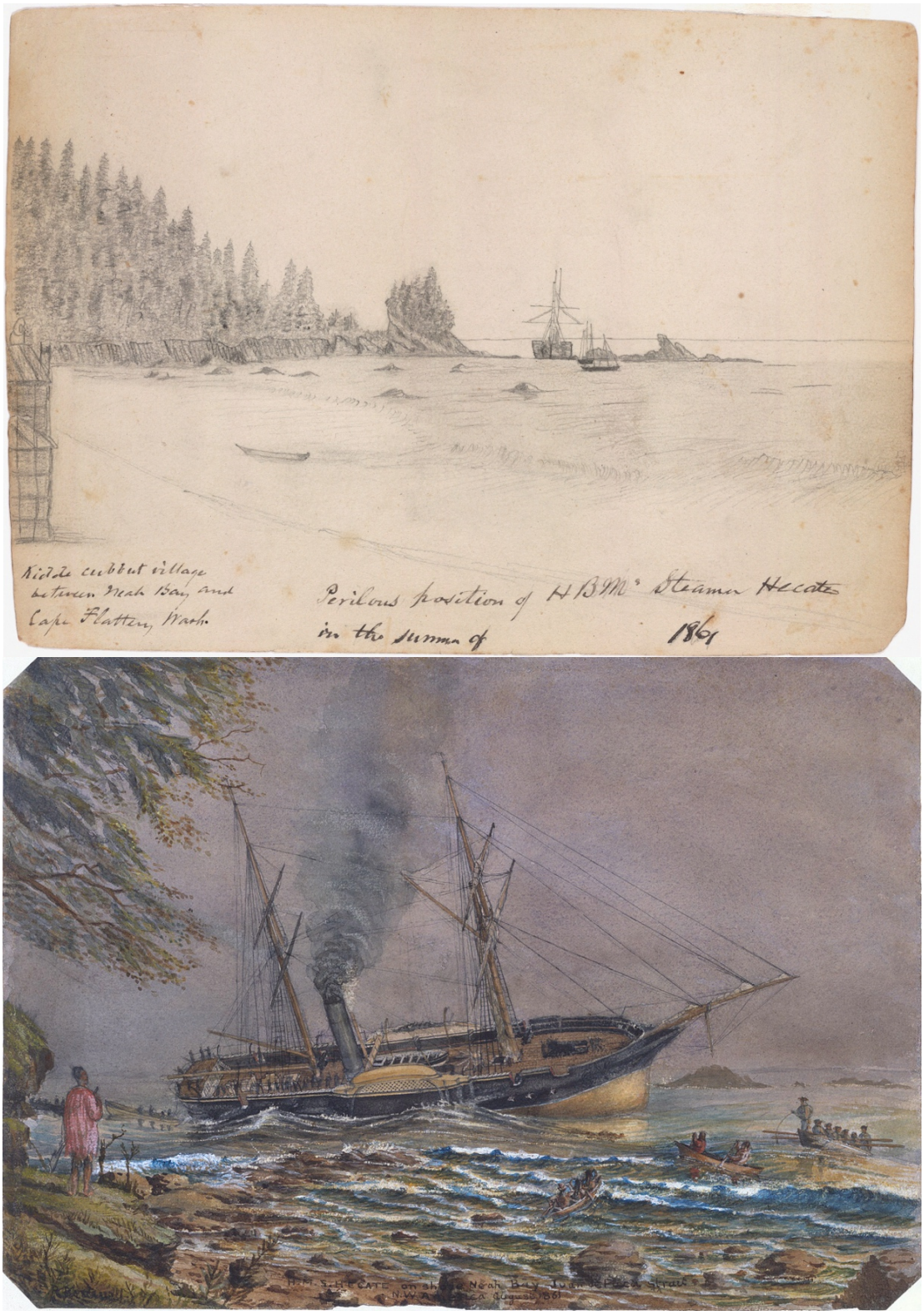
Surf continued to break over the *Hecate*, driving it further aground, and nearly toppling the disoriented crew with every wave that lifted, and abruptly dropped, the steamer. "Nothing but rocks were to be seen all around us," wrote Mayne, "and we were all equally puzzled to know where we were, how we got there, and how we should get the ship off." They had just dropped anchor when a canoe emerged from the fog carrying the master of a nearby schooner. He reported deep water just beyond the rocks where they would be sufficiently protected until the rising tide enabled their escape. Two more crashes sent the crew flying; their engineer warned a third would hurl the engines through

the bottom. The crew let go the stern anchor, sending the *Hecate* lurching over the rocks, with incredible luck, into a pocket of water just large enough to hold it. Taking stock, Captain Richards and his officers calculated they had run aground on Vancouver Island. It was a shock when the schooner master informed the surveyors they had grounded in Washington Territory – the south shore, somewhere between Cape Flattery and Neah Bay. The *Hecate* managed to limp away with the rising tide, still floating but taking on water and in need of repair. The 19-fathom sounding remained a mystery, but Richards wondered whether he had encountered the bank "of I have heard rumours from the Indians" (Figure 4).[1]

The dramatic episode casts light on the lingering disparity between Indigenous and imperial knowledge in the mid-nineteenth-century Pacific. A naval vessel ordered to chart the coast sounded an unknown bank and ran aground on submerged rocks. Yet both features were named and known by Indigenous mariners. The *Hecate* was lodged just west of a Makah village, Q̓idi·q̓abit, on rocks known as Sah-da-ped-thl.[2] The 19-fathom bank he had the unlikely misfortune to sound was also known to the Makahs: a customary halibut fishing ground known as ƛ̓ušu·ʔa ("kloo-shoo-ah").[3] Evidently, inscribing Indigenous waters onto imperial charts remained a hazardous and sometimes inelegant undertaking. Imperial mapping drew on prior Indigenous knowledges borne from millennia of occupation, observation, and marine harvesting. Gradually, however, with the assistance of those knowledges, US and British state surveyors succeeded in producing a facsimile of the coast that rendered it legible to colonial seafarers and relative strangers, helping them to avoid hidden hazards, navigate intricate passages, and arrive safely to port. The charts and sailing guides produced by Richards and his peers extended the reach of imperial claims, extractive industry, and naval gunboats,

[1] I am grateful to Deidre Cullon and Linda Dorricott for sharing their copy and partial transcription of Richards' private letterbook. George Richards to John Washington, 23 Aug 1861, Letterbook, private collection; Richards, *Private Journal*, 126–28; Mayne, *Four Years*, 236–39.
[2] Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 106.
[3] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 213.

Figure 4. Two views of HMS *Hecate* on the rocks at Sah-da-ped-thl, 1861



A house, canoes, and a solitary Indigenous observer signal the HMS Hecate*'s inglorious arrival on Makah shores. Top: James Swan, "Perilous position of H.B.Ms. Steamer Hecate in the summer of 1861," WA MSS S-2368, Franz R. and Kathryn M. Stenzel Collection of Western American Art, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (hereafter cited as Beinecke Library), New Haven, CT; Bottom: Edward Bedwell, "HMS Hecate on shore, Neah Bay, Juan de Fuca Strait, N W America, August 1861," PAG9919, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, UK.*

and thus helped emerging settler nations to absorb the vast stretches of coastline to which they laid claim in the mid-nineteenth century. Much of this grueling work was already accomplished by the time of the *Hecate*'s near-miss in August 1861.

Nonetheless, the imbalance between Indigenous and imperial knowledge meant that British and American surveyors continued to rely on local informants to safely navigate and chart coastal waters. This chapter pivots from corporate reconnaissance to state surveys, showing how coastal charting expeditions by the United States Exploring Edition (1841), US Coast Survey (1850-1859), and British Admiralty (1856-1862) extended imperial claims and produced new opportunities for resourceful Indigenous seafarers. In some cases, entrepreneurial Indigenous people seized these opportunities to acquire new goods and skills. Elsewhere, communities approached these new interlopers with wariness or outright hostility, challenging their assumed right to transit and examine their marine territories. Either way, the result was the same: detailed, reliable, widely disseminated charts and sailing guides that provided seaborne settlers unprecedented access to unfamiliar environments.

Sailing by School Books: Charting Expeditions in their Context

Compared to the Indigenous peoples they encountered, transpacific sailors knew frighteningly little of the ocean beneath their hulls. In 1835, the Lords Commissioner of the Admiralty confessed to knowing little of the Americas' western coast "except that it is rapidly increasing in population and commerce."[4] For all its maritime activity, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was never interested in generating a comprehensive knowledge of the coast. The charts it produced were concerned with strategic harbours and navigable rivers where furs could be siphoned from opposition traders. The company felt little impetus to investigate adjacent shorelines and offshore hazards unless so compelled

[4] Edward Belcher, *Narrative Of A Voyage Round The World, Performed In Her Majesty's Ship Sulphur, During The Years 1836-1842, Including Details Of The Naval Operations In China*, vol. I (Henry Colburn, 1843), xviii, https://books.google.ca/books?id=FQhTAAAAcAAJ&.

by the threat of opposition traders.[5] The HBC was sometimes the victim of its own complacency. The absence of reliable charts, official pilots, and buoys to guide ships across the treacherous Columbia River Bar meant that job was relegated to smaller ships less likely to strike ground en route to Fort Vancouver, putting the company's Pacific depot at a competitive disadvantage to American traders hauling heavy whisky barrels to the region.[6] The *Beaver* never returned to Fort Vancouver after its inaugural visit in spring 1836 for the same reason. The poorly marked and shifting bar was simply too dangerous to risk injury to the company's only steamer.[7]

Still, the company's efforts laid a foundation for the surveyors who arrived in their wake. Maintaining assets on either side of the border, HBC officials were probably inclined to ingratiate themselves to US and British officers alike. HBC seaman piloted Commander Charles Wilkes' ships when the US Exploring Expedition arrived in 1841 and offered similar assistance to subsequent surveyors. The US Coast Survey called on Governor James Douglas at Fort Victoria in 1853 to solicit information and described a pleasant "interchange of ideas and descriptions" by all, and welcomed an HBC pilot aboard the *Active* in 1855.[8] Douglas offered HBC pilots to the British Admiralty in his efforts to secure a survey of Haro Strait.[9] The Admiralty, in turn, instructed Captain Richards to maintain "friendly relations" with the company, sparing "no pains" to obtain any tracings in their possession.[10] HBC captains were usually helpful to their British compatriots, drawing attention to remote harbours, describing seasonal weather patterns, and sharing sailing directions for the approach to the Juan de Fuca Strait.[11] But HBC officials sometimes guarded their apparent monopoly on coastal intelligence.

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[5] Ruggles, *A Country so Interesting*, 91.
[6] "Recollections of George B. Roberts," Hubert Howe Bancroft fonds, MG29-C15, vol. 1, file A-83, LAC. See also Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Oregon, 1848-1888*, vol. 2, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft 30 (San Francisco: History Company, 1888), 24-25n45.
[7] Hamar Foster, 'Mutiny on the Beaver: Law and Authority in the Fur Trade Navy, 1835-1840', *Manitoba Law Journal* 20, no. 1 (1991): 22.
[8] USS *Active* logbook, 29 Dec 1855, Ships' Records, vol. 6, RG 23, NARA-CP; Lawson, 'Autobiography'.
[9] James Douglas to Henry Pelham-Clinton, 20 May 1853, CO 305:4, no. 8063, 40, *Colonial Despatches*: https://bcgenesis.uvic.ca/V53107.html.
[10] John Washington, Hydrographic instructions for Captain George Richards [photocopy], 10 Mar 1857 (hereafter cited as Washington, Instructions), p. 5, Admiralty fonds, PR-2125, item GR-0284, BCA.
[11] Richards, *Private Journal*, 51, 167; Mayne, *Four Years*, 2, 20.

Richards' Second Master John Thomas Gowlland complained the traders were "the only people that are at all acquainted with the coast and anchorages," yet "when asked for their knowledge it generally ends by them knowing nothing after all or their information so vague that we have to find out our own anchorages and anything else we may require to know."[12] Either way, the HBC had clearly emerged as an important knowledge broker to incoming mariners, occasionally displacing the Indigenous intermediaries on which it had itself relied in recent decades.

But such assistance, dependant on personal discretion and corporate whim, could hardly satisfy growing imperial ambitions. The end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 freed US and British vessels to pursue profit in the Pacific Basin. Growing competition weakened the hold of state-backed monopolies previously enjoyed by British, Dutch, Russian, and Spanish companies.[13] Concurrent wars of independence severed the Spanish hold on Central and South America and produced irresistible opportunities for traders previously denied access to Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Columbia, and New Spain.[14] Britain responded by despatching the HMS *Sulphur* to survey the Americas' western coast between 1835-39 and established a new Royal Navy (RN) station headquartered at Valparaiso, Chile in 1837.[15] US interest in the Pacific emerged simultaneously. Maritime interests in New England had long felt the allure of the 'Great Ocean,' wresting whales, sea cucumbers, and otters from the waves to great financial reward.[16] Other competitors came by land. By the 1840s, thousands of American settlers were flooding into jointly occupied Oregon Country, disrupting the HBC's isolation and de facto trade monopoly, and prompting the company to relocate its Pacific depot to Vancouver Island to better insulate itself from the coming geopolitical tempest.

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[12] Richards, *Private Journal*, 51n30.
[13] Igler, *Great Ocean*, 25, 37–38; Gibson, *Otter Skins*, 248–50.
[14] Belcher, *Narrative Of A Voyage*, I:xx; F.V. Longstaff and W. Kaye Lamb, 'The Royal Navy on the Northwest Coast, 1813-1850, Part I', *BC Historical Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (January 1945): 8.
[15] Longstaff and Lamb, 'Royal Navy on the Northwest Coast, Part I', 8.
[16] Igler, *Great Ocean*, 125; Melillo, 'Making Sea Cucumbers', 452; Gibson, *Otter Skins*, 252–53.

Hydrographic charting emerged as an indispensable element of US maritime expansion. Experience had shown an unmarked rock could easily wreck the ships required to supply new colonies, bring settlers, and extract resources. The War of 1812 had demonstrated the military advantages that flowed from marine knowledge: coastal Americans watched in disbelief as British ships sailed into inlets where their own, smaller craft seldom dared venture.[17] Some American traders were embarrassed by their reliance on foreign charts. Abby Jane Morrell, a New Yorker accompanying her husband on a global trading voyage, was "mortified that in every country we visited we had to sail by charts of other nations," unable to leave even New York Harbor without a British chart.[18] US naval oceanographer Matthew Maury made a similar observation in 1851, some two decades later.[19] In 1858, the American Association for the Advancement of Science prepared an effusive report describing "correct acquaintance" with the coast as vital to foreign trade and the awakening of the nation's "dormant natural resources." Local dangers arose "not out of want of skill or science in the navigator, or out of the fragility or ill-construction of his vessel" but "simply out of his unacquaintance with the natural features of the sea-bottom beneath him; with the currents of the surface on which he floats; with the degree of proximity or distance of reefs, or shoals, or dangerous-shorelines." By patiently charting these hazards, surveyors encouraged capital investment and identified pathways for the nation's "surplus production" to reach distant markets. The need for coastal knowledge was no less than an economic necessity – to the "cotton-grower of Tennessee, and the tobacco-planter of Kentucky," no less than the coastal trader.[20] Such reports helped make marine surveys synonymous

[17] William Ragan Stanton, *The Great United States Exploring Expedition of 1838-1842* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1975), 6.
[18] Abby Jane Morrell, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Ethiopic and South Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Chinese Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean, in the Years 1829, 1830, 1831* (New York: J & J Harper, 1833), 113.
[19] Matthew Fontaine Maury, *Explanations and Sailing Directions to Accompany the Wind and Current Charts*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: C. Alexander, 1851), 14, http://archive.org/details/explanationsand00maurgoog; Stanton, *Great United States Exploring Expedition*, 3–7.
[20] American Association for the Advancement of Science, 'Report on the History and Progress of the American Coast Survey up to the Year 1858', 1858, 5–9, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015031074118.

with national progress in the minds of nineteenth-century scholars, merchants, and government administrators. Where the imperial gaze lingered, surveyors soon followed.

The US Exploring Expedition, or "Ex Ex," emerged from the country's growing Pacific ambitions. Its origins were an 1828 bill requesting the president to despatch a ship to locate new realms of extraction for the nation's sealing, sandalwood, and whaling industries.[21] The bill failed in the Senate, opposed by Southerners and Democrats, but re-emerged in 1836. This time, boosters branded the expedition as an opportunity for inquiry by which US ships would advance the study of geology, botany, ethnography, and other fields dominated by European scholars. The appeal resonated with statesmen seeking to show their enlightened place among the nations. Congress passed the bill, authorising organisers to appoint officers and procure ships.[22] The expedition – two sloops-of-war, one brig, a supply ship, and two schooners – left New York Harbor on August 18, 1838, under the command of Lieutenant Charles Wilkes.[23] Though pitched as a scientific enterprise, the expedition's warships indicated other motivations at play. New England's maritime interests hoped the ships would intimidate Pacific Islanders (especially Fijians) who had previously attacked shipwrecked American sailors. Commander Wilkes later confessed that a primary purpose in visiting California was to obtain an accurate survey of San Francisco Harbor in order to facilitate its future annexation.[24] Scholarly inquiry and imperial expansion dovetailed neatly in this new enterprise. The Ex Ex traversed the better part of the globe over the next four years, sailing from Madeira to Rio de Janeiro, around Cape Horn to Chile and Peru, across the Pacific to Australia, south to Antarctica, north to Oceania. Its survey of Fiji was marred by considerable violence. The surveyors' ominous behaviour – encircling islands, firing signal cannons, aiming theodolites at shore (to measure angles), and planting flagstaffs

[21] Stanton, *Great United States Exploring Expedition*, 16–17.
[22] Stanton, 25, 31–33.
[23] Stanton, 71.
[24] Barry Alan Joyce, *The Shaping of American Ethnography: The Wilkes Exploring Expedition, 1838-1842* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 14; Ann Fabian, *The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America's Unburied Dead* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 137.

without permission – probably helped sow the distrust that led Fijian to kill two sailors, including Wilkes' nephew. The Americans responded with overwhelming force, killing as many as ninety Fijians and razing two villages.[25] It seemed, one sailor remarked, the Ex Ex's "path through the Pacific is to be marked in blood."[26] The experience would inform Wilkes' more cautious approach to Indigenous people on the Northwest Coast.

The United States' 1846 invasion of Mexico, which resulted in the annexation of California and subsequent discovery of gold, provided the impetus for a more comprehensive survey of the coast.[27] Countless ships now descended on the coast from around Cape Horn and across the Pacific world (Figure 5). Harbours formerly used only for temporary shelter emerged as consequential places of trade for acquisitive merchants who now flocked to the coast.[28] By one estimate, more ships entered the Columbia River in 1849-50 than the previous six decades combined.[29] Commander Wilkes answered the sudden demand for intelligence by publishing a pamphlet to direct navigators on the western

Figure 5. San Francisco Harbor, c. 1852

San Francisco Harbor teemed with ships from around the world after gold was reported at Sutter's Mill in 1848. Many captains were ill-prepared to navigate the treacherous waters of the Northwest Coast. William Shew, untitled daguerreotype (detail), circa 1852. National Museum of American History, PG.000159.

[25] Joyce, *Shaping of American Ethnography*, 106–10; Stanton, *Great United States Exploring Expedition*, 203–10.
[26] Quoted in Stanton, *Great United States Exploring Expedition*, 243.
[27] Stanton, 366.
[28] James Imray, *Sailing Directions for the West Coast of North America: Embracing the Coasts of Central America, California, Oregon, Fuca Strait, Puget Sound, Vancouver Island, and the Islands and Rocks Off the Coasts of Central America and California* (London: James Imray, 1853), iii, https://books.google.ca/books?id=ZmwDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PP9#v=onepage&q&f=false.
[29] United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey Showing the Progress of That Work during the Year Ending November, 1850', 31st Congress, 2nd Session, 1850, 2.

coast.[30] But contemporaneous sailing guides provide a frank assessment of the actual state of imperial hydrography. In his two-volume *Directory for the Navigation of the Pacific Ocean* (1851), English hydrographer Alexander Findlay notes that the information required for navigation was spread over so many volumes and languages as to "almost annihilate their utility in a practical sense." Findlay sought to remedy this situation, but his extensive research found little to illuminate large stretches of coast north of the Juan de Fuca Strait.[31] James Imray, publisher of nautical charts, described a similar obstacle in *Sailing Directions for the West Coast of North America* (1853), bemoaning the want of "authentic and trustworthy" information that prevailed in the absence of a systematic survey.[32] One surveyor later stated that many of the ships arriving in California had only maps torn from school atlases to guide them.[33] This may be exaggeration, but it indicates the urgent need for charts to guide this new traffic. More comprehensive surveys would be required to meaningfully integrate these recently foreign waters into the United States' political and economic lifeblood.

The scale of marine traffic was unprecedented. The task was not. By mid-century, the United States had developed a bureaucratic arsenal to impose order on foreign environments and geographies it sought to incorporate and render domestic. In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson purchased the Louisiana territory from France, extending US holdings to the Gulf of Mexico for the first time. Four years later, Congress authorized Jefferson to organize a survey of "islands and shoals, with the roads or places of anchorage" within twenty leagues of US shore. A want of equipment, conflict with Britain, and subsequent repeal stymied the survey, but a new appropriation in 1832 succeeded in establishing the United States Coast Survey (USCS).[34] Their work was cut out for them. The country's coastline more than doubled between 1803 and 1848 following a string of purchases, treaties, and conquests that

[30] Charles Wilkes, *Western America, Including California and Oregon, with Maps of Those Regions, and of 'the Sacramento Valley'* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1849); Stanton, *Great United States Exploring Expedition*, 350.
[31] Findlay, *Directory for the Navigation of the Pacific Ocean*, 1:i, 413, 419, 435.
[32] Imray, *Sailing Directions*, iii.
[33] Oscar Lewis, *George Davidson, Pioneer West Coast Scientist.* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1954), 10.
[34] Lewis, 6–8.

extended its borders south to Florida and west to the Pacific Ocean. Using numbers provided by the Coast Survey, President James Polk boasted the Union had acquired over 2000 miles of coastline (excluding bays, sounds, and islands) between 1844 and 1848 alone.[35] The Coast Survey followed the course of empire, from the shores of Connecticut and Long Island to the Gulf Coast. The surveyors were despatched to the Pacific in 1848, weeks after news of California gold reached the East Coast.[36]

The surveyors followed the miners, beginning their work the next year at San Francisco Harbor. They had an inauspicious start. An attempted desertion led to a court martial, lashings, and a hanging from the deck of a schooner.[37] Inflated wages led to delays and difficulty enlisting crew, forcing Lieutenant Commander William Pope McArthur to sail to the Kingdom of Hawai'i to enlist Kanaka Māoli seamen instead.[38] Two officers drowned when their boat flipped on the Columbia River, and McArthur succumbed to acute dysentery while travelling to Washington, DC, to retrieve a steamer in 1850.[39] Further delays arose when the assigned steamer was damaged and abandoned in a gale off the Patagonia coast.[40] Remarkably, under the circumstances, the survey succeeded in extending its reconnaissance north to the rocky coastline soon to be declared Washington Territory by 1850, producing a chart rendering the coast from San Francisco to the Columbia River at a scale ten times greater than that of Commander Wilkes.[41]

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[35] Lewis, 8; James K. Polk, 'Fourth Annual Message to Congress', Presidential Speeches (Miller Center, University of Virginia, 5 December 1848), https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-5-1848-fourth-annual-message-congress.

[36] East Coast newspapers were reporting on the discovery of gold by August 1848. Hubert Howe Bancroft credits the *Baltimore Sun* of September 20 as "the first to create general attention." Preliminary arrangements for the Coast Survey in California were made by the Secretary of the Treasury in summer and autumn of that year. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California, 1848-1859*, vol. 6, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft 23 (San Francisco: History Company, 1888), 80, https://archive.org/details/worksofhuberthow23bancrich/; United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey Showing the Progress of That Work', Thirtieth Congress—Second Session, 1848, 6.

[37] Lewis A. McArthur, 'The Pacific Coast Survey of 1849 and 1850', *Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* 16, no. 3 (1915): 251.

[38] Six Kanakas (Bill, William, Jim, Tally, Tom, and Harry) boarded the USS *Ewing* at Hilo Bay, Hawai'i in January 1850. USS *Ewing* logbook, 1 and 8 Jan 1850, Ships' Records, vol 59, RG 23, NARA-CP.

[39] McArthur, 'Pacific Coast Survey of 1849 and 1850', 253–55, 260.

[40] Extract from *New York Courier & Enquirer*, 18 Aug 1851, "Survey of the West Coast," 18 Aug 1851, in General Correspondence of Superintendent Alexander Bache, vol. XI, RG 23, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/248175543.

[41] McArthur, 'Pacific Coast Survey of 1849 and 1850', 258.

Two men picked up where McArthur left off. James Alden Jr. had previously visited the coast with the Ex Ex, serving as midshipman (and later lieutenant) under Wilkes, who Alden hated "most heartily" due to the commander's tendency to overwork and under-credit those beneath him.[42] The Coast Survey appointed Lieutenant Alden to lead hydrographic parties aboard the schooner *Ewing* and, in 1852, the steamer *Active*. His counterpart on shore, Assistant George Davidson, began his career as a clerk to Superintendent Alexander Dallas Bache in what his letters referred to as "Washington D(reary) C(ity)." A glutton for field work, Davidson requested and received reassignment to the Atlantic and Gulf coasts to assist survey and astronomical observation duties.[43] In 1850, Bache despatched Davidson to lead the topographic party charged with determining positions of capes and headlands.[44] The Coast Survey returned to the Juan de Fuca Strait in 1852, inaugurating a furious pace of activity in the area that continued until the outbreak of Civil War in 1861.[45] Ever at odds with each other, Alden and Davidson nonetheless transformed the nature of marine knowledge on the West Coast. Their joint accomplishments were critical to US success in absorbing these new, Pacific territories.

It took a border dispute to spur the pace of the hydrographic activity in British territory, in part because requisite naval resources were occupied by the Crimean War from 1853 to 1856.[46] Government officials north of the Juan de Fuca Strait observed firsthand how scarce and unreliable charts stymied commerce. In 1852, Governor Douglas noted the "extreme incorrectness" of a map published by English cartographer John Arrowsmith. Smaller islands were joined to Vancouver Island, obscuring the location of its eastern shore by 15-20 miles and compelling merchant vessels to needlessly prolong their voyages by keeping to the "circuitous channel" Captain Vancouver examined

[42] Private notes of Philip C. Johnson, p. 12, Philip C. Johnson papers, University of Washington Special Collections (UWSC), Seattle, WA.
[43] Lewis, *George Davidson*, 8–9.
[44] Lewis, 12.
[45] United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey Showing the Progress of the Survey during the Year 1853' (Washington, DC: Robert Armstrong, Printer, 1854), 21.
[46] Rozwadowski, *Fathoming the Ocean*, 94.

sixty years before. Douglas urged the Admiralty to undertake a proper survey of the islands, declaring it "of the very greatest importance to the trade of this colony."[47] The Lords Commissioner demurred, weakly counseling Douglas to "encourage some fit persons" to acquaint themselves with the "principle channels and Ports" instead.[48] Their reluctance abated, however, when conflicting claims to the San Juan Islands exposed the geopolitical perils of geographic ignorance. The Convention of 1818, by which Britain and the United States had agreed to share control of the region, ended with the 1846 Oregon Treaty that extended border along the forty-ninth parallel to the Pacific Ocean and thence through "the middle of the Channel which separates the Continent from Vancouver's Island." But the errors Governor Douglas observed in available charts obscured from diplomats the existence of several viable channels. The ambiguity soon gave rise to a dispute over the San Juan Islands. Britain claimed the islands on the grounds that the treaty referred to Rosario Strait, the "circuitous channel" shown on Vancouver's charts and preferred by most vessels. The United States insisted the border ran through the westernmost channel, Haro Strait, shown on Wilkes's map and thereby claimed the islands for itself. These competing claims led to the establishment of an Anglo-American boundary commission in 1856. The rival nations now had every reason to undertake detailed surveys of Haro and Rosario Straits.[49]

The Admiralty appointed Captain George Richards to undertake the requisite boundary surveys that began in 1857. Commanding HMS *Plumper*, Richards was remembered as "a splendid

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[47] James Douglas to John Somerset Pakington, 27 Aug 1852, CO 305:3, no. 10199, 134, *Colonial Despatches*: https://bcgenesis.uvic.ca/V52107.html.

[48] Augustus Stafford to Herman Merivale, 9 Dec 1852, CO 305:3, no. 11307, 317, *Colonial Despatches*: https://bcgenesis.uvic.ca/V525AD10.html.

[49] Tensions continued to simmer until 1859, when the shooting of a pig on San Juan Island nearly brought Britain and the United States to war. Joint occupation followed until 1872, when the dispute was finally resolved in favour of the United States. Historian and hydrographer R.W. Sandilands postulates the lack of prior charts may have ultimately cost Britain possession of the San Juan Islands. Andrew S. Cook, 'The Publication of British Admiralty Charts for British Columbia in the Nineteenth Century', in *Charting Northern Waters: Essays for the Centenary of the Canadian Hydrographic Service*, ed. William Glover (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 55–56; R.W. Sandilands, 'The History of Hydrographic Surveying in British Columbia' (n.p.: Canadian Hydrographic Service, 1965), 13–14; John P. D. Dunbabin, 'Haro or Rosario? Maps, Navigation, and the Anglo-American North-West Water Boundary Dispute, 1846-1872', *BC Studies*, no. 186 (3 February 2015): 40.

Surveyor [...] but most eccentric," in the habit running his hand through his hair until it stood on its end and gave him "a most comical appearance."[50] The Admiralty extended these duties following the discovery of gold in the Fraser River in 1858. The dramatic escalation in marine traffic and want of reliable charts resulted in countless accidents and near-misses in the Juan de Fuca Strait. The *Plumper* and HMS *Satellite* each struck rocks while attached to the Boundary Commission, with damaged sustained by both ships.[51] Shifting sandbars and inadequate buoyage plagued the entrance to the Fraser River, grounding ships and producing onerous insurance rate.[52] As late as 1861, Captain Richards described vessels entering Haro Strait "knowing nothing of the navigation and [running] great risks in consequence."[53] Nor did improvements in marine technology relieve the need for detailed charts. Steamships could run in dull wind and contrary currents, and thus bore a more direct course, kept closer to land, and made more frequent stops than wind-powered vessels, all of which made them uniquely prone to near-shore hazards. The unsettling state of affairs is captured dramatically in a letter from Assistant James Lawson (USCS), who was aboard the steamer *Panama* in 1858 when it ran onto the edge of a reef in Haro Strait:

> Lots of steamers are beginning to find out exactly where the rocks are; on our trip the Commodore tried her strength on a rock in Nanaimo. The next trip she smashed over on the shoal place between Eliza's Id at Pt. Francis, entering Hale's passage, knocking off her forefoot. The Panama having broken her piston on her last trip, the Republic was sent up. Capt Watson [...] planted her on Belle Rock. He returned to Port Townshend [sic] for a pilot, and he beached her somewhere in the Bellingham Channel, in a fog (thick smoke?) The Plumper [...] was on one of the Rocks S[outh] of Waldron Id. between that & Stuarts

[50] Richards had previously visited the coast aboard HMS *Sulphur* when it stopped at Nootka Sound in 1837. In 1863, following his second visit (1857-1862), the captain was appointed Hydrographer to the Navy and held the office until 1874. The Hydrographic Office increased in size under Richards' management, invested in deep sea research, and helped encourage the monumental HMS *Challenger* expedition (1872-1876). Rozwadowski, *Vast Expanses*, 150, 161–62. Philip Hankin, "Memoirs of Captain P. Hankin, RN" (transcript), p. 29, E/B/H19A, BCA.

[51] The *Plumper* hit a rock in Haro Strait. The *Satellite* struck Virago Rocks in Porlier Pass. The rocks' namesake, HMS *Virago*, had struck them five years earlier. George Davidson to Alexander Dallas Bache, 15 Jul 1858, General Correspondence of Superintendent Alexander Bache, vol. XVI, RG 23, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/248263435

[52] Mayne, *Four Years*, 81–83.

[53] Quoted in Bryce Wood, *San Juan Island: Coastal Place Names and Cartographic Nomenclature*, Sponsor Series (Ann Arbor, MI: Published for Washington State Historical Society Tacoma by University Microfilms International, 1980), 38.

> Id. She drifted on before they could get headway on her to take her off not much damage. Then my affair of the 'Panama'! Quite a list of them![54]

Such embarrassments supported Superintendent Bache's observation that navigation by steam "renders the necessity for a knowledge of the coast more than ever important."[55] As late as the 1870s, passengers in San Francisco were advised to travel by sail as "the steamships between San Francisco and Puget Sound were not considered very safe."[56] Insurers, captains, and colonial officials demanded accurate charts, prompting Richards to expand his activities north and west, gradually encircling Vancouver Island and its adjacent inlets and islands.

"By the assistance of the Indians"

The HBC's provision of guides, pilots, and tracings to the Ex Ex, Coast Survey, and Royal Navy surveyors notwithstanding, local nations continued to act as critical "environmental brokers" in the mid-nineteenth-century Pacific Northwest.[57] This role is evident in myriad exchanges of labour and knowledge that made possible the tedious work of surveying remote and unfamiliar marine environments. Frequent visits by curious and opportunistic locals facilitated communication and provisioning between the Ex Ex ships *Vincennes* and *Porpoise*, their isolated sounding boats, and HBC officials. Canoes relayed Commander Wilkes' orders to dispersed surveying teams, letters to and from Fort Nisqually, and news that the *Peacock* was lost on the Columbia Bar.[58] Acting Master George

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[54] Lawson to George Davidson, 28 Jun 1858, US Coast and Geodetic Survey correspondence, box 42, George Davidson papers, MSS C-B 490, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, CA (hereafter cited as Davidson papers); Davidson to Bache, 15 Jul 1858, General Correspondence of Superintendent Alexander Bache, vol. XVI, RG 23, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/248263435.

[55] United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey Showing the Progress of That Work during the Year Ending November, 1851' (Washington, DC: Robert Armstrong, Printer, 1852), 23.

[56] Greene, "A Sketch of my Life," book 2, p. 43.

[57] Annie Gilbert Coleman has used this term to describe professional outdoors guides who "united people with local environments." Sean Fraga uses it in references to Indigenous guides and canoe pullers who helped transport settlers and miners in the mid-nineteenth-century Pacific Northwest. Annie Gilbert Coleman, 'The Rise of the House of Leisure: Outdoor Guides, Practical Knowledge, and Industrialization', *Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (1 November 2011): 440, https://doi.org/10.2307/westhistquar.42.4.0436; Sean Fraga, 'Steam Power, Native Labor, and Contested Terraqueous Mobilities during American Settlement of Puget Sound, 1846-1873', *Mobilities* 17, no. 2 (2022): 2.

[58] De Haven journal, 4 Aug 1841; "USS *Vincennes*, 4/28/1840 - 9/1/1841," 8 May and 1 Jun 1841, Journals and Logs Kept by Expedition Members, NAID 74203419 [hereafter cited as USS *Vincennes* journal (1840-41)], RG 37, NARA-DC: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/74203419; 'Diary of Wilkes in the Northwest', *Washington Historical Quarterly*, I, 16, no. 1 (January 1925): 57; Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 178, 193.

Sinclair's journal describes the Skagit Chief Nadlum rendering "a vast deal of service to us during the whole time that we were at work within the range of his authority." Other Skagits followed Nadlum's lead. Two Catholic converts accompanied the Ex Ex throughout their stay, "faithfully & honestly" transporting provisions, trade goods, letters, and whiskey to the surveying parties. Revealingly, Ex Ex members referred to these men as Potlach and Cumtax – words from the region's Chinook jargon meaning "gift, to give," and "to know, understand" respectively. The choice of names is suggestive of surveyors' regard for Indigenous counterparts who conveyed materials, letters, and local knowledge, so much so that they chose to apply Cumtax's name to a bay near the entrance to Port Orchard.[59]

This pattern held in later decades: the near-ubiquitous presence of Indigenous peoples along coastal transportation networks made them ideal aids for a variety of tasks. In 1852, Indigenous locals agreed to search for a surveyor's body after a sailboat capsized in the Columbia River, drowning two of its occupants. The three-day search was unsuccessful, but Assistant Davidson (USCS) reassured his grieving family that the body may yet be found: "The Indians are constantly moving on the beach and on the water close to the beach, in their light canoes; I do not think there is a hundred yards of the whole line of beach that is not daily trodden upon or seen from the water."[60] An 1855 report by Davidson's counterpart, Lieutenant Alden, complained that "the only means of communication to be obtained is through the assistance of Indians in canoes, or small sailing-vessels, which latter is at times the most tedious."[61] Even as other forms of transport became available, surveyors continued to depend on Indigenous intermediaries for even the most basic tasks.

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[59] Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 176–80; George Gibbs, *A Dictionary of the Chinook Jargon, Or, Trade Language of Oregon* (Cramoisy Press, 1863), 11, 21, https://www.google.ca/books/edition/A_Dictionary_of_the_Chinook_Jargon_Or_Tr/lRxgjHTsp6MC. A Catholic missionary visited with Chief Nadlum and the Skagits the previous year. Francis Norbert Blanchet, *Historical Sketches of the Catholic Church in Oregon, During the Past Forty Years* (Portland, OR: Catholic Sentinel Press, 1878), 111–13, https://books.google.ca/books?id=970OAQAAIAAJ.

[60] William Strong to Richard Cutts, 23 Oct 1852; Cutts to Alexander Dallas Bache, 31 Oct 1852, General Correspondence of Superintendent Alexander Bache, vol IX, RG 23, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/248185039; Davidson to Edward Hall, 9 Jan 1853, Letters written by Davidson, box 59, Davidson papers.

[61] United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent… during the Year 1855', 190.

Indigenous peoples were also instrumental in keeping surveyors well-fed. Midshipman George Colvocoresses described meeting locals almost every day during the Ex Ex survey of Hood's Canal, and the "considerable intercourse [had] with them in the way of trade."[62] The *Vincennes* was "plentifully supplied by the indians with an abundance of excellent fish" while off Dungeness Spit for six days. [63] Expedition members had occasion to sample much of the region's abundant food: salmon, rock cod, halibut, clams, venison, ducks, geese, bear, and camas bulbs – surely a welcome change from the rations they received at sea. In return, Indigenous traders procured an equally valued array of commodities: knives, fishhooks, files, clothing, gunpowder, and paints.[64] So reliable were these exchanges that Wilkes saw no reason to equip Midshipman Henry Eld with provisions for his forty-day venture to Gray's Harbor, "as he would, by the assistance of the Indians, be able to obtain both fish and game."[65] Captain Richards (RN) and his men were similarly fortunate in their trade with Indigenous peoples around Vancouver Island, offering clothing, biscuits, tobacco, and soap in exchange for salmon, wild fowl, deer, elk, and potatoes, "so that, as a rule, we did not fare badly," according to First Lieutenant Mayne.[66] Davidson (USCS) was less magnanimous, complaining about the monotony of provisions while working north of Cape Disappointment: "salmon fried – salmon boiled – salmon stewed – dishes of the animal ad in fin. After a week you feel sealy & believe yourself a fish [...] If crows were good eating we might live like lords."[67] Granted, the alternative – going hungry – was hardly more appealing. Blind to the bountiful foods around them, surveyors depended on the

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[62] Colvocoresses, *Four Years*, 234.
[63] "USS *Vincennes*, 6/24/1839 - 3/23/1842," 22-26 Jul 1841, Journals and Logs Kept by Expedition Members, NAID 74203749 [hereafter cited as USS *Vincennes* journal (1839-42)], RG 37, NARA-DC: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/74203749.
[64] USS *Vincennes* journal (1839-42), 3 May and 22 Jul 1841; USS *Vincennes* journal (1840-41), 3, 6, and 7 May 1841; De Haven journal, 12 and 13 Aug 1841; Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 132, 170, 187–88; Colvocoresses, *Four Years*, 234; Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842*, vol. 4 (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845), 299, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001983708.
[65] Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842*, vol. 5 (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845), 124, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b3007323.
[66] John T. Gowlland, HMS *Plumper* logbook, 20 Apr 1860, John T.E. Gowlland fonds, PR-1942 (hereafter cited as Gowlland journal), BCA; Mayne, *Four Years*, 216.
[67] Davidson does not specify whether his team was being provisioned by Indigenous fishers or the emerging settler population around Cape Disappointment. Davidson to Samuel Hein, circa 1851 (missing cover page), Letters Received by Samuel Hein, box 1513, RG 23, NARA-CP.

knowledge and good will of Indigenous traders. The fact that surveyors were able to maintain their rigorous duties for months on end was due, in no small part, to Indigenous peoples' willingness to provision them.

Local nations remained crucial knowledge brokers to state surveyors, as they had with HBC navigators. Such exchanges are particularly evident in the Indigenous seafarers who served as guides and pilots aboard survey ships, sounding boats, and hired canoes. Four high-ranking Indigenous pilots are known to have guided Ex Ex ships during its short stint in Oregon Country. An unnamed Nisqually chief boarded the *Vincennes* upon its arrival in Puget Sound. Chief George piloted the ship to a Makah village in Neah Bay as it was leaving the Juan de Fuca Strait three months later.[68] King George and Ramsey, brothers of the late Chinook Chief Concomly, piloted the *Porpoise* and *Oregon* on the Columbia River.[69] Other chiefs guided Ex Ex boats and canoes conducting surveys at a distance from the USS *Vincennes* and *Porpoise*. A female "Sachal" chief conveyed a party led by Midshipman Eld over a portage to Black (Sachal) Lake and, some days later, across the tempestuous waters of Gray's Harbor.[70] A Chehalis chief sold Eld a canoe and guided him across Shoalwater Bay and an overland portage to the Columbia River.[71] Such assistance was crucial for the surveyors who, for all their seafaring experience, "did not much understand using paddles," according to one officer, and made slow progress in the absence of Indigenous aid.[72] Davidson (USCS) suffered terribly in his own attempt to manage a canoe alone, dragged out to sea by the tide and failing six times to return to camp, until exhaustion and bleeding hands forced a precarious landing on an isolated beach. The hapless surveyor finally returned to camp after three hours' absence, just as his companions were preparing a search party.[73] His

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[68] USS *Vincennes* journal (1839-42), 2 Aug 1841; Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 253.
[69] Wilkes purchased the brig *Oregon* (previously *Thomas H. Perkins*) through an arrangement with the HBC to accommodate the sailors attached to the wrecked *Peacock*. USS *Vincennes* journal (1839-42), 2 Aug 1841; Wilkes, *Narrative*, 1845, 4:495–96.
[70] The Sachals have been identified with the Challouina (or Halloweena) people that John Work encountered on the Black River in 1824. Work considered them closely related to the Chehalis. Colvocoresses, *Four Years*, 243–44, 248–49; Clarence B. Bagley, 'Journal of Occurrences at Nisqually House, 1833', *Washington Historical Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1915): 196n51.
[71] Colvocoresses, *Four Years*, 255; Wilkes, *Narrative*, 1845, 5:133.
[72] De Haven journal, 14 Aug 1841.
[73] Davidson to Hein, circa 1851 (missing cover page), Letters Received by Samuel Hein, box 1513, RG 23, NARA-CP.

colleague, Lieutenant William Trowbridge, left the paddling to his Nisqually and Lummi guides, and wisely postponed a trip from Bellingham Bay to Olympia after receiving several admonitions against proceeding into the foul weather they said was brewing beyond the bay.[74] Such assistance did much to ensure the success of US surveyors as they acquainted themselves with the intricate coastlines of Washington Territory.

Indigenous mariners also served aboard British ships in the early 1850s when American mining forays prompted the Royal Navy to show the flag and survey strategic harbours around Haida Gwaii. The HMS *Thetis* procured an HBC officer to assist its 1852 reconnaissance of the offshore archipelago, but found him "of no service whatever," failing to recognize critical headlands despite having visited the islands twice previously.[75] A second HBC pilot boarded the HMS *Virago* when it was sent to the islands the following year, but the steam sloop's officers wisely sought additional counsel upon arrival. An unnamed man from SGang Gwaay Llnagaay boarded the *Virago* during its survey of Rose Harbour "to assist as pilot on the coast," identifying Cumshewa and Skidegate harbours as the ship proceeded north and using what Commander James Prevost called his "hydrographical knowledge" to help British navigators avoid a dangerous, low-lying spit at the entrance to the former.[76] A second Haida pilot called Bearskin took his place at Skidegate, boarding the ship with a bundle of papers from White mariners attesting to his character and ability. The son of an influential chief by the same name, Bearskin Jr. spoke some English and consented to join the Brits "as Interpreter & a kind of Pilot," having previously journeyed as far San Francisco on an American or Russian vessel.[77]

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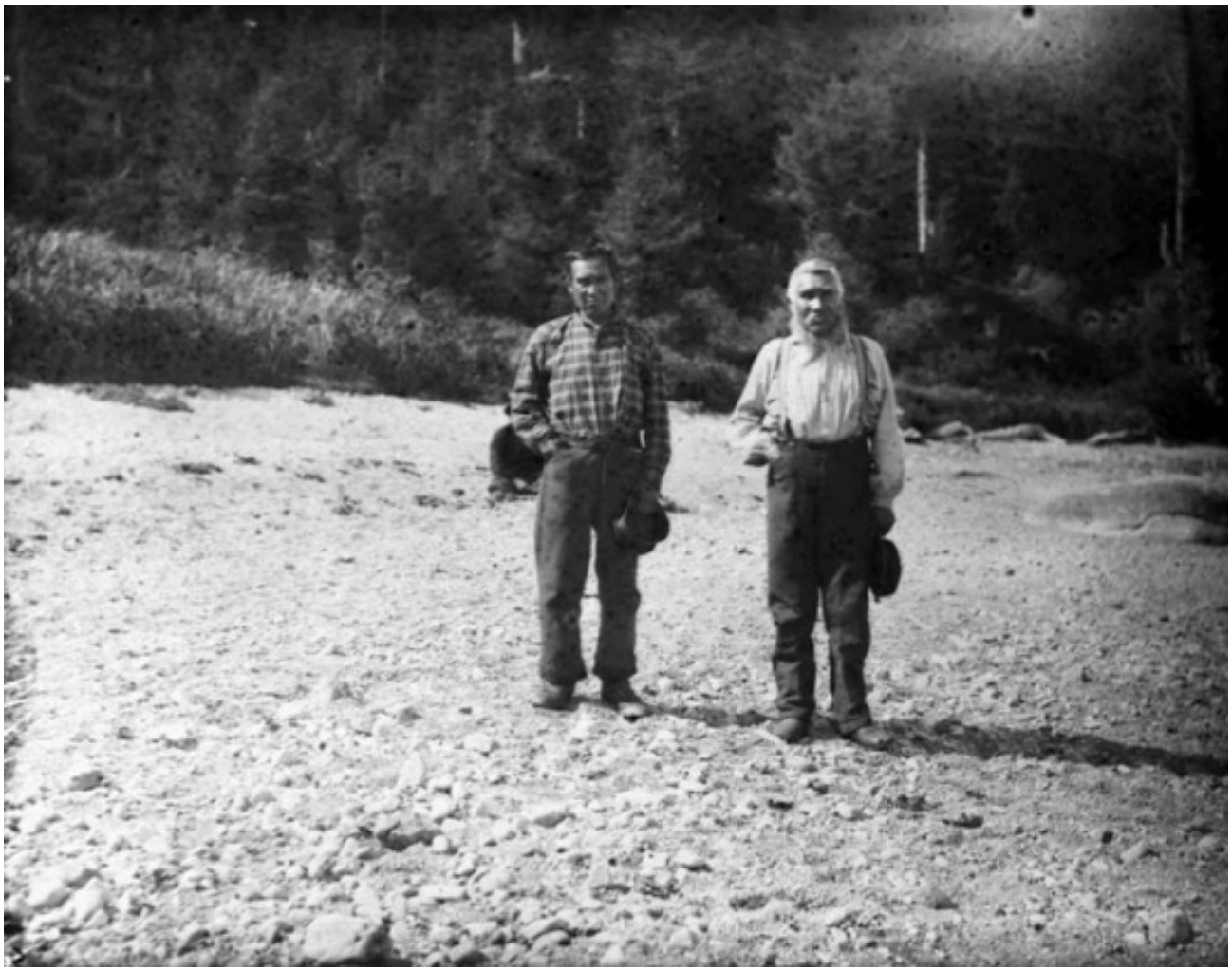
[74] Lancaster Pollard, 'Journal of a Voyage on Puget Sound in 1853 by William Petit Trowbridge', *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1942): 393–94, 402–3.
[75] George Alexander Hamilton to Herman Merivale, 27 Sep 1852, CO 305:3, no. 8866, 269, *Colonial Despatches*: https://bcgenesis.uvic.ca/V525AD07.html.
[76] Hills journal, 13 May 1853; George Hastings Inskip journal, 14 May 1853, MS-0805, George Hastings Inskip fonds, PR-0702, BCA (hereafter cited as Inskip journal); Prevost to Fairfax Moresby (transcript), 7 Jun 1853 (hereafter cited as Prevost to Moresby, 7 Jun 1853), box 1, file 2, GR-1309, BCA.
[77] It is unclear how long Bearskin accompanied the voyage, but he may have accompanied the expedition as far as Masset, where Commander Prevost mentions a "drawing of the two Indian pilots" – presumably a reference to Bearskin and Edenshaw. Trevan journal, 15-16 May 1853; Inskip journal, 17 May 1853; Hills journal, 13 May 1853; Prevost to Moresby, 7 Jun 1853.

Yet another Haida pilot, Edenshaw, is particularly prominent in records left by the *Virago*'s officers (Figure 6). Politically savvy and tirelessly opportunistic, Edenshaw used a strategic marriage to claim the chieftainship of K'yuust'aa on the northwest tip of Graham Island in the 1840s.[78] By the next decade, he had acquired a reputation among coastal traders as an outstanding ship pilot. Edenshaw was implicated in a Haida attack on the American schooner *Susan Sturges* near Masset in

Figure 6. The Haida pilot Edenshaw, 1878



Edenshaw (left) was among the Haidas who shared knowledge with the Geological Survey of Canada's during its 1878 study of Haida Gwaii. George Dawson, "Edenshaw and Hoo-yâ [Weah]. Chiefs at Ya-tza and Masset, Graham Island, Queen Charlotte Islands, BC," 23 Aug 1878. Geological Survey of Canada Photographs, item ID 3370401, Natural Resources Canada fonds, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, ON: http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=fonandcol&id=3370401&lang=eng

[78] Kathy Bedard Sparrow, 'Correcting the Record: Haida Oral Tradition in Anthropological Narratives', *Anthropologica* 40, no. 2 (1998): 217–18.

1852, an event that had precipitated the *Virago*'s voyage the following year. Despite being a primary suspect in their investigations, Edenshaw boarded the steam sloop at Fort Simpson and agreed to pilot it towards the scene of the alleged crime. The *Virago*'s officers may not have trusted him, but they were wise enough to recognize their need of a pilot with local knowledge before venturing to Haida Gwaii's treacherous northern coast.[79] Paymaster William Hills described Edenshaw as standing 5'7", impressively adorned in a fitted suit, with hazel eyes and hair worn in what Hills described as "European style."[80] The ship's officers praised Edenshaw for his canny ability to determine whether they could safely enter a given stretch of water. Hills wrote admiringly that Edenshaw "seemed to have let his foresight carry him underwater as well as above." Where Edenshaw reported "good water," they found it deep. Where he pointed to "small water," they found it shallow. And "any spot where he said, 'plenty stone stop,' sure enough it was rocky."[81] While entering Masset Harbour, Edenshaw assured the officers that the depth would shrink to as little as three fathoms before deepening again considerably. The *Virago* weighed anchor and proceeded slowly as a boat sounded ahead, casting three fathoms over a shallow bar, then nine and eleven fathoms just beyond. Edenshaw's information proved "perfectly correct."[82] Such knowledge proved key to the *Virago*'s safe reconnaissance and found lasting expression on the forthcoming Admiralty chart, which noted dangerous shoal waters ascertained by "Indian report" (Map 6).

The Royal Navy drew extensively on Indigenous knowledge during its survey of Vancouver Island in the early 1860s. Indigenous informants volunteered the position of submerged reefs and rocks around Beaver Harbour, Johnstone Strait, Quatsino Sound.[83] A Kwakwaka'wakw man, Rupert Jim, served as interpreter aboard the HMS *Plumper* in 1860 and the *Hecate* in 1862. Like Bearskin and other

[79] Inskip journal, 21 May 1853; Trevan journal, 23 May 1853; Prevost to Moresby, 7 Jun 1853.
[80] Hills journal, 24 May 1853.
[81] Hills journal, 24 May 1853.
[82] George Hastings Inskip, 'Remarks on Some Harbours of Queen Charlotte Islands, North-West Coast of America', *Nautical Magazine* 24, no. 12 (December 1855): 625, 626.
[83] Richards, *Private Journal*, 49, 53, 75.

interpreters, Jim performed roles beyond translation, describing the recent histories of particular Indigenous villages, for example, or noting harbours that could accommodate different sorts of vessels.[84] Other Indigenous mariners showed Admiralty officers the whereabouts of an anchorage at

Map 6. Detail from an 1856 chart for Massett Harbour

An 1856 Admiralty chart for Masset Harbour warns mariners of two areas described by "Indian report" as "very shoal." The chart, prepared aboard the HMS Virago*, does not credit the information to an individual, but it was likely copied from a drawing of the harbour produced by Edenshaw and another unnamed Indigenous guide (perhaps Bearskin).*[85] *"Sketch of the Entrance to Masset Harbour by Mr. H.N. Knox, Mate, 1853," inset from Admiralty chart no. 2168, published 8 Nov 1856. Admiralty Charts, item ID 3673688, Admiralty fonds, LAC: http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=fonandcol&id=3673688&lang=eng*

[84] Richards, *Private Journal*, 82, 84–85, 89.
[85] Prevost to Moresby, 7 Jun 1853.

Klaskish Inlet, a canoe channel at Otter Cove, a ship passage in Clayoquot Sound, and landing places around Cape Scott.[86] These guides also forecast the weather for surveyors. "They rarely fail in their prognostication of the weather," Captain Richards observed, "and study the set of the clouds general appearance thoroughly before they start on this west coast from one place for another." A young man at Quatsino informed Richards that the season for southeast winds had just ended, "that we shall get westerly winds for a month, and rain as he says to make the Sting Nettles grow."[87] At Klaskish Inlet, Richards wrote admiringly that "the Natives know almost to a day when summer has really begun and the [southeast] gales and rain over. They never begin to move until that day."[88] Such forecasting was an invaluable service given the risk inclement weather posed to surveyors working from isolated canoes and soundings boats on Vancouver Island's outer coast.

Surveyors in Pursuit of Indigenous Bathymetry

Surveyors' dependence on Indigenous knowledge is particularly apparent in the US Coast Survey's prolonged effort to locate halibut banks said to lie near the entrance to the Juan de Fuca Strait. Makah, Ditidaht, and Nuu-chah-nulth fishers had long known about ƛ̓ušu·ʔa· (Swiftsure Bank) and spent considerable time there harvesting in the summer months. No coincidence, then, that the canoes which greeted the *William & Ann* offshore in 1825 came laden "with very fine Halibut & other fish."[89] James Hunter (Keen-teė-tsum) describes how Makahs discovered these prized banks when they observed sealions feeding 15 miles from shore:

> The old men used to tell that the way halibut were discovered away out there [indicating, to seaward] was when their forefathers were whale hunting. The whalers saw some sea lions – 3 or 5 of them – and 2 had halibut in their mouths. Men took cross-bearings on Tatoosh Island and on Wah-ah-dah Island and on the highest peak on Vancouver Island – the one with the bump on this side of it. Next day they went back with hemlock-knot

[86] Richards, 122, 168, 170, 176.
[87] Richards, 170.
[88] Richards, 177.
[89] Hanwell, *William & Ann* logbook, 8 Aug 1825.

> hooks and kelp lines, returned to the same place by taking bearings, filled the canoe with halibut in a little while, and came home happy and shouting from far out to sea.[90]

The observation and pursuit of one species revealed something of the underwater features they depended on. Makahs saw sealions while pursuing whales and thus discovered halibut banks: hydrography by other means. The prospect of returning to a specific patch of ocean fifteen miles from shore sounds incredible, but Indigenous mariners commonly used shoreline features to locate underwater banks. Nearby *Hopaqso:ʔis* (Seven Mile Bank), for example, is a valuable chinook and coho salmon bank that Huu-ay-aht fishers locate by aligning specific islands with mountain contours and a prominent cape.[91] With experience, whalers and fishers could determine their location even when fog and sheer distance obscured their sight of land. In the 1920s, an anthropologist noted that some of the older Makahs "who had spent a lifetime on the halibut banks, can locate themselves even when out of sight of land by the appearance of water and the set of the 'tide rips.'"[92]

Indigenous harvesters also had to know the depth of a particular bank in order to fish successfully. James Swan, who lived on the Makah reservation in the 1860s, recorded local fishers catching halibut at depths of around 20-30 fathoms. Makahs fished cod from deeper waters (30-40 fathoms), and sablefish deeper still (80 fathoms).[93] Knowing where to find banks at these depths was essential, as fishers needed to cast the appropriate length of fishing line to target a given species. Asked about halibut fishing in the 1930s, Makah fisherman Elliott Anderson (Kwa-Yuk-Thick) prescribed dangling the hook 3-4 feet above the ocean floor. Cast higher and the fish didn't bite; cast deeper and the bait would be spoiled by sand.[94] Fishing lines were prepared by knotting discrete lengths of kelp together until they reach the required length, with particular banks and species in mind.[95] These

[90] James Hunter (Keen-tee-tsum), n.d., George Roger Chute collection, Ms 15 (hereafter cited as Chute collection), box 4, file 71, WSHS.
[91] St. Claire, 'Barkley Sound Tribal Territories', 174, 177.
[92] Waterman, 'Whaling Equipment of the Makah Indians', 47.
[93] Waterman, 47.
[94] Elliott Anderson (Kwa-Yuk-Thick), 1936, Chute collection, box 4, file 9.
[95] Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 40.

harvesting practices, repeated and refined over generations, produced a remarkably precise knowledge among coastal people, one coveted by coastal surveyors throughout the nineteenth century.

Makahs discovered ƛ̓ušu·ʔa by observing sealions; Europeans discovered it by studying Makahs.[96] In 1852, US Coast Surveyors encamped near Neah Bay saw canoes returning from a fishing trip (Figure 7). The Makahs described the bank's position offshore, but surveyors regarded the intelligence "with distrust" and assumed the cod was caught in shallower waters within the strait. The intense southeast gales that frequently whipped the coast thwarted incidental attempts to locate the bank while passing to or from the strait's entrance. Surveyors' skepticism faded a few years later,

Figure 7. Makah women clean halibut at Neah Bay, 1915

Makah women clean halibut on the shores of Neah Bay. Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University Libraries. "Halibut Fishers – Neah Bay," Edward S. Curtis, The North American Indian, *vol. 11 (1915). J. Paul Getty Museum Collection Online.*

[96] James Hunter (Keen-tee-tsum), n.d., Chute collection, box 4, file 71.

however, when a White captain observed canoes fishing off the entrance to the strait. The captain decided to try his own luck and found a bank eighteen fathoms below the surface – far shallower than the surrounding depths – and reported the incident to Assistant Davidson.[97] Lieutenant Alden made four attempts locate the bank over the next year. In July 1855, the lieutenant found the weather sufficiently calm to spend half a day "in the same fruitless search." He and Lieutenant Trowbridge each solicited the aid of several Makahs who boarded with canoes and fishing tackle, "So that they might use their own means & appliances in demonstrating the existence or not in the locality of the far famed 'halibut.'" The surveyors found no fewer than 45 fathoms, which Makah guides insisted was the least they would find. The hapless lieutenants returned empty-handed from the day's attempt, without even a fish to show for their efforts.[98] Further attempts that year were similarly unsuccessful.[99]

ƛušu·ʔa continued to elude the Coast Survey in 1858, when Davidson published the region's first comprehensive sailing guide. Tellingly, the guide mentions the alleged bank despite the Coast Survey's failure to find it.[100] Surveyors regarded local and Indigenous knowledge warily until they corroborated it firsthand, but they clearly understood the risks of ignoring it altogether. ƛušu·ʔa was too deep for a boat to strike, but its isolated position offshore could confuse and endanger vessels who used depth soundings to determine to determine their proximity to land when beset by fog or smoke from forest fires.[101] Even survey steamers were susceptible to such miscalculations, as Captain Richards discovered that foggy day in 1861. Thick fogs prevented Richards from marking the banks

[97] George Davidson, 'Directory for the Pacific Coast of the United States, with Sailing Directions, Geographical Positions &c', in *Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey Showing the Progress of the Survey during the Year 1858*, 1st ed. (Washington, DC: William A. Harris, 1859), 414, https://library.noaa.gov/Collections/Digital-Collections/USCGS-Annual-Reports.
[98] Alden spent another luckless 10-12 hours casting for the bank in September 1855. James Alden Jr. to Alexander Dallas Bache, 22 Jan 1856, General Correspondence of Superintendent Alexander Bache, vol. XVI, RG 23, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/248239234
[99] Alden to Bache, 22 Jan 1856 and 20 Mar 1856, General Correspondence of Superintendent Alexander Bache, vol. XVI, RG 23, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/248239234; USS *Active* logbook, 13 Sep 1855, 16 Mar 1856, Ships' Records, vol. 6, RG 23, NARA-CP.
[100] Davidson, 'Directory for the Pacific Coast', 1859, 414–15.
[101] Pemberton, *Facts and Figures*, 11; Imray, *Sailing Directions*, 136; G.H. Richards, *The Vancouver Island Pilot: Containing Sailing Directions for the Coasts of Vancouver Island, and Part of British Columbia Compiled from the Surveys Made by Captain George Henry Richards, R.N., in H.M. Ships Plumper and Hecate, between the Years 1858 and 1864* (London: Hydrographic Office, Admiralty, 1864), 9.

with any precision on that occasion, but he found a fleet of canoes fishing the area when he returned the following summer. Like others before him, Richards took the cue and began sounding but found the canoes in deeper water than he had previously encountered. He managed to locate a 29-fathom patch, but the shallower area his crew had accidentally sounded remained elusive.[102]

Nagging reports of a bank compelled the US Coast Survey to resume its investigations in the 1860s. In 1864, a vessel claimed it had anchored off the coast in twelve fathoms.[103] In 1865, the schooner *Brant* reported catching five barrels of cod on a 25-fathom bank north of that anchorage. Davidson's *Pacific Coast Pilot* (1869) credits the *Brant* with the discovery, but a local observer notes there were "a number of Indians" on board "to ascertain the locality of the ground."[104] Assistant Lawson sought Indigenous assistance again upon returning to Neah Bay in 1867. The resident Indian agent helped Lawson procure a Makah interpreter and several guides "having most experience in offshore fishing." The Makahs described an eighteen-fathom fishing ground closer to Barclay Sound on Vancouver Island and another about forty miles offshore but reported nothing shallower than twenty fathoms in ƛušu·ʔa's location fifteen west miles of Cape Flattery. Like others before it, the ensuing investigation proved futile. The depths Lawson recorded merely affirmed those on the Admiralty chart, and further efforts were stymied, as usual, by wind and fog. The assistant confessed his doubts as to the existence of the bank "from the fact that it is not located on the English maps, and that no such one is known to the Indians, who would be most likely to know it from their frequent fishing excursions."[105] The

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[102] Richards, *Private Journal*, 193.
[103] Davidson, *Pacific Coast, Coast Pilot*, 1889, 518.
[104] Indian Agent Webster arranged the excursion so that the Makahs could "learn to fish from a vessel with a view of procuring one for the reservation." A similar expedition took place the following year aboard the schooner *A.J. Wester*. This time Swan names two guides, Pahahquitl and Legs, who were among the men recruited to indicate the location, act as pilots, and help with the fishing. James Gilchrist Swan diaries (transcript), 15 and 25 Jun 1865, 23 and 25 May 1866, Pacific Northwest Historical Documents Collection, UWSC: https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/pioneerlife/id/4488/ (hereafter cited as Swan diaries); George Davidson, *Pacific Coast: Coast Pilot of California, Oregon, and Washington Territory*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: G. P.O., 1869), 181–82, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009503413.
[105] Lawson to Benjamin Peirce, 15 Sep 1867, Superintendent's Files, box 360, RG 23, NARA-CP; United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey Showing the Progress of the Survey during the Year 1866' (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1869), 2; Lawson, 'Autobiography'.

admission reveals the extent to which Indigenous knowledge remained a primary source of intelligence for US and British surveyors, the apparent limits of one defining those of the other. It would be several decades longer before the Royal Navy finally succeeded in charting a 20-fathom patch on the elusive bank.[106]

Against "the silly repetition of popular names"

The charts and guides these surveyors produced provide an additional layer of evidence of their frequent encounters with Indigenous mariners. Scholars draw attention to the erasure of Indigenous toponyms from imperial maps.[107] It is counterintuitive that mid-nineteenth-century surveyors, whose work overlapped with and accelerated the transition to settler colonialism, did more to record and retain Indigenous placenames than earlier voyagers who conducted their surveys in an uncontested Indigenous seascape. In fact, Indigenous toponyms are a regular feature of US and British sailings guides and rise in frequency with each successive edition. Tables 2 and 3 tally instances in which Indigenous names are explicitly provided in US and British sailing guides: specifically, instances in which a placename is accompanied by an Indigenous derivation, meaning, and/or pronunciation; in which the Indigenous name is provided alongside its European counterpart; and in which names are given for specific Indigenous villages. A complete list of these toponyms is given in Appendix A:

Table 2. Summary of Indigenous placenames in US sailing guides, 1858-1889

Publication	Indigenous placenames (explicit)
Directory for the Pacific Coast (1858)	34
Directory for the Pacific Coast (1862)	51

[106] HMS *Swiftsure* reported a 20-fathom patch in the area in 1889, but its position remained doubtful. HMS *Egeria* succeeded in charting the bank's shoal waters in 1901. A lightship was established at the bank to mark the entrance of the Juan de Fuca Strait from 1909-1961. George Davidson, "A Study of the Entrance to the Fuca Strait," Manuscripts of his writings, box 9, Davidson papers; United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, *The British Columbia Pilot, Including the Coast of British Columbia from Juan de Fuca Strait to Portland Canal, Together with Vancouver and Queen Charlotte Islands*, 2nd ed. (London: Printed for the Hydrographic Office, Admiralty, 1898), 27, http://archive.org/details/cihm_15103; Humphrey Golby and Shirley Hewett, *Swiftsure: The First Fifty Years*, ed. Ed Gould (Victoria: Lightship Press, 1980), 18–19.

[107] Daniel Clayton, 'Circumscribing Vancouver Island', *BC Studies*, no. 122 (1999): 19, https://doi.org/10.14288/bcs.v0i122.1496; Wood, *San Juan Island*, 35–37.

Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot (1869)	50
Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot (1889)	75
Total unique placenames	82

Table 3. Summary of Indigenous placenames in British sailing guides, 1864-1899

Publication	Indigenous placenames (explicit)
Vancouver Island Pilot (1864)	7
Vancouver Island Pilot. Supplement (1883)	42
British Columbia Pilot (1888)	63
British Columbia Pilot (1899)	78
Total unique placenames	85

To be sure, these growing tallies reflect the expanding geography contained within each of these volumes. In some cases, cataloguers offer alternate toponyms simply as a point of curiosity. Davidson's guides include points-of-interest and anecdotes whose utility probably did not extend beyond amusing the idle mariner. The frequency of Indigenous names also reflects the spread of professional and amateur anthropology. As Indigenous populations declined, settlers in the Pacific Northwest expressed increasing interest in the cultural habits and knowledge they assumed would soon disappear. The fourth and final edition of Davidson's guide, in particular, reflects widening scholarly access to Indigenous placenames, drawing liberally on publications by the Smithsonian Institute, ethnologist George Gibbs, and regional authorities like Gilbert Sproat and James Swan.[108]

But surveyors sometimes sought Indigenous placenames for entirely practical reasons. First of all, there were only so many names to go around. The British Empire had reached an incredible geographic extent by mid-century, and the proliferation of British names had become a source of frustration for colonial authorities who sought to manage this sprawling domain. Admiralty Instructions published in 1862 counselled surveyors against "the silly repetition of popular names,

[108] See, for example, Davidson, *Pacific Coast, Coast Pilot*, 1889, 492, 511, 515.

which so much tends to confuse our gazetteers and to perplex our memories."[109] Similar repetition littered US charts. Lieutenant Lawson counted three "Sandy Points" in the vicinity of Port Discovery alone.[110] Unique, reliable, and agreed upon place names became all the more important to navigators with the issue of sailing directions, but the mobility of settler population on the Pacific Coast meant names were "very readily lost, changed or corrupted" as itinerant men chased labour opportunities in temporary logging, fishing, or mining camps. US Coast Surveyors often found settlers using two sets of names for the same geographic feature, neither matching available charts.[111] These factors encouraged British and American surveyors to adopt a more careful approach to naming the infinity of points, islands, shoals, and rocks by which mariners, merchants, and militaries were expected navigate their oceanic frontiers. The Admiralty deemed it preferable to "adopt the native name [...] than to exhaust the catalogue of public characters and private friends," and provided Richards (RN) and his assistants with a prescribed orthography to accurately record the vowels and consonants Indigenous informants used to describe the coastal seascape.[112] An pamphlet of the US Coast Survey published around 1860 instructed surveyors to seek out and restore original, including Indigenous place names, especially where they had become corrupted over time.[113] By adopting Indigenous names, Anglo surveyors tapped into a wealth of unique, historically consistent names with which to populate their charts and guides.

Of course, the British Admiralty and US Coast Survey generally understood historical consistency to mean preserving names established by the earliest "discover or explorer," a toponymic Doctrine of Discovery "held sacred by the common consent of all nations," according to the

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[109] United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, *General Instructions for the Hydrographic Surveyors of the Admiralty*, 1862, 25, http://archive.org/details/general-instructions-for-the-hydrographi..
[110] Lawson to Benjamin Peirce, 12 Dec 1869, Superintendent's Files, box 360, RG 23, NARA-CP.
[111] Wood, *San Juan Island*, 21; United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent... during the Year 1855', 10.
[112] Washington, Instructions, p. 6; United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, *General Instructions*, 25. The Admiralty's prescribed orthography was presaged by earlier instructions issued in 1849: John F. W. Herschel, ed., *A Manual of Scientific Enquiry: Prepared for the Use of Her Majesty's Navy and Adapted for Travellers in General* (London: John Murray, 1849), 441–44, https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.50759.
[113] Wood, *San Juan Island*, 42–43.

Admiralty.[114] Richards' instructions exhorted him against changing "the names given by the discoverers for some new modern name."[115] Davidson (USCS), too, placed the "right of the discoverer in a new country with uncivilized inhabitants" among the foremost considerations when selecting a place name.[116] The goal was not simply to reproduce British or American hegemonic space, however. The Admiralty instructed Richards to maintain the names given by Spanish officers and "the native name with its meaning if it have any."[117] Davidson readily employed names applied by English captains, but also sought out Indigenous names "when they were descriptive," "where they could be verified," and where they were likely to be useful to mariners in need of Indigenous guides (notably in later Alaskan surveys).[118]

The underlying intent, in both cases, was historical consistency and agreement with local usage, as would best support the needs of colonial navigators. In many cases, this meant using established European names. Elsewhere, local usage demanded mid-century surveyors adopt Indigenous place names. Davidson felt obliged to adopt names imparted by earlier English and Spanish navigators but had no qualms about overruling those applied by the Ex Ex without regard to local precedent. He jettisoned "Scarborough Harbour" for Née-ah (later Neah) Bay, the Makah name and "the only one by which it is known on the coast," and "Elliott's Bay" for Duwamish Bay, "by which it is invariably known and was adopted from the name of the tribe of Indians inhabiting its shores."[119] In areas removed from colonial settlement, surveyors adopted names directly from Indigenous peoples who boarded their ships and visited their encampments (see Map 7).[120] In many cases, surveyors received Indigenous names from recent settlers. HBC factors and traders used Indigenous toponyms,

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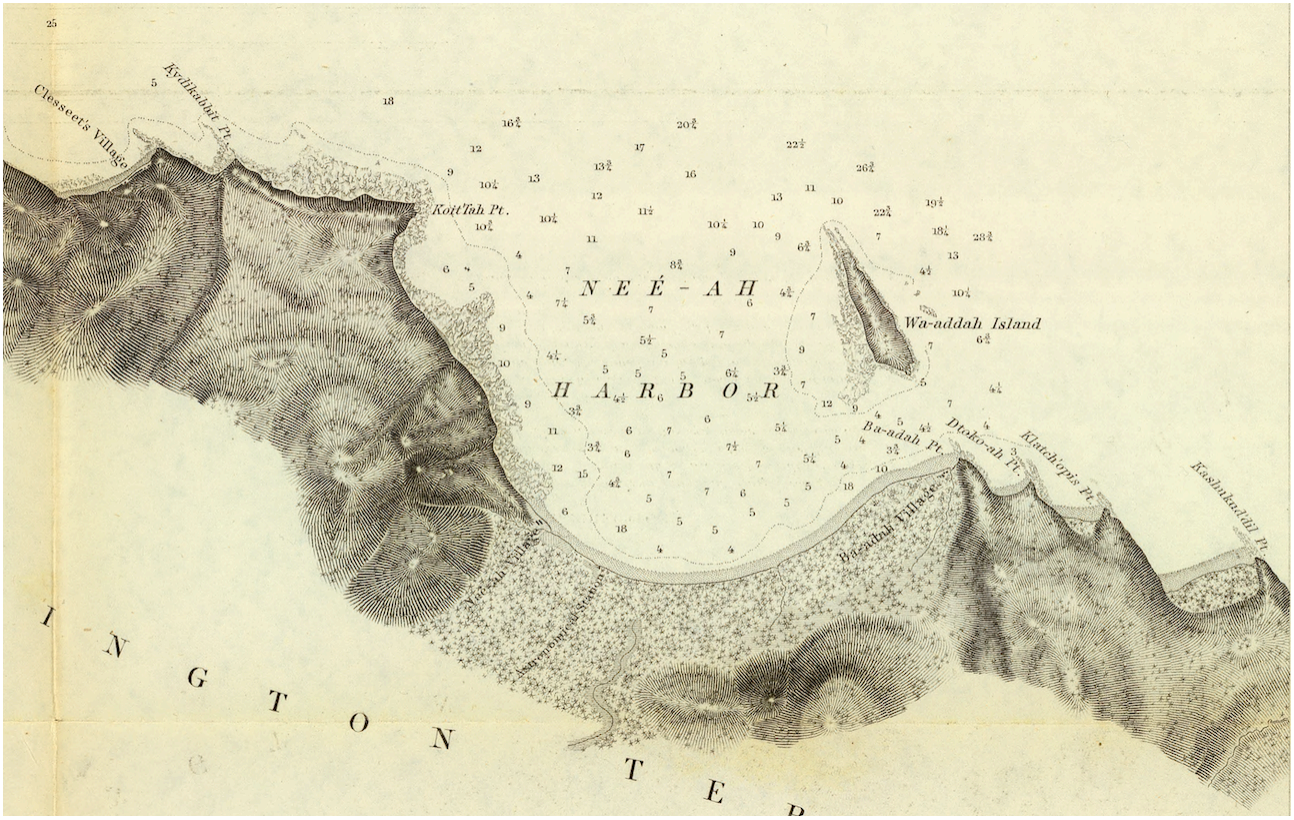
[114] United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, *General Instructions*, 25.
[115] Washington, Instructions, p. 6.
[116] George Davidson, 'The Name "Mt. Ranier"', in *Sierra Club Bulletin*, vol. 6 (1907-1908) (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1908), 89, https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/137986.
[117] Washington, Instructions, p. 6; United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, *General Instructions*, 25.
[118] Davidson, 'The Name "Mt. Ranier"', 88, 94.
[119] Davidson, 'Directory for the Pacific Coast', 1859, 417, 446.
[120] See, for example, George Gibbs, "Journal & Notes, N.W.B.S.," pp. 35r-36r, WA MSS S-1810, Beinecke Library, Yale University: https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/11237471; Richards, *Private Journal*, 41, 176.

Map 7. Detail from an 1853 chart of Neah Bay



Davidson recorded numerous Makah placenames while working from Neah Bay in 1852. Q̓idi·q̓abit, the village where Lieutenant Alden met with Chief X̌isi·t ("Clesseet") is shown in the upper left. The submerged rock where the HMS Hecate *grounded in 1861 is immediately to the west ("Kydikabbit Pt"). The position of the Coast Survey's astronomical station is indicated on the beach between Neé-ah (Di·ya) and Ba-adah (Biʔidʔa) villages. US Coast Survey, "Cape Flattery and Neé-ah Harbor, Washington," 1853. David Rumsey Map Collection.*

Davidson observed, and undoubtedly passed many to successive waves of settlers and surveyors.[121] Changing Indigenous names in use among local settlers could only produce unnecessary confusion for incoming navigators who required a consistent and common vocabulary to interpret charts, obtain directions, and communicate with pilots. Using names simply to reproduce imperial space may have been a desirable goal in the eighteenth century, but it was a navigational nuisance in the nineteenth. Imperial consolidation was better accomplished by reliable navigation than declarative nomenclature.

Of course, there were limits. Charts and guides preserved Indigenous toponyms in some areas but erased or obscured them in many others. Admiralty instructions limited the advice to adopt

[121] Davidson, 'The Name "Mt. Ranier"', 88–90, 94.

Indigenous names to those considered pronounceable, surely a subjective measure which surveyors would have interpreted widely.[122] The Coast Survey sought to restore "aboriginal names [...] preserved by the inhabitants [i.e., settlers]," but not where later appellations had "become so permanently attached to the localities as to make it too difficult."[123] Conflict with Indigenous inhabitants, such as those experienced in Puget Sound in 1855-56, likely tempered the application of their placenames in some cases.[124] Richards did not include a recommended "glossary of native names" in his *Vancouver Island Pilot* probably because he anticipated that incoming mariners would generally be interfacing with English-speaking authorities in the chief ports of Victoria, Esquimalt, and Nanaimo (the latter two derived from Indigenous names and adopted by the HBC).[125] In every case, utility to White, English-speaking mariners was the primary object in determining the names adopted. The measure of local usage used in selecting names was never that of Indigenous communities who occupied the region from time immemorial. Indigenous names found wide circulation on imperial charts and sailing guides, but only to the extent that other factors made doing so the most expedient option for safe navigation. The adoption of Indigenous toponyms by imperial surveys was, paradoxically, the product of a changed landscape in which an established settler population had learned to navigate the coast by means of Indigenous technologies, knowledge, assistance, and lexicons.

Gestures, Errors, and Prized Possessions: Interpreting "False" Data

The information Indigenous informants provided did not always prove correct. Lieutenant Trowbridge (USCS) wrote that his guides led him to a dead-end bay, mistakenly believing it to open into Puget Sound, and were loathe "to acknowledge that a 'Boston' [i.e., American] knows more about the Sound than they themselves."[126] Apparent errors in depth were more common. Indigenous

[122] United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, *General Instructions*, 25.
[123] United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent... during the Year 1855', 10.
[124] Davidson, 'The Name "Mt. Ranier"', 95.
[125] United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, *General Instructions*, 30.
[126] Pollard, 'Journal of a Voyage', 402.

informants told the Ex Ex of a passage between Skagit and Bellingham bays, but the water shallowed to "almost a mud-flat" and was scarcely passable by the USS *Porpoise*.[127] Captain Richards (RN) received Tla-o-qui-aht assurances that the HMS *Hecate* could pass through the southern entrance to Clayoquot Sound but reported that he would have run on shore had he taken them at their word.[128] Such incidents echo patterns observed from the HMS *Virago* during its examination of Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii in 1853. Master George Hastings Inskip wrote that "an Indian always knows every creek and corner of his own district," but was seldom able to differentiate waters that could accommodate large vessels and those fit only for canoes.[129] Paymaster Hills mirrored this assessment, suggesting the Indigenous pilots "did not seem to notice whether the water be shoal or deep," provided their canoes could pass safely.[130] These observations reflect the respective demands of Indigenous and imperial maritime technologies. Indigenous observers did not always discern the needs of deep draught vessels during initial encounters, but they learned quickly when it was in their interest.

Still, assertions that Indigenous guides were simply ignorant of depths should be regarded carefully since that information was an essential component of their fishing knowledge. Richards professed difficulty procuring Indigenous names for mountains and other terranean features but noted "Any good fishing place [...] they have frequently a name for."[131] Makahs knew how to find ƛ̓ušu·ʔa and determine its depth because they depended on the cod and halibut that frequented with bank. Paymaster Hills describes approaching Perry Passage "under the guidance of Edinsaw [Edenshaw] who assured us it was 'halibut water' meaning deep water; the halibut only abounding at certain depths."[132] The observation captures Edenshaw's gift for translating harvesting knowledge (where to

[127] Wilkes, *Narrative*, 1845, 4:482.
[128] Richards, *Private Journal*, 122.
[129] Inskip, 'Remarks on Some Harbours', 625.
[130] Hills journal, 24 May 1853.
[131] Richards' comments were made with respect to "natives of these southern parts," apparently referring to groups on southern or southeastern Vancouver Island from whom he might obtain Indigenous names for the Olympic Range. Richards to John Washington, 25 Jan 1860, Letterbook, private collection; Richards, *Private Journal*, 107n87; Gibbs, *Dictionary of the Chinook Jargon*, 23.
[132] Hills journal, 23 May 1853.

catch fish) into navigational knowledge (where to steer ships). His ability to do so was reinforced by recalling where traders had anchored in decades past. The chief affirmed the suitability of channels and anchorages by noting the size of vessels that passed through it "in former times." If a large, three-masted American ship had entered a harbour, it would likely be safe for the *Virago*.[133] Rupert Jim may have drawn on similar knowledge aboard HMS *Plumper* when he distinguished anchorages for "boats or schooners" from those capable of accommodating larger ships.[134] Such histories were often maintained by Indigenous communities. Visiting Observatory Inlet aboard the *William & Ann* in 1825, Dr. John Scouler described the Indigenous people he encountered (perhaps Ts'msyens) as having "traditions of C. Vancouver, as they were at great pains to make us understand that a great many snows ago two vessels had anchored in the place where we now are."[135] It is unlikely that Edenshaw and Jim were the only Indigenous mariners with the fishing and historical knowledge required to pilot imperial ships of all sizes.

Some reported errors probably derived from mistranslation. Surveyors and Indigenous mariners improvised several means to communicate across linguistic divides. Hand gestures emulated paddle-wheelers and beckoned vessels to anchor.[136] Sketches by Edenshaw and other guides described harbours and navigable rivers: a man at Fort Simpson was "known as the Arrowsmith of the Northwest Coast" (a reference to one of England's preeminent cartographers) for having prepared "very accurate charts" of Fort Simpson and its adjacent shorelines.[137] Interpreters like Rupert Jim were

[133] Inskip journal, 23 May 1853; Hills journal, 23 May 1853.
[134] Richards, *Private Journal*, 84.
[135] Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal, II', 183.
[136] Prior to entering the strait, the US Ex Ex encountered two men in a canoe off Point Grenville who tried to communicate this information by shouting "*Nusk quall*" (Nisqually) and rapidly turning one hand over the other in imitation of the *Beaver*'s paddlewheel. The meaning was not immediately clear, but the informants received tobacco for their efforts. Hills journal, 7 May 1853; Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 269.
[137] Prevost to Moresby, 7 Jun 1853; Hills journal, 22 May 1853; Richards, *Private Journal*, 124–25; Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal, II', 191. For "Arrowsmith," see Simpson, *Overland Journey Round the World*, 123.

hired at HBC settlements or solicited en route.[138] Some informants only spoke in "broken English," or through the medium of the coast's lingua franca, Chinook jargon.[139] The latter may explain Richards' occasional difficulty in procuring Indigenous names. Asked the name for Mt. Baker, an unnamed Chief replied that it was called "'Hias siah,' which merely means in Chinook jargon 'it is a long way off.'" Similarly, an Indigenous person asked the name of Mount Benson replied "'Wake siah' or 'not far off.'" The vague names Richards received may have resulted from the fact that his informants were more accustomed to communicating to Europeans in the Chinook jargon than the local languages from which toponyms were derived.[140] Even this medium was unavailable in remote villages such as Kyuquot on northwest Vancouver Island as late as the 1860s.[141] In one exceptional case, a visiting surveyor became sufficiently proficient in "the Barclay Sound dialect" to make himself understood to Indigenous mariners along the west coast of Vancouver Island.[142] Even so, mistranslations were inevitable, and surveyors were cognizant of their inability to obtain accurate geographic information given their "ignorance" of certain Indigenous languages.[143]

Such shortcomings make it difficult to determine whether Makah guides assisting the US Coast Survey knew of ƛ̓ušu.ʔa's shallowest patches. Alden, Lawson, and Richards all report Indigenous people fishing at depths of 45-52 fathoms, considerably deeper than those the surveyors sought.[144] Halibut swim at a variety of depths and Makah fishers may have been content to fish from

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[138] Journal of William Ebrington Gordon, 26 Apr 1853, MLMSS 3091 (hereafter cited as Gordon journal), Mitchell Library: https://archival.sl.nsw.gov.au/Details/archive/110319753; Inskip journal, 17 May 1853; Colvocoresses, *Four Years*, 239–40; Richards, *Private Journal*, 82, 178.

[139] Hills journal, 7 May 1853; USS *Vincennes* journal (1839-42), 30 Apr 1841, 2 Aug 1841; Richards, *Private Journal*, 107n87; 178, 182.

[140] Linda Dorricott and Deidre Cullon note the Snuneymuxw name for Mount Benson is *tetuxwtun*, meaning 'uncovered mountain.' "Siah-siah" ('very far') and "wake siah" (near, not far) both appear in George Gibbs' 1863 dictionary of the jargon. Still, one wonders why Richards reported no so such difficulty acquiring names for Indigenous fishing places. Richards, 107n87; Gibbs, *Dictionary of the Chinook Jargon*, 23.

[141] "Copy of Lieut. Hankin's report to Captain Richards of a Journey across Vancouver Island," 13 Dec 1852, *British Colonist*: https://archive.org/details/dailycolonist18621213uvic

[142] Richards, *Vancouver Island Pilot*, 174.

[143] Colvocoresses, *Four Years*, 255; *Private Journal*, 195; Mayne, *Four Years*, 143.

[144] James Alden Jr. to Alexander Dallas Bache, 22 Jan 1856, General Correspondence of Superintendent Alexander Bache, vol. XVI, RG 23, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/248239234; Richards, *Private Journal*, 193.

deeper patches where they were reliably found.[145] Then again, James Swan reported their retrieving halibut from an offshore bank varying of 20–30 fathoms.[146] Makahs were almost certainly hesitant to share the location of prized fishing bank with these outsiders. Indigenous peoples fished at least three distinct grounds at ƛ̓ušu·ʔa, and Makahs may have been selective in sharing their locations with surveyors.[147] The US Coast Survey had promised not to impinge on Makah rights when they arrived in their territory in 1852. Makah accounts of the treaty signed three years later recall Governor Isaac Stevens' promise that ƛ̓ušu·ʔa "never would be taken from us, but was to remain ours forever." Makahs withheld permission for resident traders to fish on the banks into the late-1850s.[148] Alden and Trowbridge may have unwittingly undermined the confidence of their guides when they asked them to bring their fishing tackle to one of the Makahs' most valuable assets just six months after Governor Stevens gave his assurances in 1855. The growing presence of White fishing boats on the banks may have dissuaded them from offering additional aid to Lawson in 1867.[149] There are later indications that Indigenous fishers knew of a patch as shallow as thirteen fathoms. The captain of the Canadian government steamer tried using their descriptions to find the bank while passing through the area in the 1880s. His efforts were unsuccessful, but a 13-fathom patch is referenced in the 1898 edition of the

[145] For halibut behaviour and fishing around the Juan de Fuca Strait, see Terry Rudnick, 'How Deep for Halibut?', *Salmon University* (blog), 16 March 2016, http://salmonuniversity.com/archives/4620.
[146] Swan records this information in a book published in 1868, so it is possible this was an inference based on earlier reports of an 18-fathom or 29-fathom patch. Either way, Swan associated these shallower patches with Makah fishers who returned to Neah Bay in canoes laden with fish. Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 23.
[147] Jones, *Queesto*, 30.
[148] Henry St. Claire (Yah-kahl-chup), n.d., Chute collection, box 5, file 2; United States Office of Indian Affairs, 'Report of the Commissioner… for the Year 1858', 233.
[149] In 1865, fishers aboard the schooner *Brant* returned to Victoria bragging that they had discovered cod-banks off Cape Flattery, retrieving five barrels of the fish in two hours. Makahs would not be the only ones who hesitated to broadcast valuable fishing knowledge to unknown surveyors. In 1867, George Davidson complained that Alaska fisherman refused to provide detailed information regarding the location of cod banks in the recently purchased territory. Lawson, 'Autobiography'; Davidson, *Pacific Coast, Coast Pilot*, 1869, 181–82; United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey Showing the Progress of the Survey during the Year 1867' (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1869), 218.

British Columbia Pilot. ƛušu·ʔa remained elusive, but surveyors continued to echo Indigenous reports some forty years after the bank was first described in Davidson's 1858 *Directory*.[150]

Shots Fired and Narrowly Avoided: Conflict between Surveyors and Indigenous Peoples

Even as they stumbled into prized fishing grounds, surveyors did their best to avoid conflict. Even with its considerable entourage, Commander Wilkes issued a general order to the Ex Ex urging "unceasing caution, and a restrictive and mild system in all their intercourse" with the Indigenous peoples they encountered and directed remote survey parties to avoid "any disputes or maltreatment of the Indians." Fearing the worst, Wilkes ordered that no man should visit shore without arms and stipulated that surveying boats be outfitted as necessary for their protection. These cautions arose from Wilkes' desire to avoid "difficulties" similar to those the expedition encountered in Fiji – two Americans and as many as ninety Fijians dead – and from his cognisance of the "misfortunes" that previous voyages had suffered following "unrestrained and unguarded intercourse with the natives" of the Northwest Coast.[151] These impressions, elaborations on a much older geography of fear, motivated Wilkes to undertake special precautions. His men were not always so tactful, however. Shore parties desecrated gravesites and stole ancestral remains for the expedition's ethnographic collection, to lasting local indignation.[152] A party narrowly avoided a skirmish in Hood Canal when a survey instrument was found missing and reported stolen. Lieutenant August Case demanded the return of the theodolite (used to measure angles) from a Skokomish woman and seized an absent chief's gun when she denied possessing the item. His upper hand was short-lived. The next morning, eight canoes bore down on the isolated survey party with what appeared to be ill-intent. Case raised sail and fled,

[150] John Devereux to George Davidson, 14 Feb 1890, General Incoming Correspondence, box 6, Davidson papers; United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, *British Columbia Pilot*, 1898, 27.
[151] Wilkes, *Narrative*, 1845, 4:301; Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845), 308–9, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.b3007319.
[152] Indigenous peoples on the Columbia River remained incensed at the Ex Ex's desecration of grave sites in 1847, according to artist Paul Kane, showing "much indignation at the violation of a place which was held so sacred by them." Wilkes, *Narrative*, 1845, 4:389, 479; Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 193, 204. Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist*, 200–201.

his party too small "to attempt anything like force." The surveyors soon encountered the returning chief and wisely chose to return his gun.[153] Such spats were reminders that surveyors conducted their activities at the sufferance of Indigenous leaders.

Interference with signal markers was a more common source of irritation. Several signals, installed on prominent points to measure angles and distances, were seized from Ex Ex surveyors at Gray's Harbor, though these were returned following the intervention of the Chehalis chief.[154] Engaged at Neah Bay, Assistant Lawson (USCS) described himself as "much annoyed" by Makahs who removed the cloth flags attached to his signal marks. On one occasion, Lawson drew his pistol, chased the culprits, and shot one of the village dogs. Lawson summoned Chief Yelak'ub (known as Flattery Jack) and issued an ultimatum: "any Indian man I caught destroying my signals I would kill on the spot; women or boys I would bring into camp and have publicly whipped."[155] Lawson lost considerable time to the same behavior in Puget Sound in 1858. One signal, located twelve miles from the survey vessel, was torn down twice in succession, and could be replaced only by rowing against a strong current and crossing a dangerous rip-tide.[156] Some accusations of interference were misplaced, however. Working in Puget Sound, Acting Master Sinclair (Ex Ex) noted two occasions where equipment was lost and presumed stolen, only to be returned by the Indigenous people who happened to find it. Other signals washed away by the tide were sometimes stuck back into the shore by the Indigenous peoples who found them.[157] Some hasty accusations of theft were probably calculated to deflect attention from rushed work and lost equipment.

Surveyors identified one factor as crucial in preventing perceived instances of theft or interference: the presence of an armed ship. Even comparatively diminutive ships carried lethal firepower, as displayed by the schooner *Cadboro*'s razing of stətíɬəm in 1828. Such violence left a lasting

[153] Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 141, 144–45.
[154] Wilkes, *Narrative*, 1845, 5:132–33.
[155] Lawson, 'Autobiography'.
[156] United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent… during the Year 1858', 115–16.
[157] Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 190.

impression, but sounding parties sent away in gigs and whale boats lacked the swivel guns, boarding nets, and height advantage of larger vessels. The HMS *Virago*'s boats successfully prosecuted their work within range of the ship, but a gig dispatched to survey Houston Stewart Channel was forced to abandon its work and flee when canoes from SG̲ang Gwaay Llnagaay bore down and fired several shots, leaving a notable gap in the resulting chart (Map 8).[158] "What I most dislike about them is their different behaviour when the ship is present, and when our people are left among them in boats," Captain Richards (RN) wrote during his survey of Quatsino in 1862. "They have not then the dread of the ships [sic] force – and the boats have little to give them. Consequently their demeanour is greatly

Map 8. Detail from an 1856 chart of Houston Stewart Channel

The white space at the southwest entrance to Houston Stewart Channel testifies to the vulnerability of isolated sounding parties. The HMS Virago*'s gig recorded fewer than twenty soundings and failed to meet those conducted earlier from the opposite direction before it was chased away by armed canoes from SG̲ang Gwaay Llnagaay ("Skangoi"). "Sketch of Houston Stewart Channel and Rose Harbour by Mess[rs] Inskip, Gordon & Knox" and "Sketch of the Entrance to Cumshewas Harbour by Capt[n] T. Sinclair of the Hudson Bay Co[y], 1852," insets from Admiralty chart no. 2168, published 8 Nov 1856. Admiralty Charts, item ID 3673688, Admiralty fonds, LAC: http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=fonandcol&id=3673688&lang=eng*

[158] Gordon journal, 19 Jul 1853.

changed."[159] Lieutenant Alden (USCS) concurred, asserting the Makahs' "thieving, treacherous" disposition could be curbed by their fear of a warship.[160] Still, it is unlikely "dread" was the only factor conditioning locals' disposition towards isolated boats. Survey vessels carried firepower, but also the gifts and trade goods Indigenous mariners expected to receive from those encroaching on their waters. Sounding boats and shore parties fell short on both measures and were probably treated accordingly.

But surveyors' accounts suggest another factor that constrained or abetted tensions: the presence or absence of a ranking chief. Chehalis canoers tore down signal markers and nearly came to blows with the Ex Ex when an angry midshipman seized one of their muskets. Upon departing, the party encountered a Chehalis chief who was reportedly "mortified at the events which occurred." Wilkes later wrote that the chief possessed little authority but nonetheless managed to "keep his people in order" and secure the return of the signal markers.[161] In 1860, the uncle of the current Chief Maquinna (grandson and great-grandson, respectively, of the chief encountered by Captain Vancouver in 1792, and the *William & Ann* in 1825) exacted a "ferocious and threatening spirit" upon two Nuu-chah-nulth men who removed a chronometer from Captain Richards (RN) at Nootka Sound. His family received an array of goods on the occasion, which no doubt encouraged Maquinna to keep his people in check.[162] Two years later, Lieutenant Philip Hankin and surgeon Charles Wood had the embarrassing experience of paying for conveyance to Kyuquot, only to be dumped on shore part way by their amused Ehattesaht guides. Captain Richards held Hankin partially responsible, noting that "all arrangements of this kind should be made thro [sic] the Chief." Richards sought out the offenders

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[159] Richards, *Private Journal*, 197.
[160] James Alden Jr. to Alexander Dallas Bache, 7 Aug 1852, General Correspondence of Superintendent Alexander Bache, vol. IX, RG 23, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/248185039.
[161] Wilkes, *Narrative*, 1845, 5:129–33; Colvocoresses, *Four Years*, 250–55.
[162] Richards, *Private Journal*, 89–92. Maquinna is a hereditary name owned by specific Nuu-chah-nulth families to this day. The Maquinna who met Vancouver in 1792 boarded the *William & Ann* with the son of the same name in 1825. The younger Maquinna (born circa 1787) met an eighteen-year-old George Henry Richards when he visited Yuquot as an officer aboard HMS *Sulphur* in 1837. The Chief Maquinna (born circa 1840-1) Richards met in 1860 assumed the title through marriage to his predecessor's daughter. Scouler, 'Dr. John Scouler's Journal, II', 192; Belcher, *Narrative Of A Voyage*, I:109–12; Richards, *Private Journal*, 87–89, 184–85; Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 300n85.

and obliged their chief ("who protested himself much annoyed at the behaviour of his people") to return five blankets Hankin had given his ostensible guides. Richards promptly presented a portion of the blankets back to the Ehattesaht chief.[163] There is surely something of a performance in all these encounters. The mortification, ferocity, and annoyance these chiefs displayed was probably calculated, to some extent, to mollify captains whose ships could leave either profit or destruction in their wake.

Nowhere were surveyors' encounters with Indigenous people more precarious than amongst the Makahs at Neah Bay and Cape Flattery. As the Ex Ex exited the Juan de Fuca Strait in 1841, Commander Wilkes readied parties to examine harbours on either side of its western entrance.[164] Several Makah canoes approached the ship as it stood off in the strait. Chief George, the ranking titleholder, informed Wilkes of a nearby harbour where he urged them to anchor, volunteering to pilot the *Vincennes* himself (Figure 8).[165] The surveyors regarded the invitation warily, considering the Makahs "warlike" and capable of mustering one thousand fighting men, and attributing this to fact that the harbour had never been properly "properly surveyed" and remained "but little known even to the fur traders."[166] Wilkes accepted Chief George's invitation and determined that Neah Bay was of sufficient importance to merit a survey but kept a "vigilant watch" on the Makahs who came alongside, allowing only a few to board at a time.[167] Chief George seems to have regarded the surveyors' permission to anchor and conduct survey work as conditional on his right to board the *Vincennes*. In the afternoon, having been aboard for roughly six hours, Chief George was removed from the ship. The chief was visibly upset, declaring "that the land was his & if he could not come on board, we should go

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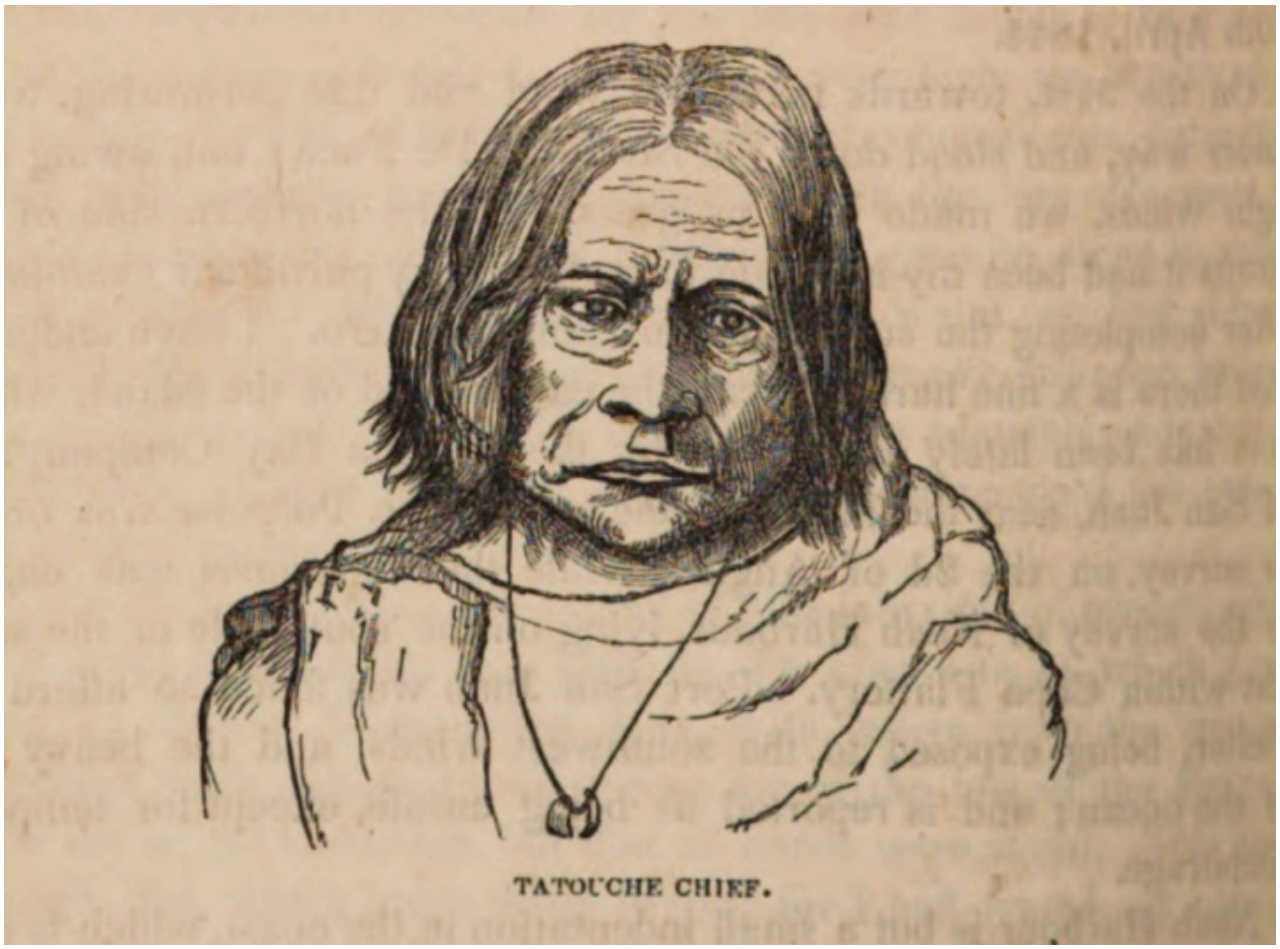
[163] Richards, *Private Journal*, 180–81.
[164] Namely, Neah Bay and Port San Juan. The boats despatched north to Port San Juan were met by Nuu-chah-nulth canoes. There are few details of the encounter, but the surveyors conducted their work without interruption. Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 224; Charles Pickering, *The Races of Man and Their Geographical Distribution*, United States Exploring Expedition 9 (Philadelphia: C. Sherman, 1848), 28, http://archive.org/details/racesofmantheirg91848pick.
[165] USS *Vincennes* journal (1839-42), 2 Aug 1841; "USS Vincennes (4/6/1841-5/1/1842)," 2 Aug 1841, Journals and Logs Kept by Expedition Members, NAID 74203151, RG 37, NARA: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/74203151; Pickering, *Races of Man*, 25. For "ranking titleholder," see Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 86.
[166] USS *Vincennes* journal (1839-42), 2 Aug 1841; USS *Vincennes* journal (1840-41), 2 Aug 1841; Pickering, *Races of Man*, 25; Wilkes, *Narrative*, 1845, 4:487; Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 267.
[167] Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 273.

Figure 8. Makah Chief George, 1841



Chief George remained aboard the USS Vincennes *for hours on end while its boats surveyed Neah Bay. The visit was long enough for Commander Wilkes to capture is likeness using a camera lucida, with which the Chief was reportedly "much pleased." Wilkes,* Narratives, *vol 4, 486, HathiTrust: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433007665387*

away ourselves for we had no right here at all."[168] The Makahs did not immediately retaliate, however, perhaps because George feared trade goods would fall into the hands of rival Chief Yelakʻub.[169] Instead, George returned the following day with a conciliatory gesture, inviting Wilkes to his village on Tatoosh Island. Wilkes declined, however, and Makahs fired a shot at one of the surveying boats that afternoon. The motivations are unclear, Wilkes not considering it "worth while to make any inquiry or

[168] Blumenthal, 262. Wilkes refers obliquely to this confrontation obliquely in his published narrative, noting his difficulty in explaining to Chief George and his people "the care that was taken to keep them from coming on board." Wilkes, *Narrative*, 1845, 4:486.

[169] The expedition was aware of the rivalry between chiefs Yelakʻub and George, having learned of it either from Chief George (who provided considerable information "relative to the different tribes of indians or inhabiting the coast") or the HBC. USS *Vincennes* journal (1839-42), 2 Aug 1841; Pickering, *Races of Man*, 25.

disturbance about this matter."[170] It is possible the expedition's disregard of local protocols – ejecting Chief George from the *Vincennes* while it lay in his waters, declining his invitation to further hospitality – contributed to the gesture of rebuke from one of the Makahs.

A new chief, ƛ̓isi·t ("klih-seet"), had taken George's place as the ranking Makah titleholder by the time the US Coast Survey entered their waters in July 1852, leveraging whaling prowess and diplomatic ties with neighbouring S'Klallam to attain his prestigious position. Lieutenant Alden expressed misgivings about the safety the shore party of nine left to take astronomical measurements among a people "of so bad a reputation," and dressed the USS *Active* "with all the attributes" of a man of war to dissuade confrontation. Chief ƛ̓isi·t took similar precautions, arranging for the lieutenant to meet him in an assembly at Qʼidi·qʼabit.[171] Both sides were prepared to flaunt their strength. More than 200 villagers received Alden when he rowed ashore the next day. ƛ̓isi·t ushered the surveyors into his house, filled with watchful Makahs. Alden was accompanied by as many men as could be spared, his officers in full uniform, others watching from boats offshore, armed and ready to intervene at the first sign of trouble. The lieutenant offered a strained combination of threat, reassurance, and material incentive in the ensuing negotiations. In one breath, the lieutenant declared his intention to punish the tribe for salvaging the wrecked HBC brig *Una* the previous December, while, in the next, promising not to interfere with their rights – surely a contradiction to a people who took for granted their right to salvage whales, timber, and wreckage from local beaches. Alden assured the assembled Makahs that he would not take away their lands but was unmoved when they "objected strongly" to his leaving a survey party encampment among them. Alden concluded by resorting to threat and material incentive, communicating that harm or interference would be answered by the destruction of their village, while explaining that their purpose was solely for the benefit of shipping, that Makahs would benefit

[170] Wilkes wrote that Chief George invited him to "Tatouche, about half a mile nearer to Cape Flattery than the place where the ship lay." Wilkes, *Narrative*, 1845, 4:488.
[171] James Alden Jr. to Alexander Dallas Bache, 7 Aug 1852, General Correspondence of Superintendent Alexander Bache, vol. IX, RG 23, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/248185039; Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 9.

directly from the wealth that would soon flow through their waters.[172] These contradictions probably did little to reassure Chief ƛ́isi·t and the attendant Makahs.

Instead, encroaching Americans were enfolded into local concerns. An enormous big house at Neah Bay testified that Chief Yelakʷub's status had only grown since the Ex Ex's visit eleven years before, and ƛ́isi·t appears to have solicited closer ties with US officials and traders to check his rival's influence. Alden's promise of a continued stake in the trade entering the Juan de Fuca Strait may have been sufficient incentive for him to tolerate the shore party left in his territory while the *Active* proceeded to Port Townsend. It is revealing that Yelakʷub was particularly vocal in opposing Alden and threatening to use violence against his men.[173] Davidson, in charge of the astronomical party, succeeded in procuring two small canoes for conveyance to Tatoosh Island, but took no chances securing his men against armed opposition.[174] They constructed a breastwork from logs, equipped with embrasures from which the men could fire at oncoming assailants. A sentry was posted each night, and target practice held every seven to ten days to exert a "restraining influence upon our neighbours."[175] The camp was on high alert when a large fleet of canoes carrying as many as 250 Nuu-chah-nulth people arrived from Vancouver Island and anchored to a nearby kelp bed – poised to attack the surveyors, according to a local White trader. Guns were distributed to every surveyor, and extra guards posted. A tense night passed in which surveyors observed Indigenous men examining the crude breastwork from the beach, their flotilla scarcely 500 metres away. The night passed without incident, however, and the canoes returned to Vancouver Island the next day.[176] The surveyors were wise to take defensive precautions, given Alden's previous disregard for Indigenous diplomacy and autonomy. They were also lucky, as Davidson privately admitted: "When I look calmly at it, I think that we might have overcome

[172] Alden to Bache, 7 Aug 1852, General Correspondence of Superintendent Alexander Bache, vol. IX, RG 23, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/248185039; Lawson, 'Autobiography'.
[173] Lawson; Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 114.
[174] United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey Showing the Progress of That Work during the Year 1852' (Washington, DC: Robert Armstrong, Printer, 1853), 102.
[175] Lawson, 'Autobiography'.
[176] Davidson to Edward Hall, 3 Oct 1852, Letters written by Davidson, box 59, Davidson papers; Lawson.

them at first, but once they brought allies into the field we should certainly have fared badly." Davidson had witnessed the aftermath of a similar skirmish at Cape Orford, Oregon, and knew how isolated and exposed American settlers were in what he still referred to as "the Indian country" – "All things considered, I am not sorry we are away."[177] Alden and Davidson failed to understand or acknowledge Makah protocols and diplomacy, but military power was another matter.

"Why should he stay [...] save for his own advantage": Interpreting Indigenous Motives

Such incidents notwithstanding, Indigenous communities and individuals more frequently chose to assist surveyors. They did so with an array of motivations. The first wave of transpacific ships to visit the coast were almost entirely interested in trade. Understandably, Indigenous mariners sought to incorporate the Ex Ex into this familiar pattern of exchange when the USS *Vincennes* and *Porpoise* arrived in 1841. Canoes frequently surrounded these ships upon their arrival in a nation's territory. Those who paddled out to meet the ships asked for gifts, offered fish and other provisions for trade, and invited the surveyors to anchor nearer to villages to where further exchanges could take place.[178] Commander Wilkes readily accepted provisions, but Chief George questioned their purpose for visiting upon discovering they did not want furs, asking "'What for so big a ship?' 'What for so many mans?'"[179] Other forms of material exchange, including tribute, also encouraged Indigenous seafarers to accept the presence of foreign surveyors in their customary waters. As early as 1824, HBC clerk Francis Noel Annance recognized the tendency for titleholders to exact a toll from those who passed through their territory.[180] The Ex Ex learned this soon after their arrival on the coast. By one account, the first words shouted from an Indigenous canoe were "S*quik quak manash*" (give us tobacco).[181] Complying with

[177] Davidson to Jane Dale Fauntleroy (née Owen), 12 Feb 1852; Davidson to Mrs. Fauntleroy, 29 Oct 1852, Letters written by Davidson, box 59, Davidson papers.
[178] Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 170, 178, 187–88, 196, 198.
[179] Blumenthal, 273.
[180] Barman, *Abenaki Daring*, 269.
[181] Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 269.

such demands went a long way towards winning the toleration of Indigenous leaders and communities.

Royal Navy surveyors enjoyed a less antagonistic relationship with Indigenous seafarers to the extent they conformed to local expectations by offering gifts and permitting leaders aboard to conduct speeches, song, and dance. Local patterns of exchange adhered to by the governing Hudson's Bay Company encouraged this behaviour. Bearskin arranged an elaborate dance aboard the HMS *Virago* at Skidegate Harbour in 1853, inviting as many 200 Haidas to board. The events are described in wonderful detail by Paymaster Hills:

> [...] at a signal from Mr. Bearskin eight men stepped forward to dance, a ring being made for them by the rest who squatted down on their hams on deck. The dancers had their faces newly painted in bright colors, and wore coronets of long feathers; and were dressed in the gayest colored blankets and shirts they could get. They held in their hands large feather fans; or rattles made of ingeniously carved wooden bases containing pebbles or shot with which they kept time to the song. The dancing [...] was performed by jerking every joint in the body, throwing the figure into all sorts of contortions, but not moving much from one spot; each dancer singing or rather yelling at the stop of his voice; and the women now and then joining in chorus, when the noise was perfectly deafening. [...] The singing seemed to be always to the same tune, and we were told the words are extempore having relation generally to passing events; the song of today being complimentary to us.

The attending Brits endeavoured to reciprocate the gesture, hauling out the bagpipes and a fiddle to perform "a jig for their benefit," and distributing tobacco to each of the Haida dancers.[182] Impressive as it was, the dance was hardly novel. HBC servants report similar ceremonies taking place previously whenever foreign vessels visited the likes of Skidegate, Masset, and Cumshewa.[183] Such exchanges, musical and material, surely helped convince Bearskin to remain on board as pilot.[184]

Precedent set by the HBC and other traders also guided Captain Richards when he came to Vancouver Island later that decade. Richards' official instructions included special provision to avoid offending Indigenous peoples, "in all cases explaining by means of an interpreter the peaceable objects

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[182] Hills journal, 17 May 1853.
[183] Dunn, *History of the Oregon Territory*, 197. Further singing and dancing took place almost every night of the *Virago*'s stop at Fort Simpson the following month. Hills journal, 22 Jun to 8 Jul 1853.
[184] We should be careful not to assume that naval officers were the sole, or even primary audience in such cases, especially when other chiefs were present in the area (as in the case of the *Virago*'s visit to Skidegate).

of your visits and making the customary presents, a supply of which may be obtained at the Hudson's Bay Settlement."[185] The captain was careful to observe this formality throughout his survey duties. Anchored in Nootka Sound in 1860, Richards invited the current Chief Maquinna (supra p. 124, n. 162) and "several others of the Royal family" into the HMS *Plumper*'s chart room, presenting them with beads, looking glasses, soap, tobacco, knives, and other presents.[186] Maquinna reciprocated the gesture when the surveyors returned aboard the *Hecate* in 1862. Eight chiefs lined the steamer's deck offered a loud oration and presented Richards with a sea otter skin as a "potlach from Maquinna."[187] Another elaborate proceeding took place the following month in Esperanza Inlet. Several large war canoes approached and furiously circled the ship three or four times, as men in regalia and extravagant paint chanted songs and kept time with their paddles. The head men presented Richards with a fine otter skin upon boarding and sat down to receive gifts in return, as was their custom, according to Second Master Gowlland.[188] Captain Richards complained about the terms of such exchanges, which seemed to require a return worth double what was received, and the time they absorbed, but knew better than to disregard such protocol altogether.[189] Trade, tributes, and tariffs lay the foundation for Indigenous assistance, as it had for countless fur traders.

New patterns of exchange also emerged in this period, however. By the 1850s, piloting and guiding foreign ships had emerged as a means by which entrepreneurial Indigenous pilots could improve their local wealth and status. In one respect, it is remarkable that Edenshaw offered local intelligence to an expedition whose primary purpose was to extend British justice to a far-flung corner of what they considered to be *their* empire. At its simplest level, cooperating aboard the *Virago* was one strategy to pacify an investigation sent, in part, to determine his own complicity in the *Susan Sturges*

[185] Washington, Instructions, pp. 5-6.
[186] Richards, *Private Journal*, 89–91.
[187] Richards, 184–85.
[188] Richards, 200.
[189] Richards, 182–85.

affair. Some of the *Virago*'s officers feared he intended to use his position as pilot to steer them into danger. Edenshaw was confidently guiding the ship towards land at what became known as Virago Sound, when the ships' officers issued a clear threat: "We told him to be careful where he took the ship, that we drew 16 feet of water and if the ship grounded or struck a rock we would hang him immediately to the yard arm. Shewed him the Rope he was to be hung with." Edenshaw responded with alarm and begged the ship anchor four miles from shore. The apparent about-face confirmed the ship surgeon's concern that Edenshaw "anticipated getting us on shore and making a wreck of the Virago."[190] If so, Edenshaw soon pivoted to curry favour with these well-armed intruders. Still, the investigation was only one factor in the pilot's calculus. Edenshaw claimed the chieftainship of the ancient town of K'yuust'aa, but there are oral traditions suggesting he usurped the title from the rightful chief, who was absent for years and thought dead. Edenshaw's title was not universally accepted and therefore required careful consolidation. Edenshaw was paid handsomely for piloting ships and channeled this wealth into a local economy where ceremonial gift giving was a central way of reinforcing political status. The blankets and other property he received enabled him to host several potlatches, attended by prestigious guests from throughout the islands.[191] By piloting ships, Edenshaw had found a valuable way to convert foreign mariners' geographic ignorance into his own political power.

But Edenshaw was playing an even longer game aboard the *Virago*. He was old enough to recall the profits the maritime fur trade had delivered to his predecessor, Gunia, and had benefited substantially from the brief flurry of activity that followed the discovery of gold at Mitchell Harbour in 1850.[192] Edenshaw understood the advantage to be gained from cultivating commercial ties. Unfortunately, strong tides and bad anchorages made K'yuust'aa a less than ideal stopping place for

[190] Trevan journal, 22 May 1853.
[191] Sparrow, 'Correcting the Record', 217–19; Collison, *In the Wake of the War Canoe*, 114; Barry M. Gough, 'New Light on Haida Chiefship: The Case of Edenshaw 1850-1853', *Ethnohistory* 29, no. 2 (1982): 131–32.
[192] Collison, *In the Wake of the War Canoe*, 114; Robert Galois, 'Gold on Haida Gwaii: The First Prospects, 1849-53', *BC Studies*, no. 196 (Winter 2017): 16–20.

British and American vessels. The enterprising chief chose to establish a new village and was in the process of relocating to commodious Naden Harbour at the time of the paddlewheel's arrival. He eagerly piloted the *Virago* to Naden, according to Paymaster Hills, and extoled its virtues as a "deep and spacious harbor" with freshwater streams and abundant salmon and halibut in August. Hills described Edenshaw as "highly delighted at having anchored the ship safely here as he is anxious to have his new port known."[193] By contrast, Edenshaw described Masset as having a narrow entrance, sand bars, and very strong tide, such that Commander Prevost initially "did not consider it prudent to venture in."[194] These descriptions are accurate, but probably selective. They suggest that Edenshaw offered his strategically to channel the *Virago* and future mariners to a port where he could oversee and profit from their presence.

Piloting ships also provided pathways to power for individuals on Vancouver Island. Like Edenshaw, Rupert Jim appears to have been motivated by the opportunity to acquire goods that would advance his local prestige and status. Richards reported that amassing a certain degree of wealth (six large boxes of blankets, say) could allow an individual to gain acknowledgment as the head of a particular group, "as in the instance of our old friend Jim of Fort Rupert." A chief in such a position had to be "very prodigal," conspicuously gifting or destroying material possessions to demonstrate largesse and maintain prestige. Such gestures suggest the primary motivation for material acquisition was not possession, per se, but the status that came with distribution and the performative destruction of personal wealth. Like Edenshaw, Jim converted outsiders' ignorance into personal power. The desire to reinforce this status probably encouraged him to maintain partnerships with cooperative outsiders. Jim joined the captain aboard the HMS *Plumper* in 1860, "and expressed a great desire to accompany the Ship" (*Hecate*) when the surveyors returned to the north island in 1862. The

[193] Hills journal, 21 May 1853; Inskip journal, 22 May 1853.
[194] Prevost to Moresby, 7 Jun 1853.

captain accepted the offer, by now quite aware of the advantage to be gained from Jim's local expertise.[195]

The case of a Huu-ay-aht man known as a Friday provides a final example of an entrepreneurial Indigenous guide. During his survey of Barclay Sound, Captain Richards engaged a Huu-ay-aht man called Friday who was paid as a seaman and accompanied the crew to San Francisco and back. Friday formed a close bond with Lieutenant Hankin, teaching him Nuu-chah-nulth words and accompanying him about the ship. Friday was separated from the crew after he was delayed in meeting them at a pre-arranged time but chanced to cross paths with them seven months later while fishing twenty miles offshore.[196] Like Jim, Friday was reportedly "anxious to remain" with the *Hecate* and soon making himself comfortable aboard ship. Richards observed that Hankin could not have been happier had he been reunited with his "sweetheart" after a year's absence. Hankin adorned Friday in his "best Shirts and Trousers" and interpreted the reunion as evidence that Friday reciprocated his affection. Richards suspected otherwise and recorded his satisfaction on learning Friday's true motivations:

> Friday told him [Hankin] that he had made a great deal of money thro [sic] being with us formerly; that he could now pilot vessels into Barclay [sic] Sound and that the little English he had learned was a fortune to him. He had come now to perfect himself in the language – nothing else – and as soon as that was accomplished he was off like a Shot.

Hankin was "much cast down" by the discovery. Richards was more understanding, seeing no reason why he would stick with the ship "save for his own advantage."[197] Like Tom aboard the *William & Ann*, Friday capitalized on the surveyors' visit as an opportunity to acquire language skills that increased his value to incoming mariners. The calculus paid off, and Friday would continue to serve as an interpreter aboard subsequent naval vessels.[198] Like Edenshaw and Jim before him, Friday drew imperial surveyors into his own, local agenda, gaining from the encounter at least as much as he offered.

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[195] Richards, *Private Journal*, 158, 185.
[196] Friday may have been separated from the *Hecate*'s crew at Point Roberts, where Hankin was left to oversee the erection of a stone boundary monument from December 7-22, 1861. Gowlland journal, 22 Dec 1861; Richards, 148.
[197] Richards, 174, 196–97.
[198] Also known as Thomas Robert, Friday accompanied Hankin aboard the HMS *Devastation*'s punitive voyage to Clayoquot in 1864, and a subsequent voyage of HMS *Forward* in 1865. In 1867, Anglican missionary Harry Guillod wrote of a Huu-ay-

A "patient, preserving and long-continued labor"

The work conducted by the US Ex Ex, Coast Survey, and Royal Navy between 1841 and 1861 transformed outside knowledge of the coast.[199] Offshore depth markings helped captains approximate their position when fog hid the shoreline from view. Draftsmen fixed rocks, shoals, and hidden hazards to the chart, enabling strangers to avoid the collisions that were so frequent in the early days of steam. Surveyors identified anchorages and protected harbours were identified for refuge in foul weather. Drawings of coastal profiles allowed navigators to identify capes and headlands along a stretch of shoreline where ubiquitous cliffs, inlets, and tree cover made distinguishing such features a difficult proposition to the uninitiated sailor.[200] By 1862, the entire coast, from San Francisco to the northern tip of Vancouver Island had been inscribed onto charts that would soon find circulation among sailors worldwide hoping to procure a minute, if second-hand, knowledge of the coast.

Equally significant were the publication of sailing guides, which provided descriptions of local currents, step-by-step instructions for navigating particular areas, and other local intelligence of use to the mariner. In 1858, Assistant Davidson (USCS) published the *Directory for the Pacific Coast*, the distillation of eight-years' experience in which he estimated himself to have travelled as many as 60,000 miles inspecting coastlines from California to Washington. The *Directory* was monumental in

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aht man named "Charles Friday" who was an interpreter on the HMS *Scout* "a few years ago, and understood Chinook very well." It is unclear whether Friday sailed with the *Scout* on its 1866 voyage around Vancouver Island (just one year prior to the statement) or if Guillod intended to refer to the *Devastation* or *Forward*. Philip Hankin to Acting Colonial Secretary, 30 Jun 1865, enclosed in Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 4 Jul 1865, CO 305:26, no. 8405, 37, *Colonial Despatches*: https://bcgenesis.uvic.ca/V65049.html; Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 197–99; Columbia Mission Society, *Tenth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1868* (London: Rivingtons, 1869), 25.

[199] The Ex Ex's claims to geographic discovery in the Northwest are mixed when viewed in isolation. Its surveys largely retraced Captain Vancouver's meticulous surveys, adding "few and inconsiderable corrections," as Wilkes privately admitted. Their chief contributions in the region were not marine, but inland observations conducted between Puget Sound and the Mexican province of California. Publication of the expedition's hydrographic work was long delayed by an 1855 fire that destroyed the first printing, the eruption of Civil War, and a Congress that tired of allocating yet more public funds to venture. Wilkes' *Hydrography* (the twenty-third volume of his expedition narrative) remained unpublished until 1873 (bearing the date 1861 but fooling no one). Still, the Ex Ex produced some 200 charts globally, relieving American mariners' dependence on foreign charts, and providing the basis of the Hydrographic Office's collection when it was founded in 1866. Simpson, *Overland Journey Round the World*, 112; Stanton, *Great United States Exploring Expedition*, 355–57, 361, 365; Fabian, *Skull Collectors*, 154.

[200] John Devereux to George Foster, 24 March 1887, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol. 1532, file 7904-V1, RG 12, LAC.

its scope and impact. The first edition ran 188 pages, described the coast from San Diego to the Gulf of Georgia, and set the bar for future sailing guides in its breadth and detail. According to one later commentator, it was the *Directory*, more than any other date or event, that marked "the end of the frontier on the Western Coast."[201] Captain Richards' work found similar expression in the *Vancouver Island Pilot* (1861). Expanded editions and a major supplement would follow as Richards' successors continued his work in the region north of Vancouver Island.

These interventions bound the region more closely to maritime networks of capitalist trade and imperial control taking hold the world over. Historian John Darwin observes that hydrographic surveys offered almost "unrestricted access to every port in the globe" by the end of the nineteenth century.[202] The impact of these navigational aids is certainly observable in locations where local hazards previously limited imperial traffic. As early as 1850, hydrographic surveys by the US Coast Survey had transformed access to the Columbia River and its hinterlands, long protected by the dangerous and shifting sand bar at the river mouth. Lieutenants Commanding McArthur and Washington Bartlett charted a new south channel into the river that was passable in most winds and capable of accommodating vessels up to twenty-foot draught in high water. By one estimate, more non-Indigenous vessels entered the river in the eighteen months preceding November 1850 than in all previous years combined, all without a single serious incident. Notable among these were the US warships *Massachusetts* and *Falmouth*, each drawing seventeen feet, and Pacific Mail Steamship Company ships undertaking monthly runs from San Francisco.[203] In February, Bartlett reported that ships, barques, brigs and steamers amounting to "the large number of 160 sail" passed over the bar in 1850 alone, carrying some 80,000 tons burden without accident or financial loss to owner or insurer.

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[201] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 'The Frontier Coast: The Coast Survey, 1807-1867', NOAA Central Library, 17 September 2008, https://web.archive.org/web/20080917202523/http://www.lib.noaa.gov/noaainfo/heritage/coastsurveyvol1/BACHE6.html.
[202] Darwin, *Unlocking the World*, 123.
[203] United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent… during the Year 1850', 2, 128.

Remarkably, Bartlett emphasized, "*ten sailing vessels have passed through the south channel without a pilot*" since the publication of sailing directions in June 1850. Investors also had reason to celebrate. Insurance companies in St. Louis responded within months by dropping rates on the river. "This," Barlett concluded, "is the direct influence of correct hydrographical information."[204] Oregon Territory was open for business as never before.

The safe entry of the *Massachusetts* and *Falmouth* are suggestive of the way comprehensive charts and guides extended imperial power. Historian Barry Gough writes that the influence of imperial ships – and by extension, sovereign power – extended no farther inland from salt water or river than the range of shot.[205] But in the absence of charts, sending ships into unknown bays or rivers remained a risky prospect indeed. The Coast Survey was still completing its hydrography of Puget Sound in 1855 when war broke out between the United States and allied warriors from the Nisqually, Muckleshoot, Puyallup, and Klickitat nations. The Americans' position was severely weakened on the morning of December 7 when an uncharted rock near Bainbridge Island pierced the USS *Decatur*, forcing it to be beached for repairs and rendering the sloop – one fifth of the entire Pacific Squadron – inoperative for the next month and a half. The survey steamer *Active* was quickly requisitioned in the sloop's place.[206] Later ships were better prepared. The USS *Shubrick* was able to navigate by the published Coast Survey chart and a specially provided tracing when it was despatched to quell Makah resistance at Tatoosh Island less than three years later.[207]

Similar dynamics were present on the British Colony of Vancouver Island. In 1859, Commander-in-Chief Robert Baynes declined the governor's request to send a gunboat to preserve

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[204] Emphasis in the original. United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent… during the Year 1851', 527–28.
[205] Gough, *Gunboat Frontier*, 211.
[206] T.S. Phelps, *Reminiscences of Seattle, Washington Territory, and the U.S. Sloop-of-War 'Decatur' during the Indian War of 1855-1856*, ed. Alice Harriman (Seattle: Alice Harriman Company, 1908), 16–18; Francis X. Holbrook and John Nikol, 'The Navy in the Puget Sound War, 1855-1857: A Documentary Study', *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (1976): 11n2, 12.
[207] Hartman Bache to John De Camp, 16 Jun 1858, Correspondence of Major Hartman Bache, box 2, vol. 8, Records of the US Coast Guard, RG 26, NARA-DC (hereafter cited as Correspondence of Major Bache).

"tranquility and order amongst the Indians" at Barkley Sound, due in part to his reluctance to risk one of Her Majesty's Ships to a coast "which has never been surveyed, and the navigation of which is dangerous and intricate."[208] Baynes' successor, Joseph Denman, received a similar request in 1864, when the new governor, Arthur Kennedy, ask him to investigate a deadly Ahousaht attack on the trading sloop *Kingfisher*. This time, several factors enabled the Rear Admiral to confidently despatch the HMS *Devastation* and *Sutlej* to the intricate waters of Barclay and Clayoquot sounds. First, these vessels were steam-powered, better suited to inshore navigation, and nimbler in narrow inlets and rock-studded waters, than earlier gunboats relying solely on wind.[209] Second, recent charting expeditions ensured naval captains had recourse to mariners with vital first-hand knowledge. Admiral Denman procured assistance from Philip Hankin, once Richards' lieutenant, now superintendent of police at Victoria. Hankin, in turn, solicited the assistance of his Huu-ay-aht companion, Friday. A third, Tla-o-qui-aht pilot and interpreter, Frank, joined the *Devastation* at Neah Bay. These three provided a degree of interpretative assistance, cultural acumen, and local knowledge that was simply not available to naval officers in 1859. Denman both praised Hankin and Friday in his official despatch to Governor Kennedy.[210] Finally, and with enduring consequences, was the publication of Richards' charts for the area the previous July, which enabled the *Sutlej* and *Devastation* to proceed confidently into the intricate waters of Clayoquot Sound, and allowed Admiral Denman to issue orders using names – "Matilda Creek," "Bedwell Arm," "Bawden Bay" – only conferred in the last three years (Map

[208] James Douglas to Robert Baynes, 28 Oct 1859, Colonial Correspondence, file GR-1372.98.1212a, BCA; and Baynes to Douglas, 31 Oct 1859.
[209] The *Sutlej* was a steam-frigate, the *Devastation* a paddle-wheel steamer. Previous, windborne expeditions often relied on towage from HBC steamers or were forced to send soldiers ashore in smaller boats at a distance from their ship while relying on its protective firepower. Gough, *Gunboat Frontier*, 12–13, 115.
[210] Frank later fled to Neah Bay when Hesquiahts were accused of murdering survivors of the *John Bright* in 1869 "for fear he might be called upon to act as pilot to the man-of-war sent to arrest the murders." It is possible that Frank regretted his affiliation with the grisly attack on the Hesquiahts in 1864. His father, Chief Cedakanim, feared his son's involvement would instigate conflict between the Tla-o-qui-ahts and Hesquiahts. John Pike to Joseph Denman, 27 Sep 1864, enclosed in Arthur Kennedy to Edward Cardwell, 14 Oct 1864, CO 305:23, no. 11617, 348, *Colonial Despatches*: https://bcgenesis.uvic.ca/V64185.html; Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 197–99; Gough, *Gunboat Frontier*, 118; Joseph Denman, 'Official Despatch', *British Colonist*, 12 October 1864, 3; 'The Wreck of the John Bright', *Daily British Colonist*, 6 July 1869, 3.

9).[211] The consequence to the Ahousahts was devastating: sixty-four canoes destroyed, nine villages razed, at least fifteen killed.[212] The reach and impact of naval firepower had changed dramatically in five years.

An 1858 report on the history and progress of the US Coast Survey noted that the depth of information required for safe navigation "can only be perfectly gathered by patient, preserving and long-continued labor [...] can only be preserved in its accuracy and its value, by frequent and careful revision."[213] The description could easily be applied to Indigenous peoples, among whom millennia of

Map 9. Detail from an 1863 chart of Clayoquot Sound

Admiral Baynes had reference to Richards' detailed chart of Clayoquot Sound, and communicated orders using recently conferred names, when the HMS Devastation *and* Sutlej *were despatched to punish the Ahousahts in 1864. Detail from Admiralty Chart no. 584, "Sydney Inlet to Natinat including Clayoquot & Barclay Sounds," published July 1863. Admiralty Charts, item ID 3673548, Admiralty fonds, LAC: http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=fonandcol&id=3673548&lang=eng*

[211] Denman, 'Official Despatch'; Cook, 'Publication of British Admiralty Charts', Table 3.1.
[212] 'Return of the "Devastation"', *Daily British Colonist*, 12 October 1864, 3. For "Matilda Creek," "Bedwell Arm," and "Bawden Bay," see John T. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names, 1592-1906, to Which Are Added a Few Names in Adjacent United States Territory: Their Origin and History* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1909), 37, 43, 325.
[213] American Association for the Advancement of Science, 'History and Progress', 10.

occupation, observation, and marine harvesting produced a systematic knowledge of coastal topography, weather patterns, hazards, bathymetry, and offshore banks. Indigenous scholars across the Pacific have defined maritime sovereignty in terms of enduring, intimate, and embodied knowledge of particular environments: "Only those who make the ocean their home and love it, can really claim it as their own," writes Fijian anthropologist Epeli Hau'ofa.[214] Rachel Yacaaʔał George and Sarah Marie Wiebe celebrate oceanic knowledges like canoeing, wayfinding, and fishing as powerful refusals of a settler-colonial governmentality that compartmentalizes the ocean into abstract, geographic spaces.[215] But despite their considerable differences, the state knowledge required to navigate and control marine space was, to a considerable extent, grafted onto the prior forms of Indigenous knowledge that George and Wiebe discuss. Successful surveyors shadowed Indigenous fishers, examined locals, and obeyed pilots. They tested "Indian report" with sounding lines and theodolites, inscribed it in logbooks and tracings, and communicated in hydrographic publications that circulated the globe. Imperial charts followed Indigenous hydrography in the Pacific Northwest.

If nineteenth-century charts and sailing directions made available an immense wealth of marine knowledge, they also represent an act of collective forgetting. These two-dimensional aids acquainted transpacific mariners with the coast but thereby distanced them from the Indigenous seafarers whose own embodied, "patient, preserving, and long-continued labour" produced a forensic knowledge of the coast long before the first European plumbed its depths. One need not understand ƛ̓ušu·ʔa as an Indigenous fishing ground to locate "Swiftsure Bank" on a chart, or receive Haida pilots on board to enter Masset, Naden, or Skidegate Harbour. Colonial mariners continued to use Indigenous toponyms, but more frequently received them from state printers than Indigenous informants. Armed with the

[214] Hau'ofa, 'Our Sea of Islands', 155.
[215] George and Wiebe, 'Fluid Decolonial Futures', 503–5, 509. See also Vincente M. Diaz, 'Voyaging for Anti-Colonial Recovery: Austronesian Seafaring, Archipelagic Rethinking and the Re-Mapping of Indigeneity', *Pacific Asia Inquiry* 2, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 21–31; Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing*, 79–102.

chart, colonial navigators could finally circumvent the types of intercultural exchange so critical in previous decades. With such knowledge in hand, a new era of marine navigation began.

Chapter 3. Indigenous Shores, Confounded Keepers, and the Lighting of the Coast, 1854-1885

Tatoosh Island holds a formidable place in the history of the US lighthouse service, projecting into the southern entrance to the Juan de Fuca Strait, where powerful currents, relentless fog, and unforgiving cliffs conspire to imperil would-be navigators. Its lighthouse looms over every vessel bound for Seattle, Vancouver, and the Salish Sea, an encouragement to the transpacific seafarer and a bulwark against marine disaster. Bound from San Francisco to Port Townsend and struggling against adverse winds in the late 1850s, settler James Swan recorded his relief at seeing the light, "which, shining like a bright star amid the primeval gloom, seemed to us not only a beacon to the mariner, but as evidence of civilization, and a proof that the 'star of Empire' had made its way westward."[1] And so it must have been a dreadful shock to the citizens of Port Townsend when all four keepers appeared in June 1858 to tender their resignation to the Collector of Customs. The beacon had been lit fewer than six months, in which time the keepers encountered substantial difficulties with resident Makahs who resented the intrusion at a significant summer village and harvesting site. A previous set of four keepers had already resigned once in that short time. By June, the situation had sufficiently deteriorated that Franklin Tucker and his assistants followed suit, abandoning their post and leaving the lantern dark. The Collector of Customs relayed the news to the Indian agent at Olympia: "The Indians have taken possession of Tatooch Island light house." The "star of Empire" had indeed risen over the Pacific, but seen from shore, it cast a fragile and intermittent light.[2]

By the turn of the century, the "geographies of interaction" that bound Indigenous and colonial mariners had been rendered increasingly invisible to the casual visitor. The concurrent growth of steam travel and steady accretion of state-sponsored navigational aids – marine charts, sailing guides, and lighthouses – allowed settlers to bypass the intermediaries that defined coastal travel in previous

[1] Swan's comments were originally published in the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* of 9 May 1859. James G. Swan, *Almost out of the World: Scenes from Washington Territory: The Strait of Juan de Fuca, 1859-61*, ed. William A. Katz (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1971), 11.
[2] United States Office of Indian Affairs, 'Report of the Commissioner… for the Year 1858', 236–37.

eras. This distancing effect shaped settler perceptions of the coast. Cole Harris argues nineteenth-century settlers "considered Native ways irrelevant [...] and constructed their own system of transportation and communication from scratch." Bruce Braun echoes this perspective, arguing that the "movement of Europeans was increasingly distanced from direct encounters with Native peoples" by the early 1900s." According to Braun, the advent of steamship service helped produce the "West Coast" as a distinct, idealized region in which Indigenous villages were reduced to "anachronistic elements" of the landscape.[3] These assessments better reflect the perspective of White, coastal itinerants than the complicated realities of industrial-era transportation. A different story emerges when we shift our attention from ships to the shore-based aids upon which they depended. Lighthouse logs, government records, and settler reminiscences reveal that Indigenous labourers and knowledge-keepers played a critical part in producing the infrastructure that transformed settler perceptions of the coast. For this very reason, Indigenous opposition or indifference could pose a serious obstacle to government officials charged with effecting this transformation.

Oceans connected distant populations and markets to an unprecedented degree in the late nineteenth century, due in large part to the proliferation of marine charts that rendered coastal spaces more amenable to ships, settlers, and capital. Even so, marine environments remained potentially devastating spaces for the uninitiated. Even the best prepared mariners could find themselves suddenly threatened when weather turned foul. The navigational infrastructure deployed to alleviate such risks was essential in enabling ships to supply colonies, bring settlers, and extract resources. In this sense, lighthouses both signified and produced a kind of state knowledge that was integral to settler projects of mobility and access to land, resources, and marine environments. Historian Robert Bickers counts lighthouses among the apparently banal arsenal of "infrastructural globalization" that

[3] Daniel Clayton locates the displacement of Indigenous-settler "geographies of interaction" in prior processes of imperial mapping exemplified by Captain George Vancouver's charting expeditions. Clayton, *Islands of Truth*, xi–xii; Harris, *Resettlement of British Columbia*, 167, 182; Braun, 'Colonialism's Afterlife', 219–20. For an earlier variation on these ideas, see Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 96.

wove China into wider networks of imperial commerce and control in the nineteenth century.[4] Eric Tagliacozzo positions lighthouses as "technologies of maritime control" that enabled a small number of British and Dutch men to exert considerable control over the East Indies.[5] But Keeper Tucker's experience on Tatoosh Island reveals a pattern that repeated itself as British and American lights spread across the region. This chapter argues that the construction and operation of lighthouses across the Pacific Northwest required geographies of interaction similar to those that defined earlier efforts to survey and chart the coast. A closer look reveals Indigenous intermediaries were frequently essential to the distribution of Western technologies, labour, and settlers across the coast. Crucially, however, their contributions were increasingly distanced, and therefore less visible, from the purview of passing mariners. Perceptions of the coast and its people were undoubtedly changing, but seaward impressions are not always the best indicator of onshore realities. To understand the realities of late-nineteenth-century navigation, historians must extend their analysis from traveling ships to the fixed navigational aids on which they depended.

Even as they beckoned new waves of commerce, investment, and extraction, lighthouses extended imperial states' reach to new stretches of coast and often constituted its earliest permanent presence. As cultural historian Sara Spike observes in rural Nova Scotia, lighthouses differed from many other public works projects (e.g. post offices, federal buildings) in that they are often located in isolated and rural areas. This dispersed geography made these beacons key sites of interaction between rural communities and the federal government.[6] Lighthouses played a similar role in the Pacific Northwest, mediating early interactions between Indigenous peoples and the state, and anticipating by years (sometimes decades) the arrival of Indian agents, customs officers, and other colonial officials. Ironically, scholarly attention to these subjects has overshadowed the towering structures that

[4] Bickers, 'Infrastructural Globalization', 433.
[5] Tagliacozzo, *In Asian Waters*, 342.
[6] Sara Spike, 'Modern Eyes: A Cultural History of Vision in Rural Nova Scotia, 1880-1910' (PhD dissertation, Ottawa, Carleton University, 2016), 229.

preceded them. Historians have rightly devoted considerable attention to fisheries officials, for example, while largely ignoring their counterparts in the lighthouse service.[7] The role of these functionaries was, however, deeply connected. If fishery departments were responsible for allocating access to marine resources, the lighthouse service was charged with opening access to the marine spaces that contained them. As such, lighthouses played a pivotal role in US, British, and later Canadian efforts to metabolize the new coasts and waterways to which they laid claim in the latter nineteenth century.

This chapter shows how lighthouses joined marine charts in extending state control, capitalist extraction, and settler colonialism on the Pacific Coast. At the same time, it reveals an ongoing geography of interaction that saturated and shaped efforts to establish lighthouses north of the Columbia River. Indigenous communities received their arrival cautiously or with outright resistance when government officials ignored their concerns and noisy construction crews scattered game. Tensions over perceived insolence, theft, and missing livestock occasionally resulted in physical confrontation and intervention from gunboats and Indian agents. And yet it would be misleading to characterize lighthouses as one-sided colonial impositions, for these aids to navigation frequently relied on Indigenous labour, knowledge, technologies, and social networks. Indigenous peoples martialed canoes and seafaring skills to build and provision lights. Forbearing men carried keepers and construction materials ashore. Lightkeeping families learned the Chinook jargon and relied on Indigenous neighbours to communicate with the outside world. Opposition and assistance dovetailed in these unlikely contact zones. This chapter focuses on the lighthouses at Tatoosh Island and Cape Beale, respectively stationed at the southern (United States) and northern (Canadian) entrances to the Juan de Fuca Strait (Map 10), to highlight the range of strategies Indigenous seafarers employed to

[7] Harris, *Fish, Law, and Colonialism*; Harris, *Landing Native Fisheries*; Newell, *Tangled Webs of History*; Dorothee Schreiber, '"A Liberal and Paternal Spirit": Indian Agents and Native Fisheries in Canada', *Ethnohistory* 55, no. 1 (January 2008): 87–118; Wadewitz, *Nature of Borders*; Arnold, *Fishermen's Frontier*; Donald L. Parman, 'Inconstant Advocacy: The Erosion of Indian Fishing Rights in the Pacific Northwest, 1933-1956', *Pacific Historical Review* 53 (1 January 1984): 163–89; Reid, *Sea Is My Country*.

Map 10. Lighthouses in the Juan de Fuca Strait and its approaches, c. 1911

A network of lighthouses hugging the Juan de Fuca Strait. All marine traffic bound for Vancouver and Seattle must bypass Tatoosh Island and Cape Beale at the strait's mouth. Google Maps.

stymy, resist, and profit from these unsolicited intrusions. Perceptions of the coast were shifting, but this chapter exposes the enduring Indigenous foundations of coastal travel in the industrial era.

"The great want which is felt by all vessels"

The history of lighthouses across the North American Pacific is the history of imperialism in miniature. The first was built by the Spanish in Salina Cruz, Mexico, in the sixteenth century. The first light in the Northern Pacific occupied a so-called castle: a lantern placed in the cupola of the Russian Governor's residence in the 1830s to guide vessels into Sitka Harbour. More surprising, perhaps, was a contemporaneous aid to navigation erected by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), which drew on Indigenous wayfinding practices from the continental interior. When the US Exploring Expedition

(Ex Ex) sighted Cape Disappointment in April 1841, Captain Wilkes observed several towering spruce and pines, "which the officers of the Hudson Bay Company have caused to be trimmed of branches nearly to their tops." Protruding from the cape's two bluffs, these conspicuous trees probably indicated safe passage over the Columbia River bar.[8] Known elsewhere as lopsticks, these partially shorn trees were engineered by Indigenous groups across boreal North America to provide directions, commemorate events, honour fellow travellers, and demarcate gathering places. Voyageurs learned to read and replicate these markers when navigating the continent's vast river systems, and someone in the HBC ranks evidently thought to import the same technology to the Pacific.[9] Understandably, Wilkes' Oahu-based pilot was at a loss to explain their relationship to the channel and advised him to stand off. Contemporary observers took note of the HBC's failure to distribute its charts of the Columbia or establish buoys and pilots at the river's mouth.[10] It may be that the "honourable company" chose to mark the channel with lopsticks precisely because they were indecipherable to visitors arriving from the Pacific. Waymarks are useful only to those who know how to read them. Their presence, absence, or illegibility says much of the relationship between a given locale and the world beyond it.

Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia River, was largely terrestrial in its orientation, located at the terminus of a transcontinental trade route and intended to draw furs from the surrounding interior. A

[8] These trees remained in place in 1850 when the US Coast Survey published instructions for entering the Columbia River. Lt. Com. William McArthur advises mariners to get the tree ("which is trimmed up like an umbrella") and the Sand Island beacon in a range line astern in order to haul safely towards Young's Bay. The range line and a mark indicating the tree are shown on a map published by the Coast Survey following their preliminary survey. "Mouth of Columbia River from a preliminary survey under the direction of A.D. Bache, Superintendent of the Survey of the Coast of the United States by the hydrographic party under the command of W.P. McArthur Lt. U.S.N. and Asst. U.S. Coast Survey, W.A. Bartlett Lt. U.S.N. Assistant," Oregon Historical Society Digital Collections, G4242.C62P53 1851 .U54: https://digitalcollections.ohs.org/mouth-of-columbia-river-1851; Wilkes, *Narrative*, 1845, 4:294.

[9] "Lopstick" derives from the action of lopping branches from the tree. Carolyn Podruchny, Frederic W. Gleach, and Roger Roulette, 'Putting Up Poles: Power, Navigation, and Cultural Mixing in the Fur Trade', in *Gathering Places: Aboriginal and Fur Trade Histories*, ed. Carolyn Podruchny and Laura Peers (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 35–38; Merle Massie, *Forest Prairie Edge: Place History in Saskatchewan* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014), 49–51; Warburton Mayer Pike, *The Barren-Ground of Northern Canada* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1917), 228, http://archive.org/details/barrengroundnort00pikeiala.

[10] "Recollections of George B. Roberts," Hubert Howe Bancroft fonds, MG29-C15, vol. 1, file A-83, LAC; Wilkes, *Narrative*, 1845, 4:489, 491; Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 49. In one case, the HBC discharged a known drunkard from its marine department, only to rehire him for fear he would become a pilot "to any strange vessel, whose presence could never be productive of any benefit to us." McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1943, 2:141n2.

different impetus governed the HBC entrepot on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. Fort Victoria was founded in 1843 to serve an emerging maritime network linking Sitka, Oahu, Guangzhou, and London.[11] Located in the heart of lək̓ʷəŋən (Lekwungen) territory, the site lay securely north of what HBC officials feared would become the new British-US border. Within months of its founding, lək̓ʷəŋən labourers assisted Captain James Scarborough in marking the channel into Victoria Harbour with rudimentary buoys fashioned from drift logs.[12] In May 1846, Indigenous labourers helped Chief Trader Roderick Finlayson dig pits for flag staffs on a bluff overlooking the strait. These beacons marked the harbour entrance, and, when aligned, indicated the position of a dangerous rock beneath the waves.[13] The HBC's efforts to mark the harbour with buoys and beacons signal its changing orientation towards the Pacific world, one that anticipated coming imperial efforts to light a path for commerce and investment on these still unknown shores. Even so, Victoria Harbour was easily missed. Captain Henry Kellett was sailing by Captain Vancouver's fifty-year-old charts when the HMS *Herald* entered the Juan de Fuca Strait a few weeks after Finlayson's efforts. Kellett missed the harbour entrance even after sighting the beacons, assuming them to be "native signal-posts."[14] In a sense, he was right, for the beacons owed their very foundations to Indigenous labour.

By the 1850s, it was apparent that lighthouses were essential to the security and prosperity of colonial settlements taking root in the region. In 1851, the US Coast Survey (USCS) reported that lights at Cape Disappointment, Cape Flattery (Tatoosh Island), and New Dungeness were "of the highest importance to the commerce of the northwest coast."[15] The provision of lighthouses had been a central concern of the United States since the Lighthouse Act of 1789 – just the ninth law passed by

[11] Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 259–60; 'The Founding of Victoria', *The Beaver*, no. 273 (March 1943): 71–85.
[12] Journal of the Schooner *Cadboro* (transcript), 18-21 Sep 1843, A/B/20.5/C12, BCA.
[13] These beacons provide the basis of the name for "Beacon Hill," a popular park near downtown Victoria. 30 May 1846, Fort Victoria Journal, B.226/A/1, HBCA, edited and transcribed by Graham Brazier et al, eds., *Fort Victoria Journal*: www.fortvictoriajournal.ca.
[14] Seemann, *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Herald*, 1:100.
[15] The Tatoosh Island lighthouse is often referred to by the name of its adjacent promontory, Cape Flattery. This chapter uses 'Tatoosh Island' to avoid confusing the two geographic features. United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent… during the Year 1851', 469.

Congress under the new US Constitution. The legislation allocated responsibility for lighthouses, buoys, and beacons to the federal Treasury Department, and thereby established the country's first national public works program.[16] The network expanded at pace with the nation's territorial aggrandizement, gradually encompassing the Great Lakes, Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, and, ultimately, the Pacific. A Lighthouse Board was established to oversee the network in 1852, and inspectors appointed to manage its regional districts.[17] The United States constructed its first Pacific lighthouse at Alcatraz Island, San Francisco Bay, in 1854, and soon turned its attention north of the Columbia River. Cape Disappointment was lit in 1856, replacing the indecipherable lopsticks and heralding a wave of activity that would see a further twenty-four US lighthouses erected in the region before the turn of the century.

The pace of construction was slower in the territories claimed by Britain, due to internal wrangling over whether and how much of the cost should be borne by what level of government. The British Parliament, Colonial Office, Colony of Vancouver Island, and (after 1859) mainland Colony of British Columbia agreed on the expediency of establishing lighthouses but demurred when it came time to foot the bill. Indeed, the financial question remained unresolved nearly two decades later.[18] Mariners on both sides of the border lamented British complacence, shaken only after the 1859 Fraser River Gold Rush ballooned marine traffic and forced the Colonial Office to secure its Pacific

[16] Eric Jay Dolin, *Brilliant Beacons: A History of the American Lighthouse* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2013), 50–52.
[17] F. Ross Holland, *America's Lighthouses: Their Illustrated History since 1716* (Brattleboro, VT: S. Greene Press, 1972), 33–37.
[18] The British Parliament could only assist in the construction of "Imperial Lights," those deemed necessary for British shipping, but withheld funds where colonies were deemed the primary or sole beneficiaries. Vancouver Island's standing was arguable, but Governor Douglas felt it was a matter of British honour to keep pace with US lights on the south shore of the Juan de Fuca Strait. In 1859, the Lords Commissioner of the Treasury agreed to advance £7000 on condition that half be repaid by the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia. By 1864, the sum required had ballooned to nearly £12,500. The Treasury Board's efforts to secure repayment for half of this new amount were delayed first by the union of the colonies, and, secondly, by British Columbia's entrance into Confederation. The claim remained outstanding in 1878, the Colonial Office noted, "and is one of which the Government of Canada are probably entirely ignorant." James Douglas to E.B. Lytton (copy), 15 Jan 1859; James Booth to Herman Merivale (copy), 7 Apr 1859; Booth to Thomas Elliot (copy), 11 Jun 1859, enclosed in Merivale to Douglas, 16 Jun 1859; Henry Pelham-Clinton, Duke of Newcastle, to Douglas (copy), 2 Jan 1864; Henry Herbert, Earl of Carnarvon, to Frederick Seymour (copy), 14 Nov 1866; Colonial Office to the Treasury (copy), 21 Jul 1878, enclosed in Michael Hicks Beach to Frederick Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, Earl of Dufferin, 30 Aug 1878, Governor Correspondence regarding Lighthouses, Vancouver Island, file 74-A-541, BCA (hereafter cited as Governor Correspondence regarding Lighthouses).

possessions. A chorus of influential voices advocated for lighthouses to protect life and commerce. Rear-Admiral Baynes described a light on the north shore of Juan de Fuca as the "great want" felt by all vessels entering the strait.[19] Captain George Richards (Royal Navy) drew attention to the vessels carrying hundreds of emigrants from parts of the world "probably unprovided with charts of this coast," for whom an error in position "would probably be attended with fatal consequences."[20] James Douglas, governor of the two colonies, and Colonial Secretary E.B. Lytton cast the construction of lighthouses as "of the highest importance" and "difficult to overstate," respectively.[21] Lytton's office observed that the loss of a single Royal Navy vessel would "far exceed the cost of the Lighthouses" and impart a reputation for danger that would deter investment and inflict "serious injury" on the colonies' commercial interests.[22] Academic historians have not been as quick to acknowledge the central position lighthouses occupied in the imperial endeavour.[23] The record, however, is clear: imperial administrators saw lighthouses as indispensable handmaidens to colonial settlement, commerce, and defense.

At last, in 1860, two British lighthouses were erected: Race Rocks and Fisgard Island, marking the southernmost extent of British territory and the entrance to Esquimalt Harbour, respectively. In 1863, a lightship was anchored to the sandbanks outside the Fraser River. The pace of construction quickened after the amalgamated Colony of British Columbia entered Canadian Confederation in 1871. The young Dominion assumed responsibility for lighthouses, buoys, and beacons under the Terms of Union, a charge it administered via the Department of Marine and Fisheries. Over the next three decades, the Department added twenty Pacific lights to those established by its colonial predecessor.

[19] Robert Baynes to William Romaine, 2 Nov 1858, GR-1309, box 2, file 1, BCA.
[20] George Richards to James Douglas (copy), 17 Jan 1859, GR-1309, box 2, file 1, BCA.
[21] Douglas to E.B. Lytton (copy), 15 Jan 1859; Thomas Elliot to George Alexander Hamilton (copy), 29 Apr 1859, Governor Correspondence regarding Lighthouses.
[22] Elliot to Hamilton (copy), 29 Apr 1859, Governor Correspondence regarding Lighthouses.
[23] One scholarly exception, Eric Tagliacozzo, observes that lighthouses, beacons, and buoys are "strangely underrepresented" in histories of science and imperialism. Tagliacozzo, *In Asian Waters*, 315.

"They say the land belongs to them and not to us": The *ča·di·* lighthouse

Such overviews necessarily obscure the messy reality of implementing a lighthouse service on the ground. In 1853, US Congress allocated funds for the construction of lighthouses at Tatoosh Island, New Dungeness, Smith Island, and Cape Shoalwater.[24] Regional officials were conscious of the fact that these lighthouses represented incursions into enduring Indigenous landscapes. Major Hartman Bache, engineer and district inspector, observed that Smith (or Blunt's) Island was a "favourite stopping place of the Northern Indians in crossing the strait." Toke Point on Shoalwater Bay was "a resort for the Chehalis, Quinault and other Indians" traveling down the coast for trade from as far as Cape Flattery.[25] Tatoosh Island – also known to Makahs as *ča·di·* ("cha-dee") – was a critical summer village, to which as many as several hundred people would resort from March to August to access offshore fish and whaling grounds. The island was also host to burial grounds, cultivated potato fields, and extensive halibut drying racks.[26] The US government valued such locations for many of the same reasons their Indigenous inhabitants did. Landing sites that allowed harvesters to beach canoes enabled materials, provisions, and keepers to come and go. The exposed locations that made these ideal sites from which to access fishing and whaling grounds also made them hazards to passing ships into whose paths they protruded. Tatoosh Island's precipitous height allowed Makahs to see portentous clouds and whale spray in the distance; the same feature increased the light's visibility by

[24] Congress made an appropriation for Cape Disappointment, Tatoosh Island, and New Dungeness in 1850, but the amount was too small to enable construction of the latter two lights. United States Congress, 'Report of the Secretary of the Treasury, on the Finances. December 7, 1853', in *United States Congressional Serial Set (33rd Congress, 1st Session)* (Washington, DC, 1853), 216, https://www.loc.gov/item/2022690729/; United States Congress, 'Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of the Finances for the Year Ending June 30, 1855', in *United States Congressional Serial Set (34th Congress, 1st Session)* (Washington, DC: Cornelius Wendell, 1856), 289, https://www.loc.gov/item/2022691042/.

[25] Hartman Bache to Thornton A. Jenkins, 23 Feb 1858, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 2, vol. 7. As was his habit, Captain Wilkes (US Ex Ex) attached a new name to Smith Island, naming it Blunt's in honour of Midshipman Simon Blunt. George Davidson (USCS) found the previous HBC name in local use in 1858 and restored it to US charts. *William & Ann* logbook (unsigned), 14 Aug 1825, Ships' Logs, C.1/1067, HBCA; Edmond S. Meany, *Origin of Washington Geographic Names* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1923), 277.

[26] George Davidson to Alexander Dallas Bache (copy), 3 Oct 1852, Letterbooks, carton 1, Davidson Papers; Franklin Tucker to Hartman Bache (copy), 27 Mar 1858, enclosed in Hartman Bache to Captain John De Camp (USS *Shubrick*), 16 Jun 1858, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 2, vol. 8; Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 268; James G. Swan, 'Visit to Tatooche Island', *Washington Standard*, 20 July 1861, 1, https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=WASHSTD18610720.

extending its beacon above the curvature of the earth. It was no coincidence, then, that the site chosen for the lighthouse was next to the Makah's favoured whale lookout spot.[27] Topographic realities across the region ensured the geography of lighthouses overlapped considerably with those of Indigenous trade, harvesting, and settlement.

These overlapping geographies were often an asset to the lighthouse construction parties that finally arrived in the Juan de Fuca Strait in 1857. Operating in isolation from colonial settlements, crews could procure potatoes and occasionally fresh meat or dugout canoes from nearby Indigenous communities.[28] But recent events made these forays into Indigenous space a risky undertaking. Few years had passed since the US Coast Survey took armed occupation of Ča·di· in 1852, on which occasion they had issued threats, ignored Makah objections to leaving a survey party, constructed a defensive breastwork, and posted armed sentries. In 1853, the Makah world was devastated by smallpox, which killed over half the population, leaving beaches strewn with bodies and survivors "almost frantic with grief and fear."[29] Some Makahs attributed the horrific disease to the interloping surveyors. The association was spurious (the disease arrived with Makahs returning from San Francisco aboard the brig *Cynosure*) but entirely reasonable given that their people were, on at least one previous occasion, threatened with the spread of smallpox: a fur trading captain once told Makahs he would release the "skin sick" from an empty bottle and destroy them all unless his trading terms were accepted. These accounts were still circulating when smallpox made its lethal appearance in 1853, prompting Makahs to dig up and destroy bottles left by the Coast Survey to mark the astronomical station under the belief that they contained evil spirits.[30] Makahs continued to regard government agents with wariness in subsequent years. Lieutenant Trowbridge (USCS) described Cape Flattery's

[27] Swan, 'Visit to Tatooche Island', 1.
[28] Hartman Bache to I.W. Sayward (copy), 11 Jun 1857, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 1, vol. 5.
[29] Boyd, *Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence*, 167–68; United States Office of Indian Affairs, 'Report of the Commissioner… for the Year 1858', 231–32; Hancock, *Narrative of Samuel Hancock*, 181–83.
[30] George Davidson, *Directory for the Pacific Coast of the United States Reported to the Superintendent of the U.S. Coast Survey* (Washington, DC, 1862), 115, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012104881; Lawson, 'Autobiography'; Lutz and Carlson, 'Smallpox Chiefs', 97; Boyd, *Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence*, 167–68.

inhabitants as "ready for open collision," believing him to have returned to bring back the smallpox when he came to the area for tidal observations in 1855. One of Trowbridge's men encountered similar hostility while undertaking work at Nootka Sound, the idea being "injuriously circulated by some of our enemies near Cape Flattery, that the object [...] was to cast some evil spell on the land and waters."[31] It is unlikely that such suspicions had dissipated when new government agents appeared in 1857 to construct a lighthouse in place of an astronomical station.

US officials fretted about the possibility of armed Indigenous resistance from within their own borders and perceived "incursions" from Indigenous groups to the north. In 1856, Puyallup and Nisqually warriors, allied with nations from across the Cascade Mountains, clashed with troops, volunteers, and gunboats in what became known as the Puget Sound War. US militants pacified the Indigenous resistance by February 1857, but a new threat emerged as naval vessels clashed with Indigenous peoples from British Columbia and Alaska.[32] Major Bache found himself navigating the outfall of these hostilities. A great-grandson of Benjamin Franklin and cousin to Superintendent Alexander Dallas Bache (USCS), Major Bache had served as Army Topographical Engineer for lights in several Atlantic states before his assignment to the Pacific.[33] In June 1856 he was writing to the Lighthouse Board to explain the apparent delay in erecting lighthouses at Shoalwater Bay, Tatoosh Island, New Dungeness, and Smith Island. "Notwithstanding the great anxiety the board has repeatedly evinced upon the subject," Major Bache had found it impossible to undertake preliminary examinations given the sites' inaccessibility and "considering the disturbed state of the Indians."[34] Hostilities tapered off the following year, but Bache remained apprehensive about the potential for

[31] United States Coast Survey, 'Report of the Superintendent... during the Year 1855', 227–28.
[32] Phelps, *Reminiscences of Seattle*, 9–12; Holbrook and Nikol, 'Navy in the Puget Sound War', 16, 19; Lissa K. Wadewitz, 'Rethinking the "Indian War": Northern Indians and Intra-Native Politics in the Western Canada-U.S. Borderlands', *The Western Historical Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (2019): 339–61.
[33] Katharine Baetjer, 'Benjamin Franklin's Daughter', *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 38 (2003): 180–81; George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. from 1802 to 1867*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1879), 181, http://archive.org/details/biographicalregi01cull.
[34] Hartman Bache to Thornton Jenkins and John Parke (copy), 22 Sep 1856," Correspondence of Major Bache, box 1, vol. 3.

"predatory acts" by Indigenous people drawn from British and Russian territories for seasonal work in Washington Territory.[35]

With the Lighthouse Board no less anxious to see the lights erected, the inspector undertook precautions to avoid conflict in the spring and summer of 1857. Bache instructed construction parties to commence operations by building defensive, two-storey blockhouses to which crews could resort in the event of attack. The parties were to bring ammunition and arms for twenty men, to be stored in racks and regularly cleaned to ensure their ready use.[36] Later, on receiving reports of aggression from "British Indians," Major Bache prescribed an order of work that reflected his understanding of Indigenous migration routes. The inspector instructed his local agent to refrain from landing freight at New Dungeness – a customary stopping point for those crossing the strait – but ordered no such delay at Tatoosh Island, which he considered safely removed from northern Indigenous travel corridors.[37] Such precautions could only go so far, however. Major Bache counted around twenty White men present among the work party at Tatoosh Island in 1857, compared with 150-200 Makahs at their summer village.[38] Exposed and outnumbered, Bache counselled construction crews to avoid conflict by adopting "a kindly, at the same time a just, consistent and firm course" with Indigenous people.[39] Crews encountered little in the way of interference from either resident or "British" natives.[40] Instead, Major Bache reported "the most amicable relations" when he visited the Tatoosh Island construction site in July.[41]

The Tatoosh Island lighthouse was completed and finally lit on December 28, 1857 (Figure 9).[42] Major Bache continued to take steps to fortify the keepers charged with maintaining and operating the

[35] Bache to John G. Parke (copy), 7 Mar 1857, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 1, vol. 5.
[36] Bache to G. W. Bolan (copy), 22 Apr 1857, Correspondence of Major Hartman Bach, box 1, vol. 5.
[37] Hartman Bache to W.B. Franklin (copy), 4 May 1857, Correspondence of Major Bache , box 1, vol. 5.
[38] Bache to John De Camp (copy), 16 Jun 1858, Correspondence of Major Bache , box 2, vol. 8.
[39] Bache to I.W. Sayward (copy), 11 Jun 1857, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 1, vol. 5.
[40] Major Bache's local agent reported one instance in which he feared S'Klallams would fire on his party should they attempt to land at New Dungeness, but nothing seems to come of it. Bache to Isaac Smith (copy), 23 Jun 1857, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 1, vol. 5.
[41] Bache to De Camp (copy), 16 Jun 1858, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 2, vol. 8.
[42] Notice to Mariners: Lighthouse on Tatoosh Island off Cape Flattery (copy), Correspondence of Major Bache, box 2, vol. 7.

Figure 9. The Makah village and lighthouse at Čaʔdiʔ (Tatoosh Island), c. 1896-1903

The Makah village at Čaʔdiʔ formed a veritable moat around the Tatoosh Lighthouse. Keepers were considerably outnumbered in the summer months. Samuel Morse, "Potlatch at Tatoosh," c. 1896-1903, MORSE/22, Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma, WA.

light. Four keepers were appointed on account of the "isolated and inaccessible character of the locality and the presence of Indians." Each was to be supplied with two muskets – sufficient, it was hoped, to discourage or rebuff violent confrontation, but not so many as might actually tempt Makahs to forcefully gain possession of the arms.[43] Major Bache, based in San Francisco, took issue with the local Collector of Customs' nominee for head keeper, George H. Gerrish, on the basis that he sold liquor and lived with an Indigenous woman. The first charge was later dismissed; the second, the Collector alleged, served "as a protection to the whites." Bache quibbled on this point, but Gerrish

[43] Hartman Bache to John G. Parke (copy), 7 Mar 1857, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 1, vol. 5; and Bache to Isaac W. Smith, 5 Dec 1857, box 2, vol. 7.

received the appointment and was soon occupying the station with three assistant keepers.[44] His tenure did not last long. The keeper and his assistants resigned the following April, explaining that the remote location and difficulty of access made the cost of fuel and rations an excessive burden on their modest pay.[45] His appointment lasted scarcely three months but appears to have been peaceful, conveniently coinciding with the winter season when Makahs returned to villages on the mainland. One wonders whether Gerrish's partnership with an Indigenous woman helped smooth relations with Makah neighbours. It is significant, in any case, that the Collector of Customs felt this "tender tie" would foster security.

Gerrish's successor encountered greater difficulties as Makahs returned to Ča·di· that spring. Franklin Tucker – known as "Screw-mouth Tucker" on account of a facial deformity – had lived "among the Indians" (presumably including the Makahs) for the past four or five years, conducting business and professing to be well known to them. Tucker gave up trading upon receiving his appointment and evidently struggled to reset the relationship. Makahs entered the station's buildings at will, the keeper complained, stealing wood and "everything they can find." Cobetsi, the leading Makah war chief, broke into the storage house and, in one instance, struck the new keeper. On another occasion, an exasperated Tucker marched down to the village, rooted around the houses, and succeeded in retrieving two of his bags. The Makahs had no more patience for this intrusion than Tucker had for theirs. These houses stored valuable fishing equipment, as well as ceremonial masks and regalia. A resentful Makah confronted the keeper that afternoon and struck him with an old sack. Tucker objected that he did not want the sack – and was promptly struck again. The assailant drew a knife and threatened to kill the keeper, forcing him to flee to the lighthouse for shelter. Tucker wrote

[44] Hartman Bache to Morris Frost (copy), 6 Nov 1857, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 2, vol. 7. Bache does not specify where Gerrish's wife was from, nor which Indigenous groups he previously traded with. In 1854, the *Washington Pioneer* ran advertisements for "G.H. Gerrish & Co.," a wholesale store in New Dungeness. 'G.H. Gerrish & Co., Commission Merchants', *Washington Pioneer*, 28 January 1854, 4.
[45] Morris Frost to Hartman Bache (copy), enclosed in Bache to Thornton A. Jenkins, 5 Apr 1858, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 2, vol. 8.

that he had never known the Makahs to "take such liberty as they do now." By June 1858, Makah defiance convinced a beleaguered Tucker and his men to surrender the island to the Makahs.[46]

These actions did not emerge in a vacuum. The recent memory of the US Coast Survey and subsequent smallpox epidemic must have weighed on the minds of Makahs as they assessed these latest intruders. Access rights were another point of contention. Lieutenant James Alden (USCS) had promised not to take away any land when he spoke with chiefs in 1852. The arrival of permanent structures and resident keepers must have seemed a clear violation of his word, one compounded when the construction party's oxen destroyed Makah potato fields. The Makahs claimed Čaˑdiˑ as their own, wrote the Indian agent in 1858, and "we have no right to put [the lighthouse] there without their consent."[47] The *Puget Sound Herald* reported that Makahs ordered Tucker to leave, "saying the Government had not paid them for the land."[48] Keeper Tucker's ow observations demonstrate that Makahs forcing entry into lighthouse buildings were motivated at least as much by a desire to demonstrate their rights as by material gain:

> They think nothing of coming up to the house, and shove us away and walk in the house. They say the land belongs to them and not to us. [...] They say they don't want to sell the Island. If I would allow them to go and come in the house whenever they wanted to it would be all right. We could not chase after them, and that is not all they would steal every little thing they could see. I think something ought to be done with them concerning the Island.[49]

Tucker was in an unenviable position, entrusted to safeguard public property on an isolated island governed by conflicting cultural and legal norms, and evoking his neighbours' ire by

[46] In this letter, Tucker noted that the "chief seems to be all right," despite his inability (or unwillingness) to control his people. The local lighthouse agent described the second assailant as "another chief." One of the two appears to have been confused as to the standing of the second Makah man described above. Tucker to Bache (copy), 27 Mar 1858, enclosed in Bache to John De Camp, 16 Jun 1858, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 2, vol. 8; Elliott Anderson (Kwa-Yuk-Thick), 1936, Chute collection, box 10, file 9; United States Office of Indian Affairs, 'Report of the Commissioner... for the Year 1858', 236–37; James G. McCurdy, *By Juan de Fuca's Strait: Pioneering along the Northwestern Edge of the Continent* (Portland, OR: Binfords & Mort, 1937), 64; Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 161.

[47] United States Office of Indian Affairs, 'Report of the Commissioner... for the Year 1858', 232.

[48] 'News from Below', *Puget Sound Herald*, 25 June 1858, 2.

[49] Tucker to Bache (copy), 27 Mar 1858, enclosed in Bache to De Camp, 16 Jun 1858, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 2, vol. 8.

denying them the "right to come in the house when they want to."[50] This fraught relationship bears striking resemblance to Captain Wilkes' (US Ex Ex) earlier encounter with Makah Chief George, who, on being refused permission to stay aboard the USS *Vincennes* "said that the land was his & if he could not come on board, we should go away ourselves for we had no right here at all."[51] The protocols governing Neah Bay in 1841 were not dissimilar from those at Tatoosh Island in 1857. Outsiders' permission to remain in the area was conditional on Makah rights to freely board vessels or enter buildings. The difference, crucially, is that the site of these encounters had shifted from ship to shore.

With Makahs threatening the security of keepers and federal property, local lighthouse agent Isaac Smith turned to his counterpart, Indian agent Michael Simmons for assistance. Chief Cobetsi and other Makahs remained defiant when Simmons visited them in May 1858. Residing in Olympia, the Indian agent had infrequent opportunity to visit and little personal sway over his ostensible charges. "I suppose the matter stands just as it did," wrote a defeated Simmons, "In case of further difficulty, I should advise you to call on the revenue cutter or military for assistance."[52] Major Bache was equally discouraged, fearing Simmons' visit would "work more harm than good. Submission of Indians can only be brought about by buying them or by fighting them. The means of fighting them we have not, and I had hoped the Indian agent would be successful in buying them."[53] With the future of safe navigation at stake, government officials opted for armed intervention. The collector found four men to replace Tucker and his assistants (the third set appointed in six months) and arranged for them to be

[50] The relationship may have been further strained by Makah cultural norms by which excess food was to be distributed throughout the community, as observed by James Swan: "If one man is more fortunate than his neighbors in procuring a supply instead of preserving it for his own wants and those of his family, he must give a feast, and while his supplies last the others are content to live on his hospitality; when that is exhausted they will seek food for themselves." The keepers' storehouse may have therefore presented a particular affront to Makah sensibilities. "They say that the stores belong to them," wrote Tucker to Major Bache, "and I have no business here." Tucker to Bache (copy), 27 Mar 1858, enclosed in Bache to De Camp, 16 Jun 1858, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 2, vol. 8; Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 25.
[51] Blumenthal, *Charles Wilkes*, 262.
[52] United States Office of Indian Affairs, 'Report of the Commissioner... for the Year 1858', 238.
[53] Hartman Bache to Isaac W. Smith, 5 Jun 1858, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 2, vol. 8.

transferred to Tatoosh Island aboard the Revenue Cutter *Jefferson Davis*. The commanding officer informed Makahs that the government would punish them if further interference occurred. The Makahs ignored the warning and continued to assert their propriety over the island and these latest intruders.[54] A visit from the new lighthouse tender *Shubrick* in July reinforced the government's threat. The 350-ton paddlewheel steamer was designed from the maintenance of lights and buoys, and, equally, their defence. It featured a 24-pounder pivot gun, two 12-pounders at its forward and aft ends, and a full armament of breach-loading rifles, Colt's revolvers, and cutlasses for up to forty men. One could be forgiven for mistaking the tender for a "war steamer," as did one California paper.[55] But for all its force, incensed Makahs simply reiterated their threats, protesting that the light had driven whales and halibut from the shore, and that the government had breached its own treaty stipulations. Captain John De Camp found the villagers in a "hostile mood," quite prepared to take up arms against the keepers and *Shubrick* party. Instructed to refrain from attack without the consent of the Indian agent, the captain pulled anchor and "immediately got under way."[56]

By mid-August, Makahs appear to have adopted a more peaceful demeanour, much to the satisfaction of Major Bach, who reported Captain De Camp and Indian Agent Simmons returning to the island with a "more salutary effect." Government and newspaper reports provide frustratingly little detail on the apparent about-face, but Bache gave some credit to the disposition of the new keepers. His local lighthouse agent had privately expressed that Tucker had "rather magnified" tensions with the Makahs (perhaps by intruding into their homes). Bache felt the new keepers, one "Mr. James" and his assistants, deserved acknowledgment for their (unspecified) conduct to their Makah neighbours.[57] Successive visits by the *Jefferson Davis* and *Shubrick* may have finally underscored for Makahs the risk

[54] Morris H. Frost, 'Custom House, Port Townsend, June 22, 1858', *Pioneer and Democrat*, 25 June 1858, 3.
[55] Isaac I. Stevens, 'Letter from Governor Stevens, 17 April 1858', *Pioneer and Democrat*, 4 June 1858, 2; 'Mutiny', *Sonoma Democrat*, 24 June 1858.
[56] 'The U.S. Steamer "Shubrick"', *Pioneer and Democrat*, 16 July 1858, 2.
[57] Hartman Bache to W.B. Franklin (copy), 18 May 1858, Correspondence of Major Bache, box 2, vol. 8; Bache to Franklin, 19 Aug 1858, box 2, vol. 9; and Bache to Thornton and Franklin, 6 Sep 1858, box 2, vol. 9.

they faced against these heavily armed steamers. So-called "gunboat diplomacy" was hardly new to the Straits of Juan de Fuca.[58] By August, the Makahs had received three visits from armed US ships in two months. They were also, by then, only weeks away from returning to their mainland villages for the season. The cost of defiance had grown, and an alternate course was pursued.

One way or another, Makah interactions with the lighthouse shifted from outright hostility to strategic entanglement. Unable to dislodge the station and its keepers from Ča·di·, Makahs took steps to derive advantage from its position within their territory. The difficulty of landing at Tatoosh Island and the infrequency of visits from the *Shubrick* created an opening for enterprising Makah seafarers whose canoes and seafaring skills were necessary to transport food, fuel, supplies, and letters to the isolated keepers. Makah chief Wha-latl (or Swell) transported men to and from the lighthouse until 1861, when an Elwha rival shot and killed him while travelling to Cape Flattery in a canoe with goods and two months of letters for "persons connected with the light-house department" (Figure 10).[59] Following his death, Wha-latl's brother Peter Brown transported men, letters, food, and oil to the station.[60] Numerous others – Legs, Yonarthl (Old Doctor), Captain John Claplanhoo, Hohorkathl (Barker) – transported keepers to and from the island in the 1860s.[61] Baptist missionary Samuel Greene, residing at Neah Bay from 1874-75, observed that the "Indian mail carrier" made the trip to the lighthouse twice a week, weather permitting – far more regular than the *Shubrick*, which delivered

[58] Thirty years had passed since the HBC schooner *Cadboro* razed the S'Klallam village stətíɬəm (New Dungeness), killing perhaps twenty-five people. The USS *Decatur* had fired on warriors during the "Battle of Seattle" in January 1856, killing, by some estimates, as many as two hundred. That November, the warship *Massachusetts* fired on an Indigenous encampment at Port Gamble when they refused to return to their northern homes. Twenty-seven men and women were killed, and a further twenty-one injured. Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 46; Gough, *Gunboat Frontier*, 60; George W. Fuller, *A History of the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931), 236–37, https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcbooks/items/1.0376066; L. A. Kibbe, 'Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey, 1856-1857', *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1942): 313–14; S. Swartout, 'Battle with the Northern Indians', *Pioneer and Democrat*, 19 December 1856.

[59] James Swan records that Wha-latl was shot by Met-so-nack (Elwha Charley) in retaliation for killing two Elwhas a few months earlier. Swan diaries (transcript), 13 Nov 1859, 2 Jun 1860; James Swan, "Statement connected with the murder of Swell," 22 Aug 1864, United States Commissioner Series, box 8, file 25, item D.2.24, James Swan fonds, RBSC-ARC-1539, University of British Columbia Rare Books and Special Collections (UBC-RBSC), Vancouver, BC; James G. Swan, 'Murder of Wha-Lathl, or "Swell," One of the Mackah Chiefs, by the Elwha Indians, near Old Dungeness', *Washington Standard*, 30 March 1861, 1. See also Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 161–62.

[60] Swan diaries, 4 May 1861, 17 Apr 1862, 13 Apr 1864, 20 Dec 1864, 7 Jan 1865.

[61] Swan diaries, 22 Jan 1864, 14 Oct 1864, 7 Jan 1865, 24 Jan 1865, 9 Mar 1865, 25 Jun 1865.

Figure 10. Makah Chief Wha-latl's burial monument, 1861

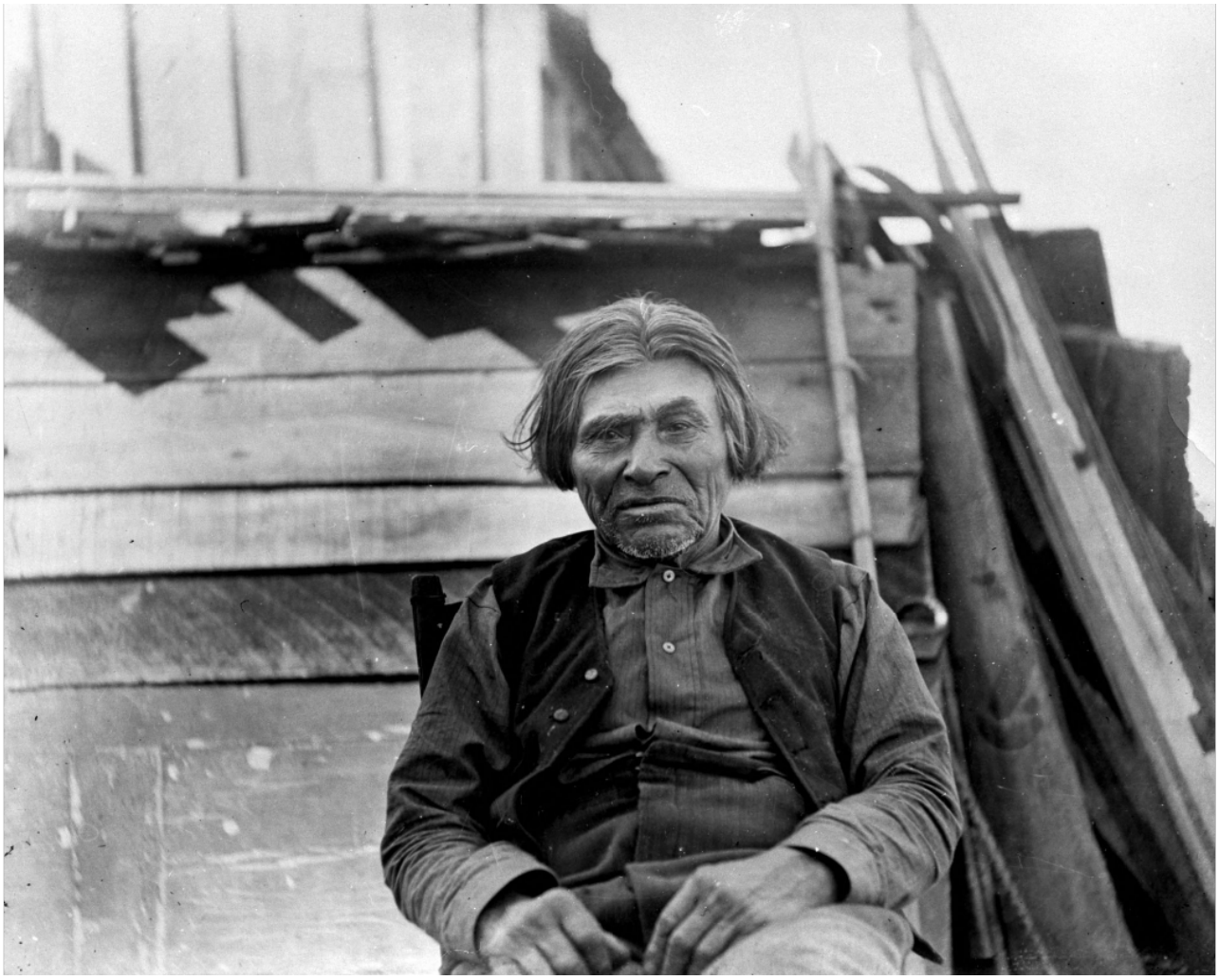
A burial monument was erected in Wha-latl's memory in 1861, adorned with paint from the Tatoosh Island Lighthouse and mounted with a tin oil can. It is possible the can also came from the light. Pattie Cox, who grew up across the strait at the Cape Beale lighthouse, recalled that Indigenous neighbours coveted used tins, emptied of the coal oil that fueled the light, for storing whale oil. The fixture atop Wha-latl's monument may have indicated his whaling prowess and/or wealth.[62] *James Swan, "Swells monument at Neeah Bay" [1861], WA-MSS S-2368, Stenzel Collection of Western American Art, Beinecke Library.*

[62] Pattie Alexander Haslam interview, 26 Mar 1962, Imbert Orchard fonds, MS-3268.U, BCA (hereafter cited as Pattie Haslam interview); Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 83; Lucile McDonald, *Swan among the Indians: Life of James G. Swan, 1818-1900* (Portland, OR: Binfords & Mort, 1972), 88.

supplies only two or three times a year.[63]

James McCurdy, who resided at Neah Bay as a child in the late 1870s, remembered "Lighthouse Jack," otherwise known as Frank Parker, as an amiable storyteller and deft paddler (Figure 11). Parker earned a reputation among Whites for his reliability in delivering post to the lightkeepers twice weekly, in fair weather and foul. His canoeing prowess was crucial to his success in this role. During winter storms, the mail carrier would hold fast to outlying kelp beds – a customary

Figure 11. Frank Parker, aka "Lighthouse Jack," c. 1899



Frank Parker posed for this photo when his old friend James McCurdy returned to Neah Bay as an adult. Bert Kellogg Photograph Collection, INDNPORT012, North Olympic Library System, University of Washington Digital Collections.

[63] Greene, "A Sketch of My Life," book 2, pp. 60-61.

technique of Indigenous canoe travel – "gauge the in-sweeping seas with the practised eye of a born seaman," and dart into the waves at the opportune moment to throw his mail sack to the keeper on shore. The rewards for this service were more than reputational. Parker's government mail check bought him additional sugar, tea, molasses, and other foods, affording him and his wife what McCurdy considered "lives of true luxury" by Makah standards.[64] The station's earliest extant lighthouse logbook (1872-1895) provided less detail but noted these deliveries when foul weather prevented Makahs from returning to the mainland. "Mail from Neah Bay at noon. Siwashes storm bound," is a typical entry. Clearly, Makahs remained a crucial link to the outside world, particularly in winter months when rough conditions demanded expertise in handling and safely landing boats.[65] Makah mail carriers continued to be praised for this capability as late as the 1920s, when Jim Hunter held responsible for the "perilous journey" to Tatoosh Island (Figure 12). Like Parker, Hunter's income allowed him to purchase lavish goods, including a new, 45-foot gas engine boat for $9000.[66]

These were convenient opportunities for Makahs who gathered at Ča·di· in any case to participate in potlatches, hunt whales, and tend halibut racks. They also established a context in which lightkeepers became acquainted with the customs and lifeways of the people in whose territory they found themselves. Keepers watched with interest as Makahs beached slain whales or hosted potlatches and dances with guests from across the region.[67] The logbook records an instance in which an assistant keeper went to Neah Bay "to attend an Indian dance" (and failed to return that night, as promised).[68] Assistant keeper Oscar Brown (1890-93) praised Lighthouse Jim (apparently a different individual than Lighthouse Jack) as a "well informed Indian" and "fine old canoeman" who once saved

[64] McCurdy, *Indian Days at Neah Bay*, 84, 103–4.
[65] Although it begins in 1872, the earliest Tatoosh Island logbook offers few entries for its initial years, often no more than one per month. The keeper began daily logs on November 18, 1879. Cape Flattery Lighthouse logbook, 14 Jan 1891, Logbooks of Lighthouses, box 63, Records of the US Coast Guard, RG 26, NARA-DC (hereafter cited as Cape Flattery Lighthouse logbook). See also entries for 30 Nov 1893, 4 Jan 1894, 20 Dec 1894.
[66] "This Mail Man Rides Daily over the Wild Tatoosh Seas," *Post-Intelligencer* clipping [date unclear in pencil annotation, probably 7 Sep 1926], Niendorff Maritime Disaster Scrapbooks, vol. 27, Museum of History and Industry, Seattle, WA.
[67] Cape Flattery Lighthouse logbook, 21 Jul 1890, 27 Jul 1891, 28 Jul 1895; Elliot Anderson (Kwa-Yuk-Thick), 1936, box 4, file 9.
[68] Cape Flattery Lighthouse logbook, 2 Aug 1878.

Figure 12. Mail carriers Jim Hunter and George Young, 1926

Makah mail carrier Jim Hunter and his helper George Young delivered mail to the Tatoosh lighthouse and other points aboard the Uncle Jim *in the 1920s. In 1926, Hunter replaced the* Uncle Jim *with a larger, gas-powered boat purchased in Tacoma. "This Mail Man Rides Daily over the Wild Tatoosh Seas,"* Post-Intelligencer *clipping [date unclear in pencil annotation, probably 7 Sep 1926], Niendorff Maritime Disaster Scrapbooks, vol. 27, Museum of History and Industry, Seattle, WA.*

his life while he was traveling to the mainland. Jim's relationship to the keepers was not always so amicable. Jim was "the owner of Tatoosh" and a gifted whaler, according to his cousin, and may have been among the Makahs who protested the lighthouse's adverse impact on whales and halibut in 1858. Keeper Brown related that the Makah's name derived from his "having laid siege to the lighthouse

keepers for about a week" – probably a reference to Tucker's tumultuous tenure.[69] Jim's trajectory is exemplar of the transformation that took place in other areas where the US lighthouse service inserted itself. Given the option of military reprisal or modest material advantage, Indigenous peoples generally chose strategic entanglement.

Indigenous labour and knowledge underpinned the lighthouse network in other, less obvious ways. Historian Richard White observes how fuel-based technologies masked ongoing ties to both nature and human labour in the nineteenth century.[70] Certainly, most seaborne observers had little idea that many of the lights guiding them to port were literally powered by Indigenous fisheries. Dogfish oil, burning brighter than the colza (rapeseed) oil formerly used, was procured by T'Sou-ke and Ts'msyen fishers to illuminate many British Columbia lights in the 1870s.[71] One Washington settler reported Haidas transporting a cargo of dogfish oil to the lighthouse at Tatoosh Island, presumably for the same purpose. Keeper Alexander Sampson (1866-1893) continued to purchase whale oil from Makahs after the Tatoosh station switched to coal oil, reserving the rendered fat to light the lantern in emergencies, and occasionally adding a dash "t'make it gleam a little brighter."[72] These exchanges represent strategic and lucrative expansions of customary harvesting activities that illuminated the lamps transpacific mariners increasingly depended on.[73] Nor did such assistance wane with the introduction of new technologies. The installation of a steam whistle at Tatoosh Island in

[69] Lighthouse Jim was born around 1834 and appears in US Indian Census rolls with the Indigenous name Du-qua-pis. An 1894 petition records his name as Seahsub. Frank Parker was born around 1827 and appears on the same census rolls with the names Ba-duke-to-ah and Mar-nut-kar. Oscar V. Brown notes, 25 Jul 1936, Chute collection, box 5, file 30; Elliott Anderson to George Chute, 19 Jun 1937, Chute collection, box 6, file 23; Neah Bay Agency, 1900, images 10, 29, Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940, National Archives Microfilm Publication M595, accessed via FamilySearch.com; Petition of Idiz Woodward and Lighthouse Jim, 1894, United States Commissioner Series, box 8, file 30, item D.3.5, James G. Swan fonds, UBC-RBSC.

[70] Richard White, *The Organic Machine* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 37–38.

[71] Canada, 'Annual Report for the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Fiscal Year Ended 1876,' 210; Canada, 'Annual Report for the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Fiscal Year Ended 1875,' xxix; Canada, 'Annual Report for the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Fiscal Year Ended 1878,' 136.

[72] Caroline C. Leighton, *Life at Puget Sound, with Sketches of Travel in Washington Territory, British Columbia, Oregon and California, 1865-1881* (Boston: Lee & Shepard and C.T. Dillingham, 1884), 142, http://archive.org/details/cihm_15461; McCurdy, *Indian Days at Neah Bay*, 86, 88.

[73] Knight, *Indians at Work*, 156–57; Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 165–77.

1872 simply created a new demand for water, and the fuels (wood and coal) required to transform it to steam. Makahs freighted immense quantities of water to the station from Neah Bay in order to fill the whistle's cistern and conducted similar operations into the 1890s.[74] Makahs also transported coal and wood from Neah Bay and/or to haul it up from the beach, depending on weather conditions and the *Shubrick*'s ability to land materials at the island. In October 1880, "Indian Callappa" delivered twenty cords of wood (around 2500 cubic feet) for the lighthouse and dwelling.[75] In the 1930s, Elliot Anderson recalled his late brother's contract to supply the keepers' woodshed with forty cords, at about $7.50 a cord.[76] Michael Schiffer observes that nineteenth-century lighthouses typically contained a mix of old, new, and experimental technologies.[77] The same could be said of the fuels and relationships that sustained these emerging networks.

In short, Makahs were an indispensable factor in the reliable operation of the lighthouse lantern and whistle on this otherwise unforgiving coast. US lighthouses like Tatoosh Island were the most visible and permanent of the efforts to construct a navigable coast, but they were, in important respects, a by-product of Indigenous toleration and labour. Given the option of military reprisal or modest material advantage, Indigenous peoples generally chose strategic entanglement and or non-intervention. The vast majority of encounters were peaceful as Indigenous peoples continued to visit these sites for their own economic and social motivations. Makahs continued to gather at Čaʷdiʷ, as they had done for countless generations. Quileute, Makah, Ditidaht, Clayoquot, and other Indigenous seafarers camped near the New Dungeness lighthouse when traveling to and from the hop fields of

[74] In August 1894, Makahs in two large canoes brought over 5000 litres of water, which they subsequently barrelled, hoisted up by the derrick, and emptied into the cistern. Cape Flattery Lighthouse logbook, 29-30 Aug 1895; United States Light-House Board, *Annual Report of the Light-House Board of the United States to the Secretary of the Treasury for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1872* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1872), 84.
[75] Cape Flattery Lighthouse logbook, 9 Oct 1880.
[76] Elliot Anderson, 1936, Chute collection, box 4, file 9. Many such deliveries are noted in the keeper's log: Cape Flattery Lighthouse logbook, 9 Dec 1875, 13 Dec 1875, 15 Dec 1875, 19 Jun 1879, 10 Apr 1880, 9 Oct 1880, 18 Oct 1886, 26 Aug 1888, 31 Aug 1888, 22 Oct 1889, 23 Aug 1890, 12 Jul 1891, 15-17 Jul 1891.
[77] Michael B. Schiffer, 'The Electric Lighthouse in the Nineteenth Century: Aid to Navigation and Political Technology', *Technology and Culture* 46, no. 2 (April 2005): 279.

Washington.[78] Ninety-four canoes, a sloop, and a small boat carried Indigenous families passed the Smith Island light in the last week of August 1890 alone, with most choosing to stop for the night.[79] Such details confirm the extent to which the Juan de Fuca Strait remained a vibrant and interconnected Indigenous seascape in the late nineteenth century. Few were in a better position to witness this reality than lightkeepers along the Juan de Fuca Strait.

"I was more or less dependent upon them": The Keepers of Chi·mataqsał.

Different considerations shaped imperial efforts to construct a lighthouse at the northern entrance to the Juan de Fuca Strait. All vessels bound for Victoria, Puget Sound, and the Fraser River were required to bypass Vancouver Island's rugged coast, and a confluence of poorly understood natural forces sometimes conspired to drive them off-course. Efforts to erect a lighthouse to mitigate these risks were shaped by the area's unique physical topography and a sparse settler population, which combined to increase outsiders' dependence on local Indigenous knowledge and labour. The Huu-ay-aht's ability to derive immediate material advantage may have encouraged them to adopt a strategy of accommodation earlier than Makahs across the strait. The intervening sixteen years – marked by a gold rush, smallpox epidemic, and increased British military presence – had also raised the cost of resistance. The Tatoosh Island lighthouse had already been in operation for two years when Captain Richards identified Cape Beale as a prospective lighthouse site during his 1861 survey of Barkley Sound. Standing opposite Cape Flattery, a light at Cape Beale would allow mariners to make landfall with less anxiety, and to shelter in the sound when confronting high winds or thick fog.[80] This remained to be accomplished when Canada assumed responsibility for lighthouses in 1871. The

[78] The New Dungeness logbook (1888-1896) records arrivals from Quileute, Neah Bay, Clallam Bay, Jamestown, Victoria, Nitinat, Clayoquot Sound, and Nootka Sound. Indigenous people were curious about the lighthouse, too. The keeper was lighting the lantern one evening in September 1891 when young men came into the house, and, like so many tourists to come, asked to climb up the tower (the keeper said no). New Dungeness Lighthouse logbook, 14 Oct 1888, 2 Apr 1891, 21-23 Sep 1891, 8 Oct 1891, 17 Sep 1892, 21 Sep 1892, 21 Sep 1893, 8 Oct 1893, 4-5 Nov 1893, Logbooks of Lighthouses, box 63, RG 26, NARA-DC.
[79] Blunt's [Smith] Island Lighthouse logbook, 26-31 Aug 1891, Logbooks of Lighthouses, box 33, RG 26, NARA-DC.
[80] Richards, *Private Journal*, 117; Mayne, *Four Years*, 226–27.

following year, Minister of Public Works Hector-Louis Langevin recommended a light to guide "navigators desirous of entering the Strait of Fuca, and prevent their being cast away on the coast." Marking the entrance to Barkley Sound was a secondary concern, but Langevin had high hopes for the development of the area given the possibility that nearby Alberni Inlet might be selected as the terminus for the intended Canadian Pacific Railway.[81]

Construction was delayed when November winds and impenetrable salal prevented an initial attempt to survey the site. Finally, in July 1873, the schooner *Surprise* was commissioned to transport a working party and materials to the site. Because the headland's rocky cliffs made a coastal landing untenable, the party anchored in a cove behind the cape that could be accessed by running a narrow gap in the rocks at high tide (Figure 13). This passage was well known to the Huu-ay-aht, who used it as a tidal shortcut around the cape they knew as Chi·mataqsaɬ.[82] The captain of the *Surprise*, accustomed to hiring Indigenous crew and sealers in the area, probably secured the assistance of Huu-ay-aht labourers who canoed the lumber ashore and packed it to the construction site. The attached tower and dwelling were completed in October, but the station still awaited a light and a keeper to be put into operation.[83] In June 1874, Marine Agent James Cooper chartered the schooner *Kate* to transport lantern glass and other materials to the station. In what became standard procedure, the party anchored at Dodger Cove, a protected harbour eight kilometres north, where the Huu-ay-aht had two villages, Chapʔis and ʔA:ʔat.sow'is (Figure 14).[84] Cooper was forthright about his reliance on the villagers in a subsequent report:

> The landing at the light-house is nearly always bad, and sometimes dangerous, but the sea-coast Indians are very expert in handling their canoes, and it is considered safer to entrust

[81] Canada, Parliament, 'British Columbia: Report of the Hon. H.L. Langevin, C.B., Minister of Public Works,' in *Sessional Papers for the Fifth Session of the First Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1872*, vol. 6, paper 10 (Ottawa: I.B. Taylor, 1872), 31, 42.
[82] "Cape Beale Expedition," *Daily British Colonist*, 5 November 1872, 3; "The Cape Beale Lighthouse Party," *Daily British Colonist*, 19 July 1873, 3; Pattie Haslam interview.
[83] "The Cape Beale Lighthouse," *Daily British Colonist*, 28 October 1873, 3.
[84] St. Claire, 'Barkley Sound Tribal Territories', 109.

> property or life to the care and management of the natives than to risk the same in (frequently) very inferior boats.[85]

The villagers also recognized Cooper's dependence on them. They demanded he hire more labourers than he felt necessary and scorned his initial payment offer. The Huu-ay-aht had a strong hand to play, knowing the Department of Marine and Fisheries (DMF) had run advertisements announcing the light's completion in little more than two weeks. Any delay could disorient and imperil mariners expecting to find the headland newly lit.[86] Cooper soon lost his patience and threatened to land the

Figure 13. The cove behind Chi·mataqsał (Cape Beale), c. 1918

A boat runs into the narrow cove behind Cape Beale lighthouse on "a very calm day" (date unknown). A faint 'x' inscribed to the left of the boat marks the position of an unseen rock beneath the waves. P-J47.4, Bamfield Community Museum and Archives, Bamfield, BC. Reproduced with permission.

[85] Agent Cooper was known neither for his tact nor understanding of Indigenous protocols. Encountering him fourteen years earlier, Captain Richards complained that Cooper (then a harbour master at Esquimalt) had frustrated planned negotiations with Kwakwaka'wakw chiefs due to his "little knowledge of the people." Richards, *Private Journal*, 67, 70. Canada, Parliament, 'Seventh Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries being for the Fiscal Year Ended 30th June, 1874,' appendix 5, in *Sessional Papers for the Second Session of the Third Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1875*, vol. 4, paper 5 (Ottawa: MacLean, Rogers & Co., 1875), 163-164.

[86] Official notice of the light was published the week prior to Cooper's visit. "Notice to Mariners," *Daily British Colonist*, 9 June 1874, 4.

Figure 14. Buildings at Dodger's Cove, 1902

Dodger Cove's proximity to Cape Beale provided a lifeline to DMF agents and lightkeepers who relied on resident Huu-ay-aht for labour, local knowledge, and the transport of material, provisions, letters. "Barclay Sound, Dodger's Cove," 1902, 1917.115.255, Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma, WA.

schooner himself. The villagers knew this was "almost a physical impossibility" and smirked that he was welcome to try. "They knew that I was more or less dependent upon them," the exasperated agent wrote, "and were sharp enough to know how to make me pay for it." Cooper threatened to inform the Indian Commissioner that they were a "bad race of people," but ultimately agreed to pay them each $4.50 – six times his initial offer – plus $3.00 for each of two canoes. Much to Cooper's astonishment, the Huu-ay-aht did not solicit any payment when they returned to transport him back to Dodger Cove some days later.[87]

[87] Canada, 'Annual Report for the Department of the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Fiscal Year Ended 1874," 163-164.

The Huu-ay-aht continued to derive gain from their proximity to the Cape Beale Lighthouse (Figure 15), despite DMF efforts to the contrary. Evidently still sore, Agent Cooper furnished keeper Robert Westmoreland with a surf boat in 1875, "rendering him independent of Indian help, upon which he previously had to depend for every trifling service."[88] Such independence proved elusive. In 1878, when Westmoreland's successor was appointed, the new keeper and his family were deposited by paddlewheel tug at Numukamis, a village on the southeastern corner of Barkley Sound. Huu-ay-aht shuttled Emmanuel Cox, Frances (née Shortt), and their children by canoe to Tzartus Island, and later Dodger Cove, where a storm delayed them for many days. Once it passed, fifteen Huu-ay-aht men

Figure 15. The Cape Beale Lighthouse, early 1900s

The Cape Beale Lighthouse as seen from the southwest. The rocky waters offshore made this a treacherous coastline. P-G04.415, Bamfield Community Museum and Archives. Reproduced with permission.

[88] Canada, 'Annual Report for the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Fiscal Year Ended 1875," appendix 8, 102.

and women conveyed the Coxes and their belongings across Trevor Channel to the landing behind the lighthouse. Two forbearing men hauled keeper Cox (a "tall, rugged man") to shore. A man called Whiskey Charlie carried his three-year old daughter Pattie Cox all the way to the lighthouse. Drizzling winter weather and a lantern and house "badly in want of repairs" offered a cheerless welcome to the new keepers. The Coxes were fortunate to enlist the services of another Huu-ay-aht, John Mack, who agreed to paddle 150 kilometres down the coast to alert Agent Cooper in Victoria to the maintenance they required.[89]

The Cox family would operate the station for the next seventeen years. Eager to supplement the preserved foods brought by government steamer, the family maintained goats, learned to fish and dig clams, shot ducks, and tried their best to grow vegetables.[90] Huu-ay-ahts probably regarded Cox family and DMF property as fair for the taking since these uninvited intruders lacked social status, kinship, and ceremonial relations.[91] In 1880, Keeper Cox complained to the new Marine Agent, Frederick Revely, that Huu-ay-ahts had begun "stealing" lumber from the site and were "very insolent and defiant in demanding food."[92] The Ditidaht, who lived down the coast from the Huu-ay-aht, stopped at the lighthouse en route to potlatches at Dodger Cove to request water, food and other supplies. They especially coveted old tins, emptied of the coal oil that fueled the lighthouse, for storing whale oil.[93] Huu-ay-ahts also continued to visit the premises for their own land use practices. Keeper Cox interfered when he noticed "Indian Harry" cutting down a tree close to the lighthouse tramway and described Harry as "impertinent" when he was prevented from continuing.[94] On another occasion,

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[89] George Nicholson, *Vancouver Island's West Coast, 1762-1962* (Victoria: George Nicholson, 1962), 139–40; George H. Bird, *Tse-Ees-Tah (One Man in a Boat): Sketches* (Port Alberni, BC: Arrowsmith Press, 1971), 208. Pattie Haslam interview; Cape Beale Lighthouse logbook, vol. 1, 22 Feb 1878, Cape Beale Lighthouse fonds, PR-1470, BCA (hereafter cited as Cape Beale Lighthouse logbook); Chas. A. Cox memoirs, ADHS.
[90] Having a stockpile of food was essential in the event of a shipwreck, and the Coxes were eager to get wrecked sailors aboard the first vessel to pass the light, lest their stores be fully depleted. Pattie Haslam interview; Frances Morrison interview, 26 Mar 1962, Imbert Orchard fonds, MS-3268.KK, BCA (hereafter cited as Frances Morrison interview).
[91] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 48, 64.
[92] Frederick Revely to William Smith, Memo, 14 Jun 1880, Black Series, vol. 3715, file 21973, Department of Indian Affairs (hereafter cited as RG 10), LAC.
[93] Pattie Haslam interview.
[94] Cape Beale Lighthouse logbook, vol. 1., 25 Apr 1883.

a storm forced Huu-ay-aht whalers to bring a dead whale into the cove behind the lighthouse. The whalers asked Cox if he objected to their leaving it there but didn't bother to comply when he ordered them to take it away. The carcass remained for weeks while Huu-ay-ahts butchered and transported it home in pieces, leaving a stench that Pattie Cox would remember decades later.[95] Indigenous callers also frustrated Cox with their tendency to frequent the station in little or no clothes, occasionally causing the keeper to erupt in anger and shout them off the premises. They soon learned "that the law of the lighthouse was 'Pants on or keep out.'"[96] That the Coxes characterized Huu-ay-aht behaviour as "insolent" and "impertinent" is indicative of their inability (or refusal) to comprehend the cultural and legal norms governing the coast on which they found themselves.

A more serious incident took place in April 1880, when Cox discovered a group of Indigenous people hunting the family's goats. Keeper Cox fired his shotgun at their dogs and demanded the return of a missing goat. A man called Man-as-atta seized his own rifle and threatened to shoot Cox if he remained on the beach. Cox was outnumbered and reluctantly obeyed. Agent Revely had Man-as-atta arrested on his next inspection visit and provided Cox a Winchester rifle and ammunition to protect his family and government property. Revely also wrote to DMF's deputy minister, urging that an Indian agent be appointed to Barkley Sound to curb the "bad character" of the local population. Man-as-atta was tried in Victoria and released on bond. Trespass notices were posted at the lightstation a few months later.[97] The incident must have reinforced the Coxes' feeling of vulnerability and isolation, but the fact that Cox was armed only as an afterthought says something of the dynamics that distinguished Cape Beale from those at Tatoosh Island two decades earlier.

Certainly, such eruptions did not characterize day-to-day encounters between the Coxes and their Huu-ay-aht neighbours. Mrs. Cox felt sorry for visiting Indigenous people and compensated

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[95] Pattie Haslam interview.
[96] Pattie Haslam interview; John Ross, 'A Pioneer Family of the West Coast,' *West Coast Advocate*, 2 October 1947, 9, microfilm copy, BCA.
[97] Revely to William Smith, Memo, 14 Jun 1880, Black Series, vol. 3715, file 21973, RG 10, LAC; Cape Beale Lighthouse logbook, vol. 1, 28 Apr 1880 and 11 Sep 1880; "Municipal Police Court," *Daily Colonist*, 27 May 1880.

them with empty coal oil tins when they were bitten by the family's dog. The family watched ceremonial dances at potlatches, and while Pattie Cox disliked "Indians," she described them as "very kindly" and marvelled at their "beautiful" war canoes and "melodious" voices. A family member described the Cox children as having Indigenous playmates, from whom they learned the Chinook jargon required to converse in their new home. In this respect, the Coxes conformed to a familiar pattern of communication in the Pacific Northwest, whereby Indigenous peoples, European traders, and early settlers sought a common vocabulary across linguistic barriers. The family simply "had to know the jargon," according to Pattie, "there was no way else to speak." Pattie's older brother Augustus "Gus" Cox went a step further, and learned to speak Nuučaaʔuł, reportedly one of only two White men who could do so proficiently.[98] Huu-ay-aht imparted ecological knowledge as well, instructing the Coxes never to run away if they encountered a cougar and reportedly teaching Pattie to canoe and trawl for salmon. "They were always trying to teach us and talk to us," she later recalled.[99]

Indigenous labour remained central to the light's routine maintenance and provisioning. The family purchased fresh fish from their neighbours, and for all his bluster Keeper Cox hired Huu-ay-aht to cut wood and repair and paint lighthouse structures.[100] The difficulty of landing at the cape and the high cost of White labour meant that DMF depended on Huu-ay-aht to transport lumber, machinery, and other materials to the lighthouse.[101] As at Tatoosh Island, Cox's logbooks and DMF reports give a partial account of such exchanges. Huu-ay-aht labourers were generally hired indirectly by the Marine Agent or a local White sealer, and their presence at the lightstation was sometimes only

[98] Gus Cox would later deploy the language and cultural knowledge acquired at the lighthouse in his capacities as a policeman and Indian Agent. John Ross, "A Pioneer Family of the West Coast," *West Coast Advocate*, 2 October 1947, 9; Pattie Haslam interview; Edward Cox interview, 8 Mar 1965, Imbert Orchard fonds, MS-3268.S, BCA (hereafter cited as Edward Cox interview); Chas A. Cox memoirs, Alberni District Historical Society (ADHS), Port Alberni, BC.
[99] Pattie Haslam interview; George Nicholson, "They Came to School by Schooner," *Daily Colonist*, 21 July 1957, 8-9. Nuu-chah-nulth salmon trawling is discussed briefly in Alan D. McMillan, *Since the Time of the Transformers: The Ancient Heritage of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth, Ditidaht, and Makah* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 17–18.
[100] Ross, "A Pioneer Family of the West Coast," *West Coast Advocate*, 2 October 1947, 9; Cape Beale Lighthouse logbook, vol. 1., 28 Jun 1878, 27 Sep 1879, 1-7 Oct 1879,
[101] Cape Beale Lighthouse logbook, vol. 1, 22 Jan 1881, 1 Nov 1881, 11 Feb 1885, 31 Jan 1892; Canada, 'Annual Report for the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Fiscal Year Ended 1884,' appendix 7, 119.

noted by happenstance several months later.[102] Securing labour was easy enough in the summer months, when Huu-ay-aht resided in outer coast villages like Chaapis and ʔA:ʔat.sow'is from which they fished and hunted sea mammals. Most families moved to Barkley Sound's inner salmon streams during the fall, and to larger, protected villages like Numukamis come winter. DMF was subject to this seasonal rhythm, and lighthouse tenders had to venture further into Barkley Sound if there were no labourers at Dodger Cove.[103] This likely explains why the steamer deposited the Coxes at Numukamis when they arrived in winter 1878.

The demands on DMF's sole steamer, and the relative infrequency of shipping between Victoria and Barkley Sound, meant Nuu-chah-nulth seafarers were able to turn a profit on longer trips transporting men and materials to the Cape Beale Lighthouse. Again, as is often the case, Indigenous labour is probably obscured in colonial records.[104] DMF paid White sealing captains for transportation costs, but their schooners often had Indigenous sailors. When the *Surprise* arrived in April 1874 with a repairman to fix lighthouse machinery, it numbered Ka:ˈyu:ˈkˈtˈhˈ (Kyuquot) boatswain Nomucos and Mowachaht assistant sailor Chechiepe among its four crew members.[105] Failing the availability of a sealing schooner, Indigenous seafarers might be hired directly, as when Agent Cooper tried to enlist help to transport a painter from Victoria to the lighthouse.[106] As at Tatoosh Island, Indigenous intermediaries were particularly essential for outward travel and communication from the lighthouse, and Keeper Cox enlisted canoes to report broken machinery and transport items for repair.[107] When

[102] Canada, 'Annual Report for the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Fiscal Year Ended 1877,' appendix 6, 252; Cape Beale Lighthouse logbook, vol. 1., Nov 1881, lower margin.
[103] Canada, 'Annual Report for the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Fiscal Year Ended 1877,' appendix 6, 245.
[104] Martha C. Knack and Alice Littlefield, 'Native American Labor: Retrieving History, Rethinking Theory', in *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives*, ed. Martha C. Knack and Alice Littlefield (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 3–4; Lutz, *Makúk*, 40; Carol Williams, 'Introduction', in *Indigenous Women and Work: From Labor to Activism*, ed. Carol Williams (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 20.
[105] August Brabant, *Mission to Nootka, 1874-1900: Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, ed. Charles Lillard (Sidney, BC: Gray's Publishing, 1977), 13; Cairn Elizabeth Crockford, 'Nuu-Chah-Nulth Labour Relations in the Pelagic Sealing Industry, 1868-1911' (MA Thesis, Victoria, University of Victoria, 1996).
[106] "Supreme Court," *Daily Colonist*, 19 December 1878, 3.
[107] Cape Beale Lighthouse logbook, vol. 1., 16 Aug 1881, 24 May 1884, 3 and 5 Apr 1892.

such assistance was required Cox had only to raise a flag to summon help from Dodger Cove.[108] The Coxes also entrusted their children to the care of Indigenous mariners. Dick Clamhouse and his wife were returning from hop-picking in Washington on one occasion when they agreed to convey Pattie and her sister back home from Victoria.[109]

The family's closest associations at Barkley Sound were mail carriers like Clamhouse, who visited the station on a monthly basis to deliver and receive letters from Victoria, Port Alberni, or passing ships. When the sea was rough, mail carriers took the customary trail that linked Chi·mataqsaɬ to other Huu-ay-aht settlements.[110] Many of the carriers' names and dates of employment are known from Cox's logbooks and DMF reports. Charlie (1879-1885), Joe (1885-1888), Clamhouse (1890-1891), and John Mack (1892-1894) served regularly and became known to the family over several years.[111] Mrs. Cox spoke highly of Mack and his wife. When Keeper Cox died in 1894, Mack refused payment for informing family members in Port Alberni, and reportedly took considerable offence at Mrs. Cox's efforts to pay him for the service.[112] Trips to Victoria and Alberni were likely appealing opportunity for Nuu-chah-nulth mariners who, like Clamhouse and his wife returning from the hop fields, had their own kinship, ceremonial, and economic motivations for plying the coast.[113] The

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[108] Nicholson, "They Came to School by Schooner," *Daily Colonist*, 21 July 1957, 8-9; Colin McKea, "The McKee's: A Brief Biography by Collin McKea," file D-F02.70, Bamfield Community Museum and Archives, Bamfield, BC.

[109] Clamhouse (elsewhere rendered "Thlaamahuus" or "La:ma<u>h</u>o:s") appears in ethnographic texts as one of Edward Sapir and Alex Thomas' local interlocutors. There he is described as a Uchucklesaht that lived among the Huu-ay-aht. Ross, "A Pioneer Family of the West Coast," *West Coast Advocate*, 2 October 1947, 9; Cape Beale Lighthouse logbook, vol. 1, 24 Mar 1886, 5 Ap 1892; Edward Cox interview; E. Y. Arima, Katherine Robinson, and Terry Klokeid, eds., *The Whaling Indians: West Coast Legends and Stories: Tales of Extraordinary Experience*, Sapir-Thomas Nootka Texts 10 (Hull, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2000), xiv; Edward Sapir, *Native Accounts of Nootka Ethnography*, 1 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, 1955), 55.

[110] An "Indian path" between Cape Beale and Bamfield is referenced in an 1864 newspaper article and described as leading to the Huu-ay-aht village Kiix?in in Cox's log entries. Cape Beale Lighthouse logbook, vol. 1, 10 Dec 1884, 11 Feb 1885, 25 May 1886; "The Land We Live On (continued)," *Victoria Daily Chronicle*, 10 May 1864, 3.

[111] The family's first regular mail carrier was probably the "Whiskey Charlie" who carried Pattie to the station in 1878. Other mail carriers were hired on a more casual basis: Harry (1878, 1892); Jackson (c. 1883); Ah-ack-Soa, aka "Jimmey" (c. 1884); Taylor (1885); Douglas (1890); Pete (1891); Sam (1892-1893). Cape Beale Lighthouse logbooks, various dates, vols. 1-2; Canada, 'Annual Report for the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Fiscal Year Ended 1881,' Appendix 7, 106; '...1882,' Appendix 7, 107; '...1883,' Appendix 7, 102-103; '...1884,' Appendix 7, 119; Pattie Haslam interview.

[112] Ross, "A Pioneer Family of the West Coast (continued)" *West Coast Advocate*, 9 October 1947, 22, microfilm copy, BCA; Nicholson, *Vancouver Island's West Coast*, 140.

[113] Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, 98–115; Jennifer Seltz, 'Epidemics, Indians, and Border-Making in the Nineteenth-Century Pacific Northwest', in *Bridging National Borders in North America: Transnational and Comparative Histories*, ed. Benjamin Johnson

exposed route to Victoria could take several days by canoe, but it was reportedly regarded as an easy voyage even for older individuals. This attitude reflects the seafaring skill and local knowledge that enabled Indigenous mariners to shelter in countless nooks "of little use to the white man's boats."[114]

Indigenous knowledge – ecological, technological, social – underpinned all the above activities to some extent, but is particularly evident in the pilots and guides who levied their geographic knowledge for pay. Captain Richards' *Vancouver Island Pilot* (1864) counselled "strangers" against navigating local harbours except in the fairest weather and, even then, with "great caution." The entry for Cape Beale in the 1874 *List of Lights* similarly warned against entering Barkley Sound "without local knowledge or a pilot." Unfortunately, it is difficult to quantify how often mariners secured Indigenous pilots, as these were hired on a casual basis and generally documented only when voyages went amiss. A Catholic missionary at Numukamis related one instance in which three prospectors decided to paddle to Victoria "without any Indian assistance." He protested that it "was not only foolish, but risky and dangerous" given the fierce breakers off the cape. His misgivings proved prescient when the expedition's remains were discovered beneath the lighthouse. A newspaper account conjectured that the three failed to find the entrance to the cove behind the cape and were caught among the reefs outside when a wave capsized their boat.[115]

Two contrary accounts provide another tantalizing, if uncertain, glimpse at the local piloting economy. The keeper's daughter, Frances Cox, related how a barque identified as the *Dumbarton* dropped anchor to avoid running aground in Barkley Sound after the captain mistook it for the Juan de Fuca Strait. According to Frances, a local chief brought the captain to Cape Beale and volunteered to

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and Andrew R. Graybill (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 91–115; John S. Lutz, 'Work, Sex, and Death on the Great Thoroughfare: Annual Migrations of "Canadian Indians" to the American Pacific Northwest', in *Parallel Destinies: Canadian-American Relations West of the Rockies*, ed. John M. Findlay and Ken S. Coates (Seattle: Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest in association with University of Washington Press and McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 80–103; Bird, *Tse-Ees-Tah*, 49.

[114] Bird, *Tse-Ees-Tah*, 49.

[115] "The Loss of the West Coast Prospecting Party," *Daily British Colonist*, 21 April 1877, 3; Charles A. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island* (Victoria: Acme Press, 1926), 150.

pilot the ship to safety provided the captain obey his instructions to the letter. Acting as interpreter, Keeper Cox explained that the chief previously came to the assistance of a US trading schooner that struck rock after his instructions were ignored. Familiar with the chief, Cox reportedly advised the captain to "let this Indian take the wheel and don't interfere." The captain reluctantly agreed, and the chief safely led the four-masted barque out of the sound a few days later. Cox's logbook makes the briefest mention of the captain's visit and later notes simply that the "Dumbarton sailed out, Middle Channel." A newspaper reported a variation of this incident, referring to the barque as the *Dumfriesshire*. According to this account, the captain tried to telegraph at Cape Beale after he "went to the Indians for a pilot" and found no one willing to take him. Finding the line down, the captain decided to sail out and by "good luck" reached the Juan de Fuca Strait. The accounts differ in important respects, but both reveal that mariners solicited Indigenous guides when vessels ran into trouble in Barkley Sound.[116]

By the late-1880s, it had become clear that additional light stations were necessary to guide vessel traffic on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Of six new lighthouses constructed between 1891 and 1911, half were constructed on or adjoining an Indian Reserve; all were within five kilometres of at least one reserve. These overlapping geographies meant that lights continued to draw on Indigenous labour, knowledge, and technologies in important ways. Carmanah Point, forty kilometres southeast of Cape Beale, was immediately adjacent to a Ditidaht village and reserve. In March 1889, an Indigenous guide was hired to help the Marine Agent locate a suitable trail to the proposed site.[117] Indigenous and Chinese labourers cleared trees, leveled, the area and transported provisions from Victoria by canoe, and the government contractor justified end-of-season delays by the fact that lantern and fog alarm

[116] Ross, "A Pioneer Family of the West Coast (continued)," *West Coast Advocate*, 9 October 1947, 22; Cape Beale Lighthouse logbook, vol. 2, 13 and 16 Oct 1892; "Out in the Reckoning," *Daily Colonist*, 20 October 1892, 6; Nicholson, *Vancouver Island's West Coast*, 142–43.

[117] Marine Agent Herbert Lewis estimated it would take four White men and "8 Chinamen or Indians" six to eight weeks to clear timber, grade a trail, and level the proposed site for the contractor. A new trail was subsequently identified the following year. Lewis to William Smith, 2 Apr 1889, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol 1507, file 7958-C5, RG 12, LAC; and Lewis to John Hardie, 2 Sep 1890, vol 1503, file 7952-C4.

machinery "could not possibly have been landed [...] as even the Indians leave that place this time of year."[118] Indigenous people regularly transported mail, provisions, and other goods to and from passing steamers or the nearby village of Clo-oose.[119] Others were recruited to scan beaches for lost ships, or hired for assistance when the keeper's son was sick.[120] One might expect such engagements to wane as settler populations boomed at the turn of the century. The opposite seems true. Later Vancouver Island lightstations, including those at Estevan Point (1909) and Nootka Sound (1911) employed Indigenous labourers to transport building materials, level ground, and clear trails, a condition the Department of Indian Affairs sometimes imposed on DMF in exchange for relinquishing reserve lands and rights-of-way.[121] Further afield, lightstations on or near reserves were placed under care of Indigenous lightkeepers: Captain Richard Carpenter at Dryad Point, Campbell Island (1899-1930);[122] Daniel Tom at Helen Point, Mayne Island (1909-1921);[123] and Chief Henry Weah at Masset, Haida Gwaii (1913-1932).[124] Donald Henry McNeill – the grandson of Captain William Henry McNeill (HBC)

[118] The Indigenous labourers initially demanded a daily rate of $2.50 but agreed to settle for $1.50 when the Marine Agent proposed returning with additional White and Chinese labourers to take their place. Herbert Lewis to William Smith, 25 Jul 1891; George H. Frost to Smith, 18 Nov 1890; Lewis to John Hardie, 2 Sep 1890, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol. 1503, file 7952-C4, RG 12, LAC.

[119] For mail to/from Clo-oose, see Carmanah Lighthouse logbooks, 18 May 1898, 21 Dec 1898, 12 Jan 1900, 11 Mar 1900, 10 Apr 1900, 26 Nov 1900; for communication with passing steamers, see 2 Nov 1898, 8 May 1899, 5 Feb 1900, 13 Mar 1900, 21 Mar 1900, 15 May 1901, 2 Feb 1902, 6 Mar 1902, 15 Mar 1902, Carmanah Lighthouse Records, box 880340-1809, Department of Transport fonds, PR-2105, BCA (hereafter cited as Carmanah Lighthouse logbooks).

[120] Carmanah Lighthouse logbooks, 3 Jun 1898, 9 May 1900.

[121] Various correspondence, 27 Jun 1908 to 18 Sep 1908, "Sites – Estevan Lightstation," Central registry files of the Marine Group, Canadian Coast Guard, Victoria, BC, box 6, file 8010-1920, RG 12, LAC; [Illegible] to A.W. Neill (copy), 14 Sep 1910, Donald Graham Lighthouse Research, 993.012.0013, Maritime Museum of British Columbia, Victoria, BC.

[122] Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, 152.

[123] Hubert Lindsay Cadieux describes Daniel Tom as "a native Indian from Matsqui Island." Tom's marriage record lists his birthplace as "Cowichan I.R." "Manned Lighthouses of British Columbia," Lighthouses, vol. 1, file 1, Hubert Lindsay Cadieux fonds, AM782, City of Vancouver Archives, Vancouver, BC; Marriage of Daniel Tom and Elizabeth Cornish, registration no. 1935-09-019142, BC Vital Stats: https://search-collections.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/Genealogy.

[124] Chief Weah's widow, Rebecca Weah, was appointed temporary keeper following her husband's death. Acting Marine Agent W.L. Stamford drew on Haida political tradition in when considering applicants for the permanent post: "One of these applicants being from Willia Mathews, the succeeding Chief to the late Henry Weah former Chief, who has at various times assisted the former lightkeeper in his duties and as according to Indian custom the new chief usually takes over the duties of the former chief, Mr. Mathews would appear the natural successor of the Range lights." Chief Matthews encouraged the Department of Marine to maintain Rebecca Weah's appointment, but requested it pass to him should other arrangement be required, writing "I looked after it many times for the late Mr. Weah. he [sic] used to make me understand if he should resign or stop looking after the light I would take his place." Canadian government priorities ultimately trumped these considerations. The position went to Albert Edwards, a Haida fisherman, like Matthews, but also a veteran of the First World War. William Matthews to Department of Marine (copy), 26 Aug 1932; W.L. Stamford to the Deputy Minister of Marine, 14 Sep 1932, and 14 Jun 1933, "Masset, Queen Charlotte Island - Lighthouse keeper," Subject File Classification System, RG42-C-1, vol. 531, file 22403-4K, Department of Marine (hereafter cited as RG 42), LAC.

and his elite Kaigani Haida wife, Matilda – kept the light at Fiddle Reef, near Victoria (1905-1925).[125] Many more lightkeepers must have followed George Gerrish's example in partnering with local Indigenous women.[126]

On the one hand, the establishment of lighthouses at Tatoosh Island and Cape Beale tell two different stories about colonial efforts to provide aids to navigation on a treacherous coast. For a combination of reasons, Makahs frustrated early efforts to establish a lighthouse in their midst. There is little evidence of such disruptions at Chi·mataqsaɬ, which, for all its importance to Huu-ay-aht, was farther removed from their major village and cultivation sites. Confrontations at Cape Beale arose more from passing irritants – a missing goat, uncovered legs, or rotting whale carcass – than sustained resistance. Ultimately, however, Makahs and Huu-ay-ahts pursued a path of strategic entanglement, leveraging dependency on dugout canoes and boat-handling skills to procure a modest material advantage from these latest colonial intrusions. But there is likely more to these intercultural exchanges, especially when viewed in light of those described in previous chapters. Like Tom aboard the *William & Ann* or Rupert Jim aboard the *Hecate*, the Makahs and Huu-ay-ahts who provisioned lighthouses deployed their knowledge to demonstrate continued control over marine and coastal spaces. Different histories and geographies shaped initial responses, but encroached upon by gunboats and government agents, both groups adopted new means to express their enduring authority.

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The appearance of lighthouses on the Juan de Fuca Strait was a portent of changes to come. James Swan correctly characterized Tatoosh Island as the "star of empire," for it was by virtue of this and other lighthouses that the Pacific Northwest was absorbed into the imperial and commercial

[125] Kirk, 'Tracing the Fortunes of Five Founding Families', 178.
[126] Several Indigenous lightkeeping wives are mentioned in existing popular histories. Their number could be quantified with substantial genealogical research. Similar work undertaken in the Upper Great Lakes has recorded numerous Indigenous wives partnered to European and mixed-ancestry keepers on the Canadian shores of lakes Huron and Superior. Donald Graham, *Lights of the Inside Passage: A History of British Columbia's Lighthouses and Their Keepers* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 1986), 72, 82, 191; Jesse Robertson, 'Tracing Indigenous Families and Identity in Canada's Inland Lighthouse Service, 1855-1920' (Presentation, Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting, Vancouver, 4 June 2019).

lifeblood of encroaching settler states. By virtue of their overlapping geographies, US and Canadian lightstations were often the locus of the earliest sustained encounters between Indigenous communities and the state. The nearest Indian agent was based in Olympia when Tatoosh Island was lit in 1858; he readily conceded his inability to influence the Makahs at such remove.[127] The situation in was similar in British Columbia when Cape Beale was illuminated in 1874, with two Indian Commissioners for the entire province, both resident in Victoria.[128] In their isolation, keepers imposed norms regarding property, clothing, wages, and land use that were unfamiliar and, in some cases, resented and challenged by Indigenous peoples. The precarity of their presence on Indigenous shores meant that officials in other state departments were quickly drawn in. Tensions at Tatoosh Island prompted intervention from the Indian agent, a revenue cutter, and a heavily armed lighthouse tender in the summer of 1858. Marine Agent Cooper threatened to inform the Indian Commissioner when Huu-ay-ahts demanded better pay for their labour in 1874. Perceived theft, insolence, and defiance led to calls for an Indian agent at Barclay Sound in 1880. It so happened that plans to establish an agency system in British Columbia were underway, and an Indian agent was duly appointed to Alberni the following year.[129]

Lightkeepers continued to serve as the state's "eyes and ears" in the absence of other officials. In 1891, a Vancouver paper reported that Indigenous people had repeatedly cut the telegraph wires to Cape Beale, under the impression that communication to and from the station was interfering with their ability to freely trade and consume alcohol.[130] Keeper William Daykin of Carmanah was especially vigilant, informing the Indian agent of "illegal" net fishing; confiscating "on behalf of Customs" a sloop and goods brought across the border from Neah Bay; seizing the Tatoosh lighthouse boat after it was salvaged by Ditidahts; and ordering the arrest of men who brought whiskey to the

[127] United States Office of Indian Affairs, 'Report of the Commissioner… for the Year 1858', 238.
[128] Canada, 'Annual Report for the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Fiscal Year Ended 1874,' 71.
[129] Canada, 'Annual Report for the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 1881,' xli.
[130] 'Hon. John Robson', *Vancouver Daily World*, 10 June 1891, 4.

Carmanah Indian Reserve. If policies enacted in far-off capitals had meaning on the western extremity of the continent, it was, to some extent, because the state had established new sentinels of surveillance in the porous Pacific Northwest borderlands.[131] Eric Tagliacozzo compares the lighthouses of Southeast Asia to Foucault's panopticon, allowing colonial states to herd and surveille local marine traffic.[132] A similar process is observable in the Pacific Northwest. Lighthouses stood watch, illuminated the darkness, and rendered visible activities that were previously unseen. Lightkeepers undertook to enforce colonial norms and could call on gunboats and Indian agents when their efforts were flouted, even as they relied on Indigenous neighbours for food and transport.

More consequently, navigational knowledge and technology beckoned the marine traffic that wove the Pacific Northwest more tightly into imperial and capitalist trade networks that spanned the globe. By 1860, the Surveyor-General of Vancouver Island could boast to "intending emigrants, merchants, or capitalists" that the facility for entering and navigating the Juan de Fuca Strait had been "greatly increased by the erection of lighthouses" on British and American shores.[133] Of course, Indigenous people had little need for assistance in entering and navigating the strait. It was enough, for their most experienced navigators, to read and take bearings off the adjacent shoreline, to feel the direction of the ocean swell, or to hear the sound of lapping waves to identify their location vis-à-vis the strait. Transpacific mariners were not so well equipped and continued to make critical errors in judgment, like mistaking Barkley Sound for the Juan de Fuca Strait, or Vancouver Island for the Olympic Peninsula. But each new light was a safeguard against such mistakes, opening the region's lands, waters, and abundant resources to commercial and imperial ambitions conceived a world away.

Armed with charts and beckoned by lighthouses, ship captains were empowered to bypass the Indigenous expertise so necessary for marine travel in earlier eras. The Juan de Fuca Strait remained an

[131] Carmanah Lighthouse logbooks, 17 May 1898, 6 Jun 1898, 29 Oct 1900, 4 Nov 1900, 7 Apr 1901, 21-22 Apr 1902, 6 May 1902.
[132] Tagliacozzo, *In Asian Waters*, 19.
[133] Pemberton, *Facts and Figures*, 1, 11.

animated and intricate Indigenous seascape, but it was increasingly possible, for the itinerant mariner not to see it in such terms. Indigenous people suffered the consequences of these changes, while also leveraging them to procure new wage labour opportunities, additional sources of material wealth, and captive markets for fish, canoes, and other goods. Settlers in this new era may have "considered Native ways irrelevant" but that doesn't mean they constructed new systems of transportation "from scratch." If lighthouses shaped perceptions of the Pacific coast, they also present vantage points from which to reconsider coastal history today. A new dimension of the coast emerges when we shift our attention from ship to shore. Indigenous knowledge and labour, mediated by new technologies of light, helped render the coastline legible, and therefore navigable, to the countless mariners who plied the coast in the late nineteenth century. Lighthouses at Ča·di·, Chi·mataqsał, and beyond owed much to Makah, Huu-ay-aht, and other Indigenous seafarers. State construction and steamer schedules conformed to Indigenous migration patterns and seasonal movements. Canoes ferried keepers, provisions, fuel, and the very fabric of lighthouses ashore. Wha-latl, Frank Parker, Whiskey Charlie, Dick Clamhouse, John Mack, and other mail carriers connected lighthouses to the outside world. These and other familiar faces taught lightkeeping families about their new surroundings and leant sustaining human contact to an otherwise lonely life. Perceptions of the coast were beginning to cleave from shore-based realities. A navigator making landfall from across the Pacific could be forgiven for regarding Native ways as irrelevant; the keepers lighting his way had no such luxury.

James Swan provided another revealing metaphor in a second article published in 1859. Following a harrowing canoe voyage through violent winds and riptides, Swan again expressed his relief upon sighting a lighthouse, this time comparing New Dungeness to the pillars of cloud and fire that ushered ancient Israelites from the wilderness of Sinai to the land of the Canaanites. The allusion suggests the arrival of a new chosen people, led from perceived ocean wilderness to promised land by

emboldening technologies of light and sound.[134] Charts, guides, and lighthouses rendered marine space amenable to outside settlement, investment, and control, transforming the coast from an unwieldy contact zone to a mundane arena of transport, industry, and leisure. But these devices could not eliminate the risk of marine accident altogether. The coast quickly reverted to a less predictable space of cultural encounter when shipwrecks interrupted mariners' newfound independence. Coming ashore with the benefit of blockhouses, construction crews, lighthouse tenders, and Indian agents was one thing. Washing ashore, we will see, was quite another.

[134] Swan's comments were originally published in the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* of 17 Jun 1859. Swan, *Almost out of the World*, 23.

Chapter 4. Washing Ashore: Shipwrecks and Salvage in the Graveyard of the Pacific, 1859-1906

Captain Samuel Hughes would later remember how his vessel "seemed to open right out and every seam to become a mouth" as it sank deeper into the Pacific Ocean. The *Edwin James*' departure began unremarkably enough, however, with a transpacific itinerary indicative of the region's absorption into the global oceanic economy. The American barque loaded 300,000 feet of lumber from the sawmill at Utsalady, Washington, anchored off the tip of Vancouver Island, and beat about the Juan de Fuca Strait for a day waiting for the winds to pick up. The ship finally reached open ocean on December 3, 1874, passing Tatoosh Island and a new lighthouse at Cape Beale, as it set its course for hungry markets in the Colony of South Australia. The first sign of trouble appeared that evening as the *Edwin James* began leaning into the wind, its steering disabled. The captain ran the pumps but found them inoperative as the vessel began taking on water and sinking lower into an increasingly turbulent ocean. Waves began to clear the deck as it settled lower into the sea, too fast for all of those on board to properly secure themselves. The captain's wife and two children were swept forever away when the deck-level cabin they sheltered in was pummeled into the sea; a Chinese cook drowned in the galley, unable to reach the deck above. The captain and remaining eight crew struggled through fallen rigging and crowded into a platform up the foremast, barely surviving on evaporated milk and preserved peas as their disabled ship drifted at the mercy of a North Pacific current.[1]

The *Edwin James* coasted for three days before reaching land – a remote stretch of Vancouver Island 100 kilometres northwest of Cape Beale – drawing close enough for the desperate sailors to abandon ship and try for land by means of a crude raft. It was at this point that a group of Hesquiahts spotted the foundering ship and hastily launched their canoes into the violent breakers offshore. Captain Hughes and his men were struck with terror as the canoes approached and, despite their

[1] 'Dreadful Marine Disaster', *Daily British Colonist*, 23 December 1874, 3.

desperate position, waved their arms and made signs for the Hesquiahts to stay back.[2] Only five years had passed since another lumber-bearing American barque, the *John Bright*, wrecked at the same place, producing sensationalist articles and a trial that cast Hesquiahts as "heartless" murderers, despite contradictory evidence and testimony that eventually came to light.[3] Such characterizations reinforced the geography of fear birthed by the *Boston* and *Tonquin* incidents decades earlier. Stranded, defenceless, their ship barely afloat, the survivors of the *Edwin James* had reason to dread the canoes as they closed in. The Hesquiahts registered their apprehension, however, and succeeded in defusing the tension by making the sign of the cross to show their altruistic intentions. Contrary to their fears, Chief Matlahaw transferred the hypothermic crew transferred into the canoes, brought them to his house, provided them with food, clothing, and, in short, "everything they had to our comfort," as Captain Hughes later reported. The mariners remained at Hesquiaht for eleven days while they regained their strength and waited for the weather to pass. Once it did, Hesquiahts ferried the men south, stopping at Ahousaht and Toquaht villages ("where we also received great kindness from the Indians") before finally securing their passage to Victoria aboard a sealing schooner.[4]

International marine travel had been considerably transformed by the final decades of the nineteenth century. Charts, sailing guides, buoys, and lighthouses rendered distant shores increasingly legible and, therefore, navigable to mariners arriving in the Pacific Northwest from San Francisco, Shanghai, Australia, and beyond. These transformations gradually dislodged the ocean as a primary site of encounter between transpacific seafarers and the Indigenous peoples in whose territorial waters they traveled. Such encounters continued, of course, but were increasingly confined to the few traders, missionaries, and government officials who made it their business to visit Indigenous communities.

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[2] Joseph van der Heyden, *Life and Letters of Father Brabant: A Flemish Missionary Hero* (Louvain, Netherlands: J. Wouters-Ickx, 1920), 57–58; August Brabant, *Vancouver Island and Its Missions, 1874-1900: Reminiscences of J.A. Brabant* (New York: Messenger of the Sacred Heart Press, 1900), 22–23.
[3] van der Heyden, *Life and Letters of Father Brabant*, 28; Gough, *Gunboat Frontier*, 125–28.
[4] Samuel R. Hughes to D. Eckstein (copy), 26 Dec 1874, Black Series, vol. 3615, file 4468, RG 10, LAC: http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=fonandcol&id=2060195&lang=eng; van der Heyden, *Life and Letters of Father Brabant*, 28.

Charts, guides, and lighthouses created a veil between Indigenous and imperial mariners, making it ever easier to see the coast of Vancouver Island and the Olympic Peninsula as something other than Indigenous land and water. But the veil was thin and subject to tears. This chapter considers shipwrecks as pivotal sites of intercultural encounter in the final decades of the nineteenth century, events that collapsed in moments the gap that separated Indigenous and imperial seafarers.

It may seem counterintuitive that record numbers of ships were lost on Vancouver Island's west coast in the final two decades of the nineteenth century, well after the region was charted and lit.[5] The apparent contradiction can be explained by the accelerated rates of shipping to and from the region. A burgeoning population; industrial extraction of fish, logs, and minerals; and the arrival of transcontinental railways transformed regional ports into global shipping hubs. The mariners who managed this traffic had varying degrees of familiarity with the coast and its navigational infrastructure. Captains continued to mistake Barkley Sound for the Juan de Fuca Strait, for example, even after capes Beale and Flattery were lit. Nor did charts and aids entirely negate the danger posed by rough seas or professional negligence. Inevitably, then, as marine traffic grew, so did the risk and incident of marine disaster. The ongoing occurrence of marine disaster did not reflect the typical experience of the ocean-going traveler so much as the frequency with which these vessels appeared. This was cold comfort to the seagoing public and mariners whose lives and livelihoods depend on safe navigations. By the 1890s, mariners had coined a bitter new moniker for the treacherous region between the Columbia River and Vancouver Island. The term circulated to newspaper readers by 1896, when Victoria's *Daily Colonist* reported the loss of the lumber schooner *Puritan* on the west coast of Vancouver Island as still "another monument in the 'Graveyard of the Pacific.'"[6] Ironically, no lives were lost in that incident. In the absence of a Coast Guard, Daniel Sitkeelahchy, a young Ditidaht man

[5] Jim Gibbs, *Sentinels of the North Pacific: The Story of Pacific Coast Lighthouses and Lightships* (Portland, OR: Binfords & Mort, 1955), 188–89.
[6] Local navigators were using the term by the 1890s. 'No Lives Were Lost', *Daily Colonist*, 17 November 1896, 6.

from the village of Wyah, swam to the rock nearest the vessel and spent six hours wading in and out of the frigid breakers amidst snow and rain, attempting to throw a 30-fathom fishing line to the crew still stranded on their collapsing schooner until, at last, the crew succeeded in grasping the line and using it to reach shore. Captain C.H. Atwood praised Sitkeelahchy's bravery, acknowledging that "the whole crew would have gone down" had he not risked his life.[7] The US and Canada claimed the coast, but Atwood was among countless mariners who owed their lives to Indigenous people who assumed responsibility for this so-called graveyard.

Well-publicized marine disasters like the *Puritan* exposed ambiguities and competing claims to sovereignty over coastal space. Shipwrecks were devastating to persons and property aboard wrecked vessels but also presented unique challenges and opportunities to coastal Indigenous and settler societies. The newspaper reporting that followed shipwrecks frequently expressed alarm at the "theft," "looting," and "murder" that opportunistic Indigenous people visited upon misfortunate seafarers and their cargo. Other times, reporters described Indigenous people going to extreme lengths to rescue passengers and notify lightkeepers or distant government officials of accidents occurring in their territories. While these might appear to be contrary impulses, this chapter shows how supposed theft, murder, and rescue can be helpfully reinterpreted in light of Indigenous peoples' culturally specific notions of marine tenure.

Like other Nuu-chah-nulth titleholders, Chief Matlahaw assumed authority over objects and people cast upon his shores. In the early colonial period, Indigenous leaders regularly held shipwrecked mariners as slaves or sold them to fur traders and government agents willing to purchase their freedom. These customs shifted in the late nineteenth century, as Indigenous titleholders took advantage of US and Canadian lifesaving rewards and adapted them to local practices that affirmed their authority over coastal territory. The practice of distributing gifts and distinctions to benevolent

[7] Harry Guillod to A.W. Vowell, 9 Jan 1897; William Stone to Vowell, 15 Jan 1897; Statement of Tsahwossep, Nitinat Indian of the Village of Wyah (copy), 16 Mar 1897; Statement of Daniel Sitkeelahchy of the Village of Wyah (copy), 25 Mar 1897, Black Series, vol. 3967, file 152100, RG 10, LAC.

rescuers resonated among coastal Indigenous cultures with their own practices of ritual gift exchange. Indigenous leaders demonstrated material largesse and reinforced elite status by furnishing castaways with blankets and provisions, occasionally competing with one another in these public performances. The state rewards that followed such benevolence, and the heroic rescues that preceded them, became the occasion for ritual wealth redistribution, feasts, speeches, and potlatches that buoyed Indigenous political authority in the Pacific Northwest.

The United States and Canada, for their part, relied on Indigenous communities in the absence of an organized coast guard or lifesaving stations to drag mariners from the surf, furnish them food and shelter, and transport them to the nearest White settlement. Indian agents dispersed lifesaving awards to encourage acts of benevolence and recognized their distribution as conforming to Indigenous protocols. Some officials participated in potlatches, feasts, and ceremonies in their efforts to foster a de facto Indigenous coast guard on the continent's coastal fringe. These exchanges represent an important, if momentary, instance in which imperial and Indigenous practices converged with mutual advantage. But colonial governments' uneven capacity to prevent and independently respond to highly publicized marine catastrophes could be an embarrassing reminder of fissures in their "control" of marine space. Successive administrations took steps to reduce the number of marine accidents and ensure a more rapid state response when they inevitably occurred. Mounting public outcry finally cajoled the US Life Saving Service into establishing stations at Shoalwater Bay, Cape Disappointment, and Neah Bay in 1877 and 1878. Canada's Department of Marine and Fisheries (DMF) introduced relief shelters for wrecked mariners in the 1890s, and lifesaving stations and the Dominion Lifesaving Trail the following decade. But these developments, and a host of unrealized proposals, continued to depend on prior Indigenous geographies. Lifesaving stations at Shoalwater and Neah bays relied on volunteer Indigenous crews to launch boats in the event of disaster. DMF's earliest proposals for a "primitive life saving service" depended on Indigenous pilots accustomed to navigating rough waters in dugout

canoes. The presence or absence of Indigenous settlements was a primary factor determining whether, where, and when lifesaving services were established on either side of the international border.

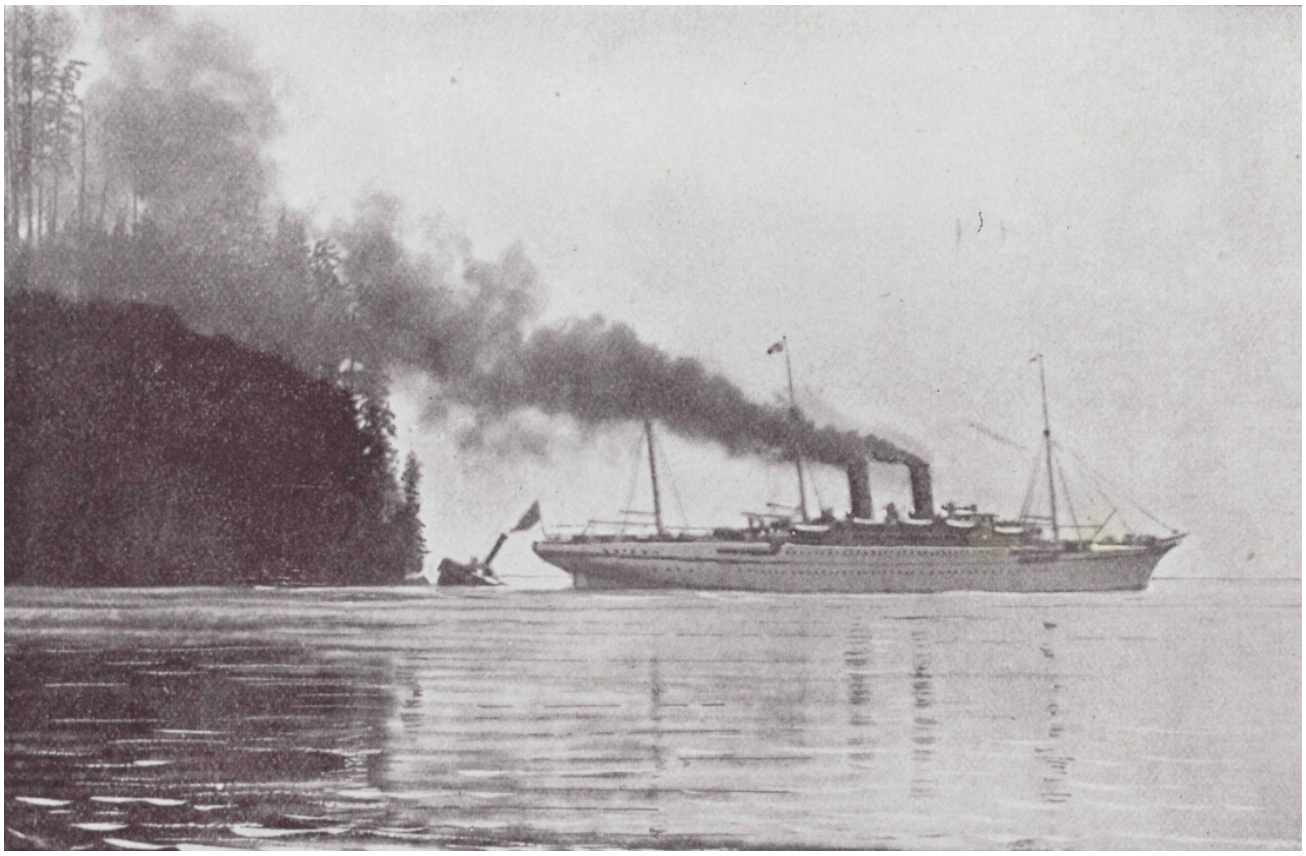
By the turn of the century, coastal spaces had transformed from an unpredictable space of cultural encounter to a more mundane arena of transport, industry, and leisure – the geography of fear replaced by confident banality. But the coast quickly reverted to a less predictable arena when shipwrecks washed sailors ashore and Indigenous mariners were called to their aid. This chapter follows ships, cargo, and sailors ashore to expose the fragility of maritime colonialism and the persistence with which Indigenous communities managed coastal environments.

"Legitimate Spoil": Indigenous Marine Tenure and Salvage Practices

The practice of salvaging wrecked ships and their cargo has probably been a fixture of maritime life anywhere where marine accidents commonly occurred. It certainly was on the coasts of Britain, where the medieval Crown reserved the right to salvage flotsam, jetsam, derelict vessels, and "royal fish" (including whales). The right to salvage in the early medieval period occasionally included the right to slave people, as Wilfred, Bishop of York, had the misfortune to discover after surviving a wreck on the Sussex coast in 666 CE. Such practices occurred in other areas of the world into the nineteenth century, notably on the coasts of North Africa.[8] Cornish "wreckers" came from all levels of society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from the gentry to the common labourer and even clergy.[9] Settlers were equally apt to assume this prerogative in the Pacific Northwest. A "curious throng" of Vancouverites descended on the *Beaver* when the former HBC steamer finally broke apart in 1892 (Figure 16), four years after it was irreversibly stranded at the entrance to Burrard Inlet, going so far as to blast dynamite beneath the ship in a clumsy effort to retrieve its storied and pleasingly variegated woodwork.[10] Pattie and Frances Cox, daughters of the lightkeeper at Cape Beale, visited

[8] Cathryn J. Pearce, *Cornish Wrecking, 1700-1860: Reality and Popular Myth* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2010), 43–44.
[9] Pearce, 84–89.
[10] The City of Vancouver purchased thee *Beaver*'s mast for use as a flagpole and memorial at the entrance of recently opened Stanley Park. McCain, *History of the SS. 'Beaver'*, 30–32, 61.

Figure 16. The SS *Beaver* and *Empress of China* at Brockton Point, c. 1888-92



Two eras of steam dovetailed at the entrance to Vancouver's Burrard Inlet at the turn of the century. The SS Beaver, *the first steamship in the Pacific Ocean, wrecked at Brockton Point in 1888. The ship collapsed four years later after wake from a passing steamer caused its boiler to work lose and crash through the hull. Vancouverites quickly converged to pry mementoes from the storied steamer, seen here in the wake of another passing ship, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's* Empress of China. *McCain, p 96. BC Historical Books, UBC Library Open Collections.*

the wreck of the *Michigan* in 1893 and were pleased to retrieve rolls of carpet and a keg of honey – apparently with the approval of Huu-ay-aht mail carrier John Mack and his wife, who took the children to see the wreck after the surviving crew had left to find help.[11]

Confronted with shipwrecked mariners, Indigenous first responders drew on longstanding laws, cultural protocols, and notions of sovereignty that encompassed not just land, but marine, coastal, and intertidal environments. The HMS *Virago*'s officers discovered this when their ship was beached for repairs at Fort Simpson in 1853. Chief Legake boarded the grounded ship inquiring "how much would

[11] Pattie and Frances were taken to the site of the wreck by Huu-ay-aht mail carrier John Mack and his wife. Pattie Haslam interview. 'The City', *Daily Colonist*, 22 June 1893, 5; Bernice McDonough, 'Childhood on a Rock', *Vancouver Sun*, 29 August 1953.

be paid him for using his beach," wrote Paymaster William Hills, "but went away quite satisfied on being told that if ever his big canoes went to King George country [England] he would be able to haul them up where he liked without paying for it."[12] The material terms of the trade were of little advantage to the chief, but they affirmed his standing as local sovereign and equal to the British monarch. Similar proprietorial rights extended to anything that washed up on Indigenous beaches. Local chiefs and titleholders generally held these salvage rights on behalf of their community. Nuu-chah-nulth groups such as the Huu-ay-aht were headed by *hawiih* (hereditary chiefs) who held specified privileges throughout the *hahuulthi*, including the right to salvage everything from whales and canoes to runaway slaves and European vessels. Anyone else using these resources was required to pay a tribute, frequently used to host a feast for the *hawilth*'s (singular) people.[13] The boundaries separating these ancestral territories were carefully distinguished in order to prevent conflict, as Indian Commissioner Israel Powell observed during an 1874 tour of Vancouver Island's west coast:

> The Ahts [Nuu-chah-nulth] have strict customs in regards to their exclusive rights to every thing [sic] their country produces. The limits of tribal properties, or tribal claims to land are clearly defined. Anything for instance cast up by the Sea being considered at once the property of the tribe claiming the locality. Frequent and bloody disputes in times gone by have occurred between different Tribes for this reason, and have led to the establishment of distinct boundary posts by which the lines of each little locality are distinctly defined and respected by neighbouring Tribes.[14]

George Blenkinsop, despatched to Barclay Sound in advance of Powell's visit, reported a remarkable marker on the Alberni Canal that distinguished Tseshaht and Uchucklesaht territories by means of two immense, stacked boulders, the topmost of which was estimated to weigh upwards of ten tons. Men, women, and children from four tribes gathered to witness the monument's erection, instructed by Elders to "impress the event on their memory in order that they might be able to hand it down to

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[12] Hills journal, 22 Jun to 8 Jul 1853.
[13] E. Richard Atleo, *Tsawalk: A Nuu-Chah-Nulth Worldview* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 80–82; Arima and Hoover, *Whaling People*, 105–7; Philip Drucker, *The Northern and Central Nootkan Tribes*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 144 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1951), 254. See also Brabant, *Mission to Nootka*, 73.
[14] Canada, Parliament, 'Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ended 30th June, 1874', in *Sessional Papers for the Second Session of the Third Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1875*, vol. 7, paper 9 (Ottawa: MacLean, Rogers & Co., 1875), 46.

future generations." One location, Lyall Point, remained disputed between Tseshahts and Toquahts at the time of Blenkinsop's visit, each side claiming rights via an athletics contest that took place about a century prior.[15] The importance attributed to these rights, and their implications for shipwrecked sailors, compelled Commissioner Powell to stop "at each point along the Coast" distributing gifts and beseeching *Hawiih* to offer hospitality and shelter to those cast upon their shores.[16] Government officials such as Powell clearly understood the significance of Indigenous salvage rights, occasionally choosing to work within this legal framework to ensure the security of mariners plying the coast.

The Makahs maintained a similar suite of drift rights.[17] The authority of Makah titleholders "is respected relative to anything cast ashore by the tide," James Swan observed in 1868, "whether drift lumber, dead whales, or wrecks." Makah chiefs ensured the cooperation of their followers by distributing salvaged goods and offering compensation to those who first discovered them ashore. Like Powell, Swan observed cooperation among coastal villages and neighbouring tribes that prevented disputes over "property acquired by flotsam." Such rights were inheritable and generally transferred within kinship groups. For example, Swan understood one Chief Deeaht as previously owning all the land around Neah Bay. After his death, Deaht's rights were added to those of his brother, Obiee, which extended east to the Hoko River. Swan reported that Obiee's descendants still claimed "this right of seignorage."[18] These rights were maintained and insisted on well into the reservation era. James McCurdy, whose father constructed the lifesaving station at Neah Bay in 1877, recalled being reprimanded as a child when he and his friends were beachcombing in the area in the aftermath of a

[15] Both groups appeared to accept the agent's suggestion that it be used for a lighthouse, such as the one recently erected at Cape Beale, perhaps anticipating its utility as a lasting boundary marker. George Blenkinsop, "Reports on the West Coast of Vancouver Island and of Barclay Sound," 23 Sep 1874, p. 26-27, Black Series, vol. 3614, file 4105, RG 10, LAC.
[16] Canada, Parliament, 'Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for 1874', 50–53.
[17] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 25; Charlotte Cote, *Spirits of Our Whaling Ancestors Revitalizing Makah and Nuu-Chah-Nulth Traditions*, First edition., A Capell Family Book (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 27.
[18] Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 54–55.

wreck. A passing Makah seized the gathered items, informing them that everything that came ashore on a reservation belonged to the Makahs.[19]

The condition of a vessel was a primary consideration in determining possession. Captain James Prevost (RN), investigating the wreck of the *Swiss Boy* in 1859, reported that Huu-ay-aht s "at once considered her their property" upon seeing the brig's disabled state.[20] Circumnavigating Vancouver Island by yacht the following year, Charles Barrett-Lennard observed that nations like the Mowachahts and Tla-o-qui-ahts were "generally willing to lend all the assistance in their power to a vessel in distress, so long as she holds to her anchors," but regarded the same as "legitimate spoil" from the moment a vessel went on shore.[21] Similar rights appear to have been a feature of coastal Indigenous cultures beyond the Juan de Fuca Strait. The Clatsops took possession of twenty-one bales of goods when the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) brig *William & Ann* wrecked on the Columbia Bar in 1829, initially consenting to return the goods to the HBC but rescinding the offer and opening fire when traders insisted on landing ashore without their permission (see Chapter 2). Edenshaw was among those who tried to gain possession of the HBC schooner *Vancouver* in 1834 when it was stranded and seemed poised to disintegrate into the breakers at Rose Point, Haida Gwaii, the territory of his uncle. A Haida chief connected with the incident later defended their actions on the basis that the waves were responsible for the schooner's loss. "This appears to be their way of reasoning on the subject," wrote the inquiring trader.[22] Edenshaw, then chief, was also present when Haidas seized the *Susan Sturges* near Masset in 1853. Chief Scowell of Chatsina was visiting at the time and protested when he

[19] McCurdy, *Indian Days at Neah Bay*, 116.
[20] James Prevost, Letter of Proceedings, 11 Mar 1859, Colonial Correspondence, file GR-1372.99.1218, BCA.
[21] Barrett-Lennard, *Travels in British Columbia*, 118.
[22] Edenshaw bore an enduring grudge against the ship's master for lighting the magazine prior to abandoning ship, risking the lives of the Haida salvagers and destroying what they probably considered to be their lawful property. Still, salvagers were able to acquire blunderbusses and sufficient goods to purchase slaves and other property. John Work, *The Journal of John Work, January to October, 1835*, ed. Henry Drummond Dee, Archives of British Columbia Memoir 10 (Victoria: C.F. Banfield, 1945), 22, 40, 49, https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcbooks/items/1.0406654?o=0; Collison, *In the Wake of the War Canoe*, 112.

found the Massets removing valuables from the seaworthy ship, objecting that "it was not good for them to take her when she was not a wreck."[23] Such episodes show that salvaging was not carried out indiscriminately but according to commonly held protocols, even if these were not strictly followed in every case.

Whether retrieved from shore or a foundering ship, salvaged items were quickly repurposed to serve the requirements of coastal communities (Figure 17). Historic reports describe all manner of materials that bore trace of some ill-fated voyage, from food and basic tools to luxury goods, furniture,

Figure 17. A salvaged boiler at Taholah, Washington, c. 1885

The Quinaults of Taholah, Washington, moved an old boiler to their village after it washed ashore in the wake of a wreck. It might have been used to cook food or store water. Sarah Willoughby, "Quinault village of Taholah, Washington, probably 1885," PH Coll 568.5, University of Washington Digital Collections.

[23] Anonymous, 'Account of the Plunder of the "Susan Sturgis," American Schooner, Burnt at Queen Charlotte Islands', *Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle*, April 1854, 211.

and even architecture. The *Southerner* afforded a "rich harvest" after it wrecked south of Cape Flattery in 1854, providing iron, copper, and engineer's tools that were widely used and traded among nearby tribes. Quileutes, for example, whose chief Howelatl was "of great service" to the steamer's passengers and crew, were later found selling forks and spoons bearing the imprint of the company that operated the ship.[24] In the winter of 1863-64, Makahs salvaged butter kegs, vegetable crates, boxes of apples, and even sacks of flour, finding their contents quite usable beyond the spoiled, cakey exterior.[25] Ditidahts retrieved a large iron buoy, presumed to have drifted unmoored from the Columbia River, splitting it in two to store water in the 1880s, while Pacheedaht Chief Queesto (Charles Jones) recalled using a massive steel buoy to cook an elk and thirty-one harbour seals before their last potlatch in the early 1900s.[26] Indigenous houses also bore the imprint of past wrecks. Makah lodges were filled with fittings and furnishings from wrecked ships when James McCurdy visited Neah Bay in the late 1870s.[27] Victoria's *Daily Colonist* described Ditidaht houses as "fitted up quite grandly with fine carpets and furniture" retrieved from the wreck of the *Michigan* in 1893. Other Ditidahts were seen in possession of "quantities of cigars" and whiskey barrels from the same source.[28] DMF officials noted an old ship's iron work and the top-gallant yard of "some long shipwrecked vessel" serving as a house beam when they inspected the Huu-ay-aht village Kiixʔin the previous year.[29] Other items appear to have been recovered for the sake of novelty alone: a ship's wheel brought to a fishing village in Nootka Sound, for example, or the "ship's *klootchman*" (figurehead) retrieved near Ediz Hook following a great storm.[30] Indigenous peoples incorporated a range of salvaged materials for a wide range of practical and ceremonial purposes. Mariners' misfortune was, by right, their gain.

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[24] 'Wreckage on the Coast', *Daily Colonist*, 8 August 1896, 5; Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 34–35; Swan, *Almost out of the World*, 40–41.
[25] McCurdy, *Indian Days at Neah Bay*, 115.
[26] 'From the West Coast', *Daily British Colonist*, 28 January 1883, 3; Jones, *Queesto*, 82.
[27] McCurdy, *Indian Days at Neah Bay*, 51.
[28] 'The City', 5; McDonough, 'Childhood on a Rock'.
[29] 'The Douglas' Cruise', *Victoria Daily Times*, 23 July 1892, 4.
[30] Pemberton, *Facts and Figures*, 145; Leighton, *Life at Puget Sound*, 110–11.

One imagines such mariners were even more distraught to discover they, too, were considered the property of the titleholders on whose beaches they surfaced. Possessory rights to seaborne objects also applied to any survivors washing ashore amidst the debris. These were often taken as slaves but could procure their freedom for a price.[31] The HBC participated in this ransom economy as early as the winter of 1833 when the damaged Japanese junk *Hojun-maru* came within sight Cape Flattery after three months adrift. Makahs paddle out to the ship, seize the vessel and its goods, and enslaved a man and two teenage boys who had managed to survive on rice and rainwater. The HBC learned of the incident from Chinooks at Fort Vancouver and redeemed the captive sailors and a portion of the junk's porcelain cargo by purchasing them from Makah Chief George.[32] Haidas captured the crew of the sloop *Georgiana* after a fierce storm drove it onto the east coast of Haida Gwaii in November 1851. They seized the wreck, stripped it of its goods, and set it ablaze in order to secure its iron bolts. Some debate seems to have arisen regarding the fate of the crew, but a chief chose to board the sailors until their government ransomed them. On leaning of the incident, the US Collector of Customs at Olympia rounded a company of soldiers and chartered a schooner to retrieve the stranded men. The chief was paid nine blankets, one shirt, a bolt of muslin, and two pounds of tobacco for each of the twenty-seven sailors – a sizable ransom, though perhaps less than the chief would have demanded in the absence of a well-armed vessel.[33] A similar sequence occurred when the *Susan Sturges* was captured the following September. The Haida, led by Chief Weah, stripped the crew of their clothes, seized a strongbox containing $1500 of gold and silver, and set the schooner aflame. Chief Edenshaw claimed that the mariners were about to be shot when he persuaded Weah to instead seek payment from the HBC. This

[31] Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 54–55.
[32] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 103–4; Grant Keddie, 'Japanese Shipwrecks in British Columbia - Myths and Facts: The Question of Cultural Exchanges with the Northwest Coast of America', *The Midden* 49, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 22. Other porcelain objects were retained by Indigenous salvagers. One HBC trader commented on the abundance of "beautiful vases & flowerpots [...] applied to uses for which they were never intended" by their Indigenous salvagers. Glazebrook, *Hargrave Correspondence*, 184.
[33] "Queen Charlotte Island Expedition by Charles E. Weed," Hubert Howe Bancroft fonds, MG29-C15, vol. 3, file C-29, LAC; Thomas Boys to John Otway O'Conner Cuffe, 11 Oct 1852, CO 305:3, no. 9263, 495, *Colonial Despatches*: https://bcgenesis.uvic.ca/V526B05.html.

was later arranged, the Haidas receiving seventeen blankets, eight shirts, gun powder, tobacco and cotton for bringing the captain and mate to Fort Simpson, and a further forty blankets when they arrived with the remaining four crew the next month, with Edenshaw reportedly sharing "in the plunder."[34] Such exchanges can be variously understood. Enslaved seafarers and colonial officials may have justly regarded these purchases as "plunder" or opportunistic ransoms. The titleholders involved may have considered these gifts as due recognition of their drift rights. Such interpretations need not be exclusive. The survivors of the *Hojun-maru*, *Georgiana*, and *Susan Sturges* owed their freedom to the interpretive slippage between ostensible opposites.[35]

Guns, Germs, and Too Much Steel? Shifting Salvage Practices

Colonial officials fretted about Indigenous people's treatment of wrecked sailors and their cargo and adopted a range of tactics to ensure the security of salvaged goods and seafarers. Punitive reprisals began with the Hudson's Bay Company's occupation of the Columbia River and spread north apace with their efforts to dominate the regional trade economy. Failing to secure an agreement for the return of the *William & Ann*'s cargo in 1829 (the Clatsop conceded to return only an old broom) the HBC deployed the *Cadboro* to fire on the Clatsop village while a shore party ransacked property and set lodges on fire. The devastating attack "was in all respects salutary," according to one fur trader, producing "the submission of the Indians, namely, and their subsequent good conduct."[36] The HBC reported no such difficulty retrieving the *Isabella*'s cargo after the brig was lost at the same location on its maiden voyage the following year.[37] But such conflagrations sometimes obscure the Indigenous

[34] The schooner's master, Matthew Rooney, testified to Edenshaw's role in securing their freedom. Hudson's Bay Company traders and Haida oral tradition contest that Edenshaw colluded with Weah to arrange the attack in the first place. Gough, 'New Light on Haida Chiefship', 134–36; Sparrow, 'Correcting the Record', 218–19; Helen Meilleur, *A Pour of Rain Stories from a West Coast Fort* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2001), 215–16.
[35] It is testament to his long and valuable service that Captain William Henry McNeill was the HBC officer who helped ransom survivors of the *Hojun-maru* in 1834, the *Georgiana* in 1851, and the *Susan Sturges* in 1852. McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:128; Meilleur, *A Pour of Rain Stories*, 212–15.
[36] Alexander C. Anderson, "History of the Northwest Coast," Hubert Howe Bancroft fonds, MG29-C15, vol. 2, file C-2, LAC; McLoughlin, *Letters of John McLoughlin*, 1941, 1:71–73.
[37] McLoughlin, 1:83–85.

power and diplomacy at work beneath the fray. The company dispatched the *Cadboro* again when Makahs salvaged the wrecked brigantine *Una* at Neah Bay in 1851, producing what Governor James Douglas described as the "desired effect of alarming the natives who made every concession & reparation in their power."[38] Joshua Reid, however, observes that the outcomes hewed closely to local protocols of peace brokering. A Makah chief, probably Yelak'ub, claimed that he had already resolved the matter by executing the guilty parties (probably stand-in slaves, if true) and paid the HBC for the loss of property as if making peace with another chief. For all their firepower, the HBC was reluctant to pursue the matter further and largely accepted Yelak'ub's accounting as sufficient. The *Cadboro* left Neah Bay without incident.[39]

The loss of the *Swiss Boy* suggests Indigenous salvagers continued to flout imperial sanction as responsibility for military control passed from the HBC to the Royal Navy. The brig left Puget Sound on January 29, 1859, in a dilapidated state, overladen and straining under the weight of squared timber intended for San Francisco's booming market. It had just passed the Cape Flattery Lighthouse when water burst through what was probably a rotting hull. All hands were called to the pump, to little avail. By morning, water had filled the lower hold to within a foot of the deck beams, forcing Captain David Weldon to seek refuge off a small island in Barkley Sound. It didn't take long for local Tseshahts and Huu-ay-ahts to see and board the waterlogged ship. A high-ranking Huu-ay-aht known as George asserted his right to seize the decrepit *Swiss Boy*, along with its crew and effects. Armed Huu-ay-ahts boarded the ship, stripping it of boxes, paint, a ladder, old canvas and rigging, and other modest materials. Captain Weldon and his men attempted to escape in the ship's yawl boat but were easily apprehended on shore. The Huu-ay-ahts, disappointed to find so little of value, held a council to determine their fate. Here the seamen were fortunate to find an advocate in Makah Chief Wha-latl, a pilot and interpreter who was in Ucluelet when he saw the brig limp into Barkley Sound. Wha-latl

[38] James Douglas to Lord Earl Grey (copy), 11 Feb 1852, GR-1309, box 1, file 2, BCA.
[39] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 88–90, 109–10.

procured provisions for the captives and arranged to ransom them for 100 blankets. Content with the arrangement, the Huu-ay-ahts released the crew, conveying Captain Weldon and four crew members some five miles by canoe before they met with a trading schooner that agreed to transport the men to Victoria.[40]

Arriving in Victoria on February 15, Captain Weldon petitioned Governor Douglas for redress. The Governor proposed to send him aboard the HMS *Satellite* to repossess the ship and cargo, an offer that Weldon declined on account of the *Swiss Boy*'s damaged state. Weldon found a more sympathetic audience in the editors of the *British Colonist* newspaper, which disparaged the incident as piracy and called for the navy to "inflict summary punishment" on the Huu-ay-ahts to dissuade them from taking similar actions in the future.[41] The same day, Governor Douglas despatched the HMS *Satellite* to investigate the incident, and, if necessary, bring those responsible to trial.[42] The *Satellite*, a two-hundred foot screw corvette armed with twenty-one guns, left Esquimalt on February 24 and proceeded directly to Neah Bay, where Wha-latl agreed to accompany the ship as pilot and interpreter. Several Huu-ay-aht canoes assembled around the corvette the next day when it anchored in Barkley Sound, "unconscious of the object of our visit," according to Prevost, "and apparently ignorant of having committed any crime." Having behaved in accordance with Nuu-chah-nulth law, the Huu-ay-ahts saw no reason to hide their actions, going so far as to present the *Swiss Boy*'s rope blocks and other items for trade. Further trading took place on February 26, during which Wha-latl identified George

[40] The four remaining seamen traveled alongside the canoe in the *Swiss Boy*'s yawl boat, accompanying their fellow crew as far as their encounter with the schooner, before continuing alone across the strait to Neah Bay. James Prevost, Letter of Proceedings (copy), 11 Mar 1859; "Deposition of Swale, Indian Interpreter of Neah Bay, near Cape Flattery" (copy), 26 Feb 1859; "Deposition of the Ohiaht Indian [Sweesmen?], commonly known as George" (copy), 24 Feb 1859; M.S.S. Peele et al., Inspection report, 28 Feb 1859, Colonial Correspondence, file GR-1372.99.1218, BCA; David K. Waldon, 'Capture and Destruction of the Brig Swiss Boy', *Pioneer and Democrat*, 28 February 1859.
[41] Waldon; 'Piracy by Indians', *British Colonist*, 19 February 1859, https://archive.org/details/dailycolonist18590219uvic/page/n2/.
[42] 'Piracy by Indians'; Waldon, 'Capture and Destruction of the Brig Swiss Boy'; Robert Dennis (Emchayiik) and Kevin Neary, 'Huu-Ay-Aht t'ayii Ḥawiɬ ƛ̓iishin's Land Transaction with Government Agent William Banfield in 1859', in *To Share, Not Surrender: Indigenous and Settler Visions of Treaty Making in the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, ed. Peter Cook et al. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021), 173.

as a ringleader of the Huu-ay-aht who took possession of the brig. Captain Prevost seized George, sent word to Huu-ay-aht Chief ƛiishin that the "stolen property" was to be assembled in his lodge, and set about visiting Dodger Cove and villages of the Tseshaht, Toquaht, Ucluelet, Uchucklesaht, and Hupačasath peoples, hoping "the presence of a ship like the 'Satellite' in their hitherto unfrequented waters [...] would strike such terror upon their ignorant minds as would effectually prevent a recurrence of the 'Swiss Boys" fate." The *Satellite* returned to Huu-ay-aht territory on March 10, and weighed anchor for Victoria the following day.[43]

Captain Prevost's report conceals the extent to which Indigenous leaders controlled the entire sequence of events. Huu-ay-aht seized the ship in accordance with Nuu-chah-nulth law, and deflected colonial interference by returning goods whose value was sufficiently paltry as to cause more disappointment than elation when they were first salvaged. Chief George was taken to Victoria for trial but released several weeks later for want of a witness.[44] Captain Weldon failed to secure redress, leaving the *Swiss Boy* to rot on the beach where the Huu-ay-aht could avail themselves of timber cargo as needed.[45] (Perhaps this was the source of the aforementioned iron work and gallant yard that DMF officials found at Kiixʔin three decades later.) Wha-latl arranged the crew's release, and mediated Captain Prevost's subsequent investigation and interactions with various Nuu-chah-nulth peoples in Barkley Sound. Upon learning of his efforts, Washington Indian agent Michael Simmons ordered the local agent to award him "a considerable present in blankets." News of the exchange spread through Washington Territory, inspiring similar behaviour when the bark *Palestine* wrecked south of Cape Flattery later that year. Makahs and Quileutes both went to its assistance, taking "little or nothing," and helping the crew reach assistance in Neah Bay. Such emulation suggests Wha-latl's involvement (and subsequent reward) only increased his esteem among Indigenous peoples throughout the region.

[43] James Prevost, Letter of Proceedings, 11 Mar 1859, Colonial Correspondence, GR-1372.99.1218, BCA.
[44] 'Later from the North', *Sacramento Daily Union*, 19 April 1859, 1.
[45] Gowlland journal, 18 May 1861; W Banfield, 'Letter from Barclay Sound', *British Colonist*, 30 May 1861, 1.

It certainly did so among White settlers who praised his intelligence, kindness, and honesty, or issued certificates to promote his services as a pilot.[46] The HMS *Satellite*'s twenty-one guns surely left an impression, but the Indigenous peoples it encountered can hardly said to have been overawed by its circuit of Neah Bay and Barkley Sound.

Still, the relative balance between Indigenous and imperial seapower continued to shift as the United States and Britain increased their Pacific fleets, equipped more vessels with steam engines, and charted inshore waters. The presence of heavily-armed survey ships in every corner of the region at least demonstrated the expanding reach of imperial weapons. Second Master John Thomas Gowlland (RN) alluded to the *Swiss Boy* while surveying Barkley Sound in 1861, observing that Huu-ay-aht who had "dreadfully maltreated" castaway crews behaved "civil enough to us being man of wars men."[47] Two high-profile events in the 1860s underscored the imperial navy's growing capacity to punish Indigenous communities accused of attacking ships and sailors. In 1864, Admiral Denman organized an expedition to Clayoquot Sound to punish Ahousahts for their deadly attack on the trading sloop *Kingfisher*. His ships conducted a ghastly attack that killed at least fifteen Ahousahts and leveled nine of their villages (see chapter 3). A lumber ship, the barque *John Bright*, wrecked at Estevan Point in 1869. A sensationalist press accused Hesquiahts of murdering the crew and stoked public appeals for a gunboat "to punish the heartless savages," while a group of volunteers threatened taking it upon themselves to fulfill their "duty as white men [...] and wipe out the whole tribe of murderers" if the government failed "to administer summary justice." Governor Frederick Seymour finally agreed to send

[46] A letter of recommendation from Henry Webster praised Wha-latl as the "most trustworthy Indian of this tribe," noting his assistance to the *Swiss Boy*, and describing him as "well acquainted with the waters of the Straits of Fuca as far as Port Gamble, the Vancouver shore as far as Woody Point, the Pacific coast as far south as Grey's harbor [...] perfectly familiar with them, their anchorages &c and I believe well qualified to act as pilot to any vessel requiring such aid." Henry A. Webster, letter of recommendation, 1 Mar 1860, United States Commissioner Series, box 8, file 25, item D.2.24, James Swan fonds, UBC-RBSC; 'Particulars of the Wreck of the Palestine', *Daily Alta California*, 15 June 1859, 1; James G. Swan, 'Trip to Neah Bay', *Pioneer and Democrat*, 14 October 1859, 1; Swan, 'Murder of Wha-Lathl'; United States Office of Indian Affairs, 'Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1859' (Washington, DC: George W. Bowman, 1860), 397, https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/A3YVW4ZRARQT7J8S; Swan, *Almost out of the World*, 66.
[47] Richards, *Private Journal*, 114, 116.

the HMS *Sparrowhawk* to investigate and apprehend the accused. Hesquiahts initially refused to surrender two suspects, Katkinna and Anietsachist, but relented after a landing party burned houses and shelled canoes. The ensuing trial heard contradictory evidence, began without counsel for the two Hesquiahts, and relied on a chief witness against the accused for translation. Later accounts insisted on their innocence, but a colonial jury found Katkinna and Anietsachist guilty and condemned them to death. The HMS *Sparrowhawk* returned to Hesquiaht Harbour with a company of marines and hanged the two men in front of their families and community, hoping the example "would have a salutary effect on deterring others from the commission of a like offence."[48] Reflecting on such incidents in 1872, Indian Commissioner Israel Powell felt confident in declaring that "A wholesome dread [...] of her Majesty's war ships was firmly established."[49] Such pronouncements may exaggerate Indigenous reactions – imperial ships had razed villages before –but they are a clear indication of growing imperial confidence.

For all the grief such visits imparted, Indigenous peoples had other reasons to waive drift rights in particular instances. By the 1860s, some nations had probably begun to associate salvaged goods with the spread of disease. One 1852 smallpox outbreak probably began with transmission from goods recovered north of the Columbia River. Indigenous people salvaged two ships, the *Vandalia* and *Merrithew*, after they wrecked on January 9 and 12, respectively. Several Chinooks appear to have contracted the disease after stripping clothing from the bodies of corpses that had left San Francisco only days earlier. James Swan, then resident at Shoalwater Bay, observed the telltale blisters break out on one woman, Winchestoh, after she and her husband "had been to the wrecks." The disease spread

[48] Philip J. Hankin to Granville George Leveson-Gower, 3 Aug 1869, CO 60:36, no. 10225, 306, *Colonial Despatches*: https://bcgenesis.uvic.ca/B69137.html; van der Heyden, *Life and Letters of Father Brabant*, 28; Gough, *Gunboat Frontier*, 125–28; 'Court of Assize and General Gaol Delivery', *British Colonist*, 29 May 1869, 3; 'Barclay Sound Murders', *British Colonist*, 19 July 1869, 3.

[49] Canada, Parliament and Israel Wood Powell, 'Report of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for British Columbia for 1872 & 1873', in *Sessional Papers for the First Session of the Second Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1873*, vol. 5, paper 23 (Ottawa: I.B. Taylor, 1873), 5.

quickly among the Chinooks and Clatstops, killing as much as half the population. Later White commentators observed solemn evidence of the destruction: entire lodges left silent with corpses still wrapped their blankets, and extensive graveyards scattered among trees along the coast.[50] Swan reinforced the connection between smallpox and salvage while undertaking a census among the Makahs at Ozette in 1861:

> The chief [Ćaqáʷiƛ] then said the Indians were afraid if I took their names that they would have the smallpox [...] I assured them that they stood in more danger of catching the smallpox by stealing clothes from shipwrecked sailors, than they did from my book, and advised them not to wear any clothes they should get from wrecks, but to deliver them from the agent.[51]

This may help to explain why some Makahs later agreed to have certain salvage claims mediated by the Indian agent, accepting payment in lieu of the goods themselves.[52] What first appears as deference to the state may be better understood as an ongoing health precaution that balanced customary rights against the danger of contracting lethal foreign illness.

While speaking with Ćaqáʷiƛ ("tsuh-kah-wihtl") and other "principal men" at Ozette, Swan also mentioned "one or two examples" where people became ill after wearing a sick person's clothes (perhaps including his earlier experience at Shoalwater Bay). Swan's Makah companion Peter corroborated one incident in which an Indigenous person caught "the itch" after taking used clothes or bedding from a hospital at Port Townsend. Such associations appear to have made a lasting impression. A S'Klallam oral tradition recorded by Mary Ann Lambert in the mid-twentieth century suggests that hundreds of Makahs and S'Klallams contracted the disease after retrieving "pox-infested garments and bedding" cast to sea by sailors entering the Juan de Fuca Strait aboard the barque *What Cheer*. Lambert's account is inaccurate in some respects, attributing to the *What Cheer* in 1859 a disease

[50] Robert Boyd identifies the salvaged goods as the likely origin point for the transmission of the disease, but allows for the possibility the Chinooks received it separately through interactions with the Clatsops who had contracted it earlier. Boyd, *Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence*, 160–64; James G. Swan, *The Northwest Coast; or, Three Years' Residence in Washington Territory* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1857), 54–59.
[51] James G. Swan, 'Scenes among the Mackahs: Taking the Census', *Washington Standard*, 8 February 1862, 1.
[52] Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 55.

imported by the *Cynosure* in 1853. Interestingly, Lambert specifically recounts that the salvaging in question took place at Ozette and sxʷčkʷíyəŋ (a S'Klallam village at Washington Harbor). The coincidence in locations (Ozette, S'Klallam territory), salvaged items (clothes and bedding), and proximate timing (Swan's visit in 1861; remembered epidemic in 1859) raises the possibility that several events, or their retelling by Peter and Swan, have coalesced in oral accounts. It is significant, in any case, that later generations continued to associate historic pandemics with salvaging practices.[53]

The availability of particular materials was another factor chiefs weighed when deciding whether to exercise their drift rights. Swan notes that the supposed (perhaps exaggerated) scarcity of cedar around Cape Flattery encouraged Makah chiefs to assert their right to drift logs which were valued for housing boards or canoes. By the 1860s, colonial logging operations had so increased the abundance of lumber and milled logs washing ashore that chiefs no longer felt it necessary to insist on these rights in every case. Makahs who came across such materials had only to cut a notch in them with an axe to claim them for themselves.[54] Elsewhere, Indigenous salvagers were reported as disappointed, even "disgusted" to discover that wrecked ships carried only timber.[55] Materials washing ashore betrayed the region's pivot from an economy of trade to one of extraction; Indigenous salvagers adjusted their own practices accordingly. One wonders how the rising availability of other materials – steel, tools, blankets, clothing – informed the assertion of drift rights as Indigenous peoples bartered or purchased goods from nearby colonial settlements. It stands to reason, in any case, that claims to salvaged material shifted historically according to the current value of commodities washing ashore.[56]

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[53] Mary Ann Lambert was the pen name of Marian Taylor, an ancestor of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. She attributes the account to "an Old Indian who was eye witness to the burial of Capt. Thomson," who reportedly succumbed to smallpox aboard the *What Cheer* in 1860. David Brownell, email message to author, 10 Oct 2024; *Dungeness Massacre*, 25–26.
[54] Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 4, 55.
[55] James Prevost, Letter of Proceedings, 11 Mar 1859, Colonial Correspondence, file GR-1372.99.1218, BCA; 'The Wreck of the John Bright', 3.
[56] Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 55.

"The Indians were the means of saving their lives": From "Ransoms" to "Rewards"

If Indigenous communities adapted in tandem with their shifting political, epidemiological, and economic context, they continued to receive payments that affirmed their authority over castaways. Ransom payments did not end so much as evolve in step with other circumstances. Though they conformed to established Indigenous practices, colonial officials developed a haphazard approach to ransoming shipwrecked sailors in the mid-nineteenth century. The United States Collector of Customs at Olympia was as likely to pay ransom for castaways on Haida Gwaii (900 kilometres north) as the HBC at Fort Simpson (80 kilometres east of the archipelago), as with the *Georgianna* and *Susan Sturges*. Elsewhere, visiting chiefs like Wha-latl negotiated the release of captive sailors on promise of further goods. By the 1860s, some Indigenous people were complaining that released castaways had failed to return with promised payments. One Ahousaht man showed officers aboard the HMS *Sparrowhawk* "a paper promising him ten blankets for services tendered on the occasion of a wreck, of which blankets he has hitherto been defrauded." Such lapses threatened Indigenous peoples' resolve accept barter for the waterlogged mariners appearing upon their shores.[57]

It was fortuitous that the United States and Canada began introducing marine lifesaving rewards to the West Coast around this time. Such payments – extensions of established Atlantic practice – prolonged the productive ambiguity between reward and ransom in the region. Congress issued what appears to have been its first civilian lifesaving medals in 1866, belated recognition for assistance rendered to the steamer *San Francisco* when it wrecked off South Carolina in 1853 (mere days into its intended voyage to California). Similar medals were awarded to the rescuers of the steamer *Metis* after it wrecked at Long Island, New York in 1872. Congress finally formalized the process in 1874, directing the Secretary of the Treasury to investigate bestow medals on any persons endangering

[57] W. Mist to W. Edye, 11 May 1869, enclosed in Vernon Lushington to Frederic Rogers, 3 Aug 1869, CO 60:37, no. 8788, 52, *Colonial Despatches*: https://bcgenesis.uvic.ca/B695AD10.html. See also 'The Wreck of the John Bright', 3.

their own lives to "save lives from perils of the sea."[58] The first such medal awarded on the Pacific went to William Cousins in 1879, after he dived into San Francisco Harbor on three separate occasions to rescue a seven-year old boy, a drowning man, and an intoxicated German whaler.[59] Canada's new Department of Marine and Fisheries, meanwhile, instituted a similar system in 1868 to reward those who "bravely risked their lives at sea" to save life and property.[60] The practice was extended to the Pacific when British Columbia joined in Confederation in 1871 by Terms of Union which, alongside lighthouses, allocated responsibility for "shipwrecked crews" to the growing Dominion. DMF's annual report for that year lists a panoply of nautical rewards to those rendering assistance on its salt and freshwater coasts: an inscribed sextant, aneroid barometers, telescopes, binoculars, "handsome" gold watches, official letters of thanks, and some $750 cash for distribution among the rescuing crews. Such gifts demonstrated and publicized Canada's regard for such services. The small cost borne by the public was, in the minister's opinion, "of essential service to our maritime interests."[61]

Indian agents in either country also issued rewards. Wha-latl was probably the first chief in the Pacific Northwest to receive a reward after Indian agent Michael Simmons assigned him "a considerable present in blankets" in 1859 for assistance rendered to the *Swiss Boy* earlier that year. A succession of material and symbolic rewards similarly reinforced Matlahaw's authority after he rescued the beleaguered survivors of the *Edwin James*. West coast trader J.D. Warren presented the first rewards at Hesquiaht in January 1875, in an exchange echoing shipboard rituals established decades

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[58] J.F. Loubat, *The Medallic History of the United States of America, 1776-1876*, vol. 1 (New York: J.F. Loubat, 1878), 413, 434, 442, http://archive.org/details/medallichistory01loub. Similar distinctions predate these marine lifesaving rewards. In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln awarded Kanaka Māoli missionary Rev. James Hunnewell Kekela an inscribed gold watch for his assistance to a US trading vessel after locals attacked their shore party on the Marquesan island of Hiva Oa the previous year. Justin G. Turner, 'Lincoln and the Cannibals', *Pacific Historical Review* 31, no. 1 (1 February 1962): 31–39.

[59] United Sates Life-Saving Service, *Annual Report of the Operations of the United States Life-Saving Service for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1879* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1879), 68, https://books.google.ca/books?id=PYEDAAAAYAAJ&.

[60] Canada, Parliament, 'Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Year 1868', in *Sessional Papers for the Second Session of the First Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1869*, vol. 4, paper 12 (Ottawa: Hunter, Rose & Co, 1869), 9, http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.805897/publication.html.

[61] Canada, Parliament, 'Third Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the Year Ending 30th June, 1870', in *Sessional Papers for the Fourth Session of the First Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1871*, vol. 3, paper 5 (Ottawa: I.B. Taylor, 1871), 53–59, http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.805897/publication.html.

earlier during the maritime fur trade. Some ninety Hesquiahts boarded Warren's ship, as Chief Matlahaw, "Charley," and "William" entered the cabin to receive suits and other articles courtesy of the "Canadian government, through its representative the Indian Commissioner." Pinning a medal to Matlahaw's breast, Warren explained that it was a gift for his bravery and kindness to the shipwrecked seamen, and "that he must always wear it when he visits Victoria or any other place where there are resident Whites, and that any person reading the inscription on it would know for what reason it had been given to him and would respect him and befriend him" (Figure 18). Afterwards, Warren arranged biscuits, molasses, rice, tobacco, and other goods on the deck and proclaimed to the attending Hesquiahts that it was a present from the Dominion government, evidence

Figure 18. Hesquiaht Chief Matlahaw's silver medal, c. 1875

Chief Matlahaw received a silver medal from the Canadian government after assisting the survivors of the Edwin James *in 1874. The image was reprinted in a missionary memoir to show how the Catholic faith had a positive influence on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. In fact, Matlahaw used the medal's arrival to host a customary potlatch feast in which gifts were distributed to all present. Rev. A.J. Brabant,* Vancouver Island and Its Missions, *17. BC Historical Books, UBC Library Open Collections.*

that "their good deeds would never go unrewarded."[62]

From Washington and Ottawa, such presents probably seemed little different from those doled out to brave seafarers elsewhere. Seen from the coast, it is clear that they were quickly incorporated into a system of ritual gift exchange that had long taken place between Indigenous and colonial mariners. Though Warren delivered the gifts, Matlahaw assumed the responsibility for ceremonially distributing them. The Chief later invited Warren to come ashore to witness their allocation, sending a canoe to ferry the trader ashore the next day. Matlahaw used the government's gifts to prepare a great feast, after which the remaining provisions were distributed to all present. Then followed several speeches by prominent Hesquiahts, and Warren himself, who took the opportunity to explain that further gifts were likely to follow from the United States, since the *Edwin* was an American vessel. "At this they all appeared to be very much pleased," the trader reported, "and promised to befriend in like manner any other mariners whom they might find in the same forlorn condition." Warren explained that he had purchased the wreck and enjoined them to return any articles they had salvaged. The Hesquiahts did so the following day, delivering articles "as fast as I could receive it" and for which they received compensation. Warren promised additional payment for any lumber that might come ashore, which he later purchased and conveyed to the resident Catholic missionary to construct mission buildings.[63] The United States shipped further gratuities from Victoria that March: $250 (less freight charge) of blankets and provisions, and a consular letter communicating a note of thanks from President Ulysses S. Grant.[64] Matlahaw received a welcome reception upon visiting Victoria that spring. Captain Hughes recognized his rescuer donning his metal and presented him and his

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[62] Samuel R. Hughes to D. Eckstein (copy), 26 Dec 1874; J.D. Warren to I.W. Powell, 9 Feb 1875, Black Series, vol. 3615, file 4468, RG 10, LAC: http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=fonandcol&id=2060195&lang=eng.

[63] J.D. Warren to I.W. Powell, 9 Feb 1875, Black Series, vol. 3615, reel C-11063, file 4468, Black Series, LAC: http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=fonandcol&id=2060195&lang=eng; van der Heyden, *Life and Letters of Father Brabant*, 58.

[64] Tragically, the Vice Consul who penned the letter, Francis Garesché, would perish before the end of the year when the steamer *Pacific* sunk off the coast of Cape Flattery. Francis Garesché to John L. Cadwalader, 13 Mar 1875; David Eckstein to Cadwalader, 9 Nov 1875, Despatches from US Consuls in Victoria, NAID 211550726, General Records of the Department of State (hereafter cited as RG 59), NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/211550726.

companions with flour and goods. The chief's visited was noted "with pleasure" in the *Daily British Colonist* and further documented by local photographers Noah Shakespeare and Richard Maynard (Figure 19).[65] Such distinctions undoubtedly carried double meaning for Indigenous leaders who continued to assume authority for seamen wrecked upon their shore.

Reports of these transactions spread along the coast, encouraging Indigenous rescuers to expect blankets, provisions, testimonials, or medals for showing bravery and kindness in their assistance towards castaways. Consular officials, Indian agents, and priests praised the humanity of Indigenous first responders, but with constant reference to the danger of their reversion to violence or "plunder" should their governments fail to reward those involved. The fact that Indigenous nations

Figure 19. Chief Matlahaw in Victoria, c. 1875

Chief Matlahaw's 1875 visit to Victoria was the subject of some excitement on the part of journalists, photographers, and curious onlookers. The chief is shown here displaying his silver medal pinned to his suit. Taken by Richard Maynard, 1875. Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, BC, PN05033-A.

[65] 'Clayoquot Sound Indians', *Daily British Colonist*, 23 May 1875, 3.

were not uniform in their response to such wrecks heightened the urgency of remuneration. A Makah crew agreed to assist the US Revenue Cutter *Oliver Walcott*'s search for bodies and survivors after a schooner struck the steamship *Pacific* off Cape Flattery in November 1875, breaching the latter's hull and causing it to crumple into the sea with over 230 victims and $150,000 of Cariboo gold. Finding the crew of the schooner, *Orpheus*, stranded but safe in Barkley Sound, Makahs expressed amazement that Chief ƛiishin and other Huu-ay-aht had retrieved and returned various articles to the captain. The Makahs reportedly "told their British friends [the Huu-ay-aht] they were fools; that they ought to keep all they found, as it was their land, and everything which came on shore was theirs." Indian Commissioner Israel Wood Powell was understandably motivated to distribute presents and petition the US government to follow suit, lest Huu-ay-aht should find such arguments compelling.[66]

That Indigenous communities solicited tributes should not be taken as evidence that recognition from settler governments took precedence over local, intra-Indigenous concerns. The captain and crew of the *General Cobb* received generous hospitality after the bark ran aground in Clayoquot Sound in January 1880. Ahousahts found the men clinging to a rock two days later, helped them into their large canoe, and offered them the use of a house at their village. Their head chief, Shewish, housed the men for two days and furnished them with blankets, mats, and provisions before conveying them to a local trader's store. It was an act of charity, to be sure, but one that resonated with longstanding local practices which understood the ritual redistribution of wealth as a signifier of political authority. The chief's performance of generosity had multiple audiences, but future state recognition was surely secondary to the Ahousahts assembled at the village. Nor did Shewish have a monopoly on such performances. He was only one of two chiefs (the other being Maquilla) who furnished Captain Hughes and his men when they passed through the Ahousahts' village in 1874.

[66] I.W. Powell to Minister of the Interior, 14 Jan 1876, Black Series, vol. 3626, file 5676, RG 10, LAC; David Eckstein to John Cadwalader, 9 and 24 Nov 1875, 17 Jan 1876, Despatches from US Consuls in Victoria, NAID 211550726, RG 59, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/211550726; Rustler, 'Facts Worthy of Consideration', *Puget Sound Argus*, 20 November 1875, 2.

Evidently, the "the whole tribe" contrived "to surpass one another in demonstrations of kindness and hospitality" to crew of the *General Cobb*. Also among them was an elite Tla-o-qui-aht known as Frank (son of Chief Cedakanim), who also seized the occasion to distribute money to the captain and his men. The gift was of little practical use to the stranded mariners but probably reinforced Frank's status among those assembled.[67] In any case, such generosity bore dividends when they were answered by rewards from Canadian and US officials. Indian Commissioner Powell and US consul Allen Francis paid a joint visit to Clayoquot Sound that June aboard the USRC *Oliver Wolcott*, delivering rice, hardtack, molasses and sugar in a ritual that closely paralleled Warren's visit to Hesquiaht five years earlier: canoes surrounded the ship, conveyed the goods ashore, and piled them at Chief Shewish's house. Powell and Francis delivered speeches via an interpreter conveying their respective governments' praise for the Ahousahts' generosity and informing them that a gold medal was being prepared as further evidence of their gratitude.[68]

Two gold medals, one each for Chief Shewish and Frank, arrived in Victoria in April 1881. Word of their arrival probably spread the following month as Indigenous peoples from across the coast gathered in the capital for Victoria Day festivities. Chief Shewish received his medal first, appearing in Victoria that June with sixty Ahousahts. The chief appeared at the US Consul the next day in an English naval uniform and accompanied by an interpreter and two slaves. The chief accepted his medal with a long speech drawing surprising connections between recent hardships experienced by his people and the mariners cast upon their shores. His words, mediated by the interpreter and the consular official who recorded it, is reproduced here as a valuable record of Indigenous motivations in earning and accepting such rewards:

> He [Chief Shewish] said the past winter had been cold, the spring boisterous, and the summer brought storms of wind, hail and rain, making the ocean very rough, and his

[67] J.D. Warren to I.W. Powell, 9 Feb 1875, Black Series, vol. 3615, file 4468, RG 10, LAC; Allen Francis to John Hay, 20 Mar 1880, Despatches from US Consuls in Victoria, NAID 211551081, RG 59, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/211551081; 'Marine Disaster', *Daily Colonist*, 3 February 1880, 3.
[68] 'Recognition of Meritorious Conduct', *Daily Colonist*, 29 June 1880, 3.

> people believed the great spirit was angry with them, as they had suffered much, and had taken only a few fur seals. Last moon his people had held a council and decided that Schewish should take as many of his people as could leave home, and visit the people along the coast, make friends, and appoint a time for a great feast and potlatch, that until this was done, the great spirit would continue in anger with them; keep the seals away from their shores, make sickness and famine and many of the people would die.
>
> He was now on his way to make that visit, to set a time for a great feast and potlach, and, as he had heard that the Father of the Bostons had potlatched him a gold medal for the services his people had rendered the seamen cast on shore near his village. Schewish, their chief, had come for the medal, that he might show it to his brother Indians on his visit, and tell them that the great Boston chief had sent it him for being kind to his people.
>
> He then referred to the provisions and clothing presented by our Government to the tribe, in consideration of their services in this case, and placing his hand on his breast, said, Schewish and his people had good hearts for the Boston chief, and for his men who sailed upon the big waters, that his old and young men would always be on the watch, and if any of their ships were driven on the rocks, they would help and protect them – that he must tell the Indians as he visited them, some of whom had been bad, and killed men cast upon their shores, unless they had good hearts for the white people, the great spirit would send them bad weather, they would catch less and less seals many year; and they would have sickness, and want, and there would be many deaths among them. At the great feast, he would talk these matters over, and they would fill the hearts of the Indians with love and kindness, lest the anger of the great spirit be upon them all their lives.

While Shewish conveyed his intention to encourage neighbouring Indigenous groups to offer similar kindness to wrecked mariners, he positioned his motivations as arising from the Ahousaht's economic and spiritual well-being (a dismal fur sealing season and corresponding need for ceremony and "good hearts") rather than the possibility of reward from distant governments. To this end, Shewish emphasized that the decision to host a feast was borne of a council "last moon" – before Victoria Day, in other words, and possibly before word of the medals' arrival reached Clayoquot Sound.[69]

It is also noteworthy that the speech describes the medal as "potlatched" to him by the president. The word carries a double meaning in the Chinook jargon, meaning both "gift," in the mundane sense of the word, as well as the ceremonial feast and distribution of goods practiced among many Northwest cultures. The latter meaning is clearly intended in the previous line: "a great feast and potlatch." Whether rendered this way by Chief Shewish, the interpreter, or both, it is revealing that

[69] Allen Francis to John Hay, 21 Jun 1881, Despatches from US Consuls in Victoria, NAID 211551081, RG 59, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/211551081.

Consul Allen Francis opted to leave this one word untranslated in his letter to the US Assistant Secretary of State. With two decades' experience on the coast, and having personally distributed gifts at Clayoquot Sound the previous year, Francis understood the importance of conforming to Indigenous feasting protocols if his government was to have any positive influence on their behaviour.[70] Pinning the medal to Shewish's chest, Francis commended the chief's intention to visit neighbouring groups in preparation for the great feast, encouraging him to exhibit the medal "and tell them why it was given you, tell them if they save the lives of wrecked seamen [...] they may be remembered." It appears Chief Shewish followed through with this intention. Frank provided an update as he collected his own medal two months later, reporting that Shewish had "seen and conferred with nearly all the Indian chiefs and leading Indians of the coast," showing them the medal and describing the provisions he received for his assistance to the *General Cobb*'s crew. Shewish had "appointed a time for a great feast and potlatch, at which he would establish a lasting peace, the Great Spirit propitiated, and they would have restored to them the care and blessing enjoyed in former times."[71] The rewards presented to Matlahaw, Shewish, and Frank were clearly prized, but their easy incorporation into local ceremony and protocol suggests their value arose more from Indigenous priorities – ritual, economic, political – than the state's narrower objectives.

Government officials clearly recognized the symbolic importance of their rewards among the Indigenous communities that received them. Indian Commissioner Powell (tacitly) and US consul Francis (explicitly) encouraged, and arguably participated in, these ceremonies to encourage the safety of lives and property washing on to Indigenous shores. Their actions are remarkable in light of the steps the Canadian government would take to prohibit the potlatch under an amendment to the *Indian*

[70] Charles John Fedorak, 'The United States Consul in Victoria and the Political Destiny of the Colony of British Columbia, 1862-1870', *BC Studies*, no. 79 (Autum 1988): 4, 19–20.
[71] Allen Francis to John Hay, 21 Jun 1881; Francis to Robert R. Hitt, 30 Aug 1881, Despatches from US Consuls in Victoria, NAID 211551081, RG 59, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/211551081.

Act just four years later. That Powell himself was an advocate for the potlatch ban is indicative of the extent to which assimilatory ideology was sometimes set aside in favour of practical necessity.

Nor was potlatching the only Indigenous to which custom to which colonial officials conformed. Harry Guillod, Indian agent for the West Coast of Vancouver Island, distributed rewards on the basis of status and title to particular beaches where ships washed ashore. In October 1882, the American barque *Malleville* struck a reef off Estevan Point amidst a terrible storm and impenetrable darkness. All perished in the surrounding rocks and breakers. Hesquiahts, alerted to the tragedy, retrieved thirteen bodies from the swash, wrapping them in mats and linens, and burying them in the company of missionary August Brabant. Chief Aimé Anutspato showed particularly tenderness to the captain's wife, furnishing five new linens and a white blanket to enshroud her lifeless corpse. President Chester Arthur soon learned of the incident through a consular agent and heeded Rev. Brabant's request for a $200 reward to those "most deserving of it."[72] Guillod traveled to Hesquiaht for this purpose in January 1884, converting the money into local trading vouchers and ostensibly distributing them "to those who actually worked." Yet of fifteen individuals so rewarded, one – Chief Anutspato – received $100, fully half of the allocated sum, while the remainder received amounts between $3 and $18. The chief's noteworthy generosity provides a partial explanation for the discrepancy, but Guillod's brief report further emphasizes that it was Anutspato "on whose land the 'Malleville' was wrecked." The Indian agent had given "careful consideration of the claims of the Indians" prior to distributing the vouchers and evidently factored Chief Anutspato's title into his calculations.[73]

This reading is borne out by a subsequent wreck. The Hawaiian brig *Thomas R. Foster* wrecked near Cape Cook while transporting coal from Esquimalt to Honolulu in December 1886. The crew

[72] August Brabant to Allen Francis, 29 Jun 1883, enclosed in Francis to John Davis, 10 Jul 1883, Despatches from US Consuls in Victoria, NAID 211551081, RG 59, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/211551081; Fred. F. Frelinghuysen to L.S.S. West (copy), 10 Oct 1883, Black Series, vol. 3647, file 8083, RG 10, LAC: https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=fonandcol&id=2061178&lang=eng.
[73] Harry Guillod to I.W. Powell (copy), 31 Jan 1884, Black Series, vol. 3647, file 8083, RG 10, LAC: https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=fonandcol&id=2061178&lang=eng.

stove two of their three boats before reaching shore, surviving for three weeks on salvaged rations and what little they could scrounge (mussels, boiled mice, and seaweed) before a Che:k:tles7et'h' (Checklesaht) fishing party found some of the men drifting to sea on a makeshift raft. The fishers helped the castaways into their canoes and carried them to their village, where subchief Raymond (or Lemon) Toutapoul organized a rescue party to retrieve their other companions. The Che:k:tles7et'h' divided the recovered crew between six family households, giving them flour, salmon, and blankets to restore their beleaguered bodies. After ten days, they transferred the men to a Catholic mission at Kyuquot. The *Foster*'s crew remained there until late-February, when a word of their situation finally reached the Marine Agent in Victoria.[74] Catholic missionary Rev. Joseph Nicolaye wrote several letters pressing government officials for "the usual rewards for the Indians," warning that little assistance would be offered in future incidents if the present claim was slighted. Marine Agent Lewis concurred. Nicolaye "did all in his power to make the crew comfortable," he told his superior, "but the Indians were the means of saving their lives." Indian agent Guillod finally distributed the money in August 1888: $65.70 from DMF and $150 from the Kingdom of Hawai'i. His account reveals how the Canadian funds were distributed according to local hierarchies. $10 was awarded to head chief Na-wa-ik for boarding four sailors; Kleeshka, with no status indicated, received $5 for the same service. Toutapoul himself reaped the greatest reward: a conspicuous payment of $33.70, not only for rescuing the crew and boarding four men – $12 would seem consistent with amounts awarded to Na-wa-ik ($10) and the other rescuers ($2 each) – but because it was him "To whom the land belonged." The Che:k:tles7et'h', like the Hesquiahts before them, were pleased with the government gifts. If lifesaving rewards conceived in Ottawa and Washington, D.C., resonated on the west coast and throughout the Pacific, it

[74] H.G. Lewis to William Smith, 20 Apr 1887, Black Series, vol. 3778, file 39057, RG 10, LAC; 'Shipwrecked', *Daily Colonist*, 4 May 1887, 4.

was at least in part because Indigenous leaders ensured such payments honoured their title and ancient drift rights.[75]

Stories of "murder," "plunder" and other "cruel atrocities," continued to circulate long after their actual occurrence, but the reality was quite different by the late nineteenth century.[76] Captain Hughes and his men had little to fear when they washed ashore at Hesquiaht in 1874. Reflecting on their childhood at the Cape Beale lighthouse, Pattie and Frances Cox remembered the fearful disposition of the *Glen Fruin*'s crew when the barque grounded near the light in 1880. "Of course those people were all afraid of the Indians," Frances recalled, "They thought the Indians would kill them and the children."[77] Contrary to such expectations, Pattie recalled that Huu-ay-aht and other Indigenous peoples frequently provided lifesaving assistance in such cases.[78] According to Pattie, wrecked sailors' best chance of survival lay in waiting for Indigenous assistance:

> If the sailors got to shore they would start beating their way through the thick bush and die of exhaustion and starvation. If only they had stayed in one place the Indians would have reached them either by canoe or trail. They had trails all up and down the coast. Once we came upon three skeletons – sailors who had perished only a short way from a trail that would have led them directly to an Indian lodge.[79]

These observations reflect how Indigenous salvaging practices had shifted by the 1870s. While Makahs continued to assert drift rights and payment for anything they saved, James Swan observed in 1870 that they had "very recently" been persuaded to respect the "rights of white men" and have their salvage

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[75] Joseph Nicolaye to Henry [Harry] Guillod, 1 Mar 1887; H.G. Lewis to William Smith, 20 Apr 1887, Black Series, vol. 3778, file 39057, RG 10, LAC; Nicolaye to Captain Lewis, 20 Aug 1887; Harry Guillod, "Details of Distribution of Departmental Cheque for $65.70," 5 Aug 1888, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol. 1499, file 7810-7, RG 12, LAC; Canada, Parliament, 'Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31st December, 1888', in *Sessional Papers for the Third Session of the Sixth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1889*, vol. 13, paper 16 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1889), 103.

[76] For "murder," "plunder," and "cruel atrocities," see Revely to William Smith, Memo, 14 Jun 1880, Black Series, vol. 3715, file 21973, RG 10, LAC; Canada, Parliament and Powell, 'Report of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for British Columbia, 1872-73', 4–5; Davidson, *Pacific Coast, Coast Pilot*, 1889, 492–94, 499, 501–2; United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, *The British Columbia Pilot, Including the Coast of British Columbia from Juan de Fuca Strait to Portland Canal, Together with Vancouver and Queen Charlotte Islands* (London: Printed for the Hydrographic Office, Admiralty, 1888), 269, 508.

[77] Frances Morrison interview.

[78] Pattie Alexander Haslam interview.

[79] Bernice McDonough, "Childhood on a Rock," *Vancouver Sun*, 29 August 1953, 22.

claims mediated by the Indian agent.[80] In 1874, George Blenkinsop recorded Huu-ay-aht chief Haht'sick's readiness to secure salvaged property for their "rightful owners" and to offer assistance to shipwrecked mariners cast on his shores: the "habit of appropriating all wrecked property [...] he said was now at an end."[81] The captain of the DMF lighthouse tender *Sir James Douglas* had occasion to remark on the changing circumstances of shipwrecks following the wreck of the *Thomas R. Foster* in 1886. "In the early days the crew would have been murdered after they got safe ashore," wrote Captain John Devereux to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries. "Happily those days are gone by, and the Indians will do all they can to help people in distress."[82]

"My chief reliance [...] is in the cooperation of the Indians": Lifesaving Stations on the Pacific

For decades, Canadian and US officials were content to rely on remote Indigenous communities as a de facto coast guard, occasionally rewarding their efforts with medals or more practical goods. The system never took the shape of centralized policy, but occasionally shaped local considerations. In 1879, the Indian agent at Neah Bay advised against removing the Quileute people to the Makah reservation, in part because they had several times "been instrumental in saving the life and property of sufferers by shipwreck" in the vicinity of their own reservation at La Push.[83] The following year, Indian Commissioner Israel Powell communicated to the US Consul in Victoria his feeling that the importance of such gifts "cannot be overestimated" given the large and increasing shipping trade plying Puget Sound and the Pacific Northwest. Powell had high hopes that their nations' joint provision of rewards to Indigenous rescuers "will no doubt result in the complete establishment of a series of life saving stations along this exposed and dangerous coast." Purpose-built lifesaving stations,

[80] Swan, *Indians of Cape Flattery*, 55.
[81] George Blenkinsop, "Reports on the West Coast of Vancouver Island and of Barclay Sound," 23 Sep 1874, p. 53-54, Black Series, vol. 3614, file 4105, RG 10, LAC.
[82] John Devereux to George Foster, 24 Mar 1887, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol. 1532, file 7904-V1, RG 12, LAC.
[83] United States Office of Indian Affairs, 'Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1879' (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1879), 145, https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/A3YVW4ZRARQT7J8S.

such as those on the Atlantic with permanent White crews, were hardly necessary on the Pacific as long as there were Indigenous communities to rescue those in peril.[84]

While revealing of US and Canadian reliance on Indigenous rescuers, such statements came on the heels of a turning point in shipwreck responses: the introduction of federal lifesaving stations on the United States' Pacific Coast. The system had its origins in private humane societies operating in Atlantic states like Massachusetts as early as the 1780s. Congress began appropriating money for lifeboat stations, surf boats, and equipment in the 1840s, and, the following decade, authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to appoint keepers to maintain the stations. It took a further two decades (and dozens of lethal marine disasters) before Congress passed the *Life-Saving Stations Act* (1874). This was the same act that instituted US lifesaving medals, and further authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to employ crews and establish the first lifeboat stations in California, Oregon, and Washington.[85] An investigating committee did not consider the vicinity of Neah Bay sufficiently dangerous for a lifesaving station, but ultimately decided a single keeper's salary could be justified since the citizens of Port Townsend agreed the Makahs would be "available and adequate" to serve as crew when needed.[86] It was a refrain that would be repeated by leading citizens and mariners elsewhere in Washington and British Columbia in the late nineteenth century. The professionalization of marine rescue on both sides of the border was, to a large extent, shaped by prior Indigenous geographies. While blockhouses were no longer required, the construction of the Neah Bay life station in the spring of 1877 had echoes of earlier efforts to establish lighthouses in the region. The station was

[84] Israel Wood Powell to Allen Francis, 19 Feb 1880, enclosed in Francis to John Hay, 9 Aug 1880, Despatches from US Consuls in Victoria, NAID 211551081, RG 59, NARA-CP: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/211551081;
[85] Dennis R. Means, 'A Heavy Sea Running: The Formation of the U.S. Life-Saving Service, 1846-1878', *Prologue* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1987), https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1987/winter/us-life-saving-service-1.html; Dennis Noble, *That Others Might Live: The U.S. Life-Saving Service, 1878-1915* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 24–32.
[86] 'Neah Bay Station', *Post-Intelligencer*, 21 August 1890, 11. A similar appeal was made by the Superintendent of the Quinault school in 1896, who argued a crew of Quinault volunteers could "be raised in five minutes any day or night" to succor mariners wrecked on the coast between Gray's Harbor and Destruction Island. Meagley pointed to the incongruity of the fact that Quinaults, "whose bravery has often been tested, and whose skill as surfmen is unexcelled, and whose kindness to suffering seamen is a matter of history," were "wholly without apparatus" to buoy their efforts to rescue distressed mariners. W.E. Meagley, 'Indian Life Savers', *Post-Intelligencer*, 11 May 1896, 8.

built on Makah reservation land owned by the Claplanhoo family and required canoes to safely land building materials without spoiling them through exposure to salt water.[87] It was finally opened on September 5, 1878, on the heels of stations opened at Shoalwater Bay (November 26, 1877) and Cape Disappointment (February 15, 1878), the first such stations on the coast.[88]

The relative isolation and absence of permanent crew at the Shoalwater and Neah Bay stations meant their keepers depended on local Indigenous volunteers to assist in rescue operations when disaster struck offshore. In April 1880, when the Shoalwater keeper observed the schooner *Enterprise* lying broadside on reef, his first act was to send a runner to the Indigenous village two miles distant to procure a crew.[89] Such assistance was not always forthcoming. Exceptional judges of waves and wind, Indigenous volunteers sometimes declined to offer their assistance in dangerous conditions. The lighthouse keeper ran to the village for a crew after he and the lifeboat keeper noticed the iron barque *Lammerlaw* caught in the breakers at the bay's entrance in October 1881. Only three Indigenous volunteers – Lighthouse George, Lighthouse Charley, and Bob – offered their services "on account of the surf and wind being so very high." Charley and Bob subsequently retracted their services while the lifeboat was at anchor awaiting daylight, considering it foolish to approach any closer before the tide receded, and forcing the lifesaving station keeper to await assistance from South Bend, some fifteen miles distant. The keeper reported that the entire operation, lasting some 30 hours, could have been done in six if a crew was assembled more quickly.[90] Such limitations drew criticism in the press. One

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[87] William A. McCurdy to J. White, 28 May 1877, Incoming Correspondence Series, box 7, file 8, item B.7.2.3, James Swan fonds, UBC-RBSC; Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 193, 327n82.
[88] United Sates Life-Saving Service, *Annual Report of the Operations of the United States Life-Saving Service for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1878* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1878), 34, https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Annual_Report_of_the_United_States_Life/dXZEAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&.
[89] Shoalwater Bay Lifesaving Station Logbook, 5 Apr 1880, Life Saving Station Logbooks, box 211 (hereafter cited as Shoalwater Bay Lifesaving Logbook), RG 26, National Archives and Records Administration, Seattle, WA (NARA-SE).
[90] The keeper's efforts didn't end with the rescue of the *Lammerlaw*. He and his crew were returning to their station when they sighted yet another British barque, the *G. Broughton*, aground in the oncoming fog. The lightkeeper returned to South Bend to acquire yet another crew. The lifeboat keeper returned from this second rescue on November 2, after an exhausting 32 hours' absence. The British government later acknowledged his efforts with a silver medal, and £2 each to the six crew, presumably including Lighthouse George. Shoalwater Bay Lifesaving Logbook, 30 Oct to 2 Nov 1881; United Sates Life-Saving Service, *Annual Report of the Operations of the United States Life-Saving Service for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1882* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1883), 188–121,

paper declared that the limited funds reserved for Pacific lifesaving was "ridiculous" and lack of permanent crews "preposterous" considering the coast's extent, danger, and commercial importance.[91] The Shoalwater station was finally buttressed with a six-person crew beginning in 1885, relieving its keeper of his dependence on nearby Indigenous neighbours.[92]

Weather was not the only factor Indigenous volunteers considered when they were petitioned for aid. Makahs helped Neah Bay station keeper and Indian agent Charles Willoughby free the San Francisco schooner *Seventy-Six* from the sand after it ran aground in January 1881. A crew of forty men, mostly Makahs, worked "well and heartily" to dig sand from under the vessel at low water, passing ropes under its keel and lashing empty oil tanks to its sides to float it with the rising tide. The Life-Saving Stations Act (1874) authorized payments to volunteer crews in such cases but such payments did not occur automatically. Captain Willoughby wrote to his superintendent after the rescue of the *Seventy-Six* encouraging liberal compensation for the Makah crew to incentivize similar assistance in future cases. The importance of adequately rewarding Indigenous assistance was underscored just two weeks earlier when the *Champion* stranded on Waadah Island. The weather was calm, and no assistance ultimately needed, but Makahs rebuffed Willoughby's efforts to secure a volunteer crew "on account of the unpopularity" of Captain E.H. McAlmond.[93] Local mariners who failed to maintain positive relationships with Indigenous communities may have come to regret their behaviour after running aground on Indigenous shores. Willoughby was astute, under the circumstances, to advocate for payments that would make assistance more appealing irrespective of local affection or enmity.

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https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Annual_Report_of_the_Operations_of_the_U/TXgDAAAAYAAJ?; 'Local', *Daily Post-Intelligencer*, 1 August 1882, 4.

[91] 'Pacific Coast Life Saving Service', *Daily Post-Intelligencer*, 20 October 1883, 4.

[92] Shoalwater Bay Lifesaving Logbook, 1 Nov 1885.

[93] Charles Willoughby to J.W. White, 28 Jan 1881, Charles Willoughby papers, box 1, file 9, UWSC; 'Schooner Ashore - Snow-Storm', *Daily Record-Union*, 1 February 1881, 4; United Sates Life-Saving Service, *Annual Report of the Operations of the United States Life-Saving Service for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1881* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1881), 160, https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Annual_Report_of_the_United_States_Life/ypk6AQAAMAAJ.

Makah volunteers launched the Neah Bay lifeboat on just one occasion, but it was another Indigenous nation that ultimately came to the assistance of the *Lizzie Marshall* in February 1884. The American barque was trying to make the Juan de Fuca Strait on when the wind suddenly died, leaving the sails limp and the vessel without steerage amid a driving swell and tide that set it towards Vancouver Island's treacherous coast. The captain dropped the anchors to prevent from going ashore near Bonilla Point and despatched a boat to retrieve assistance from Neah Bay. The men succeeded in alerting the new keeper, Charles Koopmann, who launched the lifeboat the following day with a crew of eight Makahs, in tow of the tug *Tacoma.*[94] The towline strained against a heavy gale and cross-sea as it entered the strait, compelling the Makahs and Koopmann to seek safety aboard the tug after a first towline parted. The empty lifeboat was refastened but parted again and was set irretrievably adrift when its towing bits tore away. The *Tacoma* found what was left of the *Lizzie Marshall* strewn across the rocks on Vancouver Island, but Koopman had no means by which to determine the fate of its crew, and returned, defeated, to Neah Bay.[95] As in previous decades, responsibility for the search fell to nearby Indigenous communities with the canoes and boat-handling required for such precarious work. Chief Charley Queesto and three other Pacheedahts (Billy Buster, Policeman Peter, and Policeman Jake) agreed to accompany the tug *Blakely* to the wreck and succeeded in landing their canoe amid the frightening surf. The Pacheedahts found the surviving captain, wife, and crew – one sailor drowned trying to reach shore – huddling in a cave around a fire that local Ditidahts had prepared and tended for them over the past two nights. Chief Queesto and his crew managed to transport the castaways

[94] Four Makahs accompanied Koopman into the strait the previous day but had gone only four kilometres before meeting the tugboat *Blakely*, whose captain agreed to proceed accompanied to retrieve the barque. Koopman and the Makahs revived their efforts when the *Blakely* returned the following morning, having failed to find the *Lizzie Marshall* in the enshrouding fog.

[95] United Sates Life-Saving Service, *Annual Report of the Operations of the United States Life-Saving Service for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1884* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1885), 210, https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Annual_Report_of_the_United_States_Life/DXNEAQAAMAAJ?; 'The Wrecked Lizzie Marshall', *Puget Sound Argus*, 28 February 1884, 3.

onto the *Blakely* with considerable effort, making three trips through the surf and smashing their canoe on their final attempt.[96]

The incident drew attention to the apparent ineffectiveness of the station at Neah Bay. A Seattle paper complained that "We have never been called to describe any valuable or heroic deed of the Life Saving Service" on the Pacific coast. Relatively few wrecks had taken place in the vicinity of Neah Bay since the lifeboat station was established, but the author expressed dismay at the absence of a permanent crew and dependence on Indigenous volunteers who, it professed, "cannot be induced to expose his life in a boat he knows nothing about." The paper lamented the fact that the station's damaged lifeboat, found adrift by Ditidahts on Vancouver Island, was towed to Port Townsend and left to rot, "a monument of the total uselessness of this branch of the service as far as our immediate vicinity is concerned."[97] Of course, Makah volunteers had "exposed" their lives on that particular occasion and bore little responsibility for the lifeboat's failure to cross the strait intact. A Pacheedaht canoe succeeded where the American lifeboat failed, but it was the station and volunteer crew that bore the criticism. The Neah Bay lifesaving station carried on until December 1890, however, when it was finally discontinued after thirteen relatively uneventful years.[98] The premises were sold by auction

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[96] The *Lizzie Marshall*'s captain spread reports of ill-treatment at the hands of the Ditidaht when he returned to Washington Territory, alleging that they had taken their goods and refused to provide any provisions until forced to do so by threats of a man-of-war. An investigation by Indian Agent Harry Guillod casts doubt on these allegations, stating that the captain overstated the value of lost property, and, unable to communicate with the Ditidahts, gave them the impression "that they (the captain and crew) did not much care about the property." In addition to tending the fire, Guillod reported that the Ditidaht prepared hot tea and blankets for the castaways. Of course, Guillod was quick to defend the actions of his ostensible charges and shield his government from financial liability. The Ditidahts probably saw no contradiction in salvaging materials, in accordance with their drift rights, while providing succour to the mariners who washed ashore amidst the wreckage. Statement of J.W. McAllen, 21 Jul 1884, United States Commissioner Series, box 8, file 10, item D.2.9, James G. Swan fonds, UBC-RBSC; Harry Guillod to I.W. Powell, 19 Mar 1884, Order-in-Council 1884-0431 F, Privy Council Office, RG 2-A-1-a, LAC: http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=ordincou&id=36541&lang=eng; 'The Wrecked Lizzie Marshall', 3.

[97] 'The Life Saving Service', *Daily Post-Intelligencer*, 27 December 1885, 4; United Sates Life-Saving Service, *Annual Report of the Life-Saving Service for the Year Ending June 30, 1884*, 211.

[98] Life Saving Service Superintendent Sumner Kimball felt the station was unnecessary, calculating that only two casualties had occurred within range of Neah Bay since the station's founding. Port Townsend's Chamber of Commerce bristled at his accounting, which conveniently omitted the horrific wreck of the *Pacific* in 1875, more recent wrecks on the "foreign" shore of Vancouver Island (the *Lizzie Marshall* and *Duchess of Argyle*, 1887), and wrecks are all hands survived by good fortune or the aid of Indigenous people (the *Orpheus*, *Austria*, *Irene*, *West Shore*, and *Port Gordon*). James Swan, "A brief history of the life saving station formerly at Neah Bay, Clallam County, Washington," cage 4997, Washington State University Libraries, Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections, Pullman, WA; United Sates Life-Saving Service, *Annual Report of the*

and purchased for $300 by the Makah family whose land was appropriated for the station fourteen years earlier. "Turnt [sic] the old condemned boat-house, flag-pole, and remnant of launching ways over to James Clapanhoo," reads a final logbook entry, "and discontinued the station."[99]

Canada was slower to introduce similar lifesaving measures on its own coasts. The Member of Parliament for Victoria raised a motion as early as 1877 calling on the Dominion to establish lifesaving stations on Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii, and mainland British Columbia "to succour shipwrecked mariners and to protect their lives against the murderous attacks of savage tribes," but withdrew the motion after a short debate.[100] Ironically, Indigenous peoples were already the primary means by which Dominion authorities sought to relieve shipwrecked mariners on the Pacific, and would remain so when proposals for lifesaving measures reemerged a decade later. Public pressure to improve coastal navigation increased considerably following the completion of transcontinental railways to Seattle (1883) and Vancouver (1885) and consequent development of the region's lumber and coal industries. Wrecks like the *Thomas R. Foster* (1886) served to underscore the risk of danger and helped make lifesaving stations a nagging local issue in the 1887 federal election and concurrent session of the British Columbia Legislature.[101] With people "clamoring for Life-Saving Stations," the captain of the DMF lighthouse tender wrote an unsolicited letter to his Minister, hoping to raise various proposals before newly elected Parliamentarians arrived in Ottawa. Captain John Devereux did not feel lifesaving stations were warranted, but recommended new lighthouses and beacons, a telegraph to Cape Beale, and a network of signals to communicate with "Priests, Traders, and Indians" west of the cape.

Operations of the United States Life-Saving Service for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1897 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1898), 371, https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Annual_Report_of_the_Operations_of_the_U/iJk6AQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1; 'Neah Bay Station', 11.

[99] Neah Bay Lifesaving Station Logbook, 1 Jul 1891, Life Saving Station Logbooks, box 150, RG 26, NARA-SE; A.L. Spaulding to Superintendent Twelfth Life Saving District (San Francisco), 6 Jun 1891, Letters sent relating to the Life Saving Service, vol. 3, RG 26, NARA-DC.

[100] Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 4th sess., 3rd Parliament, 2 Apr 1877, pages 1070-1: https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.9_07185_3/1138

[101] Copy of a Report of a Committee of the Honourable the Executive Council, approved by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor on 10 May 1887, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol. 1500, item 7850-2, RG 12, LAC; 'Last Night's Meeting', *Daily Colonist*, 6 March 1887, 2; 'Marine Necessities', *Daily Colonist*, 5 August 1887, 2.

Devereux emphasized coastal Indigenous peoples' readiness to do everything possible to assist shipwrecked mariners and enclosed a sketch showing "what a number of villages there are along the coast" of which "some use might be made" in the future.[102] Devereux's proposal met the approval of Colonel William P. Anderson, Chief Engineer of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, and was partially implemented in 1891 when telegraph communication was established to Victoria (sans semaphores), but was otherwise forgotten until further disasters compelled action.[103]

Colonel Anderson conducted his own investigation into Pacific shipping in 1891. The Chief Engineer concurred that Vancouver Island lifesaving stations were untenable given the lack of White population and roads in the vicinity. Nor did he consider that specially crafted surf and lifeboats appropriate to the coastal environment, since ships were typically only wrecked during lee shores that would render it difficult to launch, land, and transport such boats. Like Devereux, Anderson mused that Indigenous settlements could provide an adequate stopgap in the absence of a permanent lifesaving station. "I think something might be done towards establishing a primitive life saving service in these waters," the Chief Engineer wrote, observing that their large canoes were admirably adapted to local conditions: "The Indians can use these canoes in surf that would swamp any ordinary boat, being wonderfully expert in their management, and I see no obstacle to making some kind of arrangement with them to the effect that they should be paid for every time they turned out in case of shipwreck, with a bonus in the event of their saving life."[104] It was, in effect, a proposal to formalize the status quo, one that Anderson would repeat in subsequent reports. When the Port Townsend Chamber of Commerce and British Columbia Board of Trade pressed the Department for further improvements in 1893, Colonel Anderson acknowledged bluntly that his "chief reliance all along that

[102] The sketch, which also showed the location of various marine disasters, was not found. John Devereux to George Foster, 24 Mar 1887, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol. 1532, item 7904-V2, RG 12, LAC.
[103] Devereux to George Foster, 24 Mar 1887, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol. 1532, file 7904-V2, RG 12, LAC; Canada, 'Annual Report for the Department of Marine for the Fiscal Year Ended 1891," 42.
[104] W.P. Anderson to Deputy Minister of Marine, 2 May 1891, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol. 1500, item 7850-2, RG 12, LAC.

coast is in the cooperation of the Indians."[105] The BC Board of Trade supported a "fixed and known reward" to encourage assistance from Indigenous communities, and recommended the local Indian agent begin inquiries to ascertain "what assistance they are prepared to give and the terms asked."[106]

The chief difficulty, the Board of Trade noted, was that Indigenous peoples along the coast gathered in protected, inner coast villages during winter months when shipwrecks were most likely to occur. Marine Agent James Gaudin concurred, arguing that it would be too costly to induce Indigenous people to remain at outer coast stations in light of the high wages their men earned in the sealing industry. Gaudin was also informed by his impression that "the experiment" of relying on Indigenous mariners was already tried, unsuccessfully, at the Neah Bay lifesaving station.[107] DMF dragged its heels again until 1896, when public outcry over the wreck of the barque *Janet Cowan* forced a small concession. Because "lack of knowledge of the coast" was perceived as contributing to the suffering experienced by the crew – several of whom died from exposure after safely reaching shore – the department erected a series of shelters and notice boards providing directions to the nearest Indigenous village or lighthouse where assistance could be obtained.[108] The proposals of the period are revealing. DMF officials recognized the utility of Indigenous canoes and piloting skills, but plans were stymied when they failed to connect with the reality of Indigenous geographies. The department's use of Indigenous labour and knowledge derived more from local improvisation than centralized strategy, and bureaucrats were generally unwilling to invest in such approaches. If an all-White lifesaving crew was untenable, a few notice boards would do.

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[105] W.P. Anderson, "Life-Saving Station on West Coast Vancouver Island," 21 Nov 1893, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol. 1500, item 7850-2, RG 12, LAC.
[106] Extract from a letter of the Secretary, British Columbia Board of Trade to the Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries, 23 Feb 1894; Report of the British Columbia Board of Trade, 23 Feb 1894, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol. 1500, file 7850-2, RG 12, LAC.
[107] James Gaudin to W.P. Anderson, 9 Apr 1894, Central registry files of the Marine Group, vol. 1500, file 7850-2, RG 12, LAC.
[108] "Seven Lives are Lost," *Daily Colonist*, 14 January 1896; "To Lessen the Perils of Vancouvers Coast," *San Francisco Examiner*, 28 January 1896; "Information for Distressed Seamen," *Daily Colonist*, 4 August 1896.

"The primary and greatest cause of the loss of life": Saving Lives in Tragedy's Wake

The turn of the century marked a series of important departures in state efforts to foster dependable navigation on the coast. Where rail dominated the late nineteenth century, Canadian and American statesmen increasingly looked to marine transportation to extend their nations' influence at the dawn of the new century.[109] Klondike gold and plans for a northern railway spurred renewed hydrographic charting, accelerated the pace of lighthouse construction, and motivated the first lighthouses north of Vancouver Island. But it would take another appalling tragedy before the United States and Canada felt compelled to take decisive action to establish lifesaving stations at the Juan de Fuca Strait. The wreck of the *Valencia* shocked citizens of both nations and exposed a panoply of failures in government efforts to foster maritime safety. The steamer left San Francisco on January 20, 1906, carrying 173 passengers and crew for the well-established run to Victoria and Seattle. The ship maintained its usual course as far as Cape Mendocino, 300 kilometres north of San Francisco, confirming its position vis-à-vis the prominent headland and lighthouse. From this point on, the *Valencia* was engulfed in fog. No lights were seen, no capes discerned, no fog signals heard. Captain Oscar Johnson continued his course, navigating almost entirely by the compass and dead reckoning, taking too few soundings too late to determine his position on the chart. Astonishingly, the captain failed to account for the northward flowing currents known to prevail in the winter months and judged that he was still south of Cape Flattery on the evening of January 22 when a series of vanishing depth soundings indicated looming danger: 80 fathoms, 60 fathoms, 30 fathoms. The lookout, just fifteen minutes from the end of his shift, was either absent or too exhausted to give notice of the approaching shore. Instead, it was the second officer who first observed a dark object ahead. The captain ordered the wheel hard to starboard, but too late. The *Valencia* lurched over a rock, hanging

[109] Fraga, 'Outlet to the Western Sea', 458; Richard H. Gimblett, "'The Incarnation of Energy": Raymond Préfontaine, the Hydrographic Survey of Canada, and the Establishment of a Canadian Naval Militia', in *Charting Northern Waters: Essays for the Centenary of the Canadian Hydrographic Service*, ed. William Glover (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 77–82.

precariously for a few minutes before turning on a pivot and sliding into the ocean as the driving waves pounded it less than 100 metres from shore.

An inadequately trained crew compounded the disaster. Crewmen improperly secured three lifeboats, spilling passengers helplessly into the sea before they were lowered. Two others were successfully lowered but improperly handled, turning broadside into the waves and capsizing. It took less than thirty minutes for the *Valencia* to lose five lifeboats to the driving sea, and, with them, as many of fifty passengers. Only nine managed to claw their way to the rocky shore; the remainder drowned while fellow passengers watched aghast from the deck of the immobilized steamer. The sixth (and final) lifeboat was successfully launched the next day, landing on a beach 11 kilometres north of the wreck. To this point, all aboard assumed they were somewhere on the coast of Washington. It must have been a shock when the passengers aboard the sixth lifeboat found a DMF sign directing them to the Cape Beale lighthouse, just three miles away. The *Valencia* had entirely overshot the Juan de Fuca Strait, and grounded, like so many ships before it, on the impenetrable shore of Vancouver Island. The passengers still trapped on board were just 100 metres from shore but had little chance of making to safety. Those who didn't drown or freeze in the crashing surf were crushed by barnacled rocks or stranded at the foot of towering cliffs. The two shore parties (those who had crawled from the surf on the first night, and those in the sixth lifeboat) independently succeeded in alerting the Cape Beale lightkeepers and a telegraph lineman, who forwarded word of the disaster to authorities in Victoria and Seattle. The steamer *Queen* found the *Valencia* on January 24 but had no way to retrieve the remaining passengers from the pounding surf. The tugboat *Topeka* failed to locate the 250-foot *Valencia* in the dense fog, receding farther and farther from the wreck in its fruitless search. A party organized by a telegraph lineman located the vessel from shore just in time to watch it finally collapse, heaving its remaining passengers and crew into the frigid sea.[110]

[110] All preceding details drawn from the subsequent investigation ordered by President Theodore Roosevelt. The primary narrative account of the disaster is found on pages 10-47. "Wreck of the Steamer *Valencia*: Report to the President of the

It was a disaster at every turn, communicated to a horrified public by reporters who accompanied the *Topeka* and subsequent rescue attempts. Amidst the deluge of reporting that followed were accounts of Nuu-chah-nulth finding one group of survivors and conveying them to a passing steamer (Figure 20).[111] Other Nuu-chah-nulth parties organized a search and were reported as "taking desperate chances [...] to investigate every floating object that may prove a human being alive or dead."[112] Huu-ay-aht at Dodger Cove retrieved eighteen bodies, placing them aboard the tug *Lorne* for transport to Bamfield.[113] The *Lorne* and a second tug picked up Indigenous crews at Bamfield and Clo-oose and attempted landings near the site of the wreck.[114] As hope dimmed for survivors, the British Columbia Provincial Police offered Indigenous people rewards for recovering bodies, acknowledging their familiarity with the coast and ability to work more effectively from their canoes than White mariners in boats brought to the scene by steamer.[115] But these efforts came far too late for most of the *Valencia*'s passenger and crew. Just 12 of 108 passengers survived, not a woman or child among them. The crew fared little better: just one third reached shore. 136 people perished, just 50 kilometres from the site of the shuttered Neah Bay lifesaving station, fewer than 25 kilometres from the Indigenous village of Clo-oose. It was among the *Valencia*'s many misfortunes to strand on a coastline where neither canoe nor lifeboat stood ready to help.

The horrific disaster shocked the United States from its complacency and prompted a series of interventions that once again transformed the nature of marine navigation on the coast. Newspapers

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Federal Commission of the Investigation," Casualties and Violations Case Files, NAID 298322 (hereafter cited as "Wreck of the Steamer *Valencia*"), Records of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation (hereafter cited as RG 41), NARA-SE: https://catalog.archives.gov/id/298322.

[111] Newspaper reports record the discovery as being made by "Indian policeman" Charlie Ross and/or an unnamed sister. "Story of Men on Turret Island," *Victoria Daily Times*, 27 January 1906, 1; "The Story of the Wreck Told Pictorially By Times Artists," *Victoria Daily Times*, 29 January 1906, 1.

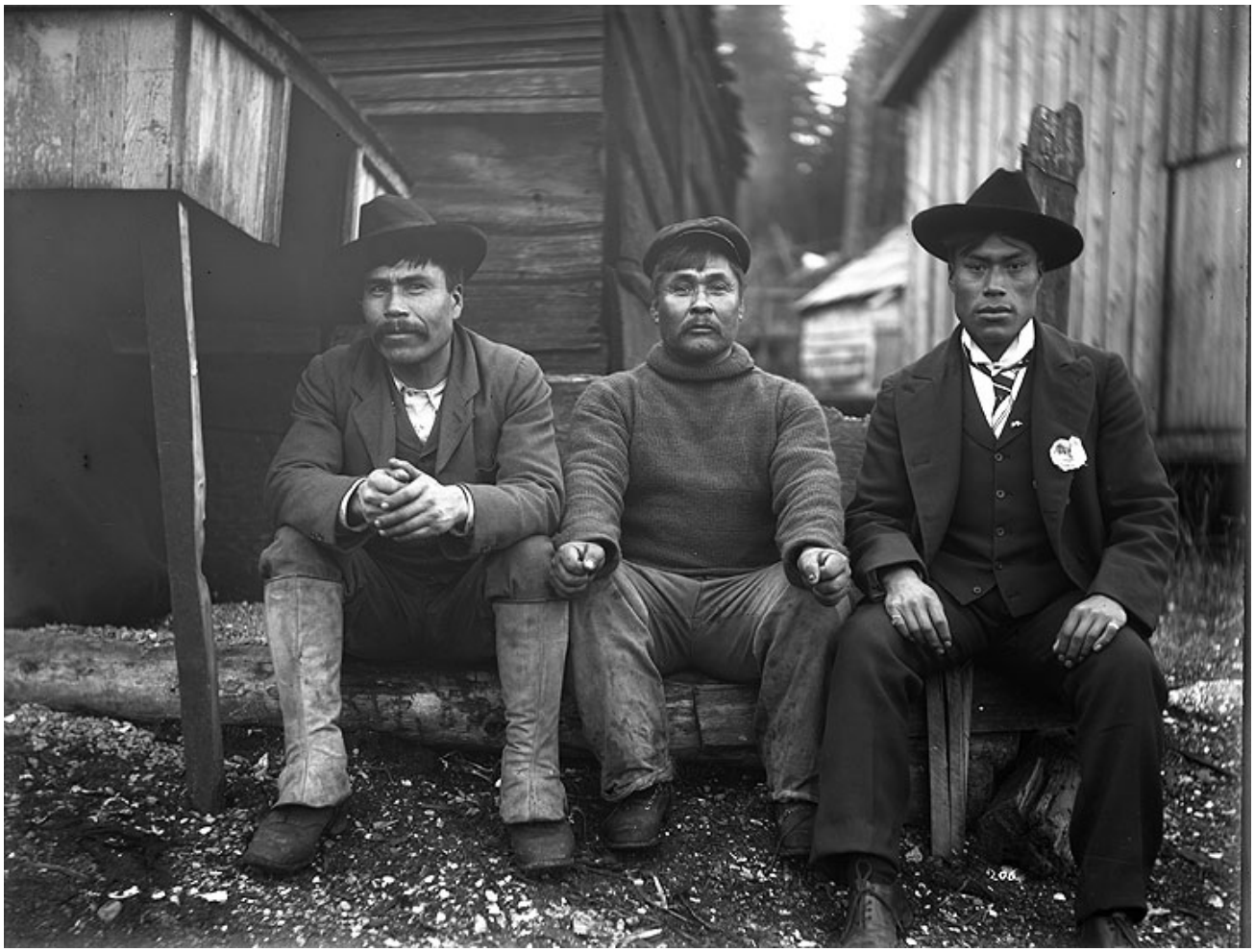
[112] "Fourth Man is Insane," *Vancouver Daily World*, 26 January 1906, 13; "Indian Carousals on Beach cause Anxiety," *Vancouver Daily World*, 27 January 1906, 10.

[113] John T. Ross, "Wreck of the Valencia," pages 4-5, file 18, box 6, MS-2305, BCA.

[114] "Surf Too High Yesterday for Indians to Land," *The Province*, 30 January 1906, 1; Testimony of Captain James Patterson, 23 Feb 1906, Transcript of Testimony before the *Valencia* Commission, vol. 2, p. 635, NAID 26329524, RG 41, NARA-DC.

[115] "Number of bodies found to date," *Victoria Daily Times*, 1 February 1906, 1; "Bodies brought from the wreck," *Victoria Daily Times*, 2 February 1906, 1.

Figure 20. "Indian policeman" Charlie Ross, 1902



Charlie Ross, one of the men shown here, was likely among the Nuu-chah-nulth men who came to the rescue of Valencia *survivors who were swept to Turret Island (Barkley Sound) aboard a lifeboat. Conflicting newspaper reports record the discovery as being made by "Indian policeman" Charlie Ross and/or his unnamed sister. The photograph does not indicate which of the men is Ross. Samuel Morse, "Charley Ross & two others, Dodger's Cove, Barclay Sound," 1902, Washington State Historical Society, 1917.115.206.*

reported widespread "indignation at the shameful neglect of life saving stations and coast guards."[116]The resulting Presidential Commission of Inquiry described the state of lighthouses, fog signals, communication, and life-saving equipment "the primary and greatest cause of the loss of life," and completely out of proportion with the Juan de Fuca's position as "probably the most important single entrance on the Pacific coast," through which an estimated 5-6 million tons of traffic passed per year. The Commission found that at least fifty vessels had been lost on Vancouver Island in as many years, resulting in millions of dollars in lost property, and as many as 700 causalities. Their

[116] 'Life Saving at the Capes the Cry', *Seattle Star*, 25 January 1906, 7.

recommendations included calls for new lightship to mark the entrance of the Juan de Fuca Strait at ƛušu·ʔa, or Swiftsure Bank – the elusive halibut fishing ground only charted by the HMS *Egeria* in 1901 – and for the US Coast and Geodetic Survey to undertake observations of prevailing currents which remained "very little understood, even by those who navigate them constantly." Observing that the nearest remaining lifesaving station was 160 kilometres away – "and therefore absolutely inadequate to cover this dangerous locality" – the commission called for a first-class, ocean-going lifesaving steamer to be stationed at Neah Bay and manned by "the most skillful lifesaving crew available."[117] Congress quickly authorized a new station at Waadah Island, Neah Bay, which was completed in 1908 and augmented by the arrival of the state-of-the-art lifesaving steamer *Snohomish* early the following year.[118] Lifesaving on the shores of Washington State, long downloaded to Indigenous volunteers, had at last come under the purview of the state and its agents.

Canadian newspapers also drew attention to the fact that many lives and much suffering might have been spared had the federal government followed earlier calls for a lifesaving station on its Pacific coast.[119] In March, the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia passed a resolution calling communicating to the Dominion government the "urgent necessity" of lifeboats on Vancouver Island.[120] Once again, DMF proposals were shaped by the reality of Indigenous and settler geographies along the coast. The Department ordered the construction of a 35-foot, self-righting lifeboat, but felt it would be unable to maintain the required crew of eleven men anywhere except Victoria, or perhaps Bamfield. Chief Engineer Colonel Anderson maintained that such a lifeboat would be too heavy to be rowed any distance on Vancouver Islands shore and thus suggested a compliment of lighter boats maintained by smaller crews. Colonel Anderson suggested that White coxswains be appointed to drill

[117] "Wreck of the Steamer *Valencia*," pp. 46-52.
[118] Greg Bradsher, 'Assignment: Neah Bay, Washington, 1909; The United States Revenue-Cutter Service and the USRC Snohomish', *The Text Message* (blog), 1 September 2020, https://text-message.blogs.archives.gov/2020/09/01/assignment-neah-bay-washington-1909-the-united-states-revenue-cutter-service-and-the-usrc-snohomish/.
[119] 'Wreck of the Valencia', *Daily Colonist*, n.d., 4; 'Aids to Navigation', *Daily Colonist*, 17 February 1906, 4.
[120] "Copy of a Resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia during the Session ending on the 12th March, 1906," Consecutively numbered headquarters registry system, vol. 102, file 25371-1, RG 42, LAC.

and oversee crews at Clo-oose, Ucluelet, and Clayoquot where Indigenous mariners were "accustomed to face the rough waters of the Pacific in their dug-out canoes." Anderson proposed establishing a regularly enrolled crew at Bamfield during the winter months when most disaster occurred but suggested this might be replaced by a volunteer crew consisting of Huu-ay-aht and Pacific Telegraph line employees during the summer months.[121] The Department continued to bandy proposals, but the urgency of the matter was underscored in December 1906 by the wreck of yet another ship, the American barque *Coloma*, mere kilometres from the remains of the *Valencia*.[122] Marine Agent James Gaudin renewed his efforts to implement the proposals in the following year by identifying prospective station sites on the foreshores of Indian reserves at Clo-oose and Ucluelet.[123] Surfboats were placed at both locations in 1907, but Ditidaht at Ucluelet villagers rebuffed DMF's offer to hire crews at $15 a month. "Our men, both white and Indians, want to squeeze as much out of the Government as they can," reported Gaudin, "I am very much afraid we will have to pay each individual of the surf boat's crew $60.00 per month." The surfboats sat unattended for several months before DMF renewed its efforts and succeeded in securing crews at Bamfield, Ucluelet, and Clayoquot in January 1908.[124] There is evidence of Indigenous sailors among the early Bamfield crews, but generally the work was given to local White men.[125] The Dominion had finally taken steps to relieve "shipwrecked crews" – nearly fifty years after assuming the responsibility under British Columbia's Terms of Union.

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[121] Canada, Parliament, 'Thirty-Ninth Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1906 (Marine) for the Year Ended 30th June 1906', in *Sessional Papers for the Third Session of the Tenth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1906-07*, vol. 9, paper 21 (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1907), 27–28, http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.805897/publication.html.
[122] Jesse Robertson, 'Lightkeepers on Huu-Ay-Aht Shores: Indigenous Labour and Knowledge in the History of Coastal Navigation', *BC Studies*, no. 222 (25 October 2024): 47, 67–69, https://doi.org/10.14288/bcs.no222.198968.
[123] 'From West Coast', *Daily Colonist*, 25 April 1907, 10.
[124] James Gaudin to W.P. Anderson, 21 Nov 1907, Consecutively numbered headquarters registry system, vol. 102, file 25371-1, RG 42, LAC; various correspondence, 4 Mar 1907 to 21 Oct 1908, Consecutively numbered headquarters registry system, vol. 158, file 28067, RG 42, LAC; 'Quadra Was Delayed', *Daily Colonist*, 7 January 1908, 10, https://archive.org/details/dailycolonist19080107uvic/page/n8/mode/1up; 'Establish Crews for Lifesaving', *Daily Colonist*, 14 January 1908, 10.
[125] Robert Scott, who came to Bamfield in 1930 to work at the cable station, knew of one or two Indigenous men in the local lifesaving crew. Robert Bruce Scott interview, 30-31 Jan 1866, Imbert Orchard fonds, MS-3268.U, BCA.

Frequent, well-publicized shipwrecks collapsed the distance navigational aids and infrastructure had place between Indigenous and colonial mariners in the nineteenth century. Indigenous laws, marine tenure, and protocols permeated US, British, and Canadian efforts to save lives and property from shipwreck during this period. These threads connected longstanding salvage practices to ransom payments, rescue rewards, and volunteer lifesaving crews, forcing otherwise assimilationist government officials to bend to Indigenous ceremonies and means of exchange in their efforts to mitigate the disasters unfolding on their shores. Such exchanges became rarer in the *Valencia*'s wake. By the early twentieth century, it had become possible for even the shipwrecked sailor to escape the geography of interaction that had long bound Indigenous mariners to traders, surveyors, lightkeepers, and castaways. Granted, this colonial insularity was altogether fragile. It could be punctured in an instance when ships went ashore beyond the reach of the handful of lifesaving stations now scattered along the coast. Still, for the average seafarer, marine travel had been transformed into a relatively banal and predictable experience, stripped of the intercultural encounter that had so long defined it. The coast remained a lively Indigenous seascape, but charts, lights, and lifesaving stations made it easier than ever for settlers to take for granted their ability to navigate coastal waters independent of Indigenous consent or assistance. To many, the bifurcation of the coast from its people – scarcely conceivable in 1825 – appeared complete.

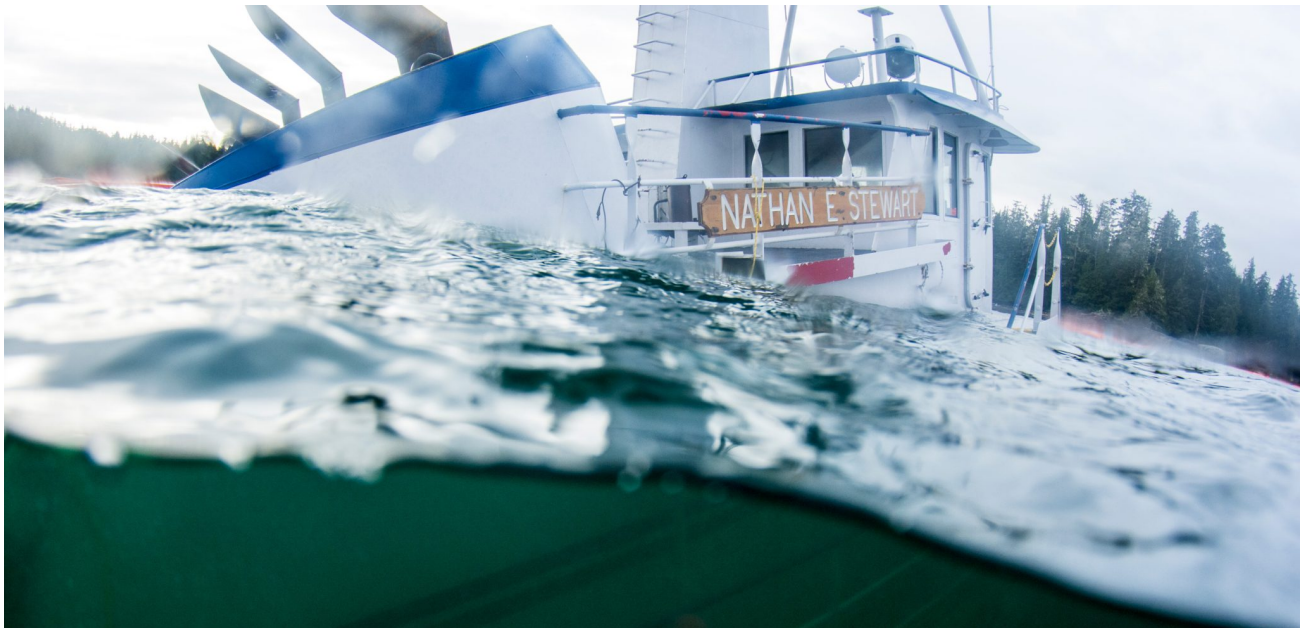
Conclusion

The air was thick with the acrid smell of diesel as Hím̓ás Wigvilhba Wakas (Hereditary Chief Harvey Humchitt) surveyed the disaster unfolding in Heiltsuk waters. "You could see the stern going down, down, down. The grinding noise it was making, it's still so clear and vivid," the chief recalled. "The grey-blue sky – it's so clear. If I was an artist I'd paint a picture."[1] The tug *Nathan E. Stewart* had been pushing an empty barge from a distribution point in Ketchikan, Alaska, to a refinery in Vancouver when it failed to make a crucial course correction eastward into Seaforth Channel. The second mate was working alone on the bridge just after midnight, fatigued and asleep, when the vessel's hull slammed into a submerged reef near Gale Creek and the ancient village of Q̓vúqvái. The master woke abruptly, assumed command, and summoned assistance from a Canadian Coast Guard lifeboat stationed forty-five minutes away at Bella Bella. It did not take long for word to filter to others in the community. Chief Humchitt and other Heiltsuk first responders arrived at the scene before sunrise to render assistance and take stock of the damage. The crew abandoned ship at 9:26 am, October 13, 2016, as the *Nathan E. Stewart* sunk lower, waves sweeping over its stern (Figure 21). Heiltsuk responders watched in horror as the water turned a sickly grey and rippled out from the wreck. Observers became nauseous and received headaches as the smell of 110,000 litres of escaped diesel leeched into the air.[2]

The incident, occurring near nine salmon rivers, fifty-six clam beds, and as many as three dozen archaeological sites – in an area where Heiltsuks harvest at least twenty-five food species – was heartbreaking and traumatic to the community. "It was like a death," according to Kelly Brown,

[1] Steph Kwetásel'wet Wood, 'Frustrated with Canada's Spill Response, Heiltsuk Leaders Take Their Fight International', *The Narwhal*, 20 March 2024, https://thenarwhal.ca/heiltsuk-nation-international-marine-organization/.
[2] Canada. Transportation Safety Board, 'Marine Transportation Safety Investigation Report M16P0378', 31 May 2018, https://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/rapports-reports/marine/2016/m16p0378/m16p0378.html; 'Investigation Report: The 48 Hours after the Grounding of the Nathan E. Stewart and Its Oil Spill', March 2017, 36–38, 48, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58df1f48197aea8ba6edafca/t/58e1c9e0e58c62c8b29f4e88/1491192321080/HTC-NES-IRP-2017-03-31.pdf.

Figure 21. The *Nathan E. Stewart* submerged beneath the waves, 2016



The tug Nathan E. Stewart *ran aground near the ancient Heiltsuk village of Q̓vúqvái, spewing toxins into a critical marine harvesting area. Photo by April Bencze. "The Lingering Legacy of the* Nathan E. Stewart," Hakai Magazine, *10 Apr 2017: https://hakaimagazine.com/news/lingering-legacy-nathan-e-stewart/*

director of the nation's Integrated Resource Management Department.[3] Indigenous groups were not consulted about the *Nathan E. Stewart*'s transport of oil through their territories, had previously expressed concerns about the tug, and asserted that it was not welcome in the inside waters of the coast. Hereditary Chief Humchitt volunteered his assistance to the Coast Guard several times throughout the day but had not been invited to board their operational command ship until six hours after the tug sank.[4] Heiltsuk Tribal Council (HTC) later found the tug's operator, the Houston-based Kirby Corporation, had perpetuated "colonial mentality and practices" by disregarding Heiltsuk's responsibility to protect and sustain its traditional waters. The HTC found that Canada had breached customary laws by authorizing Kirby and others to traverse Heiltsuk waters without Heiltsuk consultation or consent. Government-delegated responders showed disrespect of Heiltsuk ecological knowledge and marine expertise by failing to engage with mariners and knowledge-keepers

[3] Canada. Transportation Safety Board, 'Investigation Report M16P0378'; Heiltsuk Tribal Council, 'Investigation Report', 61, 63.
[4] Heiltsuk Tribal Council, 'Investigation Report', 24, 40.

"intimately familiar" with the area and thereby contributed to the delayed response and confusion of officials "who considered themselves to be in charge."[5] Suffice to say, Kirby Corporation and Canada took for granted their ability to transit through and manage Heiltsuk waters without Heiltsuk consent or assistance.

How did we arrive here? Heiltsuk oral histories tell how the people of Q̓vúqvái attacked the trade ship *Atahualpa* when its captain and crew disrespected their Ǧviḷás (customary laws) in 1805.[6] The earliest Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) mariners learned the necessity of securing Indigenous guides to navigate the area's labyrinthine waters. The Skidegate pilot Tom was courted by the *William & Ann* in 1825, in part, for his knowledge of Milbanke Sound. A Kitkatla guide directed the steamship *Beaver* on its inaugural voyage to Laredo Sound and Principe Channel in 1836. Other Indigenous pilots joined William Henry McNeill aboard the *Lama* and *Beaver* on early inspections of Seal Harbour, Milbanke Sound, and the channels south of Fort McLoughlin. These corporate agents were no less profit-oriented than their twenty-first century counterparts, but the imbalance of geographic knowledge meant they could not afford to altogether disregard the laws and customs of the guides and pilots they depended on. Later navigators continued to rely on Indigenous labour and ingenuity in less visible forms. Captain Richard Carpenter, Heiltsuk leader and master carver, kept the lighthouse established at Dryad Point in 1899 to guide the burgeoning traffic that steamed through the region in the wake of the Klondike Gold Rush. That year, Carpenter boarded the Canadian lighthouse tender *Quadra* and recounted the story of the *Atahualpa* to Captain John Walbran as they passed the site of the incident on Spiller Channel – a reminder, perhaps, that Ǧviḷás remained in effect even in that transformative era.[7] But such encounters had become increasingly rare by this point. Surveys of reconnaissance, hydrographic charts, and lighthouses relieved outsiders of their earlier reliance on

[5] Heiltsuk Tribal Council, 'Dáduqvḷá Qn̓txv Ǧviḷásax̌: To Look at Our Traditional Laws', 2018, 41–42, https://ipcaknowledgebasket.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Heiltsuk_Adjudication_Report.pdf.
[6] Heiltsuk Tribal Council, 19.
[7] Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, 152–55.

Indigenous knowledge keepers, changed perceptions of the coast and its people, and emboldened settler mariners to claim Indigenous waters as their own. There is a history we must attend to if we wish to understand how settler individuals, corporations, and governments considered ourselves "to be in charge."

***

"Fathoming Empire" has followed other recent histories in positioning the sea as a primary site of intercultural encounters between Indigenous and imperial actors. It shows how these encounters were continually shaped and defined by the relative balance of knowledge held by Indigenous mariners and their colonial counterparts. Every wave of imperial activity was hemmed to some extent by imperial actors' geographic ignorance, because changing economic, technological, and geopolitical circumstances were accompanied by shifting baselines in requisite knowledge. The contours of the coast were poorly understood by outsiders when the HBC began efforts to capture the maritime fur trade from its US competitors in the 1820s. This geography of ignorance constrained the movements of imperial mariners and provided the conditions within which they learned to fear coastal people. A shipwreck could be devastating to life and property, but it also meant the impossibility of defence against would-be aggressors. In 1825, Captain Henry Hanwell had every reason to avoid the coast and its people given the possibility of running aground on an unlit and unevenly charted shore. Geographic ignorance checked imperial ambition in the early nineteenth century. Ironically, perhaps, this ignorance could only be overcome by conforming to the expectations of the very people Captain Hanwell so studiously avoided: Indigenous peoples whose seafaring skills and marine knowledge had allowed them to thrive on the coast from time immemorial. It took someone with Captain William Henry McNeill's cultural acumen and flexibility for the HBC to finally gain a foothold on the fogbound coast in the 1830s. But he could not have succeeded unassisted. HBC efforts to navigate the coast were defined at every stage by the disposition of Indigenous mariners and titleholders like Sinoughton, Tom, Waskalatchy, Chaseaw, and Captain McNeill's wife, Matilda.

The HBC's hard-won foothold was hardly comprehensive. It was characterized as a working knowledge of strategic harbours, river mouths, and the navigational routes that connected them. Still, it provided the foundation on which later imperial knowledge was constructed. A portend of changes to come was evident in 1841 when an HBC officer displaced a Nisqually chief at the helm of the USS *Vincennes* (US Exploring Expedition). HBC pilots would render similar assistance to the incoming surveyors of the US Coast Survey and Royal Navy as they sought to produce comprehensive coastal charts and guides to aid the burgeoning investment, settlement, and marine traffic that flooded the region in the 1850s and 1860s. But HBC surveyors could offer little intelligence pertaining to offshore waters and large stretches off the coast considered marginal to the fur trade. Again, imperial surveyors sought out local knowledge holders who could direct them to previously unknown anchorages, erratic shoal banks, and submerged navigational hazards. Mariners like Rupert Jim, Edenshaw, and Friday amassed considerable profit from their engagement with Royal Navy surveyors and deployed this wealth into Indigenous economies where largesse was a path to status and authority. Other Indigenous mariners resisted the incursion of armed survey vessels. Chief George protested when the Ex Ex undermined his authority to board the *Vincennes* at Neah Bay in 1841. Chief Yelak'ub vocally opposed the Coast Survey at Neah Bay the following decade, forcing Davidson and his topographic party to run drills, post sentries, and fortify their encampment. Still other Makahs may have misdirected surveyors to protect a prized offshore fishing bank from these latest interlopers. Charting the coast required that surveyors navigate intricate and occasionally befuddling marine and social worlds. Sounding lines and draft sheets tell only part of the story; shipboard dances, gift exchanges, and breastworks tell the rest.

Imperial surveyors coveted a prior, Indigenous hydrography. Their colonial successors courted the seafaring skills required to construct a network of lighthouses that overlapped with prior, Indigenous geographies on the most exposed corners of the coast. The ability to read waves and safely land a heavily burdened canoe allowed the Canadian Department of Marine and Fisheries to transit

building materials, lantern glass, lightkeepers, and provisions across the critical distance separating Dodger Cove from Cape Beale as construction began in 1873. Makahs provided similar expertise across the Juan de Fuca Strait, bringing water, wood, and mail ashore to an otherwise isolated Tatoosh Island after its lighthouse was built in 1857. Lightkeepers had to form lasting relationships with the Indigenous peoples on whose territory they took residence. Early offences could spell enduring trouble, as the first keepers at Tatoosh Island discovered prior to abandoning the island in 1858. The Cox family's tenure at Cape Beale (1878-94) was hardly placid, but their ability to communicate in Chinook jargon and learn from their Huu-ay-aht neighbours did much to ensure the successful operation of the lighthouse during their sixteen-year tenure. In coming ashore, lightkeepers entered vibrant Indigenous worlds. The beacons they maintained ensured others would follow. Marine navigation remained tied to geographies of interaction established in the maritime fur trade, but the myriad exchanges that kept lanterns blazing and fog horns bellowing were increasingly obscured from passing ships that relied on these aids to navigation to arrive safely to port. The lightkeepers at Cape Flattery knew Wha-latl and Frank Parker by name, as those at Cape Beale knew Whiskey Charlie, Dick Clamhouse, John Mack. They had to. The same cannot be said of the transpacific mariners who used these lights to enter the Juan de Fuca Strait. Shore-based realities proved remarkably stable in certain respects, but perceptions of the coast were beginning to change.

These interventions did not relieve the geography of fear so much as displace and suspend it. Fear of the coast and its people no longer characterized colonial perceptions of those parts of the coast that had been charted and lit but could reemerge in an instant when disaster struck. Shipwrecks collapsed the distance that earlier interventions had wrought between Indigenous and colonial mariners, throwing castaways at the mercy of those who pulled them from the surf. Castaways and government officials throughout the mid-nineteenth century fretted that Indigenous first responders would revert to the "murder," "plunder" and "cruel atrocities" that allegedly characterized early encounters with beleaguered mariners. At the same time, government frugality and reluctance to

invest in fully staffed lifesaving stations meant the United States and Canada downloaded their responsibility to save lives to a de facto Indigenous coastguard. The ongoing dependence on Indigenous rescuers casts doubt on settler claims to coastal sovereignty. Indigenous rescuers saved lives and property in many instances but could also withhold their cooperation when waves were too rough, compensation inadequate, or a particular captain disliked. A genealogy of intercultural encounter linked existing notions of Indigenous marine tenure to mid-century "ransom payments" and lifesaving rewards that began the blankets Wha-latl received for his assistance to the *Swiss Boy* in 1859. Indigenous leaders forced US and Canadian officials to conform to protocols and expectations that affirmed their local authority over particular stretches of coast. The president "potlatched" Shewish a medal in 1881, at least as far as the Ahousaht chief was concerned. In 1875, an otherwise assimilationist Canadian administration plied Chief Matlahaw with suits, biscuits, molasses, rice, and tobacco, that quickly became the occasion for a more typical potlatch with feasting, speeches, and wealth redistribution. Canadian Indian agent Harry Guillod went a step further in the late 1880s by allocating special monetary rewards to Hesquiaht and Che:k:tles7et'h' titleholders on whose beaches the *Malleville* and *Thomas R. Foster* wrecked – implicit recognition of Indigenous title hardly characteristic of broader government policy in this era of settler retrenchment. It took the tragic and avoidable loss of the *Valencia* in 1906 to shock US and Canadian governments from their complacency, once again redrawing the landscape of maritime encounter.

"But one protracted marine picnic": The Quotidian Power to be Bored at Sea

Shipwrecks reveal the vulnerability of colonial confidence, but they were, by the turn of the century, the exception that proved the rule. By increasing marine safety and alleviating the need for Indigenous intermediaries, navigational infrastructure helped to establish what Laura Ishiguru describes as the "settler colonial everyday" in the Pacific Northwest. Examining some two thousand letters written between 1858 and 1914, Ishiguru observes that British correspondents provide little

evidence of unease toward the Indigenous peoples in their midst. To the contrary, many letters repeated the complaint that there was simply "no news" to report. For all that scholars have emphasized settler anxieties regarding physical security, racial boundaries, and sexual purity, settler correspondents communicated a "powerful, trivializing assurance that the settler colonial order was unremarkable." Ishiguru suggests it was the "quotidian power to be bored in British Columbia" that bolstered British settlers' sense of personal belonging and collective security and ultimately enabled them to claim new lands as their own.[8] But settlers claimed more than land in the new colony. A similar process is evident in the way colonists, industrialists, and imperial agents experienced the marine spaces that cradled and connected settlements across the Pacific Northwest. As early as 1863, Lieutenant Edmund Hope Verney, stationed at Vancouver Island aboard HMS *Grappler*, grumbled to his father that he was "very inactive and secretly longing for a ship to get wrecked, or the Indians to kick up a row, or for something to give me a little work." This was marked change from the geography of fear that defined and delimited the voyage of Captain Henry Hanwell four decades prior. If we extend Ishiguru's arguments beyond the shoreline, the lieutenant's complaint that "lying at Esquimalt is very dull" suggests a consequential trivialization of the imperial occupation of an Indigenous seascape.[9] Absent a shipwreck or trouble with the Natives, there was nothing so remarkable about an English ship in Coast Salish waters. Safety at sea was a precondition to the colonial appropriation of the coast.

This shifting orientation to marine space is particularly apparent in the development of tourism on the Inside Passage route to Alaska, including those waters where the *Nathan E. Stewart* sank some hundred years later. In 1862, Second Master Gowlland (RN) described the Inside Passage as "little known and rarely visited" by anyone but HBC steamers. As elsewhere on the coast, geographic ignorance provided the conditions for colonial fear, for it was here, at the limits of imperial knowledge,

[8] Ishiguro, *Nothing to Write Home About*, 95–96, 118–19.
[9] Verney, *Vancouver Island Letters*, 121.

that "a long Voyage of 400 miles [...] and territorys [sic] of hostile, powerful, daring Indians" began.[10] Gowlland was not the only Royal Navy officer to regard the area with trepidation. In 1862, Rear-Admiral Thomas Maitland advised Governor James Douglas to issue a proclamation advising all British subjects to avoid all travel along the northern coast except in well-armed vessels prepared for Indigenous attacks. [11] In September 1864, Lieutenant Verney expressed his reluctance to venture "up north at this time of year in those unsurveyed waters."[12] The paucity of knowledge about the Inside Passage only began to be relieved in the late-1860s, as British and American surveyors began charting its labyrinthine waters. In 1867, Assistant George Davidson (USCS) conducted a preliminary survey of the United States' new Alaskan possessions, described at length in the "Directory of the Coast of Alaska," which he published in 1869.[13] In 1866, Captain Richards' successor, Daniel Pender (RN), began extensive surveys of British Columbia's northern coast aboard the chartered HBC steamer *Beaver*, producing numerous charts and, in 1883, a 172-page *Supplement* to the earlier *Vancouver Island Pilot*.[14] Theirs was the laborious work that opened the Inside Passage to regular shipping and soon drew travelers and sight-seers to the region.

The West had come to occupy a prominent place in the itinerary of American tourists since the end of the Civil War, as railcars carried an increasingly urban, industrial, and prosperous nation into its proverbial backyard. Steamship companies were eager for sightseers to fill empty berths on runs to the growing network of settlements, lumber camps, and mining operations that dotted the coast.[15] It did not take long for corporate managers to realize entire liners could be profitably devoted to moving leisure-seekers. In the 1880s, intercontinental railroads to Puget Sound, Portland, and Burrard Inlet

[10] Richards, *Private Journal*, 216.
[11] Gough, *Gunboat Frontier*, 151.
[12] Verney, *Vancouver Island Letters*, 224.
[13] George Davidson, 'Directory of the Coast of Alaska', in *Report of Assistant George Davidson Relative to the Resources of the Coast Features of Alaska Territory* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1869), 226–328.
[14] Cook, 'Publication of British Admiralty Charts', 58–59, 69–70; United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, *Vancouver Island Pilot – Supplement. Coast of British Columbia from Queen Charlotte Sound to Portland Canal, Including Queen Charlotte Islands* (London: J.D. Potter, 1883).
[15] Ted C. Hinckley, 'The Inside Passage: A Popular Gilded Age Tour', *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (1965): 67–68.

integrated with Pacific steamers to make the trip to Alaska "one of the easiest and most popular in the Western repertory," as Earl Pomeroy notes in his classic study of Western tourism.[16] One aspect of this banality was the rationalization of tourist travel, expressed in predetermined routes, fixed itineraries, and predictable arrivals, each coordinated with a rail network that spanned the continent.[17] Promotional brochures included itineraries and maps to which passengers could expect careful adherence; travel writers noted approvingly as their ships departed punctually at the advertised time.[18] By the 1890s, Pomeroy notes, the West was no longer considered "physically dangerous, nor was it psychologically so disturbing as it had been." The Inside Passage was no different. The "delightful excursion can be enjoyed without the slightest fatigue or discomfort," observed one earlier traveler. The entire voyage "is but one protracted marine picnic," remarked another.[19] Steam, charts, and lights had transformed the coast. Bereft of environmental hazards and exotic intercultural encounters, coastal itinerants experienced the marine as mundane

One can track this shift in impressions of the Pacific Ocean, described not only as the "greatest and noblest, but the most romantic and amiable ocean."[20] Tourists and travel writer lauded the Inside Passage from Puget Sound to Alaska as exceptionally peaceful, protected from the outer coast by the archipelago that stretched from the Olympic Peninsula to Baranof Island. One passenger described Puget Sound as "smooth, serene, and still."[21] Another cast Georgia Strait as "a perfectly smooth sea, without a ripple save the foamy furrow of our ploughing through it."[22] The tranquility of the ocean

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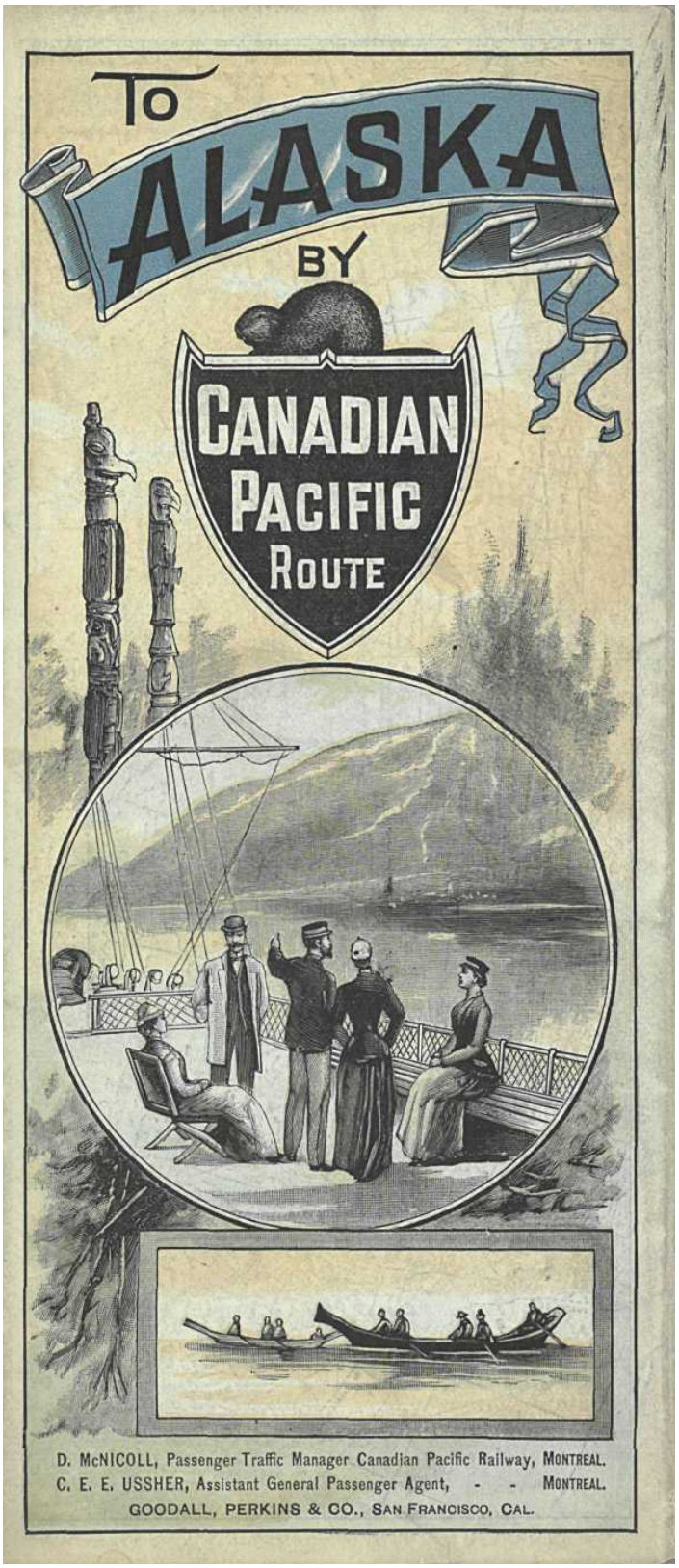
[16] Earl S. Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (New York: Knopf, 1957), vii, 57.
[17] Braun, 'Colonialism's Afterlife', 220.
[18] Canadian Pacific Railway brochures, "To Alaska by Canadian Pacific Route" (San Francisco: Goodall, Perkins & Co., 1892) and "Itinerary of Special Tour to Alaska via the Canadian Pacific Railway and Steamship 'Islander'" (1893), Wallace B. Chung and Madeline H. Chung Collection, UBC-RBSC: https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/chung/chungtext/items/1.0362761; Septima M. Collis, *A Woman's Trip to Alaska, Being an Account of a Voyage through the Inland Seas of the Sitkan Archipelago in 1890* (New York: Cassell, 1890), 45, 49, http://archive.org/details/bwb_P8-AMT-122.
[19] Canadian Pacific Railway brochure, "To Alaska by Canadian Pacific Route," Wallace B. Chung and Madeline H. Chung Collection, UBC-RBSC; Collis, preface, n.p.
[20] Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, 46, 139–40.
[21] Maturin M. Ballou, *The New Eldorado: A Summer Journey to Alaska* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1889), 73, https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcbooks/items/1.0222421.
[22] Collis, *A Woman's Trip to Alaska*, 70.

voyage was readily projected onto the surrounding natural landscape. Alaska's Clarence Strait featured "the same placid waters," according to a third itinerant, and "many a pretty view."[23] Reclining their deck chair or standing at the bow, passengers had only to wait and watch as an entire landscape unfurled, allowing them to "penetrate, either with the naked eye or our glasses, a vista of superb tranquility" (Figure 22).[24] These assessments mirror transforming impressions of the ocean worldwide.[25] Far from threatening, the waters of the Inside Passage were regarded as a panoramic playground by the leisure class: pristine, placid, pretty.

Scholars note that the emergence of steam travel wrought a similar shift in outsiders' perspectives of Indigenous peoples, from essential intermediaries to "passing spectacle." Bruce Braun notes that the effect of this distancing was to incorporate Indigenous peoples and villages "into a mythological space" that had more to do with European discourses of modernity and nationalism than the realities of Indigenous lives.[26] Some leisure seekers were undoubtedly attracted to "Indians" as a titillating reminder of a bygone era of fear. The Tlingit of Aangóon "always proved to be restless and aggressive," observed one itinerant, but were "peaceable enough now."[27] As Braun and others observe, Indigenous people, villages, and canoes were increasingly regarded in aesthetic terms, as picturesque and romantic symbols, and outside history, as remnants of a bygone era.[28] Tourists and travel writers frequently recorded their passing impressions of Indigenous peoples and villages. One writer refers to the "small native villages" seen from time to time along the coast, "all typical of the people and quite picturesque in their dirtiness and peculiar construction."[29] Others describe dugouts canoes as an

[23] Alexander Badlam, *The Wonders of Alaska* (San Francisco: Bancroft, 1890), 26–27, http://archive.org/details/wondersofalaska00badl_0.
[24] Collis, *A Woman's Trip to Alaska*, 70.
[25] See, for example, Rozwadowski, *Fathoming the Ocean*, 7–12.
[26] Braun, 'Colonialism's Afterlife', 220.
[27] Ballou, *New Eldorado*, 321.
[28] Braun, 'Colonialism's Afterlife', 220; Fraga, 'Steam Power'; Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, 141; Wenstob, 'Canoes and Colony: The Dugout Canoe as a Site of Intercultural Engagement in the Colonial Context of British Columbia (1849-1871)', 192.
[29] Ballou, *New Eldorado*, 194.

Figure 22. Promotional brochure for the Canadian Pacific Railway's Alaskan route, 1892



Gazing out to sea. An illustrated promotional depicts leisure-seekers passively surveying an idealized landscape of mountains, totem poles, and dugout canoes. Canadian Pacific Railway brochure, "To Alaska by Canadian Pacific Route" (San Francisco: Goodall, Perkins & Co., 1892), Chung Collection, UBC Rare Books and Special Collection, CC-TX-152-18.

interesting "sight," or contributing to "many a pretty marine view."[30] These constructions reveal how intercultural encounter was transformed into a visual experience. White voyeurs easily collapsed Indigenous peoples and societies into the surrounding landscape, as one more feature of a picturesque wilderness rather than human complex human actors in their own right. Consigning totem poles and canoes to nature, White travelers made wide sweeping assertions about their respective positions in the march of history. "The land is solely possessed and occupied by white Europeans," declared one, "before whom the natives have steadily vanished like dew before the sun."[31] Such pronouncements were blatantly false but are evidence enough of a hard-won colonial confidence.

Carried by steamships, White itinerants had no trouble laying claim to the land unfolding before them. But the very possibility of this visual appropriation depended on a prior possessing of the ocean. Scholars have rightly described this turn as a consequence of technology, a "settler steam imaginary" in which steamboats signaled settler modernity, superiority, and independence from "traditional" Indigenous intermediaries and canoes.[32] But this shifting perspective was equally a function of marine knowledge that allowed deeper-hulled ships to enter these waters without Indigenous consent or assistance. One traveler aboard the steamship *Queen* in 1890 described the passengers' "great effort" to convince the captain to run up Bute Inlet. He refused due to his limited knowledge of the water, explaining that "he had never explored it excepting in a small boat, and was ignorant of the soundings."[33] The admission is suggestive of the extent to which steamship routes were hemmed by knowledge of a given area. Geographic knowledge, expressed in charts and lighthouses, provided the indispensable conditions by which mariners could experience the coast as serene, placid,

[30] Collis, *A Woman's Trip to Alaska*, 51; Badlam, *Wonders of Alaska*, 26–27.
[31] Ballou, *New Eldorado*, 205–6.
[32] See Fraga, 'Steam Power'; Braun, 'Colonialism's Afterlife', 218–20; Harris, *Resettlement of British Columbia*, 183. For similar observations beyond the region, see Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 14; Patricia Jane Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 152.
[33] Bute Inlet was included as an extension to an earlier chart in 1867, in what one commentator describes as an "unwieldy" rendering of the area's tangled geography. The northern section, including Bute Inlet, did not receive a dedicated chart until 1900. Collis, *A Woman's Trip to Alaska*, 180; Cook, 'Publication of British Admiralty Charts', 58.

or picturesque. It took more than a steamer or a gunboat to transform European experiences of a little known coast. The geography of fear hewed to a geography of ignorance for these and other experienced mariners.

A "settler steam imaginary" did indeed take hold off the coast, but its geographic reach was always defined by availability or want of a reliable guide, chart, or beacon. Knowledge preceded technology in the visual and practical possession of the coast. This is a critical point insofar as it enables us to reposition Indigenous peoples as indispensable actors that made possible the distribution of new technologies across the coast. If steamboats mask their ties to human labour, as Richard White observes, they have also obscured from colonial mariners and their scholarly interpreters their dependence on different forms of local knowledge.[34] Recognizing both dependencies enables us to tell history in a manner that challenges the customary teleology of "technological progress" by remaining alert to Indigenous agency. The coast has always been an Indigenous seascape, but by the 1880s it took exceptional circumstances for colonial actors to be reminded of this critical, unwavering fact.

Sea Changes

The 2016 sinking of the *Nathan E. Stewart* was exceptional in many respects. The ecological and cultural consequences were devastating and ongoing, but the Heiltsuk Nation's response was remarkable in its own right. HTC struck its own committee to investigate the incident and weigh consequences appropriate to Kirby Corporation and Canada's breach of Ǧviḷás. The Dáduqvḷá Committee put Kirby on notice "that their vessels are not welcome in Heiltsuk waters until they have acknowledged the harms done to the Heiltsuk," and called on Canada and British Columbia to demonstrate their stated commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), providing each party with a specific list of recommendations related to the *Nathan*

[34] White, *Organic Machine*, 37–38.

E. Stewart incident and its aftermath.[35] In 2018, Heiltsuk filed a civil claim to clarify, among other points, the status of Aboriginal title rights to the seabed and foreshore.[36] In 2019, the Heiltsuk hosted a one-of-a-kind criminal sentencing circle in Bella Bella, attended by Yím̓as (hereditary chiefs) in their regalia, a Canadian justice in his robes, Elders, youth, and other witnesses gathered around cedar boughs and copper shields. Heiltsuk presenters unanimously repeated the Dáduqvḷá Committee declaration that Kirby's ships would be banished from their territory until the corporation took responsibility and offered recompense, while Judge Hoy imposed $3 million in fines.[37] In 2024, Chief Harvey Humchitt and other Heiltsuk leaders traveled to London, England, to call on the International Maritime Organization to consider cultural harm in maritime conventions regarding shipping accidents and pollution.[38] Such actions pointedly challenge government and corporate actors' assumed right to navigate and govern Indigenous seascapes independent of Indigenous law and consent.

These are hardly isolated assertions. Indigenous protected areas have been declared across the coast, raising old questions about authority over unceded marine waters. Decades of advocacy led to the 2010 establishment of a Marine Conservation Area Reserve to protect the waters surrounding Haida Gwaii.[39] The Haida have also extended their stewardship well-beyond the coast to a volcanic formation some 180 kilometres offshore. In 1997, the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) declared the subsurface SG̲aan K̲inghlas (Bowie Seamount) a Haida marine protected area. Canada followed suit with its own declaration in 2008, and a co-management strategy developed with CHN in 2018.[40] In the past five years, Indigenous protected areas have been declared in the marine territories of the

[35] Heiltsuk Tribal Council, 'Dáduqvḷá Qn̓txv Ğviḷásax̌', 46–53.
[36] Gilpin, 'Heiltsuk Sue Canada'.
[37] Georgia Lloyd-Smith, 'Witnessing the Nathan E. Stewart Sentencing Hearing in Heiltsuk Territories', *West Coast Environmental Law* (blog), 5 September 2019, https://www.wcel.org/blog/witnessing-nathan-e-stewart-sentencing-hearing-heiltsuk-territories.
[38] Wood, 'Frustrated with Canada's Spill Response'.
[39] Michelle Gamage, 'How First Nations Are Asserting Sovereignty Over Their Lands and Waters', The Tyee, 22 June 2023, https://thetyee.ca/News/2023/06/22/First-Nations-Sovereignty-Lands-Waters/.
[40] Council of the Haida Nation and Canada. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, 'SGaanKinghlas-Bowie Seamount: Marine Protected Area Management Plan', 2019, 5, https://www.haidanation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CHN_DFO_SK-BS_Plan_EN_WEB.pdf.

Mamalilikulla, Kitasoo Xai'xais, and Tsawout people, among others. [41] In some cases, these territories are monitored and protected by Indigenous guardians with the same legal authority as park rangers.[42] These Indigenous-led initiatives have prompted the Canadian government to provide supporting funding and policies of its own. In 2022, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pledged $800 million to support Indigenous-led conservation on the Pacific coast. In February 2023, Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), the successor to Marine and Fisheries, joined fifteen First Nations in announcing their intention to implement a string of marine protected areas between Vancouver Island and the Alaska border. [43] Similar efforts are underway in the United States. In summer 2023, the Resighini Tribe of the Yurok People, the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, and the Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria agreed to collaboratively steward the first Indigenous Marine Stewardship Area in the United States, encompassing nearly 700 square miles of northern California coast.[44] These declarations have forced thorny jurisdictional conversations, and shown Indigenous leaders as quite willing to take the lead in stewarding their ancestral territories.

Indigenous protected areas are just one recent facet of the Indigenous legal and cultural resurgence now taking place on the coast. Similar efforts have been underway for decades on the coasts of Washington. In 1984, Makah advocacy and legal pressure prompted Congress to order the return of Tatoosh and Waadah Islands, the sites, respectively, of the Cape Flattery Lighthouse and a

[41] Steph Kwetásel'wet Wood, 'The Mamalilikulla's Long Journey Home', *The Narwhal*, 24 September 2022, https://thenarwhal.ca/ipca-mamalilikulla/; Rochelle Baker, '"We'll Do It Ourselves": Weary of Waiting on Ottawa, First Nation Sets up Marine Protected Area', *National Observer*, 23 June 2022, https://www.nationalobserver.com/2022/06/23/news/well-do-it-ourselves-weary-waiting-ottawa-first-nation-sets-marine-protected-area; Kathryn Marlow, 'First Nation on Vancouver Island Declares Marine Protected Area', *CBC News*, 22 June 2023, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/first-nation-on-vancouver-island-declares-marine-protected-area-1.6884656.

[42] 'BC Park Ranger Authority Appointed to Nuxalk, Kitasoo Xai'xais Guardians', *Williams Lake Tribune*, 25 July 2023, sec. News, https://www.wltribune.com/news/bc-park-ranger-authority-appointed-to-nuxalk-kitasoo-xaixais-guardians-5556396.

[43] Ali Withers, The Nation Video, and Ludwig Hurtado, 'Indigenous-Led Marine Protection Sets a Course Along Canada's Pacific', 7 February 2023, https://www.thenation.com/article/environment/indigenous-protected-areas/.

[44] 'Three California Tribal Nations Declare First U.S. Indigenous Marine Stewardship Area', *Native News Online*, 21 September 2023, https://nativenewsonline.net/environment/three-california-tribal-nations-declare-first-u-s-indigenous-marine-stewardship-area.

one-time lifesaving station. Makahs granted the Coast Guard permission to service the now-automated lighthouse, rectifying a conflict that began 127 years earlier when construction crews first erected blockhouses above their village on Tatoosh Island's shore.[45] In 1999, Makahs undertook their first whale hunt in seventy years, a dramatic expression of their maritime sovereignty and culture.[46] Concurrent with these efforts was the 1989 "Paddle to Seattle," which inaugurated a revival of canoe culture. The initiative has since evolved into the annual Tribal Canoe Journeys, in which participants from across the Pacific Northwest paddle to a host nation and ask permission to come ashore. Jon Daehnke describes such protocols as "central to the reassertion of tribal primacy and sovereignty on the landscape" reconnecting and revitalizing Indigenous seascapes "explicitly outside of the framework of the colonial nation-state."[47] Seventy-nine families made the most recent journey to Puyallup in 2024, together paddling nearly 1000 miles.[48] As in British Columbia, the Indigenous resurgence in Washington State is also evident in the courtroom. In 2016, an appeal by the Lummi Nation prompted the US Corps of Engineers to reject a planned coal-export terminal that threatened the exercise of their treaty fishing rights.[49] In 2023, the Lummi filed a judicial review to suspend Canadian approval of the terminal expansion near Vancouver in an effort to ensure its rights were considered and respected on that side of the colonial border.[50]

These may seem like novel initiatives. In fact, they are a continuation of the diverse strategies Indigenous peoples have undertaken to manage seafaring strangers since Tom boarded the *William & Ann* in 1825, and before. Indigenous peoples' historic handling of traders, surveyors, lightkeepers, and

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[45] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 267–68; Alvin J. Ziontz, *A Lawyer in Indian Country: A Memoir* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 77.
[46] Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 271–72.
[47] Jon D. Daehnke, 'A Heritage of Reciprocity: Canoe Revitalization, Cultural Resilience, and the Power of Protocol', *The Public Historian* 41, no. 1 (1 February 2019): 70.
[48] Margaret Benson, 'Tribal Journeys 2023: After Three-Year Hiatus, Canoe Families Pull to Muckleshoot', IndigiNews, 7 August 2023, https://indiginews.com/news/tribal-journeys-2023-after-three-year-hiatus-canoe-families-pull-to-muckleshoot.
[49] Simonelli, 'Lummi Nation Opposes BP's Purchase of Cherry Point Parcels'.
[50] Leyland Cecco, 'Indigenous Nation in US Seeks to Block Billion-Dollar Port Project in Canada', *The Guardian*, 19 May 2023, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/19/lummi-nation-canada-port-extension-project.

castaways set the stage for their descendants' recent reassertions of jurisdiction over marine traffic in the shared and contested waters of the Northeastern Pacific. Such claims may alarm those who take for granted what many settlers consider their right to freely navigate marine spaces, but their apparent novelty is belied by the history presented here. It took numerous navigational interventions, executed over decades of gruelling labour and unpredictable encounter, before merchants, mariners, politicians, and leisure-seekers assumed and took for granted our ability to navigate coastal waters independent of Indigenous consent or assistance. Recent headlines suggest the tides are shifting again today, making this the ideal time to reflect on how we arrived at this juncture. The fact that the colonial mariner strayed, "not knowing whither he went," had tremendous consequences for the unfolding of colonialism along North America's Pacific littoral.[51] Indigenous nations and settlers continue to navigate this legacy. We, too, cannot say where we are going. We might start by understanding where we've been.

[51] Greene, "A Sketch of my Life," book 2, p. 44.

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Appendix A – Indigenous Placenames in Sailing Guides

Tables 4 and 5 tally instances in which Indigenous names are explicitly provided in US and British sailing guides: specifically, instances in which a placename is accompanied by an Indigenous derivation, meaning, and/or pronunciation; in which the Indigenous name is provided alongside its European counterpart; and in which names are given for specific Indigenous villages. Locations in US guides ranges from the Columbia River (Point Adams) to Vancouver Island (Nanaimo). Locations in British guides range from the Juan de Fuca Strait (New Dungeness) to the Nass River. The organization of the tables follows that given in the sailing guides, generally moving from north to south (with some variation between editions). The spelling of names in the 'Site' columns follows that in the guides and may not reflect contemporary usage. A summary of these tables is provided above in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 4. List of Indigenous placenames in US sailing guides, 1858-1889

Site	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1858)	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1862)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1869)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1889)
Point Adams	Klaát-sop	Klaát-sop	Klaát-sop	Klaát-sop
Cape Disappointment	Káh-eese	Káh-eese	Káh-eese	Káh-eese
Chinook Point	Nóse-to-ilse; Chenoke [Broughton]	Nóse-to-ilse; Chenoke [Broughton]	Nóse-to-ilse; Chenoke [Broughton]	Nóse-to-ilse; Chenoke [Broughton]
Scarborough Hill		No-se-misp		
Point Ellis	No-wehtl-kai-ilse	No-wehtl-kai-ilse	No-wehtl-kai-ilse	No-wehtl-kai-ilse
Tongue Point		Soo-kum-its-é-ak	Soo-kum-its-é-ak	Soo-kum-its-é-ak
Pillar Rock, Columbia River				Taluaptea
Columbia River	Shocatilcum or Chockalilum [Clarke] "the accent should be on the penult"	Shocatilcum or Chockalilum [Clarke] "the accent should be on the penult"	Shocatilcum or Chockalilum [Clarke] "the accent should be on the penult"	Shocatilcum or Chockalillcum [Clarke] "the accent should be on the penult"
Willamette River	"A corruption of the Indian name"	"A corruption of the Indian name Wallamut"		
Leadbetter Point (Shoalwater Bay)	Chik-lis-ilh	Chik-lis-ilh	Chik-lis-ilh	
Cape Shoalwater	Quahpt-sum	Quahpt-sum	Quahpt-sum	Quahpt-sum
Wil-a-pah, stream entering Shoalwater Bay				"called the Wil-a-pah [...] The Wil-a-pah Indians are extinct. The true name is Ah-whil-a-pah or Ah-whil-lapsh"

Site	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1858)	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1862)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1869)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1889)
Pine Island, Shoalwater Bay		Nass-too	Nass-too	Nass-too
Peninsula, Shoalwater Bay		Tee-choots	Tee-choots	Tee-choots
Humptólups River				"The Koom-toh'-lapsh of the Chehalis Indians"
Chehalis River	Tché-há-lis	"derived from the indian tribe inhabiting the bay and river. They pronounce it Tché-hæ-lis or Tsi-hæ-lis, signifying sand"	"derived from the indian tribe inhabiting the bay and river. They pronounce it Tché-hæ-lis or Tsi-hæ-lis, signifying sand"	Nesalups
South point of Gray's Harbor				"The Indian name of the south point of the bay is Chehalis. They pronounce it Tché-hæ-lis or Tsi-hæ-lis, signifying sand"
Copalis River	"tribe of Indians, from whom the river derives its name"	"tribe of Indians, from whom the river derives its name"	"tribe of Indians, from whom the river derives its name"	"tribe of Indians, from whom the river derives its name"
Qué-ni-ūlt River	"The name of this river is usually known by the old settlers as Qué-noith, but the Indians are said to pronounce it as if spelled Qué-ni-ūlt, accenting the first syllable strongly, and the last so softly that many persons consider they call themselves simply Qué-nai"	"The name of this river is usually known by the old settlers as Qué-noith, but the Indians are said to pronounce it as if spelled Qué-ni-ūlt, accenting the first syllable strongly, and the last so softly that many persons consider they call themselves simply Qué-nai [...] The Mukkaws call it the Quin-atl"	"The name of this river is usually known by the old settlers as Qué-noith, but the Indians are said to pronounce it as if spelled Qué-ni-ūlt, accenting the first syllable strongly, and the last so softly that many persons consider they call themselves simply Qué-nai [...] The Mukkaws call it the Quin-atl"	"The name of this river is usually known by the old settlers as Qué-noith, but the Indians formerly pronounced it as if spelled Qué-ni-ūlt, accenting the first syllable strongly, and the last so softly that many persons consider they call themselves simply Quénai. The Mukkaws call the tribe Quén-atl"
Queets River				Kweets'-hu
Raft River				"may be the Loh'-whilse of the Mukkaws"
Kwaak-sat				"Indian village at the mouth" of Hoh River
Teahwhit Head				"The Indian name is Te-ah'whit (accent on ah'), which in the Chinook jargon, signifies 'leg'"

Site	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1858)	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1862)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1869)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1889)
Quillihute River				"On the ocean side and face of this mound of the Indian villiage [sic] of Lapush"
Quillihute River				"first known as the Kwih-leh-yut by the Chehalis Indians, and the Kwmeetul or Kwi-dee-tul by the Mukkaws [...] In the Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge 200, it is referred to as Kwille'yute four times; in 1857 it was written Kwil-leh'yute by Gibbs; on the Chart, 603, it is Quil-ley-ute, and this is used until 1879, when it is given on the General Land Office map as Quillyhute. On the present coast chart it is Quillihute"
small stream north of Destruction Island	"we believe is called Hooch by the Indians"	"we believe is called Hooch by the Indians"	"after the Hooch Indians living upon its banks"	"At present [...] pronounced Hoh by the Indians living there. In 1857-1866, they pronounced it Hooch (ch as in German ich), or Hooh"
Osett				"Hosel'to, strongly aspirating the *h*"
Osett Island, Flattery Rocks				Hosett'
Osett River				"Hosett', strongly aspirating the *h* (1864)"
village on the Tsooyes River				Too-ess
"the Arch-a-wat"				"summer village of the Wa-atch Indians [...] *Arch-a-wat*. Indian village, name. Smithsonian Contribution to Knowledge, 220, spells it

Site	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1858)	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1862)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1869)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1889)
				Ahchawat, p 6; Gibbs named it Hatch-a-wat"
Olympic Mountains				Smah"'-dik't
Fuca Pillar				"In Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, 220, p. 86, the pillar is named Tsá-tsá-dak [...] On page 106 it is called Tsar-tsar-dark"
Tatoosh Island	"The present name is that given to us by the Indian tribe (Muk-kaw)"	"The present name is that given to us by the Indian tribe (Muk-kaw) [...] Too-too-tche is the Nootka name for the 'Thunderbird.' The Muk-kaws originally came from the west coast of Vancouver Island"	"The present name is that given to us by the Indian tribe (Muk-kaw) [...] Too-too-tche is the Nootka name for the 'Thunderbird.' The Muk-kaws originally came from the west coast of Vancouver Island"	"The present name is that given to us when we were here three months in 1852, by the Indian Tribe (the Muk-kaws) [...] Too-too-tche is the Nootka name for the 'Thunderbird.' The Muukaws originally came from the west coast of Vancouver Island". Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, 220, p. 1, calls the Island Tatooche; p. 60, Tatoosh; p. 105 it says Chardi is the name of the island, which is also called Oa-jecta; and p. 60, Opa-jek-ta"
Cape Flattery village		"Claasit, or Claaset"	"Claasit, or Claaset"	
"winter village of the Mukkaws"	["Within a mile of Koitlah Point was a large village of the Mukkahs"]	Wa-atch	"winter village of the Mukkaws"	"Wa-atch, the village at mouth of Wäatch creek"
Née-ah Bay [Neah]	"The Indian name is that now adopted, and the only one by which it is known on the coast"	"The Indian name is that now adopted, and the only one by which it is known on the coast"	"The Indian name is that now adopted, and the only one by which it is known on the coast"	"The Indian name is that now adopted, and the only one by which it is known on the coast"
small stream by Sail Rock	["called the Ok-ho River on the Admiralty charts, but this is not the Indian name"]	["called the Okho River on the Admiralty charts, but this is not the Indian name"]	["called the Okho River on the Admiralty charts, but this is not the Indian name,	To-kwax-ose "called the Ok-ho River on the Admiralty charts, but this is not the

Site	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1858)	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1862)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1869)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1889)
			and has probably been confounded with the O'Ko-ho, thirteen miles eastward of Neé-ah Bay"]	indian name, and has probably been confounded with the O' Ko-ho or Hó-ko, thirteen miles eastward of Neé-ah Bay. The Indian name for the stream is To-kwax-ose (Tococsos on the charts)."
Sail Rock	Saelok	Saelok	Saelok	"In 1841 the [US Ex Ex] named the rock Sail Rock from its shape and white appearance. Kellett calls it Klah-o-loh, or Seals (Klah-os-lah on the charts). The Indians sometimes call it Saelock, but this is merely their attempt to pronounce it Sail Rock; hence it is occasionally called Seal Rock [...] Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, 22, says p. 186: 'The name of the rock lying off the mouth of the Tokwaksose (Tococsos) River, two miles east of Neeah Bay, is Kaith-la-jeet'"
Carrel River	Pisht-st	Pisht-st	Pisht-st	Pysht River
Clallam Bay				Klā-klā-wice
Hygedith				"Indian village at the eastern part of the bay near the turn of the Clallam River is named Hygedith on Belcher's chart]
Hoko				"The Indian village [...] on the west side of the bay [Clallam] is Kla-kla-win; on

Site	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1858)	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1862)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1869)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1889)
				the Coast Survey chart it is named Hoko"
Sekou Point				"The proper pronunciation [...] is Sik-ke-u"
Lyre, stream, Clallam Bay (later Lyre River)		Kwa-ha-mish	Kwa-ha-mish	Tsa-how
western point of Tongue Point, Crescent Bay				Altawas
Elwha				"Indian village on the Elwha of the same name"
Washington or Budd's Harbor	S'quim "by which it is generally known to the settlers"	S'quim "by which it is generally known to the settlers"	S'quim "by which it is generally known to the settlers"	"The Indian name of the harbor is S'quim, by which it was generally known to the settlers after 1850."
village at Port San Juan	Onismah	Onismah	Onismah	Onismah
Sooke	T'sōk	T'sōk	T'sōk	T'sōk
Esquimalt				Isch-oy-malt "so written in the early letters of the Governor of the Hudson Bay Company"
Cowitchen Head	"The Indian name for the tribe in this viciinity"	"the name of the Indian tribe in this vicinity"	"the name of the Indian tribe in this vicinity"	"the name of the Indian tribe in this vicinity"
Sucia Group, Canal de Haro		Choo-sá-nung	Choo-sá-nung	Choo-sá-nung
Watmough Head		Noo-chaad-kwun	Noo-chaad-kwun	Noo-chaad-kwun
Bellingham Channel	Tut-segh	Tut-segh	Tut-segh	Tut-segh
Strawberry Bay	Tutl-ke-teh-nus	Tutl-ke-teh-nus	Tutl-ke-teh-nus	Tutl-ke-teh-nus
Bald Peak	Sheh-ung-tlh "signifying the home of the Thunder bird"	Sheh-ung-tlh "signifying the home of the Thunder bird"	Sheh-ung-tlh "signifying the home of the Thunder bird"	Sheh-ung-tlh "signifying the home of the Thunder bird"
Lummi Island		"McLaughlin's island by the [Ex Ex] in 1841; named Lummi Island in 1853 by the US Coast Survey, because inhabited by that tribe. It is known by no other name."	"McLaughlin's island by the [Ex Ex] in 1841; named Lummi Island in 1853 by the US Coast Survey, because inhabited by that tribe. It is known by no other name."	Smem-ma-uk

Site	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1858)	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1862)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1869)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1889)
Reil's Harbor, Lummi Island				"The Indian name of the anchorage is Hiks-pe-slaken"
Smuggler's Cove, Lummi Island				Ma-men-pe-slaken
Mount Constitution		Sweh-lagh	Sweh-lagh	
Point Roberts		Now-wuk-sen	Now-wuk-sen	Now-wuk-sen
Birch Bay		Tsan-wuch	Tsan-wuch	Tsan-wuch
Nanaimo	"that best representing the sound is Nah-ny'-moh"	"that best representing the sound is Nah-ny'-moh"	(Nahny'moh)	"that [spelling] best representing the Indian sound is Nah-yn' moh"
Whatcom		"Indian name for 'Noisy Water,' the outlet of the lake"	"Indian name for 'Noisy Water,' the outlet of the lake"	"Indian name of the creek is What'com"
Indian Island				Skul-luck-sion
Sandy Point				Sly-ak'-son
village near Chimikum Creek				Chem-a-kum
Foulweather Bluff	Pitch-pōl	Pitch-pol	Pitch-pol	Pitch-pōl
Scatchet Head	"The proper name for the point is Skadg'-it, and the Indian name of the point, Skoolhks"	"The proper name for the point is Skadg'-it, and the Indian name of the point, Skoolhks"	"The proper name for the point is Skadg'-it, and the Indian name of the point, Skoolhks"	"The proper name for the point is Skadg'-it, and the Indian name of the point, Skoolhks"
Point No Point	Hahd-skus	Hahd-skus	Hahd-skus	Hahd-skus
Port Madison		Noo-soh'-kum	Noo-soh'-kum	Noo-soh'-kum
Battery Point		Me-kwah-mooks	Me-kwah-mooks	Me-kwah-mooks
Alki	"the Indian phrase for 'by and by'"	"the Indian phrase for 'by and by'"	"the Indian phrase for 'by and by'"	
Duwamish Bay	"The bay was called Elliott's Bay by the [Ex Ex] [...] but the present name is that by which it is invariably known and was adopted from the name of the tribe of Indians inhabiting its shores."	"The bay was called Elliott's Bay by the [Ex Ex] [...] but the present name is that by which it is invariably known and was adopted from the name of the tribe of Indians inhabiting its shores."	"The bay was called Elliott's Bay by the [Ex Ex] [...] but the present name is that by which it is invariably known and was adopted from the name of the tribe of Indians inhabiting its shores."	"The bay was called Elliott's Bay by the [Ex Ex] [...] but the present name is that by which it is invariably known, and was adopted from the name of the tribe of Indians inhabiting its shores."

Site	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1858)	*Directory for the Pacific Coast* (1862)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1869)	*Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot* (1889)
Seattle	"The name is derived from that of the Chief Se-at-tl"	"The name of the town is derived from that of the chief, Se-at-tl [check sp]"	"The name of the town is derived from that of the chief, Se-at-tl [check sp]	"The name of the town is derived from that of the chief, Se-at-tlh"
eastern point of Blake Island	Tatugh	Tatugh	Tatugh	Tatugh
Mount Rainier				"it is locally known as Mount Tacoma. The Indian name is Taghoma"
Commencement Bay	"We believe the Indian name for this bay is Puyallup"	"We believe the Indian name for this bay is Puyallup"	"The Indian name for this bay is Puyallup"	"The Indian name of the bay is Puyallup"
Steilacoom	"The pronunciation [...] as given to us by Indians, is Tchil'-æ-cum"	"The pronunciation [...] as given to us by Indians, is Tchil'-æ-cum"	"The pronunciation [...] as given to us by Indians, is Tchil'-æ-cum"	"The pronunciation [...] as given to us by Indians, is Tchil'-æ-cum"
Nisqually		"The name is Indian"	"The name is Indian"	
Port Gamble	Teekalet	Teekalet	Teekalet	"The Indian name for the western point of the entrance to this bay is Tee-ka-let, and the place went by that name for some time"

Table 5. List of Indigenous placenames in British sailing guides, 1864-1899

The Vancouver Island Pilot *(1864) and* Supplement *(1883) respectively consider the southern and northern portions of what is now British Columbia. These two geographies were consolidated into one volume in the* British Columbia Pilot *(1888).*

Site	*Vancouver Island Pilot* (1864)	*V.I. Pilot: Supplement* (1883)	*British Columbia Pilot* (1888)	*British Columbia Pilot* (1898)
Cape Flattery	"Vancouver, in 1792, says it was known to the natives by the name of Classet"		"Vancouver, in 1792, says it was known to the natives by the name of Classet"	"Vancouver, in 1792, says it was known to the natives by the name of Classet"
Baaddah Point, Néah Bay				Mee na
Seal Rock	Klaholoh		Klaholoh	Klahosloh
village, New Dungeness Bay	Clalum			
village, Desolation Sound			Ka kae kae	Ka kae kae
stream, Bute Inlet	Homalko River		Homalko River	Homalko River

Site	*Vancouver Island Pilot* (1864)	*V.I. Pilot: Supplement* (1883)	*British Columbia Pilot* (1888)	*British Columbia Pilot* (1898)
ruins of village on north bank of the Nimpkish	Oheslakee		Cheslakee	Cheslakee
village, Village Island			Mamalilaculla	Mamalilaculla
village, Turnour Island, Knight Inlet			Karlukwees	Karlukwees
Sargeaunt [sic] Passage			Pumish	Pumish
Glendale Cove			Kiokh	Kiokh
village, valley at head of Knight Inlet			Tsauwati	
Nak wak to rapids			Kah tsis illa	Kah tsis illa
winter village, Seymour Inlet			Ta altz	Ta altz
village				Wa watl
remarkable water west of Nitinat	Tsusiat		Tsusiat	Tsusiat
village, Sheshart Channel	Sheshart		Shechart	Sechart
Indian village, Clayoquot Sound	E-cha-chets		E cha chets	E cha chets
village on Vargas Island	Kelsemart		Kelsemart	Kelsemart
village, Clayoquot Sound				Ahousat
summer village, Friendly Cove				Yuquot
summer village, Village Island				Aktese
Reef Point, Quatsino Sound				Omannys
Danger Rock, Quatsino				Okookstaw
village, Koskeemo Bay				May hat tee
Brockton Island				Quolaad
Limestone Island				Maiclagh
Hecate Cove				Kagaogh
Round Island			Quatishe	Quatishe
Hankin point				Ruanaispah
Cape Caution		Kla-Klees-la	Kla-Klees-la	Kla-Klees-la

Site	*Vancouver Island Pilot* (1864)	*V.I. Pilot: Supplement* (1883)	*British Columbia Pilot* (1888)	*British Columbia Pilot* (1898)
village, Smith Inlet			Quascilla	Quascilla
Smith Inlet		Quas-cillah	Quascilla	Quascilla
Grief Bay		Telakwas	Telakwas	Telakwas
Schooner Retreat		Ka-pi-lish	Ka pi lish	Ka pi lish
village, Rivers Inlet			Owikino	Oweekayno
Safety Cove		Oat-so-alis	Oat so alis	Oat so alis
Restoration ay				Tsekwai
Menzies Point				Taliuko
village, Dean Channel				Kimsquit
White rock, Milbanke Sound		Ka-mas-ik	Ka mas ik	Ka mas ik
Moss passage		Too-witl	Too witl	Too witl
St. John Harbour		Cheek-Squintz	Cheek squintz	Cheek squintz
Holmes Bay		Quel-ak-sea-hx	Quel ak se ax	Quel ak se ax
Village			Kitamat	["Two Indian villages of the Kitamat tribe"]
Evening point		Klewnuggit	Klewnuggit	Klewnuggit
Lowe Inlet				Kumowadah
Hunt Point				Quil mass
village on Skeena		Naas-Glee	Naas-Glee	Naas Glee
village			Kispaioks	
Port Essington			Spuk sūt	Spuk sūt
Rachel Islands, Chatham Sound		Lak-ōh-witz	Lak ōh witz	Lak ōh witz
Lucy islands				Lachspanner
Tsimpsean Peninsula		"takes its name from a tribe of Indians residing upon it"	"takes its name from a tribe of Indians residing upon it"	"takes its name from a tribe of Indians residing upon it"
village, Tugwell Island		Metlah-Catlah	Metlah-Catlah	Metlah-Catlah
Big Bay, Chatham Sound		Lak-Hou	Lak hou	Lak hou

Site	*Vancouver Island Pilot* (1864)	*V.I. Pilot: Supplement* (1883)	*British Columbia Pilot* (1888)	*British Columbia Pilot* (1898)
Union Passage, Laredo Sound to Ogden Channel		Matliksimtas	Matliksimtas	Matliksimtas
"Indian fishing village"		Yellocki	Yellocki	Yellocki
Broken Group, Outer Coast, Cape Calvert to Ogden Channel		Qual-a-qute	Qual a qute	Qual a qute
Fingal Island				Kuhmkeate
Limit Island				Tmaitlek
Gander Islands		Cha-che-Kwas	Cha che kwas	Cha che kwas
village, Ogden Channel			Kit kat lah	Kitkatlah
upper Nass village		Kilawālāks	Kilawālāks	Kilawālāks
south Nass village		Kit-min-i-ook	Kit min i ook	Kit min i ook
middle Nass village		Kit-lah-kum-ka-dah	Kit lah kum ka dah	Kit lah kum ka dah
north Nass village		Kit-a-Kauze	Kit a Kauze	Kit a Kauze
Observatory Inlet		Kit-Sah-Watl	Kit Sah Watl	Kit Sah Watl
Salmon Cove				Kwinamelith
Brooke Island				Lachjokiyeht
Indian village of the Shangoi tribe		Nin-stints	Nin-stints	Ninstints
Indian village, eastern extremity of Tan-oo island		Laskeek or Klue	Laskeek or Klue	Laskeek or Klue
village, Skedans Bay		Skedans	Skedans	Skedans
village, Cumshewa Inlet		Cumshewa	Cumshewa	Cumshewa
village, Skidegate Inlet		Skidegate	Skidegate	Skidegate
Cape Ball		Kul-tow-sis	Kul tow sis	Kul tow sis
Rose Point		"Nai-Koon, or long nose"	"Nai koon, or long nose"	"Nai koon, or long nose"
principal village, Masset Harbour		Ut-te was	Ut-te was	Ut te was
inlet at head of Masset sound		Tin-in-ow-e	Tin in ow e	Tin in owe
second great inlet on south side of Masset inlet		"Tsoo-skatli, or 'the belly of the rapid"	"Tsoo skatli, or 'the belly of the rapid"	Tsoo skatli

Site	*Vancouver Island Pilot* (1864)	*V.I. Pilot: Supplement* (1883)	*British Columbia Pilot* (1888)	*British Columbia Pilot* (1898)
village on western side of Virago Sound		Kung	Kung	
village northwest of Virago Sound		Ya tza	Ya tza	Ya tza
Stanley river, Naden Harbour		Te-ka	Te ka	Te ka
Pillar Bay		"The Indian (Haida) name is Hla-tad-zo-wōh"	"The Indian (Haida) name is Hla tad zo wōh"	
village on south side of Perry passage		Kak-oh	Kak oh	
village on south side of Perry passage		Kioo-sta	Kioo sta	
village, Lucy Island		Tartanne	Tartanne	Tartanne
opening inside Anthony Island and close to Houston Stewart Channel		Louscoone	Louscoone	Louscoone