

Representations in Photography, a European Cultural Medium:
The Photography of Northwest Coast First Peoples in British Columbia,
1858-1890


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In Memory of
Arthur Kenneth Gawley

I'm still asking questions.

Acknowledgements

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Supervisor: Dr. Greg Blue

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analysis of European photography of Northwest Coast First Nations Peoples during the later half of the nineteenth century in British Columbia, 1860-1890. It analyses the photographic medium as a European development drawn out of the European realist and scientific positivist approach to the world, and the implications of photography as a technological medium. It looks at how the inherent aspects of photography affected both First Nations Peoples' responses to photography and the photographer, and at photographers' actions within the environment of the photographic medium and their use of the medium as a technological tool. The thesis will critique the predominate theme of analysing the photography of First Nations Peoples on the basis of their depiction of stereotypes in academic and popular literature. The dissemination of the photographs of First Nations Peoples and the Historian's role in that dissemination will also be considered.

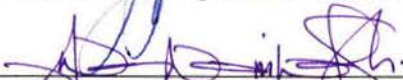
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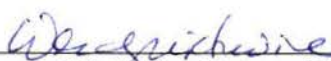
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Note on Terminology:

Traditional:

I frequently use the word “traditional” to refer to clothing worn by First People in order to express that which is not European. I have many problems with this word; in this particular case, it is problematic in that it tends to allude to an unchanging cultural state or is imbued with the idea that somehow traditional is necessarily better than what is not traditional, introduced, modern. But cultures are always to some degree in flux, transforming from one thing to another (and not necessarily linearly). Trade predated European contact, and new ideas and objects were introduced, accepted or rejected. The difference inherent in European contact was the scale of the cultural transformation, not the transformation itself. I use the term “traditional” not to refer to what is distinctly a product of Northwest Coast culture but to that which is not a product of European cultural norms. But even here the lines are grey. A Hudson Bay blanket is European but it fulfills the role of a cedar blanket. It is of both cultures and of neither.

European:

In this thesis I use the term “European” as an umbrella term for those from Europe and their descendants in North America. It is not a perfect term but it does at least define the geographical area from which the culture which would dominate North America derived. While in some cases it may appear that using “North American,” “Canadian,” or “American” might be a more precise term, these terms draw focus away from the fact that photography was initially developed in Europe and was a cultural product of Europe. Also, terms referring to those living in North America include not only Europeans but also people from a variety of non-European nationalities, including, Chinese, Japanese, and First Peoples. “Western” as a term defines too much and defines nothing. It is an abstraction. It defines not only where Europeans and European culture came from but where they went - subsuming the cultures that preceded the arrival of Europeans. Where does the West end when Canada and Australia are both considered Western cultures?

Preface:

Through The Looking Glass

I first ventured into the Royal British Columbia Museum (R.B.C.M.) as a tourist guide; that is, I was attempting to entertain my parents who were in town for a visit. I believe it was 1991 and I was in my third year of undergraduate studies. I had little regard for museums: they were stagnant memorials to the past, with little life left in them. I preferred my history rendered in text, argument, political stance, and exciting postulation. What did a brief account below an artefact have to say beyond what one might find on a trivial pursuit card? And perhaps what deterred me the most were the grey totem poles trapped behind the glass exterior of the museum. It seemed abhorrently wrong that these were what was left after the imperial steam roller. And they too were encased in a tomb of that machine. Would it not be better to let these totems decay back into the environment from which they came? Yes, the people are still living and reviving the cultures that had almost been colonized out of existence, but what had been lost forever and for what end? These were the thoughts that framed my initial visit to the Royal B.C. Museum.

I cannot deny that it was certainly interesting to see the various artefacts – especially the exhibit which highlighted various First Peoples’ masks in the context of a spiritual story. As one sat in the dark and watched the masks appear and disappear one could believe that they had crossed over into the spiritual world. But an unease followed

me throughout the *First Peoples Gallery*. This unease hit a particularly harsh note when we entered the exhibit concerning the smallpox epidemic and its aftermath. I was severely distraught by the blow-ups of newspaper clippings which lined the entrance to the smallpox exhibit, and the voice-over of a tape recording left me chilled. This was the part of the exhibit that marked the transition of the First Peoples exhibit into the modern era. It seemed bleak to me. What had Europeans done? Was I feeling some form of white liberal guilt? Depicted in the modern era was First Peoples' cultural transition into the European culture and economy. The conclusion of the exhibit with the banning of the potlatch re-enforced my belief that my distress was legitimate. In order for European culture and modernity to be realized fully that which preceded European culture, First Peoples' culture had to be stamped out. The last phase of the *First Peoples Gallery* was and is an enormous room in which one weaves through painted totems and enters a replica of a traditional long house. After my response to the smallpox exhibit, this all seemed distasteful. This was not First Peoples' culture. It was dead. It was collected. It was entombed in an imperial enterprise. I just wanted to get out.

My second foray into the Royal B.C. Museum was in 1995. Once again I was concerned with things of interest to my parents. One is rarely inclined to be a tourist in their own community. The impetus for the visit to the museum on this occasion was the Genghis Khan exhibit. I found this exhibit of great interest and generally informative. I knew very little about Genghis Khan and what I did know from A&E specials was given further elaboration by the exhibit's textual information and by the objects themselves – their dimensions, their texture, their color, etcetera. But how did others who had not seen

even an A&E special view the exhibit? As my parents went through the exhibit I felt the need to explain what little background I had, to explain how what was before us fit into the larger scheme of a Genghis Khan narrative. Was the narrative I was expressing accurate? Not necessarily – at times I did not know how accurate my memory was but I felt the need to narrate.

Once again we toured the First Peoples exhibit. I was much more at ease this time with the idea of a museum presenting artefacts pertaining to First Peoples. No, they did not give a complete picture, but they did give an introduction to a part of Canadian history, a history about which many if not most Canadians know little or nothing. If we had such knowledge, would we have been so dumbfounded by the actions in Oka and the repercussions which have followed since? And while considerable information can be gleaned from the text and photographs found in books regarding the cultural artefacts of First Peoples, these books cannot express the thing itself. To understand the physical presence of the thing itself, one must see it with one's own eyes (better yet to touch it, but museums place restrictions on such possibilities). Though one cannot hope to understand the cultures of First Peoples merely through their artefacts, seeing and knowing these artefacts does give an additional understanding. Artefacts define who we are, for instance, you walk into a house or an apartment of an acquaintance, the pictures on the walls, the type of furniture, the cutlery – whether it is made up of mixed designs or a set, adds further understanding to who the person is. However, when one walks into the museum one is not walking into the traditional homes of First Peoples. While I no longer felt the need to flee, I did continue to yearn for more narrative and context than the museum

provided.

What perhaps allowed me to further enjoy the artefacts of the *First Peoples Gallery*, as those of the Genghis Khan exhibit, was a certain knowledge I had beyond what was presented to me by the museum. Since my initial visit I had begun to gain some knowledge of Northwest Coast art through a general course on North American First Nations' art and through some investigations of my own. I had gained some understanding of the spiritual, cultural, and artistic nature of the masks and totems presented by the museum. While once I had abhorred the trivial production of First Peoples' cultural artefacts for the tourist trade, I now saw, if not the spiritual merit, at least the artistic and cultural merit of the masks found in the windows of downtown shops. Tourist art was not necessarily a parasitic form: though the form has changed with retail outlets and mass consumption the creation of artefacts for trade has a long standing history behind it. As Martine Reid notes,

The production of artefacts for the European market had begun before the end of the eighteenth century, and continued through the nineteenth century, "the golden age" of Northwest Coast art. During this period some types of Haida argillite carvings originated and thrived, while traditional artistic production, diversity, and styles continued.¹

But once again the question arose: does the museum provide a sufficient narrative for the artefacts it presents, and what does the museum's actual narrative relay to the viewer?

Today I am in the midst of writing a thesis for a Masters of Arts in History. I am writing on a subject which derives both from my passion for history and my passion for art. I am a photographer without the time to take a picture; consequently, I have found

myself combining two passions – photography and history – as an avenue to question the nature of representation. In this process I have once again found myself, in the midst of my research, turning back to the *First Peoples Gallery* at the Royal B.C. Museum. I am no longer a tourist, but an academic in search of answers, or, if not answers, then perhaps a sense of some partial closure. What is the museum presenting to viewers? What truths does it seek to disseminate? This time I am not so concerned with the material artefacts themselves but with the photographs which exclaim the authenticity of those artefacts – photographs which say, “here is the past.” Here are the canoes, the clothing, the utensils, in use. Here are the people! Without the photographs to accompany the exhibit the material artefacts would remain faceless. No longer do we put living people on exhibit in our museums. Or do we? When we approach a photograph we do not say, “Here is a picture of Uncle Joe,” rather we say, “Here is Uncle Joe.” The photograph is the thing itself. Or is it? Certainly not in the same way as the artefacts before us in glass cases. These are some of the thoughts which have run through my mind as I have visited the museum over the last year and a half.

Let me retrace a few of my steps and thoughts as I proceeded through the museum and looked at these photographs, or at least those which caught my particular interest. Let me begin with a description of what confronts the museum-goer upon first entering the exhibits on the third floor. To the left of the entrance is a raised split-level floor with a replica of a pit-house; this marks the entrance to the *First Peoples Gallery*. To the right is the *Modern History Gallery*, usually marked by a display of domestic items (though in December 1997 I found this display area had become an homage to a “traditional” Anglo-

American Christmas). The first impression is that Modern History and First Peoples History are two separate entities. Not only are they in separate exhibits but the pit-house is set on a separate plane and its domestic contents are juxtaposed to those of the European family home. One might argue that the raised floor is dictated by the architectural necessities of making the pit-house, but this argument does not exhaust the significance of the layout and the meanings that may be inferred upon it. We are still left with the juxtaposition of two very different domestic worlds, only one of which benefits from the positive connotations attached to the word “modern”.

On the far wall beside the pit-house replica is a large photographic mural of a pit-house. It would appear that the replica is not adequate as a presentation of history but requires authentication by means of a photograph showing an actual pit-house in a glade with trees. However, the photograph is not understood as a picture but as a pit-house. If one escapes this illusion, they become aware that the photograph is itself a kind of replica, and there is even the (one hopes unlikely) possibility that the photographed pit-house itself was a replica built in a field.

The first exhibit beyond the entrance of the *First Peoples Gallery* is titled, *Aboriginal Cultures in British Columbia*. In this exhibit photographs are again vital to its design. The artefacts are accompanied by large photographic murals detailing forests, moose, the natural environment, and people in traditional dress performing daily routines with items like those found in the museum’s glass cases. As one looks down the corridor they see, to the right, a series of six large photographic murals and, to the left, a row of glass encased artefacts divided by a banister, behind which there is a canoe and an

opening to a large exhibit of totem poles standing down below.

Consider a couple of photographs in particular. Written beside one photograph in bold print on a cedar plaque is, "A soft, loose garment of cedar bark was a standard item of dress." What does this say? Or, what doesn't it say? The woman in the photograph has been completely effaced by the text. The words describe a photograph of clothing but the photograph is of a person wearing traditional dress. The description on the photograph itself is, "*Nootkan Woman Wearing Cedar-Bark Blanket*. E.S. Curtis, 1915." This would seem to be a much better description – it describes both the person and the clothing – but in many instances the descriptions on the photographs are impossible or nearly impossible to read, especially when they are backdrops in artefact cases. White text is used on black and white photographs. It is a sublime example of text meant to disappear into the photograph. What is meant to be read is the bold text which effaces the subject for the object of interest, in this case the person for the clothing.

Yet what we do find with the photograph of the Nootkan² woman is her image blown-up to phenomenal proportions. With this head and shoulder shot, the viewer looks into a face that is about three and a half feet by three feet in size. The expression and textures of her face can be viewed in intimate detail. One feels a moment of surrealism and is drawn into her. In a photograph titled "*Kwakiutl Canoes*. E.S. Curtis, 1914" one finds a similar distortion of perspective when one is confronted by a canoe which towers overhead. If one were to turn around, they would find that the bow of the canoe, noted earlier, is about four feet high.

Another of the murals entitled *Loading a Kwakiutl Canoe* is more life-size,

providing an active scene involving six people in 'traditional' dress. With this photograph the viewer functions as distant observer, perhaps like the photographer himself. Such distance reflects my revised personal reactions to the mask exhibit titled, *The Supernatural*. Where once I had been comforted by the inclusive transcendence of this exhibit, my academic investigation left me an outsider. While the voice-over which narrates this exhibit attests that the world of the whites is not the only possible reality, the masks are separated and distanced from the participant by the glass encasement. Also, the exhibit itself is separated and distanced from "reality" by its very different form of presentation compared to the rest of the Gallery. It is only in this exhibit that one enters a world of unlit darkness. How does one present a different way of thinking to a museum viewer, without romanticization or distortion? While this could be an impossible task, one must ask what the rationale is behind the juxtaposition of the exhibit *The Supernatural* with another titled, *Contact. Europeans*. The culture of the First Peoples is hereby firmly set in the past, as an outmoded way of viewing the world. The European culture is the future. One is greeted at the entrance of *Contact*, directly after leaving *The Supernatural*, with the statement: "The changes made by the White People created a new social environment; the Indians had to adapt to survive." Like a towering protective guard of an Egyptian ruin, the photograph of *Shaman Kispiox* stands guard over the stairwell leaving *The Supernatural* and the old ways.

There are many photographs in the *Contact* exhibit that one could consider in detail, but I will pass over the majority in order to focus once again on the depopulation section. As expressed earlier in my disquieted reflections, one passes through a doorway

bordered by newspaper clippings detailing the smallpox epidemic of 1862. Dates frame the experiences which are recalled within – April 28, April 30, June 5, June 14, June 19, June 21, July 7, and July 11. The dates cover a brief period, and inside the smallpox exhibit one learns from a voice-over the devastating results of the epidemic, the loss of half the Tsimshian, two-thirds of the Kwakiutl, and three-quarters of the Haida. While the room itself is small, the use of photographs on convex walls (giving the sense that one is standing in a circle) has considerable impact (Figs 1&2). One is surrounded by larger-than-life faces of four men on one side and four women, two of whom appear to be in their teens, on the other. Their identity is expressed in the blankets on their shoulders, the copper ear-rings one girl wears, and the nose-bone worn by one of the men. For the viewer who seeks out the print on the lower right corners of each photograph those presented in the photographs become representative figures of particular cultures: two Kwakiutl men, a Kwakiutl woman, a Kwakiutl girl, a Nootkan man, a Haida man, a Haida girl, and a Coast Salish woman.

Once again one is drawn into larger-than-life romantic noble faces. It is as if one knows each individual in an intimate way. Each hair on their heads speaks for them. The eyes of an elder reflect wise thoughts. The eyes of a young girl reflect gaiety. But the romance is broken by a disquieting voice-over.³ The voice speaks of disease, firearms, and liquor, and their horrific repercussions, “And so, after perhaps eight thousand years..., in one terrible year, between the spring and autumn it all came to an end.”⁴ Are these large beautiful eyes accusing, condemning? But the voice-over is not all doom and gloom. It speaks of how European trade brought a flourishing to First Peoples’ arts; and

while the 1862 epidemic was dreadful, “It is one of the world’s greatest tributes to the strength of the human spirit that most of those who lived and their children after them remained sane, and adapted in part at least to the strange new world in which they found themselves.”⁵ Though First Peoples had to endure rulers who had the intent to destroy what was left of their customs and beliefs, the voice-over concludes on a positive note,

Perhaps that dreadful end more than a century ago left
the seed of a new beginning The people are still here,
changed in appearance, in language and custom, but still
alive -- a part of the present with strong roots in the magic
past, and their images become every day more and more a
part of all our lives.⁶

The exhibit implies that, despite the horrors, indeed because of them, First Peoples are grand larger-than-life heroic figures. They are not so much people as icons.

The museum has continued or reestablished the dissemination of the noble savage icon for both local and foreign tourist alike. Yes, my initial thoughts on the museum are redeemed! It is a part of the imperial colonialist complex. And I have proof! Approximately eighty to ninety percent of the photographs in the exhibit are those of photographer Edward S. Curtis, whose work continues to infuse our visions of First Peoples today via calendars, flip books, and coffee table books. Curtis who set out in a “grand endeavour” to document the various First Peoples cultures in North America in a twenty-volume set. His intent was to document a noble race before its culture if not the people themselves vanished. What I saw before me attested to the words of Curtis,

I made one resolve, that the picture should be made according to
the best of modern methods and of a size that the face might be
studied as the Indian’s own flesh. And above all, none of these
pictures would admit anything which betokened civilization,

whether in an article of dress or landscapes or objects on the ground. These pictures were to be transcriptions for future generations that they might behold the Indian as nearly lifelike as possible as he moved about before he ever saw a paleface or knew there was anything human or in nature other than what he himself had seen.⁷

Curtis' words appear to reflect the theme of the *First Peoples Gallery* in its entirety. While both Curtis and the Royal B.C. Museum's intentions were noble, the result has been a continually ahistorical vision of First Peoples. Despite the smallpox exhibit's voice-over emphasis on the fact that First People survived and are a part of our culture today, their images becoming "more and more a part of our lives," what is at issue is determining what those images are? The answer – they are artificially traditionalized renditions of First Peoples (at least within the walls of the museum). Why has the museum used Curtis' photographs? Because like Curtis they wish to preserve "the past", that is the "traditional" past of First Peoples as the museum sees it and as it has been remembered. But do noble images of First Peoples in traditional garments and jewelry attest to the lived experiences of the smallpox epidemic? Are they a visual example of the aftermath of "disease, liquor, and firearms"?

As I revisited the photographs on the walls that spoke of population decline in late 1997, I had other images in mind, images flowing out of the research I had done in the provincial archives. These were not photographs like those of Curtis taken in 1914 and 1915, reconstructing an image of pre-contact sixty-six years after European settlement had begun. These were not photographs that had been dramatically staged with the use of garments, ceremonial paraphernalia, and wigs.⁸ Instead, they were photographs taken by

photographers who had arrived at the onset of the 1858 gold rush, and who had actually been present in 1862. These photographs depicted a people caught in cultural change. Traditional clothing was mixed with European work clothes, day-to-day clothes, navy officer uniforms, etc. Traditional cedar blankets had already begun to be transformed into traditional Hudson Bay Company blankets. The photographs of this period relayed a vision of a people in disarray, a people who in some cases, as with individuals who lived near Victoria on the Songhees reserve, stepped off the streets to have their portraits taken for a fee (they being the recipients of the fee), and who the worse for wear looked as worn out as the clothes they wore.

In particular I had the image of a man – an elder – who sat dejected (see Fig. 3). Not looking at the camera he looks down to the right, lost in his own thoughts. Perhaps his thoughts are on all that he has seen and been through. Perhaps they concern what has happened to his culture or his people. His face, the pale patched skin on his exposed arms, and the lone blanket in which he is dressed are emblems of the true outcome, for so many, of the smallpox epidemic of 1862. I do not know how many of his friends and relatives died due to the disease. I do not know if he was ever himself afflicted. But for me he was a tragic anonymous figure I tumbled upon in a collection of Queen Charlotte Island First Peoples' images.⁹ The photographer was unknown. The subject was unknown. The photograph had no narrative. Yet it resonated. Would this photograph not be far more appropriate in an exhibit about the smallpox epidemic than those of Curtis? His photographs are beautiful, but what do they reflect? They say nothing of cultural transition. They remain out of time. This man is time personified.

However, before I sat down to write I re-visited the archives one more time, to look at the photograph of the anonymous old man, but to my surprise he was no longer anonymous. A piece of paper had been slipped in with the photograph on November 10, 1997, a few weeks prior to my return. It read,

This photograph is of Chief Hul - Ka - Latkstun.
He was chief of the Cowichan at the village of
Penelekut on Kuper Island.
To verify this see:

F Cryer, Beryl M.
8.2 Indian Legends of Vancouver Island
C88.1 "Clippings Book"

There is a small photograph of Hul - Ka - Latkstun
in among these files - vol. 2. The same photo as here.¹⁰

I quickly searched out the reference and not only was his photograph there but Chief Hul - ka - latkstun had a history. Beryl M. Cryer had taken it upon herself, sometime around the 1940s, to document native oral stories as told to her by Tzeamntenaht, the granddaughter of Chief Hul - ka - latkstun.¹¹ In one particular interview Cryer asked Tzeamntenaht if she remembered what her father looked like. This was her reply,

"Ah, yes," she replied, "I know - long, long, ago (must be forty years, because Hul - ka - latkstun died about forty-six years ago), Mr. Lomas, the Indian Agent took a picture of him; Oh a nice picture!" She clasped her hands as though in ecstasy at the recollection. "He fix his blanket, so, and his legs and arms are all bare. Oh it is a nice picture!"¹²

The photograph that Tzeamntenaht recollected was not of the man I saw in my photograph. Her photograph was of a man who had arranged his clothing and prepared himself for a portrait. It was a nice picture because it was of her grandfather. It was a

picture to be proud of because it was of Chief Hul - ka - latkstun, a strong man, as Tzeamntenaht described him upon receipt of the photograph (Cryer had uncovered a copy of the photograph in the possession of one of Mr. W. Lomas' daughters), "Ah, the poor old man," she said, "He was very, very old, but he was strong, stronger than many young men. Would you believe that a man as old as that could live for two months without any food, only a little water to drink?"¹³ And finally, but not least, it was a family photo, one to be propped up against a cup on a table.¹⁴

Tzeamntenaht's picture of her grandfather had none of the grandiose features that I saw in it. It was not an iconic representation of the smallpox epidemic of 1862. Neither do Curtis' photographs represent such an epoch, but I had fallen into a trap of romanticism similar to that which had caught the museum. No one particular photographic image could reflect what had transpired between Northwest Coast First Peoples and Europeans. Even if one did replace the Curtis' images with those of an earlier period they would not necessarily be representative of First Peoples' experiences. Yet my own observations were not wrong. They had been mediated by intent and focus, as had my prior visits to the museum – each time a new story told, yet all incomplete. I wanted to know where the answer lies as to how First Peoples history should be represented in a museum, if it can be at all.

If one cannot rely on one's own perceptions being the same each time one visits the same gallery, and if one cannot rely on the museum necessarily to give a correct or definitive rendition of history, then it is my conclusion that we should break down the barriers of intent the best we can and infuse the visitor with the plurality of the past, i.e.

with difference. And to this end I turn to the photographic record to seek out its offerings:
to define its form, and discover its limits.

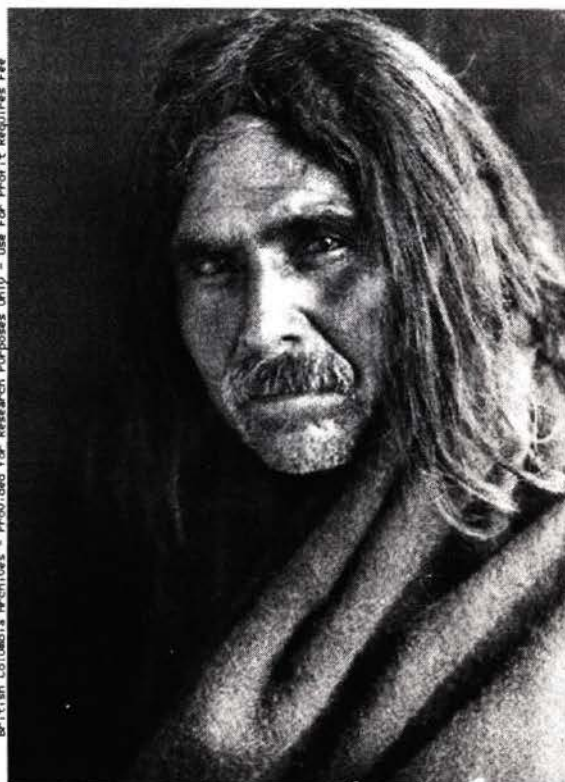


Fig. 1.
Kwakiutl Girl,
E.S. Curtis 1914.

The above description, printed in white, is what the discerning museum goer may read while observing this photograph in the exhibit concerning smallpox and depopulation in the Royal British Columbia Museum. The same can be said for figure two below. In contrast, the label used in the British Columbia Archives is more particular: "*Tsawatenok girl.*" Courtesy: BC Archives, No. D-08431.

Fig. 2.
Haida Man,
E.S. Curtis, 1915.
RBCM.

Haida of Kung.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. D-08346.



British Columbia Archives - Provided for Research Purposes Only - Use For Profit Requires Fee



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=H-05267

Fig. 3. *Chief Hul-ka-latkstun. He was chief of the Cowichans at the village of Penelekt on Kuper Island.*
Photographer: unknown.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. H-05267.

Preface - Endnotes

1. Martine J. Reid, "Silent Speakers: Arts of the Northwest Coast," The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), p. 208
2. Contemporary terminology is Nun-chah-nulth.
3. It was not until after my forays into the Royal B.C. Museum that I learned that the voice-over for the smallpox exhibit was performed by Bill Reid. The question which arose from this was, should the knowledge that Bill Reid, a highly regarded individual of First Peoples' descent, performed the narration influence my opinion of the exhibit itself? My response is no, for two reasons: first, that the dynamics of the exhibit remain the same regardless of who performs the narration, and second that, the general public is unaware of who performs the voice-over. For the public, the voice they hear is like any other anonymous voice heard over a P.A. system. Consequently, I do not include a reference to Bill Reid in the main text because I am writing the preface in accordance with my experience and response to the *First Peoples Gallery*.
4. Bill Reid, Narration for the smallpox exhibit in the *First Peoples Gallery* of the Royal British Columbia Museum (Victoria: R.B.C.M., unpublished).
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Florence Curtis Graybill & Victor Boesen, Edward Sheriff Curtis: Visions of a Vanishing Race (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976), p. 13.
8. Margaret B. Blackman, "Posing the American Indian," Natural History (Oct. 1980), p. 71.
9. The BC Archives have incorrectly placed the photograph of Chief Hul-ka-latkstun in their album of Queen Charlotte Island First Peoples' photographs. Chief Hul-ka-latkstun was from Kuper Island which sits off of Vancouver Island.
10. BC Archives, "First Peoples album, vol. IV, Queen Charlotte Islands," neg. no. H-5267.
11. Beryl M. Cryer, "Indian Legends of Vancouver Island," Clippings Book, vol. 2 (PABC), p. 40.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., p. 41.

Introduction

It is my intention in this thesis to analyze the dynamic interplay that occurred between the photographer, subject, and the photographic medium as it pertained to the photography of First Nations Peoples on the Northwest Coast of British Columbia during its early period of development, 1858-1890. Previous general analysis of the history of photography of First Nations Peoples has shown the predominance of stereotypes within the photographic records. Familiar stock types such as the savage Indian, noble Indian, and assimilated Indian have been identified by historians within the photographs produced by late nineteenth and early twentieth century professional photographers. But does what appears to hold true for the photography of First Peoples over its history hold true for a particular period of that history and does it hold true for particular photographers? It is my argument that it does not do so at least in the initial period of photography.

Stereotypes did exist, but were not necessarily deployed in a uniform manner nor as a result of the conscious efforts of European photographers. When photographers arrived with the mass migration of Europeans seeking gold in the interior of British Columbia, the photograph had only existed as a representational form for the relatively short time of twenty years. Photographers were still learning how to photograph Europeans. They were dependant on mastering the technical dimensions of the medium and on meeting cultural expectations for how to create portraits and representations of the

world. The photographer had to work within such technical restraints as dictated by equipment, exposure times, available studio props, and equipment and traveling expense. This thesis aims to show that the initial period of photography in British Columbia was not guided just by the ideas of photographers but by the medium itself. However, different photographers did pursue a variety of goals within the photographic medium. For some their incentive was purely commercial while for others ethnographic or government incentives were pursued. One must ask whether distinct photographic techniques were used in regards to First Peoples, or were techniques similar to those used with Europeans also employed for First Peoples? What was the significance of photographic stereotypes of natives in relation to the stereotypes that existed of Europeans themselves?

Photography was not a solitary practice, but involved the participation and acceptance by the subject to participate, in this case the subject being First Nations Peoples. While in many instances First Peoples were objectified by the camera lens, and photographs were largely used for purely European goals one cannot overlook the agency and willingness of First Peoples to participate in photography whether for financial, social or political incentive. Unlike Europeans who were of the same culture which had given rise to photography, First Peoples were confronted with a largely alien idea of viewing the world solely in realistic and objective terms. How then did this affect their response to and activity within the photographic medium? It is my intent to explore the answer to this question again through an analysis of the photographic medium itself – to explore its role as a European cultural metaphor, a metaphor of late nineteenth-century European ideals

held by the European middle-class that now saw itself coming into its own. In order to pursue such an analysis it is important not only to investigate photography and its use during the period and place in question, 1858-1890 in British Columbia, but also to explore the development of photography within Europe as well as the ideas which precipitated the invention of photography and those which made it popular within Europe and North America.

Finally, this thesis will give some limited exploration of the dissemination of the photography of First Peoples during the later nineteenth century along with an analysis of the continued reproduction of these photographs. It will explore the distribution of these photographs through popular means and the historian's role in the dissemination of photographs of First Peoples.

At this point I shall turn my attention to some explanation of the structural format of my thesis. Due to my desire to move away from a generalized analysis of the photographic record concerning First Peoples, there are certain limitations placed upon the arguments developed here.

This thesis does not present a comprehensive survey of photographs taken during 1858-1890. Rather I have limited my analysis to the works of a small number of photographers. While the large number of photographers during and after the gold rush might make my choice of photographers seem rather arbitrary, one cannot go into depth if one were to try to analyze all the professional and semi-professional photographers taking pictures in British Columbia at the time. My selection is determined by a desire to include a cross-section of backgrounds, influences, and purposes which defined the

photographic work of the period. I limited my scope to those photographers who gave significant attention to the Northwest Coast as opposed to the interior of British Columbia (though some photographs analyzed will stray into the interior). Furthermore, I have not made an attempt to track down every photograph taken by the photographers analyzed in this paper. One could acquire all the surviving images taken by a photographer and not create a definitive record of that photographer's work. The historian who investigates the photographic record is involved in critiquing hundreds of images cut out of their original context. Places, times, names, and purposes are often absent. The images can be arranged and rearranged within a multitude of narratives. Different narratives will emerge depending on how the photographs are arranged, which text is included with them, which other photographs they are kept with, and what is the actual physical environment in which they are stored. While the Provincial archives have a set of albums specifically concerning First Peoples, the photographs of First Peoples are also stored in albums and folders dedicated to the collected works of individual photographers, and thus the photographs exist in an extended narrative of the work of photographers as a whole. They are found alongside images of settlers, mining, and landscapes. The Royal British Columbia Museum in their archives keeps photographs of First Peoples together separate from other historical images. Their primary method of categorization is along ethnographic lines - listing the photographs by tribe, nation, or place. I have chosen to limit my analysis, for the most part, to those images found in the British Columbia Archives. My decision to use these photographs is largely based on their accessibility not only to me but to the public in general. Not only are they easily accessible within the

archives but they are accessible over the Internet. These images continue to influence perceptions of First Peoples today not only through the avenue of pre-formatted published material but also as images with limited textual accompaniment. Many of the photographs available at the British Columbia Archives website have yet to be described and are available without any context whatsoever beyond their availability in a Provincial archive. As in the past these photographs are now being overlaid with new narratives of personal experience and knowledge.

A drawback to limiting the focus of the paper to 1858-1890 is that the use of photographs by anthropologists who began to analyze native culture shortly after the early period of photography is not explored here. Franz Boas' initial visit to the Northwest Coast did not occur until 1886. His incorporation of photographs into his work marked the beginning of a new genre from which photographers could draw employment and income; these included not only non-native photographers but a native photographer as well – George Hunt. But whereas there has been only limited historical study of how photography has functioned as a medium and of its consequences for historical analysis, much has already been done in the field of anthropology. Readers with an interest in this field, in regards to the Northwest Coast, can, for example, consult the works of Ira Jacknis concerning Franz Boas and George Hunt.

Perhaps the most obvious but also most important limitation of the focus of this thesis is that one cannot presume to extend the findings found during the period described to those which follow. The extent of stereotyping, or the lack thereof, after 1890 requires further investigation. This limitation re-emphasizes my argument that it is dangerous to

make over-arching generalizations regarding the development of the image of First Peoples in photography.

The format of the thesis reflects the topic being discussed: photography. Each chapter is divided into frames which discuss particular aspects of the photographic medium. The chapters are relatively self-contained with their own introduction, figures, and endnotes. While there is some overlap it is quite plausible that one could read the chapters in whatever order they chose, much like the photographic record. As with the photographic record itself, for which one builds up an idea of the whole through gathering together individual photographs, each chapter is meant to create a further idea of what the whole looks like, but no one installment (fragment) or collection of installments is able to complete the narrative. What I have written is a contribution to a greater narrative created by historians, anthropologist, academics, and non-academics. My struggle to come to terms with the photographic representation of First Peoples in the Royal British Columbia Museum is a metaphor of this inability to ever create a definitive picture of First Peoples and the European photographers who took their pictures. While I make the attempt at an objective analysis of the photographic record in the following pages, my preface serves as a reminder of the subjective nature of the medium being studied.

It must also be stated that I arrive at the topic of this thesis not simply as a historian but also as a photographer and artist, consequently my approach to the topic is not purely historical but is drawn from my desire to understand the photographic medium in which I work.

Chapter 2

Photography as Environment

Both monocle and camera tend to turn people into things, and the photograph extends and multiplies the human image to the proportions of mass-produced merchandise public prostitutes.¹

Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*

Over the last two decades the subject of photography and the representation of First Peoples within this medium has certainly not been one that has been overlooked or ignored. But the focus has been on that which photography performs automatically: creating things out of people. The instant a photograph is taken it frames the subject of its focus and transforms it into an object which stands for a whole – including those aspects left outside of the frame. The scene becomes a photographic type meant to represent a person(s), an event, and/or moment in its entirety. Consequently, there is the creation of decontextualized types which can be easily fitted into broadly accepted social clichés regardless of whether or not the photographer did or did not intend to promote specific stereotypes. Analysis of the production of stereotypes is a focus that has been especially prevalent with regards to the photography which took place in British Columbia in the latter half of the nineteenth century. While efforts to bring to the forefront of Canadian consciousness the knowledge that such stereotypes as the savage, noble savage and assimilated Indian are constructed and detextualized European presumptions are commendable, such efforts have been blinded by the obvious and have left numerous

other avenues of approach untouched. First of all, the focus in the literature has been predominantly on the photographer and the cultural presumptions he or she brought to the work, and secondly, on how First Peoples may have reacted to photography. Such an approach is inadequate for it operates on the assumption that photography is a medium where there are only two significant players involved, the photographer and the subject. The medium itself has been forgotten. The third factor in the equation is the camera for it acts as mediator, effectively creating an environment in which both the photographer and the subject operate. For that reason, photographers were not entirely free to do as they wished, but rather were limited by the requirements of the camera itself and by the ways in which the medium developed as a form within the European cultural community and in North America. The subjects, in this case First Peoples, were curtailed by their knowledge of the photographic medium and their knowledge of how this new medium would fit within their own cultural framework.

Treating photography as an environment, rather than as a mere mechanical apparatus, raises complex issues around how exactly stereotypes were formed of First Peoples. For instance, were the photographic techniques that shaped stereotypes unique to the field of First Peoples photography, or were they also used with regards to European subjects? Did they perform a similar function in both cases? In depth questions must also be raised in regard to the agency of the photographer and of the subject. In general, authors who have written on the subject of photography and First Peoples in B.C. have assumed that photographers simply brought to their work the assumptions of their culture. Few investigations have examined the intentions and beliefs of the individual

photographer in any great depth. It is important to ask in what respect were European cultural ideals brought to bear on the photograph by the medium, as a cultural representative of Europe, as opposed to the significance of European cultural ideals as a product of the photographer's intentions and actions in regards to First Peoples. To deal with such questions, it is not enough to try and understand the product of the camera in "the field", one must look back to Europe itself to understand the photography of First Peoples in British Columbia.

Frame 1: The Stereotype

In Brian W. Dippie's "Representing the Other: The North American Indian," we find the general rubric developed by academics for the treatment of photographic stereotypes of First Nations Peoples. Dippie's analysis identifies two modes of representation of First Peoples occurring in the United States during the nineteenth century. Either Indians were presented as a savage and noble defiant race which was vanishing under the pressure of progress provided by civilization, and in large part the fault for their disappearance was perceived to rest with Indians themselves who either could not or would not be civilized; or alternatively, "the opposite image in Indian portraiture, one identified with the boarding schools of the late nineteenth century, showed the subject as a white man with dark skin."² Dippie explains these contrary representations as an evolution of thought concerning the "vanishing race" after the civil war, from the expectation of the literal extinction of a race to the belief in cultural extinction,

"We accept the watch-word," the founder of Carlisle Indian School was fond of saying, "There is no good Indian but a dead Indian. Let us by education and patient effort kill the Indian in him, and save the man."³

(Richard H. Pratt, cited in Gates 1886:31)

The tomahawk found in the portrait of the noble savage was replaced by the suit.

Dippie's premise that the two primary modes of representation in photography were the "noble savage" and the "assimilated Indian" is also reflected in Lee Clark

Mitchell's analysis in *The Photograph and the American Indian*. In reference to the period 1845 to 1880, which Mitchell defines as a period of allegory, he writes:

Dark skin, long hair, odd costumes, and a variety of weapons confirm the Indian's allegorization as the "other" – counter to all that had come to mark civilized life. Like Australian aborigines and African tribes, Indians were identified with a continent desired by whites with increasing national passion. The need to legitimate such cravings led to a dismissal of indigenous peoples as unfit for residency, unsuited to efficient husbanding of the land and its resources. Their very clothing and shelter proclaimed their unfitness, and with appearances against them, what defense was possible?⁴

Counterpointed to the "Indian" which was marked as "other" and uncivilized was a development of native portraiture showing their assimilation into European society. Mitchell described this vision of natives as part of a process occurring within a broad period that he delineates as running from 1880 to World War II. The "pacification" of the "Indians" by the federal government had been completed by the 1880s and they became viewed as having been tamed. Photographers reflected the new held opinions regarding natives and the image of the savage or antagonistic Indian which had predominated was displaced by later photographs of "natives in conventional middle-class roles, wearing broadcloth suits and gingham dresses that emblemize their acceptance of the dominant cultures mores."⁵

While both Dippie and Mitchell's analyses regard photography in the United States (though Dippie's title refers to North America as a whole), the same polarized analysis of photographic stereotypes can also be found serving as a defining mechanism in academic writings concerning photography in British Columbia. For example, in

Margaret B. Blackman's *Posing the American Indian*, which moves from a general North American focus to a local analysis of the Haida and their cultural artefacts, attention is directed to the photographic stereotype of the noble savage as well as the eroticization of that stereotype. On both the macro and micro levels of analysis she argues that while photographers in North America often accompanied ethnographic expeditions, their motives usually extended beyond the purely ethnographic. To be specific, commercial interests were usually involved; for example, entertainment value was a criterion for deciding what photographs were taken and consequently selling factors such as eroticism and romanticized images, like bare-breasted natives and generic Indian costumes, were depicted for the general public.⁶ Likewise, Alan Thomas' writings, which are specific to the Northwest Coast, treat both the established stereotype of the savage as well as the early development of the assimilated Indian in photography. "The savage, or the naked, or the primitive Indian was pursued and photographed - sometimes wearing the brass-buttoned coat of government - as if that were the real and only Indian. And this meant that the Indian, in other aspects, was neglected."⁷ While I do not dispute the fact that such stereotypes did and do exist in the photographic record of First Peoples, I am led to ask the question, what is missed when these polarized representations of First Peoples become the central focus? Also, can broad continent-wide strokes be made in regards to the photography of First Peoples?

Included within Blackman's examples of stereotypes is a brief but important reference to Edward S. Curtis' romanticized bewigged images of the Vanishing Indian,⁸ a topic which Daniel Francis also pays particular attention to in *Copying People*:

Photographing British Columbia First Nations, 1860-1940. For Francis, Curtis exemplified the photographer who set out to create romantic renditions of natives and native life, a life that was perceived to be fast disappearing:

Curtis wanted to recapture what he conceived to be the “traditional” Indian; that is, Indians as they lived before the arrival of whites. These were the Indians Curtis was trying to portray in his photographs and film. To do so, he frequently used wigs, costumes, and other props, dressing up his subjects to look more as he believed they used to look. He carefully removed all evidence of modernity and photographed his subjects in romantic poses and performing traditional activities. In his view, contemporary Native people were contaminated by their contact with white culture.⁹

Francis extends his analysis of Curtis’ romanticization of the “noble vanishing Indian” into a claim that most photographers were moving in their portrayal of First Peoples along similar romantic lines; he suggests that, “Most of the photographers represented in this book believed in the Vanishing Indian.”¹⁰ But while his statement may be true one cannot assume that such a belief influenced the work of each individual photographer. Francis’ analysis of the counter motif of assimilation within the photography of First Nations Peoples is used to reaffirm the theme of the “Vanishing Indian”:

It is often assumed by non-Natives that the more “white” aboriginal people become in appearance and lifestyle the less “Indian” they remained until, at some unspecified point, they ceased to be truly “Indian” at all. Photographs showing native subjects wearing western clothing, working at regular jobs, and living in houses are thought to be evidence of this “civilizing” process.¹¹

Again, while what Francis has to say is legitimate, can one assume that the primary goal of photographers in depicting First Peoples in western clothing was to promote the

“assimilation” stereotype? Distinctions need to be made between when photographers may or may not have been creating images of assimilation and when they may have been simply depicting First Peoples as they presented themselves on a daily basis. In part it is possible that Francis’ generalizations are a result of *Copying People* being an expanded version of his brief look at photography in *The Imaginary Indian* which was an overview of the image of the “Indian” in Canada.¹² Generalizations breed generalizations.

While Canadians and Americans held similar views about the eventual demise of the “Indian”, Canadians have been less emphatic in their approach to the “Indian problem”. Whereas in the United States the only good Indian was a dead Indian (whether that be by a bullet or education, as Dippie points out), Canadians viewed the “Indian problem” as one which would simply go away on its own, “Indians” would die out, or perhaps the problem would go away with a “little push” (a push which was often no less devastating than a bullet). Canada would avoid outright confrontation with its native populations and opt instead for methods of control that prevailed themselves through “good government” and “the law”. Education and the limit of movement off the reserves through a permit system were among the methods of control used by Canada’s Indian Department. Unlike the United States to the South, Canada did not see itself “waging a war of extinction” against its indigenous population. Rather our image was of the North West Mounted Police carrying out their role through the just implementation of Law and Order. Curiously, while the “Indian” was viewed in one respect as an enemy of the Mountie he was also viewed as the benefactor of the Mountie’s sense of justice.¹³ The North West Mounted Police were regarded as a benevolent paternal institution, as Daniel

Francis describes,

Canadians believed that they treated their Natives justly. They negotiated treaties before they occupied the land. They fed the Indians when they were starving and shared with them the great principles of British justice. The story of the Mounted Police had a powerful influence on the way Canadians felt themselves to be distinct from, and, morally superior to, the United States.¹⁴

The ethos of law and order symbolized by the North West Mounted Police in what would eventually become the Canadian Prairie Provinces was strongly affirmed during the 1858 gold rush in British Columbia, where the state sought to avoid the lawlessness which occurred during the California gold rush. Judge William Begbie thus became an emblem of the British law and order that would keep prospectors in check. In principle British justice was not limited to those of European descent; rather justice was equal to all, if not in action then at least as an ideal. Again law and order was used as a means to distinguish the British colonies from the American states to the south, as noted in the *Victoria Colonist* in an article published in 1858 entitled, "Vancouver Island and California Contrasted,"

.... I turn with disgust from its [JL: California's] domestic legislation, and refer to those acts which vitally affect the interests of the foreign residents. Not content with refusing the Asiatics the sacred right of testifying in a Court of Justice, and depriving them of every judicial right, they have recently passed laws prohibiting their settling in the State, although at the present moment their country-men are using their utmost endeavors to affect an entrance into China and Japan.

Signed C.A.A.¹⁵

Despite the fact that as the latter half of the nineteenth century progressed British Columbians would come to also see the Chinese and the Japanese as threats and

implement similar restrictive immigration policies as those of California, during the initial period of the gold rush in British Columbia the view was that the Chinese should be afforded the same rights as all British subjects and treated justly under the law. This strong belief in and acceptance of a government authority that treated all people within its governing borders in a just manner helped to establish a Canadian culture which did not define itself in opposition to First Peoples as clearly and definitively as America perceived itself in opposition to native people within its borders.

As the American expansion into the West reached its culmination so to did the Indian wars. By 1890, for all intensive purposes, the Indian Wars came to an end with the massacre at Wounded Knee.¹⁶ With the Indians safely tucked away on reservations and their presumed savagery curtailed, the photographic eye could turn its full attention towards the Indian. Anthropologists and photographers saw the newly “tamed” reservation Indian as their chance to document the Indian’s “traditional” way of life before it completely slipped away. To add to the onslaught of the picture-takers who began to arrive at the doorsteps of American Indians was the fact that by the 1890s the heavy awkward large format cameras and glass-plates were being replaced by easily carried box cameras and roll film. Photographers began developing their vision of a vanishing race on an unprecedented scale. It was not enough to take a few photographs for the commercial trade; rather, with the aid of government expeditions, they began a project to systematically document all of the various indigenous groups of the United States. John Alvin Anderson, Roland Reed, and the man who epitomizes these “grand endeavours”, Edward S. Curtis, were just a few of those who set out to document the

Vanishing Indian in his entirety.¹⁷ Their efforts were a means by which Americans could legitimize their place on the continent by incorporating the once viewed threat as a nostalgic part of their own past. First Peoples were also a means with which Americans could comment on their rapidly industrialized nation, through reflection on an indigenous pastoral alternative.

Yet as Dippie pointed out there is also a vision of the “assimilated Indian” at work in American photography. How could the vision of the noble savage coexist with the vision of the assimilated “modern” Indian? It was not a difficult dilemma to overcome, for these photographs showed the necessity of the “grand endeavours” in operation and reiterated the notion that European culture was far superior to indigenous cultures. The assumption was that traditional Indian life was disappearing thus it needed to be photographed before it disappeared, to preserve it for posterity. Yet at the same time assimilation reflected the inevitability of progress - the inevitable progress of industrialized America and the taming of the West. Once the assimilated Indian’s Indianness had been killed by education the “authentic” Indian was once again placed firmly in the past where he could be romanticized.

Brock V. Silversides rightly points out that there was no attempt to do a comprehensive photographic documentation of First Peoples in Canada.¹⁸ The only exceptions to this were provided by Curtis’ forays across the border to photograph along the Northwest Coast of British Columbia and among the Piegan and Blackfoot in Alberta.¹⁹ Unlike their American counterparts Canadian photographers do not seem to have set out with grand narratives in mind when they photographed First Peoples. The

Canadian mentality did not link itself so much with First Peoples specifically as “other” but instead included them in an overall personification of the landscape as “other”.

However, while Canada did not produce any photographers set on capturing images of First Peoples in all their variations, grand endeavours were not completely absent from the Canadian experience. As in the United States, photographers were not the first to look towards natives as subject matter – painters made ample opportunity of the “romanticized Indian”. In the U.S. the most famous of these painters was George Catlin, 1796-1872, who set out to “rescue” the image of natives before they disappeared, as he states:

Their [natives] rights invaded, their morals corrupted, their lands wrested from them, their customs changed, and therefore lost to the world; and they at last sunk into the earth, and the ploughshare turning the sod over their graves, and I have flown to their rescue – not of their lives or of their race (for they are “doomed” and must perish), but to the rescue of their looks and their modes,²⁰

Canada’s counterpart to this desire to imbue the painter’s canvas with the image of the native before it fell out of sight was Paul Kane who, at 35, took an about turn in his career after meeting Catlin in London in 1843.²¹ Society portraiture was given up and he devoted himself to the task of native portraiture – journeying out into “Indian country” for the first time in 1845. He would later write, “The principal object of my undertaking was to sketch pictures of the principal chiefs and their original costumes, to illustrate their manners and customs, and to represent the scenery of an almost unknown country.”²² In Canada however, unlike the United States, grand endeavours by painters did not translate into similar efforts by photographers. Artists like Kane who saw First Peoples as a

subject of focus for their paintings prove more the exception in Canada than the rule.

Whereas in the United States several artists working for the Sante Fe Railway concentrated on producing scenes of the Pueblo Indians for distribution on the company's calendar, in Canada artists:

remained mesmerized by the mountains to the exclusion of anything else. Lucius O'Brien, John Fraser, Thomas Mower Martin and F.M. Bell-Smith were just a few of the members of the "Railway School" of painters who made lush, dramatic portraits of towering peaks. They did not see the same artistic potential in the Indians of the West as their American counterparts did in the Southwest.²³

It was the Canadian winter, the prairies, and the Rockies which came to represent either a terrible enemy or a romantic vision. In works of fiction pioneers struggled against cabin fever or found themselves lost in a blizzard to die yards from their front door. When one was not confronted with the ravages of nature it was breathtaking to behold, and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) saw an advantage in using the Canadian landscape to promote railway travel. The CPR gave numerous photographers and painters free passes on the railway, "in return for striking depictions of the flat plains, the mountains, the lakes, the waterfalls, even the trestle bridges and hotels."²⁴ Included in these romantic depictions of landscape were images of Native people. These images were of interest to eastern Canadians, Americans, and Europeans, and were therefore included in the CPR's promotional pamphlets and posters.²⁵ Photographers did not construct grand narratives of First Peoples as such but instead created narratives of land being conquered and settled (Fig. 4-9). They took back east romantic visions of mountain paradises erupting from the earth and images of man's conquest of the environment.

However, unlike the majority of painters, photographers did not remain “mesmerized by the mountains to the exclusion of everything else.”²⁶ Instead they paid somewhat more attention to indigenous people. Initially, Canadian photographs of First Peoples tended to be based on the photographer’s functional role, whether as an official for the Indian Agency, as a member of a geographical survey team, or as a private commercial agent. As often as not, Canadian photographs of First Peoples developed out of simple opportunity. The bulky equipment and the cost limited the photographer’s forays to find photographic subject matter; consequently, photographers depended on invitations to accompany the occasional government expedition or they made use of what opportunities occurred near home.

Within the North West Territories, in the area which would become Alberta and Saskatchewan, many a semi-professional and amateur photographer went no further than a few yards away from the CPR to get his photograph of an Indian. Silversides found in his analysis of this area that initially, in the 1870s, photography was primarily documentary as photographers had not as yet gained enough control of their medium to manipulate it in any direction.²⁷ The development of the “vanishing Indian” or romantic pastoral archetype did not come about until the 1890s, after European dress had been adopted by most First Peoples, and this genre did not gain extensive popularity until after the turn of the century, when Curtis’ work across the border began to appear in published form, Then:

Those who had formerly been straightforward in their presentation of First Nations people started to compose their photographs in romantic or allegorical settings and poses. Combined with

an upsurge in camera clubs and the pictorialist movement in photography, these Indian images were considered to be art.²⁸

As has been seen in comparing the development of photography of First Peoples in Canada and in the United States, differences of place and time break down the overarching generalities of the stereotypes so far analyzed by academic authors. The people involved, both the subjects of the camera and the photographers, further complicated the issue. For while the romantic vision of the noble warrior riding off into the sunset worked well on the plains, it did not fit the relationship which existed between photographers and First Peoples on the Northwest Coast. Whereas many of the photographers of the plains were non-residents passing through, who could construct their own unhindered vision of First Peoples, from the outset in Victoria photographers set up shop, if not permanently, then at least for a few years.²⁹ Time allowed for a greater intimacy between photographer and subject. Thus a reality existed which would not resonate with the archetypes created when Curtis passed through in 1912, '14, and '15. Was the pictorialist tradition as he conceived it possible on the Northwest Coast?.

What becomes apparent is that one may not be able to boil the photographic record in Canada down to an either/or scenario of romanticized Indian or assimilated Indian. To further add to this complicated milieu, it is important to consider what the intent of the photographer was when he chose to take a photograph. To do so can be a difficult task since as often as not one does not have any written account to work from, and one must surmise from the photograph what the photographer's intentions were. For the historian the danger lies in beginning one's analysis with fixed stereotypes as the basis

and starting point of that analysis. As Blackman, whose central focus is to document cultural transition through analyzing the artefacts in photographs, states, “Unwittingly perhaps, photographers documented many changes that few anthropologists of the time were interested in, concerned as they were with reconstructing the past.”³⁰ At first the statement seems harmless enough but when it is put in the context of her argument in this article, that photographers created and/or promoted stereotypes of First Peoples, it leaves me with the belief that it is in spite of the efforts of the photographer that one can find some factual evidence in the photographic record. But this performs a grave mis-justice to the photographer if his intent was merely to document what was before him, and it misleadingly sets the photographer up as an antagonist to the anthropologist, who must unearth hidden secrets, rather than see the photograph as a useful tool from which fairly unmediated information can be drawn.

This is not to say that photographs which were documentary in nature did not have biases – the photographic tradition of documentation is certainly not without bias – but it may suggest that photographers did not necessarily have any consistent vision of what an Indian should look like or at the very least they did not operate with a collective vision. Thus, unburdened of the task of always unraveling the hidden meanings buried beneath stereotypes, the historian is led to ask, what beyond cultural assumptions drove photographers to photograph who and what they did?

Unlike Blackman, Alan Thomas focuses not on discovering meaning through photographed artefacts, but rather on how the photographic form was manipulated to succeed or fail in presenting stereotypes of First Peoples. While arguing that the

photographer may not have established a specific technique, he does critique photographs on their success in fulfilling the operative role of presenting the Indian in a particular way.

In the case of (Fig. 10 & 11) Richard Maynard's photographs from the 1874 Boxer Trip with Indian Commissioner I.W. Powell, Thomas writes:

Again, at Nootka Sound, where Cook's ships had found their first North American harbour, naked Indians are photographed by Maynard as they loll in the sand beside their canoe - in the background rise the masts and spars of H.M.S. Boxer. The effect is astonishing, we see a photograph which might be from the pre-photographic Age of Discovery.

It should not be thought that with this handful of remarkable photographs Maynard had established a subject and a technique. The special nature of the Boxer voyages to small, remote communities gave him a rare opportunity to photograph Indian life still only lightly touched by white civilization. But the chances which allowed them opportunities could also create difficulties.

Take the presence of the blue-jackets from the Boxer, for instance their inclusion in his scenes need not undermine them: the contrast of uniformed sailors and wild Indians could be telling. But Maynard was not always successful in posing this particular mixture of subjects. A promising scene in a Discovering-the-Primitive genre shows Indians squatting along the log sill of a village house and sailors sitting on the canoes drawn up on the beach. The Indians crouch, with knees drawn to chin, and blankets wrapped about them, an unrevealing posture, the sailors, on the other hand, know about photography, and they stretch themselves in positions of ostentatious ease, as if on sofas. The juxtaposition can appear mildly ludicrous to modern eyes. This photograph is typical of many others taken along the Coast in this decade in which disparate elements are not brought into a whole.³¹ (See Fig. 10 & 11)

While Thomas' analysis of the photograph of "Naked Indians" certainly draws an astonishing parallel with the European notion that Indians were a part of the historic past, his analysis of the success of the photograph involving both First Peoples and sailors is predicated on the assumption that Maynard had formed some specific intent to make a photograph which would fit the "Discovering-the-Primitive genre", as Thomas calls it.

Thus such photographs as the one described fail because of the incongruence in the sailor's pose, as opposed to how the First Peoples' pose – they don't. But the analysis is different if one evaluates the photograph not in terms of the assumed stereotypical effect the photographer may or may not have been trying to achieve, but rather in terms of what is present in the photograph. In this particular photograph it is not the First People who are the subject of the photograph, it is the sailors. It is they who are in the foreground and posing for their picture. The First People, by contrast, form a scenic tableau for a genre that we are all well acquainted with today, the tourist photo. This is a photograph which the sailors could have possibly purchased from Maynard so that on return they could show friends and family what they had seen and done.

As I have admittedly speculated somewhat in my analysis, I can understand Thomas' speculation concerning the photographer's intent in such photographs, for in this case, one is dealing with Richard Maynard, who kept very limited, but pertinent notes. For example, I found Thomas' analysis of the *Naked Indians* photograph intriguing, but it is hardly justified clearly by Maynard's note, "17 *Naked Indians* Nootka Sound Boxer Trip. Sept 10, 1874." Instead, Thomas assumed that some of the historical idealism held by I.W. Powell may have rubbed off on Maynard. Now in the case of some photographs Thomas quotes Powell as having ordered "photographs to be made which matched views sketched by naval artists eighty years earlier,"³²

"At Nootka most of the tribe were absent and I was sorry not to be able to renew my acquaintance with the chief Ma'quinna, the descendant of the Ma'quinna of Cook, Mears, Quadra and Vancouver, one hundred years ago.... I [Maynard, under his direction³³] took a photograph of the

village and, as a matter of curious comparison, I have added another taken from a sketch of Vancouver, made in 1790.”
I.W. Powell, *Department of the Interior Reports* (1876), p. 130.³⁴

Still we are left without any definite evidence of whether or not Maynard himself had specific ideals regarding natives when it came to his photographic work or whether he had rather considered his photography like his note taking as a matter of performing the required tasks necessary to procure commercially viable photographs. Whether the “Indians” were naked or a photographic backdrop may have been inconsequential to the fact that they were “Indians” and therefore a commercial subject.

If we turn back to the photograph of the sailors without the notion that the photograph belongs to some set genre, what I find is that Thomas’ own observations are more intriguing than some quirky juxtaposition. For what is of great interest is that First Peoples did not immediately know how to perform before the camera, whereas sailors clearly understood what was expected of them. It is here that the camera becomes the third complicit party in the production of the photograph as it takes on the role of mediator between two distinctly different cultures. If the camera simply operated as mediator we would have little concern but this particular mediator is biased as it serves as an instrument of the photographic medium which is both a product of European society and a shaper of that society. The medium in essence is the environment in which both the photographer and the subject operate. One must understand this medium in an intimate way to know how it shaped the photographer’s intent, the subject’s pose, and the historian’s interpretation. Like the photographer, the historian today operates within an image oriented culture.

Frame 2: The Mediator

Several summers ago I returned to the Haida Indian reserve in northern British Columbia, where I had conducted anthropological research, and I recall being both startled and amused when a native bearing a Nikon camera turned to snap my photograph..... Like many native subjects who have faced the cameras of anthropologists, I never saw the final product. Perhaps, fittingly, it is now part of a photo collection depicting anthropologists who have studied this Indian community.³⁵

While Blackman uses this passage as an introduction, or staging technique, for *Posing the American Indian* and not as a point of major analysis, I find it useful to focus on what is being affirmed here, for it reflects a misunderstanding of what indigenous people, as opposed to Europeans, were confronted with as subjects before the camera. This incident of the tables being turned attempts to establish a common ground of legitimacy. But such legitimation is misleading since Blackman has in no way experienced what First Peoples experienced with the arrival of photography on the heels of the 1858 gold rush. Unlike First Peoples of the Northwest Coast, Blackman is a product of the same social framework and culture as that of photography. The Native encounter with photography was not merely a matter of a native individual being confronted by a new and unknown cultural product; but rather, what was underway was First Peoples' contact with an embodiment of Western European and North American culture as a whole. That which was representative of the modern era had stepped off the boat.

The history of photography begins not in 1839 with Jacques-Mande Daguerre's

patent, but in the development of a perception of the world which would require photography as a means of measurement and ratification. It is within the Renaissance that we see Europeans come to proclaim the rules of art to be those which photography is - a fixed viewpoint, rigid bounds of perspective, and an aim to scientific representation.³⁶ The goal was to know nature by recreating it. The desire for a mathematically exact copying of nature manifested itself in recording machines predating photography by several centuries. The *machine pour dessiner* dominated mechanical visual representation in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, and the *camera obscura* and *machine à dessiner* peaked in popularity in the eighteenth century.³⁷ (See Fig. 12)

In 1821, two decades before photography was invented, we already find in painting the realist motifs that would later be attributed to photography and distinguish it from painting. As is seen in a black and white slide reproduction of a painting by John Constable,

it may look to us very much like the photographs of an elm tree. But the slide is made after a painting, the colors of which when reduced to black and white increase the photographic appearance of the picture. But it is not the quasi-photographic texture alone which causes the optical deception. It is also the motif itself and its treatment: the abundance of the details caused by the closeness of the painter to his subject, the portrait of an individual tree trunk which creates an illusion with which we have become familiar through photography.³⁸ (See Fig. 13)

The medium of photography was a product of a European Judeo-Christian vision of the world in which humanity had been separated from and placed above nature and in which now from a new vantage point it sought to know and understand nature through emulating it. To copy nature became the highest of artistic endeavours. Science also

began in a similar spirit to investigate nature in positivist terms. Realist ideals which had their roots in the Renaissance came to full fruition with the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on empiricism and its views that the only true source of knowledge was experience, especially of the senses. As Pultz states, "Photography seemed the perfect Enlightenment tool, functioning like human sight to offer empirical knowledge mechanically, objectively, without thought or emotion."³⁹

Both the realist perspective and the scientific knowledge required for the development of photography had emerged by the eighteenth century. Alongside the development of the realist and positivist approach to the world was also the development of a mercantile culture which would lead many of those involved in this culture to identify themselves, if not consciously then through action, as a collective community holding similar values, a community that would be identified as the bourgeoisie. All that remained to spark the success of the photographic medium was for the bourgeoisie to see their values reflected within photography, especially those values which grew out of the second industrial revolution: a matter-of-fact accounting of the world, mass production, and mass consumerism. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the arrival of mass culture; the camera would be the tool used to reflect that culture. Marbot observes that,

For the bourgeoisie, the value of any representation lay in its realism, for without this there could be no accurate inventory nor any complete investigation of the world which this class was now bent upon controlling... Furthermore, the bourgeoisie was to identify with the process that coincided with its own emergence and was capable of reflecting its own face and works as often as could be desired and at a reasonable cost.⁴⁰

As the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie and the photographic medium together became the defining symbols of the modern era, each emulated and reinforced the other. The fragmentary nature of photography which sliced up time into encapsulated moments reiterated the bourgeoisie's view of society as a collective whole constructed of individuals, while at the same time reflecting pragmatic bourgeoisie ideals through the cheap multiple reproductive process of the *Carte-de-visite*. The *Carte-de-visite* process, patented by A.E. Disderi in 1854, used a multi-lens camera and a moving film-holder to produce from a single glass-plate six to twelve albumen-silver prints which measured 2 ½ x 3 ½ inches each. This new photographic form allowed multiple images to be made cheaply and paved the way for photography to become one of the most widely marketed of the new consumer goods of the nineteenth century. As *cartes* came to be collected on a mass scale, they defined and recorded the individuals they portrayed as a unified entity. One could identify oneself as an individual yet also as part of a mass culture. People began to collect *cartes* of strangers right alongside *cartes* of loved ones, "Collections of portraits became substitutes for collections of real people.... Albums made the world a place where the bodies of families, friends, celebrities, or political figures seemed equal."⁴¹ No longer were the images of famous figures limited to the salons of the wealthy.

But as Bernard Marbot states, "... this democratic inclusivity had its limits. Not included in the albums were people marginalized or excluded from middle-class life itself, such as the poor and the sick."⁴² Images of First Peoples fell between the realm of those photographs which sat side by side in photo albums on an equal basis and those

people who were excluded from the photographic process. While the bourgeoisie regarded First Peoples as “other” they were not a direct threat to the vision of the European social framework; consequently, their images were collected like the images of famous people but instead of representing a comfortable familiarity the images of First Peoples represented the exotic, the world that would fall at the feet of the European middle-class. These images marked either a romanticized past or a fetish for voyeuristic eyes. When Blackman claims an affinity with the role that First Peoples fulfilled as photographic subjects she certainly could not have been proposing that she too was exploited in such a manner. Photographs are taken everyday of people who do not know the final destination or purpose of the photograph. Photographers snap pictures in the public domain of the urban landscape and seldom stop to ask permission. Blackman’s lack of knowledge regarding the eventual use of the photograph taken of her says little about her affinity to First Nations People in their encounter with colonial culture and society.

Unlike Blackman, First Peoples came to the role of photographic subject not as those who saw the world through the objective, physically verifiable lens of the camera, but rather, as a people who saw a world which not only existed as a recordable fact but existed as both a physical realm and a spiritual realm. They envisioned a world where the physical and spiritual were entwined to such a degree that clear distinctions between what is purely physical “reality” and what is purely spiritual could not be made. As Jamake Highwater argues concerning primal art, native use of imagery was not predominated by the literal translation of “reality” found in photography but was a part of

a visionary and transformative process:

The simultaneous point of view of primal art deals not with the “eye as a camera,” so to speak, but with the “mind’s eye” that consummates everything we know, imagine, feel, conceive, perceive, and dream about an object we are painting. Transformation lets us take our bodies with us into the visionary realm. Transformation relinquishes the point of view of the camera and provides us with direct, physical contact with the *orendas* which appear to us as visions, inspirations, intuitional insights.⁴³

For First Peoples the pursuit of rational objective “truths” that photography stood for was an invasive and restrictive process. A question which arises time and again in the literature on First People and photography, as well as within the archival material itself, is whether or not First Peoples were afraid to have their photographs taken. Did they fear that some part of themselves would be taken by the camera? But I would suggest that the true threat does not lie here but rather rests in the fact that photography unveils the shadows to the light of day. It reduces First Peoples’ culture to merely the physical – the seen. In Blackman’s analysis of the effect on the Haida of this strange machine, the camera, which could “copy” people, she points out, “Native artists could render carved wood replicas of spirits, ancestors and even living individuals. The photographer, with his mysterious machinery, could also do the latter.”⁴⁴ However, the mystery did not rest with the fact that the photographer could do something that the carver could do but rather with the idea that photography could only replicate the individual in physical form.

Mitchell explains that:

No matter how odd or idiosyncratic particular images may seem, photographs all tend to resonate at the same semantic frequency,

with the effect of reducing experience to a visual form of the least common denominator. By contrast, Indian cultures tend to honor the private and participatory, to venerate invisible ties and other worldly affinities, to preserve sacred knowledge from all but the initiated. Which may explain why the photographer has been denounced from the beginning as a “shadow stealer” who challenged the cultural context of what he so often recklessly exposed to view. The very glare of full disclosure valued by a technological society threatened the disappearance of “shadow” truths essential to tribal cultures.⁴⁵

What confronted First Peoples was not merely a new European mechanical device but a way of seeing and being that was, as defined within the dominant European discourse, completely alien to the cultures of North America. Photography which began as the culmination of the artistic tradition of realism and scientific exploration of the physical world marked the transformation of European society into a society which did not simply see photography as a new means of copying nature. Instead, Europeans equated the way the camera viewed the world with how they themselves physically viewed the world. Terence Wright states that,

The eye-camera analogy was established in a central role, explaining and shaping theories, both in the psychology and philosophy of perception.... For Descartes it was particularly significant to his philosophy. In terms of dualism, the body soul dichotomy was followed by the body/conscious dichotomy. This, in turn, has supplied the separation of eye and mind – consequently identifying the eye, as an organ of perception with the camera.⁴⁶
(See Fig. 14)

The idea that the camera emulated one’s vision of the world was further extended to how one perceived the objects within a photograph, as an unmediated presentation of those objects. It was argued that if the “spectator viewed the image monocularly from the

centre of perspective, the photograph replicated the sheaf of light rays which would have been produced by the depicted objects.”⁴⁷ Consequently, in fields such as anthropology, this justified the proposition that the viewer was receiving an objective view unmediated by outside interference,

So, for an anthropology deeply rooted in positivism, photography offered a tempting proposition, an objective vision and collection of ‘facts’, facilitating systematic organization and analysis, in the service of scientific enquiry. With little interference, outside influence, nor allowing – within the photograph – room for the viewer’s investigation, the photograph brought the subjects of anthropological study directly to the armchair. Although there has been the occasional exception ... the positivist approach had established the general pattern for fieldwork photography: a means of transferring the location of analysis and control of the subject.⁴⁸

The enthusiasm for the eye-camera analogy could at times result in some very bizarre postulations. In the example of the “optogram” the comparison was extended to its limits with the argument that the camera not only emulated the way we perceive the world with our eyes but that the chemical processes of vision and photography were similar. According to Georges Didi-Huberman, “The idea was to photograph the internal retina of the murdered victims, in the hope of obtaining an image of the scene of the crime – or even a portrait of the murderer – as if (at the moment of death) the eye became a veritable camera which for a few hours retained an exact image of the last moment of life.”⁴⁹

On the surface the optogram appears to be a bizarre anomaly of scientific positivism but it draws attention to an underlying motif in European reactions to

nineteenth-century photography: it was seen as a mystical force. At the end of his life, in the memoirs he had published in 1900, Nadar reported that Balzac had a “vague dread” of being photographed which he explained, according to Nadar, in the following manner,

Every body in its natural state was made up of a series of ghostly images superimposed in layers to infinity, wrapped in infinitesimal films.... Man never having been able to create, that is to make something material from an apparition, from something impalpable, or to make from nothing, an object - each Daguerreian operation was therefore going to lay hold of, detach, and use up one of the layers of the body on which it focused.⁵⁰

The idea that an image could be captured on paper represented photography as such a powerful and mystifying process that to some European observers it threatened the idea that only God had the power of creation. According to Gisela Freund “the church’s” early hostile position towards photography inspired this passage in a German newspaper in 1839,

To fix fleeting images is not only impossible, as has been demonstrated by very serious experiments in Germany, it is a sacrilege. God has created man in His image and no human machine can capture the image of God. He would have to betray all his Eternal Principles to allow a Frenchman in Paris to unleash such a diabolical invention upon the world.⁵¹

The threat of photography was not that it represented “the real” but that it had transferred or created on paper some aspect of the thing that had been photographed.

If a fear of some aspect of the self being “captured” by photography existed even within the predominant European ethos of physicality and realism, a new light must be turned on the academic literature that time and time again turns to the persistent issue of whether or not indigenous people, across the globe, were or were not refusing to be

photographed because they were afraid that their “souls” would be captured. One is led to ask whether or not Western preoccupations with superstitious indigenous fears about the camera were and are a reflection of the fears of indigenous people or of our own trepidations regarding photography.

This issue is important because there seems to be a tendency for the “soul catcher” analogy to get in the way of much simpler explanations regarding refusals to be photographed. A case in point is found in Silversides’ book, *The Face Pullers*, in which the analysis of the photographs taken of Prairie First Peoples is generally well rounded, yet when it comes to the issue of First Peoples’ refusal or acceptance to be photographed the author runs into problems. Silversides notes that First Peoples like any diverse group of people, included some who refused to participate, some who accepted, or some who were ambivalent. The reasons as to why or why one would not be photographed varied greatly - a spiritual fear, desire for compensation, the personality of the photographer, etcetera. Unfortunately, while Silversides recognized the variety of reasons for refusing to be photographed, his examples are dominated by descriptions of a fear of the camera’s alleged ability to steal some part of the person it photographs. Consequently, his examples tend to override his argument affirming diversity.⁵²

I am not arguing that indigenous people did not in certain instances have fears regarding the nature of photography, but I would suggest rather that perhaps the attention of Europeans to this issue was not purely guided by indigenous reactions to the camera but was shaped by the inability of Europeans to fit the mystical aspect of photography comfortably into their framework and knowledge of the medium. Perhaps in this regard

the mysticism and spiritual aspect of indigenous cultures was more inclined to understand and accept the mystical power of photography. For today, arguments continue about how the medium operates which would support the beliefs behind both indigenous fears and those beliefs “the church” professed in 1839: As Susan Sontag has remarked, “Such images are indeed able to usurp reality because first of all a photograph is not an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real, it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask.”⁵³ However, while First Nations peoples may have had a greater affinity to accept the underlying mystical aspects of photography what fears born of pragmatic caution they may have had were not based on the body (tangible) /spiritual (intangible) split existing in European culture. When Balzac critiqued photography he used the rational scientific method to explain that one cannot create something physical from nothing. The unease with photography’s seeming mystical powers is born out of the fact that this underlying aspect of photography does not fit comfortably into the society it represents which purports to a belief in realism – the physically measurable and verifiable.

While the underlying mystical through-line continued beneath the surface, the modernist movement of the early twentieth century both celebrated photography as the definitive emblem of mechanized culture and chastised it as representative of the woes of rapid industrialization and urbanization. In 1929, Albert Renger-Putzsch was one of many artists who were enthused by the urban landscape and defined the modern era in terms of photography. He wrote,

photography exists and has for nearly a hundred years now.

It has acquired an immense significance for modern man, many thousands of people live from it and through it. It exerts an immense influence on wide sections of the population by means of film, it has given rise to the illustrated press, it provides true-to-life illustrations in most works of a scientific nature. In short, modern life is no longer thinkable without photography.⁵⁴

At the same time, some painters who would come to be associated with the modernist movement began to move away from realism towards perceptions of the world that were identified with the primitive. Painting could not compete with photography's literal representations, and for many the industrialized world was not the vision they had hoped for. Heinrich Schwarz writes,

The year in which photography was born, 1839, was also the birth year of Cezanne. His new approach was to become the turning point of a development which had been dominant since the Renaissance. Cezanne's painting meant the end of scientific perspective, the proclamation of a "truth" which could not be proved by figures, facts and diagrams. He replaced "re-production" by "representation." It was the signal for a movement which wanted to escape from reality and sensuously recordable facts.⁵⁵

These two competing perceptions of the world have both shaped the society in which historians find themselves today, a society where the images which inundate it are proclaimed to be objective, yet are at the same time found to be suspect. The ensuing doubts extend even to the point of throwing into question the value of the realist perspective. The tourist today holds similar values to those of the nineteenth century. Like the nineteenth-century traveler on the Canadian Pacific Railway, we hold our postcards up and validate the legitimacy of what we see before us on the basis of how well it emulates the photograph, not on how well the photograph emulates the actual

object,⁵⁶ or in this case the authenticity of the people. As Edward Roper, a tourist on the Canadian Pacific Railway wrote of “Indians” in 1891, “Many of them were partly civilized in dress, though ragged and dirty, and there was very little of the picturesque about them. Some few had good faces, but the ideal Red Man was not there.”⁵⁷ Today similar disappointments continue to occur when the vacation destination doesn’t fit the brochure or a foreign destination is not “ethnic” enough because the people found there are much like those one left behind. The alternative through-line questions the legitimacy of what was portrayed in the 24-hour news clips of the Gulf War – was what was shown real or was it Memorex? Was what was relayed to us through CNN what actually occurred or simply what we were allowed to see? Was what we were provided with a facsimile rather than a real event? The dilemma which arises from these two competing interpretations of photography is perhaps best portrayed by our dilemma with advertising, where on the one hand we condemn it for the false unattainable body images it portrays, and on the other hand we continue to be manipulated by the body images it presents. But surely the questioning nature of historians should rescue them from the seduction of photography’s objective falsehoods?

Unfortunately, we can not completely separate ourselves from our society and the ideas and events which operate in it. When we all saw the Los Angeles police officers beating Rodney King, we condemned those officers immediately and were shocked at the outcome of the initial trial. The tape had spoken, and it was self-evident what had occurred. The officers had committed a vicious beating and were to be condemned for it. But the overlooked importance of this event was that a mechanical device had become the

prime witness in the case. Any of the events or people outside the frame did not exist. Included in this absence was the individual holding the video camera. The witness was not a flesh and blood being but the camera itself. It was *the* objective voice at the time of the incident, during the trial, in the midst of the riot, and afterwards. No one remembers who held the camera because that individual simply had ceased to exist. The camera had become an active agent in the event and had become the event, "... is this not the sole proof of its art? To annihilate itself as medium, to be no longer a sign but the thing itself?"⁵⁸

Here lies photography's continued grip on our society and our continued belief in its realism, for to be photographed is to lay claim to evidence of existence. Photography is a chemical process in which the film reacts to an object's influence in terms of the absence or presence of light:

The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here; the durations of the transmission is insignificant, the photograph of the missing being, as Sontag says, will touch me like the delayed rays of a star.⁵⁹

The knowledge that photography distorts by how it is cropped, blown up, shrunk, or by what is left in or out of the frame may be understood, but there is the presumption as Sontag points out that "something exists, or did exist, which is like what's in the picture."⁶⁰ Photography provides evidence, and it is on the basis of evidence that historians make conclusions.

The dilemma for the historian is how to keep in mind that the photograph does not

necessarily provide a realistic representation of the objects within its frame, while at the same time relying on what is found within the photograph as being factual evidence. What must be remembered is that the photograph itself does not define what is within its frame as something which is evidential. In fact it says nothing. As always, it is the historian who defines evidence. As Sontag recognized, “There can be no evidence, photographic or otherwise, of an event until the event itself has been named and characterized.”⁶¹

What is defined as evidence in much of Blackman’s work are those items which she defines as “traditional” or “non-traditional”. Such items represent evidence of cultural transition on the Northwest Coast. But Blackman’s analysis becomes problematic when she defines such evidence in opposition to the distortions caused by stereotypes, as when she writes,

In every picture we find two kinds of enlightening statements, one about the artist or author and his conception of the subject material and a second about the culture captured in the picture. These statements might be labeled “stereotype” and “reality”, respectively.⁶²

The “culture captured in the picture,” cannot stand on its own as reality as Blackman’s labels would imply for it is a framed moment cut out of a much larger continuous whole which is lost to the outside of a photographic border. Any objects found inside the frame of the photograph have been largely stripped of their cultural context. What Blackman describes in the photograph as “culture captured” are objects which she has defined as evidence, as artefacts. It is completely legitimate for Blackman to place such evidence within a cultural narrative that she has labored to construct through research and analysis,

but we should be aware that this is what she is doing.

Secondly, we can infer that Blackman regards the photograph as an objective form from which one can draw relatively unmediated conclusions because it is “the artist or author and his conception of the subject material” which has been labeled “stereotype”. In her analysis the medium can be relied upon as an objective forum because it is not implicated in the crime of stereotyping. As I hope I have shown, this is clearly not the case. When analyzing photographs, though objects inside the frame may be regarded as having been real in that they did exist, the historian must not equate the photograph to any sense of the “real”, but regard the photograph as a product of interaction between the photographic medium, the subject, the photographer and the culture(s) in which it was produced and was/is viewed. Each of these components influences and places limitations on the other. As viewer and narrator, the historian must tread lightly in interpreting the photographic record. If as Barthes has said, the photograph annihilates itself as medium to become the object within its frame,⁶³ then historians must reiterate to themselves and their reader that such action is always an artifice. The photograph is a created product.

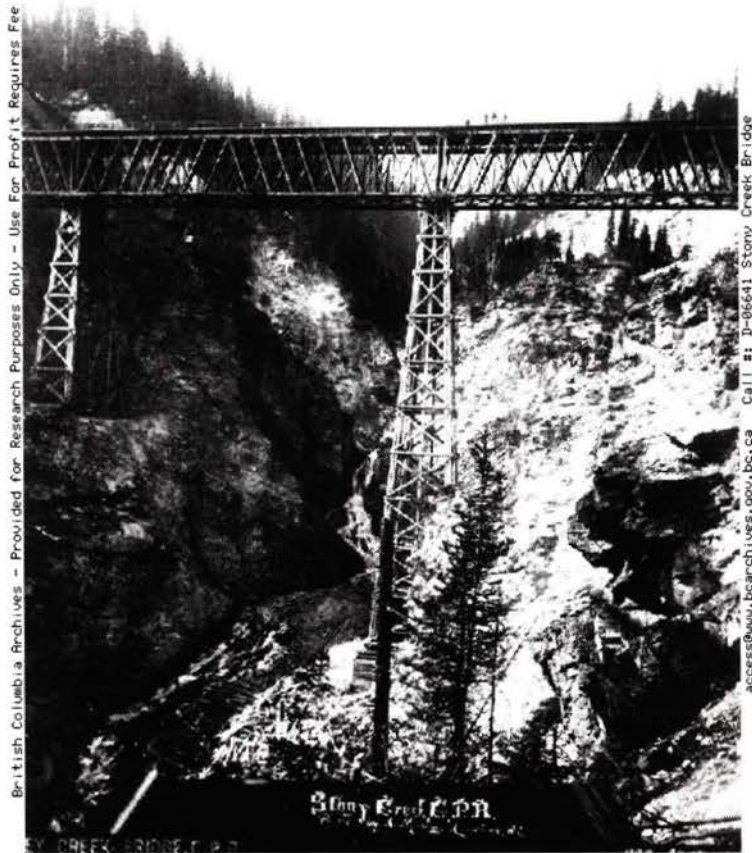


Fig. 4
Stony Creek Bridge
Richard Maynard, 188-.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. D-06641



Fig. 5
*Vancouver, Logging
Burrard Inlet.*
Frederick Dally,
ca. 1868.
Courtesy: BC Archives
No. A-03391.

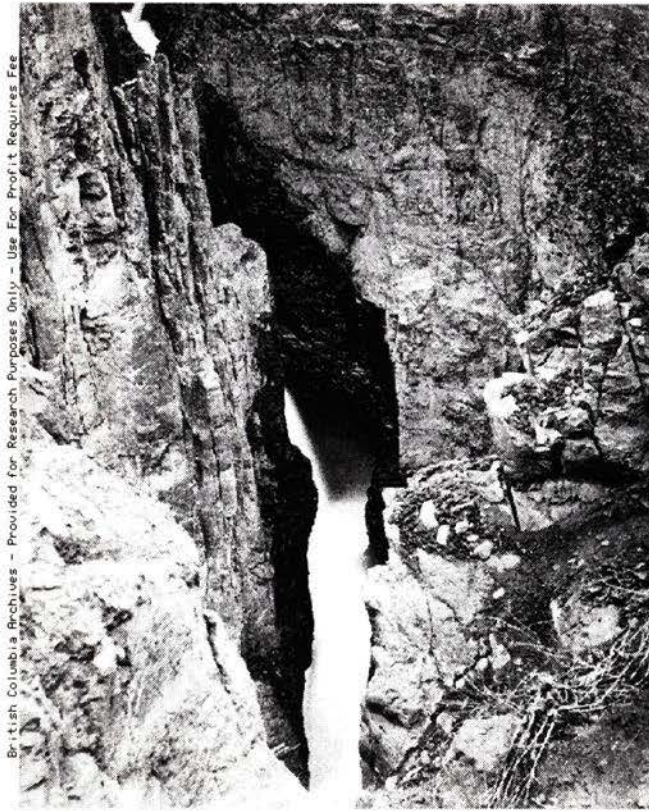
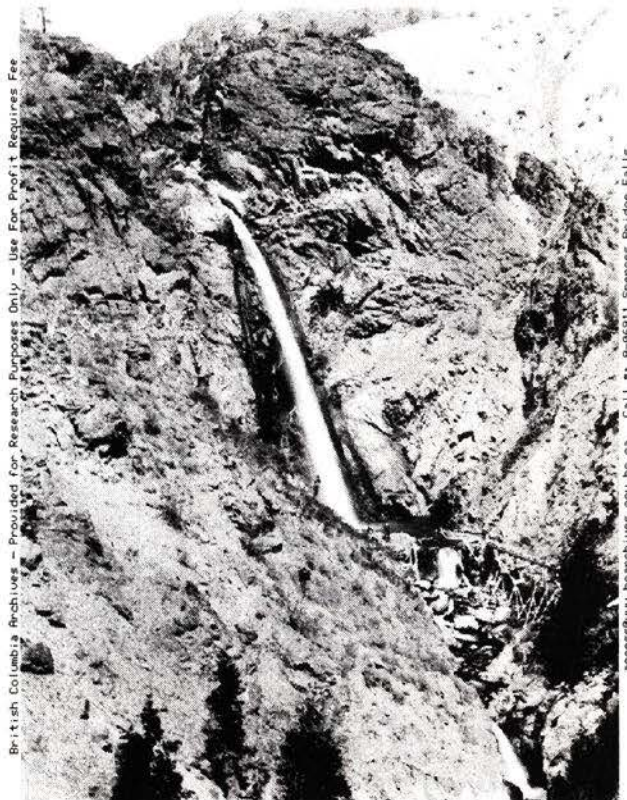


Fig. 6.
Nicomen Falls.
Richard Maynard, ca. 1870.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. A-06700.

British Columbia Archives - Provided for Research Purposes Only - Use For Profit Requires Fee

access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: R-06700 Nicomen Falls

Fig. 7.
Spences Bridge Falls.
Frederick Dally, 1867.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. A-06911.



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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: R-06911 Spences Bridge Falls

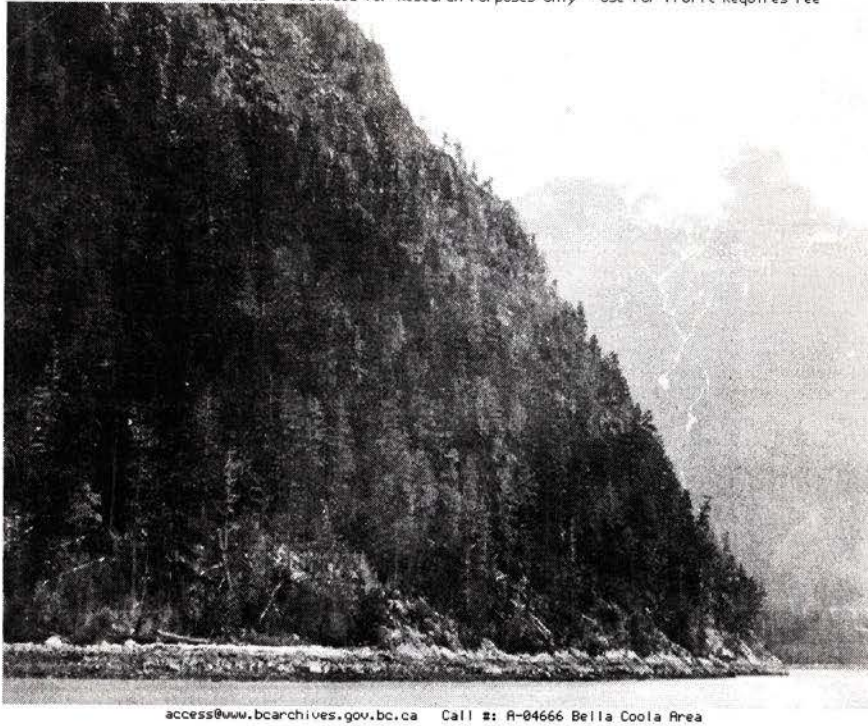


Fig. 8. *Bella Coola Area*. Richard Maynard, 1873.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. A-04666.

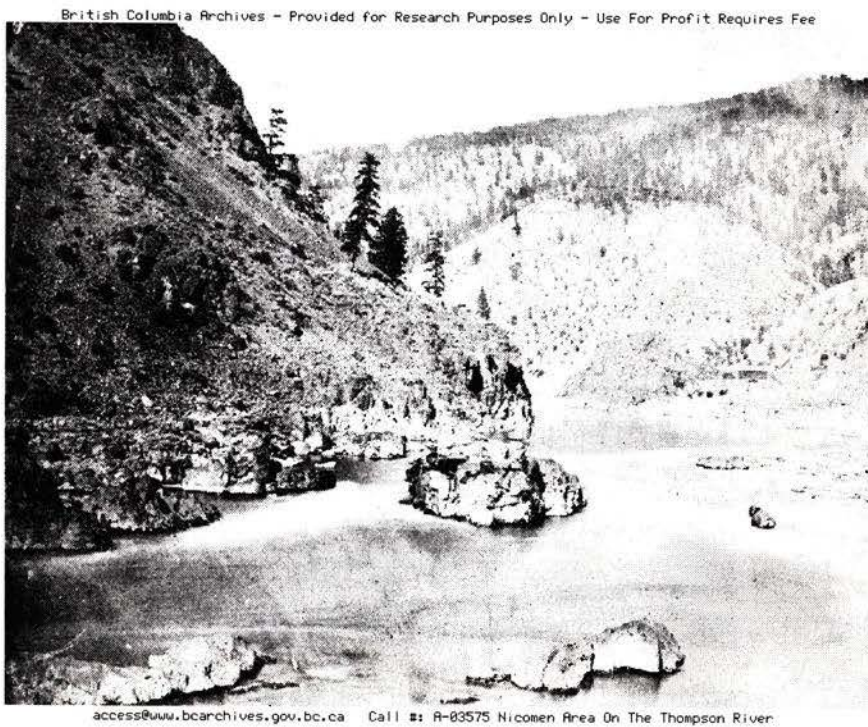
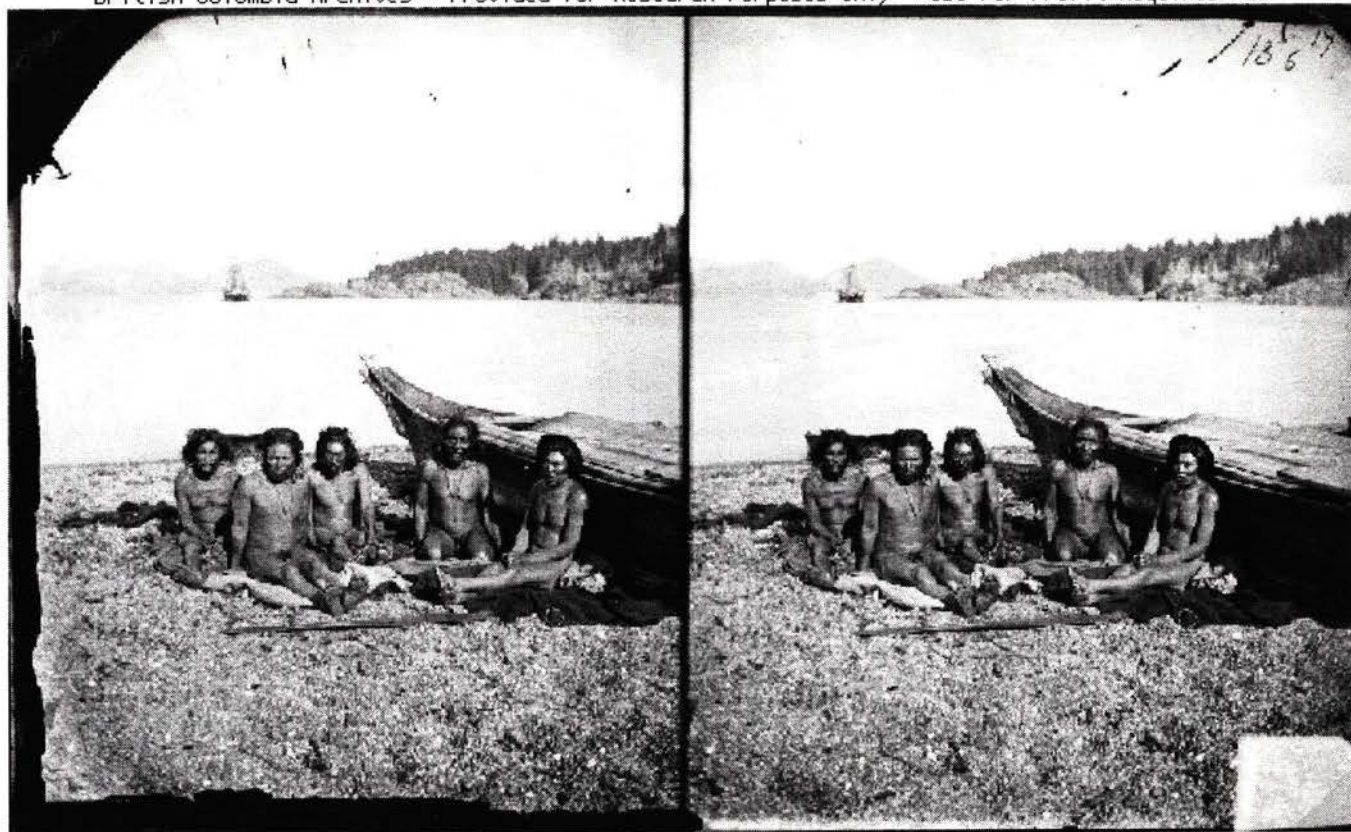
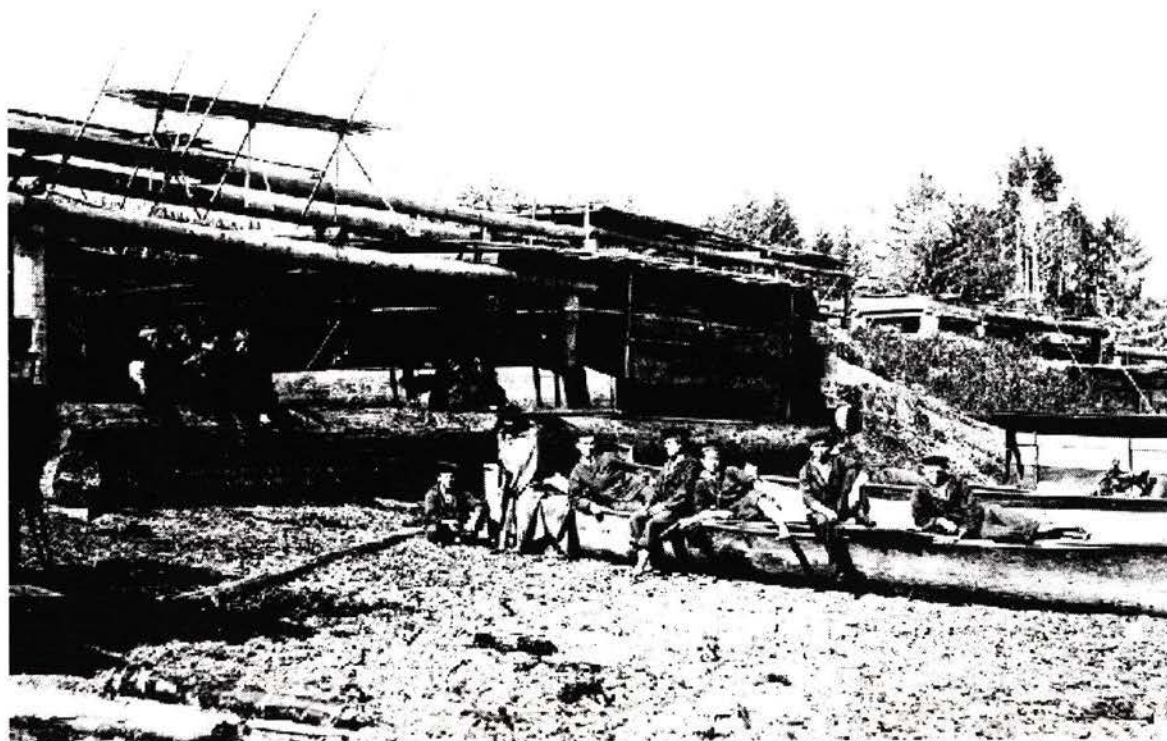


Fig. 9. *Nicomen Area on the Thompson River*. Frederick Dally, 1867.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. A-03575.



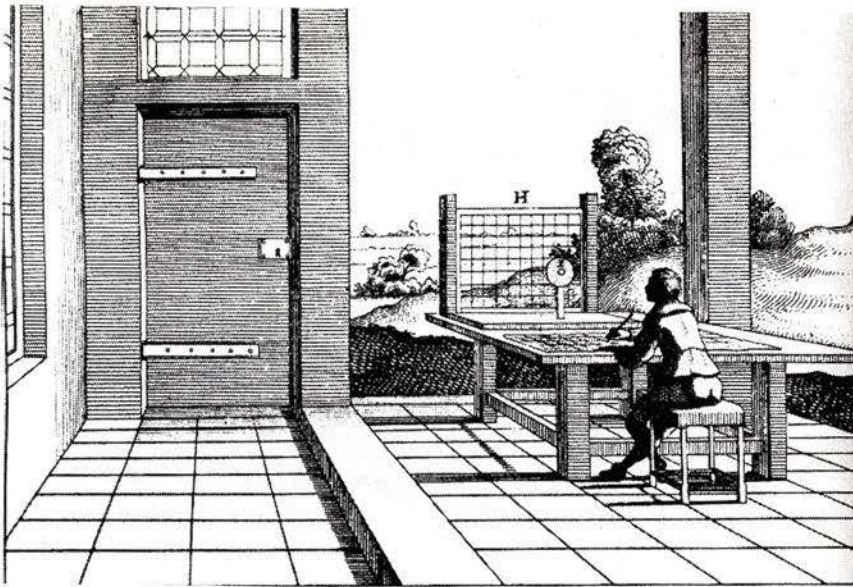
access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=I-50665

Fig. 10 Maynard Notes: "17 Naked Indians" Nootka Sound, Boxer trip. Sept. 10, 1874.
Richard Maynard, 5x7 stereo wet plate.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. I-50665.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: A-02693 Naval Detachment At Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound

Fig. 11. *"No. 21 Indian camp at N[ootka] Sound. Large."*
Indian ranch at Nootka Sound where Captain Cook was in March, 1778.
Richard Maynard, HMS Boxer Trip, 1874.
Courtesy: BC Archives No. A-02693.



"Machine a Dessiner," engraving from Jean Dubreuil *La Perspective pratique*, Paris, 1663.

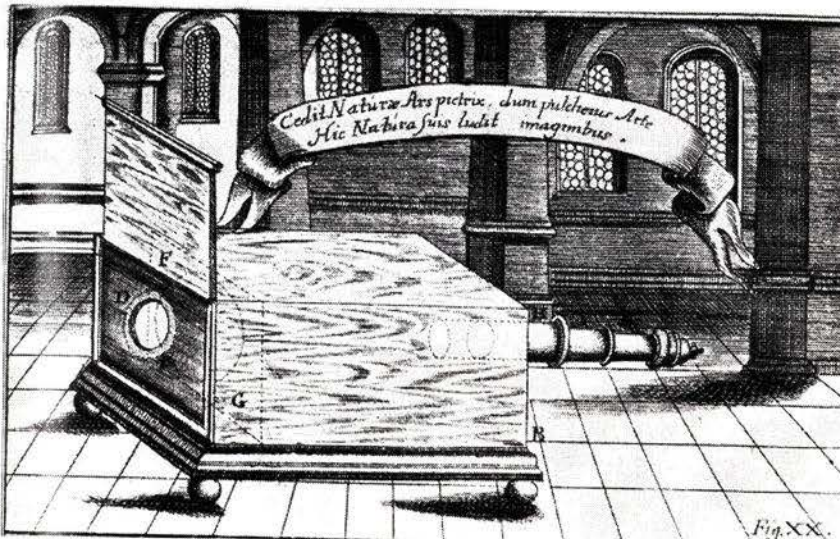


Fig. 12. Portable *Camera Obscura*, from Johannes Zahn, *Oculus artificialis*, 1685. The principles of the camera obscura were first noted by Aristotle while engaged upon observing an eclipse of the sun. Between the eleventh and sixteenth century astrologers made use of the phenomena in which one could observe rays of light cast an inverted image of the sun on a wall opposite of a circular aperture pierced in the shutters of a darkened room. The camera obscura came to general use in the arts with Giovanni Battista della Porta's exposition in a work frequently reprinted and translated from 1558 onwards. Girolamo Cardano suggested the addition of a lens to the aperture thus allowing the image to be more distinct. In the seventeenth century it became portable.

(Jean Marbot, "Towards the Discovery," *A History of Photography: Social and Cultural Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 12.



Fig. 13. John Constable, *Elm Tree*, c. 1821.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

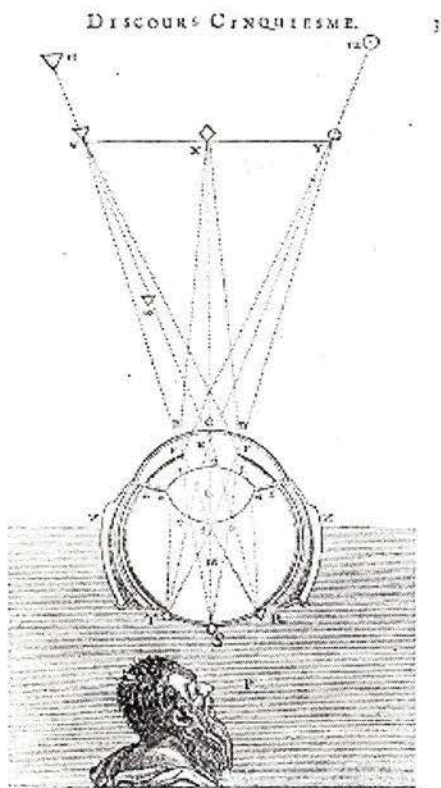
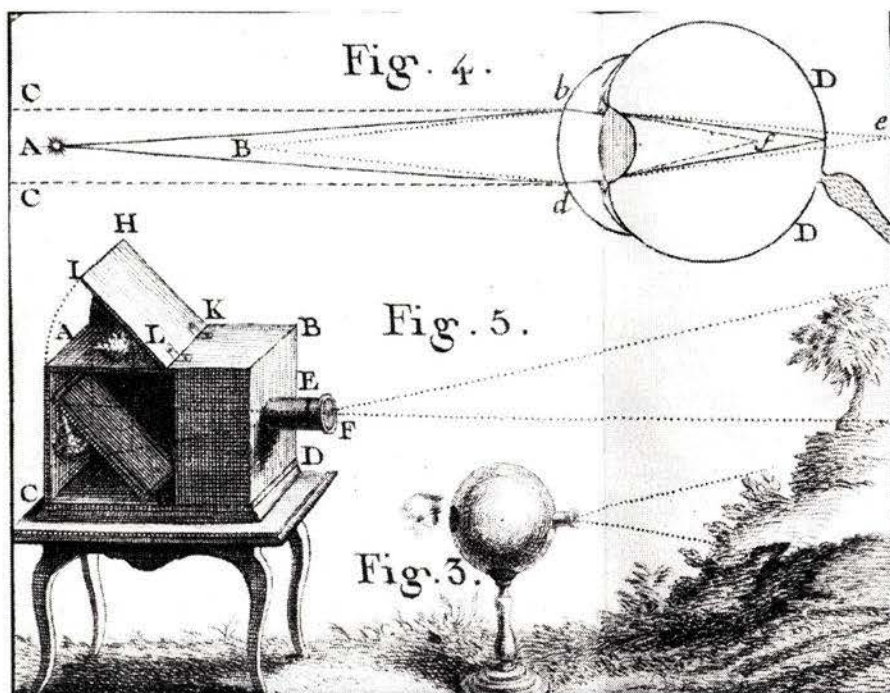


Fig. 14.
 Illustration of an experiment to explain the formation of the retinal images performed by Schiener (1619) which appeared in Descartes, *La Dioptrique*, 1637. Courtesy: Cambridge University Library.

In the illustration below one can see the direct connection made between how the camera obscura worked and the eye.

Camera Obscura. Engraving from *Lecons de physique experimentalé* by the Abbé Nollet, Paris, 1755, vol. V, lesson XVIII, p. 480. Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris. Ph. Michel Didier © Photeb.



Endnotes

1. Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New York: Mentor, 1964), p. 170.
2. Brian W. Dippie, "Representing the Other: The North American Indian," Anthropology & Photography, 1860-1920, ed. Elizabeth Edwards (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 134.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
4. Alfred L. Bush & Lee Clark Mitchell, The Photograph and the American Indian (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. xvii.
5. *Ibid.*, p. xx.
6. Margaret B. Blackman, "Posing the American Indian," Natural History (Oct. 1980), pp. 70-72.
7. Alan Thomas, "Photography of the Indian: Concept and Practice on the Northwest Coast," BC Studies, No. 52 (Winter, 1981-82), p. 84.
8. Blackman, "Posing the American Indian," p. 71.
9. Daniel Francis, Copying People: Photographing British Columbia First Nations, 1860-1940 (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1996), p. 3.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p.48.
12. Daniel Francis, The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), pp. 39-42.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-82.

14. Ibid, p. 69. In fact, with the exception of Vancouver island, the general rule in British Columbia prior to joining confederation was that no treaties were signed. With the on-rush of the gold rush on the mainland Governor James Douglas expedited the establishment of lands for First Nations Peoples by sending out Royal engineers to determine with the counsel of First Peoples what areas they considered theirs without formally establishing treaties. Consequently, unlike the majority of Canada, British Columbia lacks the basis of a treaty system for its native land claims issues. But this fact does not diminish the belief in British Columbia along with the rest of Canada that natives were treated justly. Douglas acted out of a belief that what he was doing was the best means to secure lands for First Peoples and at the same time maintaining peace between the incoming miners and First Peoples.
15. The Victoria Gazette, July 19, 1858, p. 3.
16. Paula Richardson Fleming & Judith Lynn Luskey, Grand Endeavors of American Indian Photography (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), p. 12.
17. Ibid., pp. 29-33, 99-103, & 107-116.
18. Brock V. Silversides, The Face Pullers (Saskatoon: Fifth House Ltd., 1994), p.5.
19. Ibid.
20. Fleming & Luskey, Grand Endeavors of American Indian Photography, p. 17.
21. Francis, Imaginary Indian, p. 17.
22. Ibid..
23. Ibid., pp. 178-179.
24. Ibid., p. 57.
25. Ibid.
26. Francis, Imaginary Indian, p. 178.
27. Silversides, The Face Pullers, p. 15.
28. Ibid., p. 146.

29. While resident photographers, like Frederick Dally had already established themselves by 1860 in Victoria, on the prairies the first resident photographer did not arrive until 1876, when George Anderton (1848-1913) arrived at Fort Walsh in the Cypress Hills. He had been enlisted by the North-West Mounted Police and would remain stationed at Fort Walsh until 1897. Furthermore, photography on the prairies was dominated to a much greater degree than B.C. by itinerant photographers who had available to them the completed Canadian Pacific Railway across the Prairies from Winnipeg to Calgary in 1883. Silversides, The Face Pullers, pp.2-3.
30. Blackman, "Posing the American Indian," p. 73.
31. Alan Thomas, "Photography of the Indian," p. 71.
32. Ibid., p. 60.
33. It is highly unlikely that Powell literally took the photograph he describes. On his inspections of native coastal villages, where photography was included, Powell made use of a number of official photographers, including; Maynard in 1873 and 1874 (Maynard Research, BC Archives), O.C. Hastings in 1879, and Edward Dossetter in 1881 (Blackman, "Copying People", BC Studies, No. 52 (Winter, 1981-82), pp.93-94). Photography from the 1860s through the early 1880s was primarily reserved for professionals as it was a relatively complex undertaking and it is likely that if Powell had enough interest in photography to take photographs himself, he would have included significantly more description of the photographs and their use on his inspection tours than he does in his reports to the Indian Agency. Rather he gives no mention of the use of photographers on the trips that involved O.C. Hastings and Edward Dossetter (Blackman, "Copying People", pp. 93-94). The only trip in which he does mention photography taking place is the 1874 H.M.S. Boxer trip in which Maynard took part: "The day was spent in visiting and photographing all points of interest about this historic camp and inquiring into the general character and wants of its inhabitants." (Israel W. Powell, Department of Indian Affairs, Report for 1874 (Ottawa: Canada), p. 50) It would appear that though the quote used by Thomas does not appear in the 1874 Report it is the Boxer trip and the photographs taken on that trip that are being described as the description fits the photographs taken on this trip and Powell uses the same quote in both the Reports for 1876 and 1879 (Department of Indian Affairs, 1876 Report and 1879 Report (Ottawa: Canada, 1879). Powell is less interested in the photographs taken on later trips than he is interested in the historical nostalgia of the Boxer trip.
34. Thomas, "Photography of the Indian," p. 69.

35. Blackman, "Posing the American Indian," p. 69.
36. Heinrich Schwarz, Art and Photography: Forerunners and Influences (Layton, UT: Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., Peregrine Smith Books, 1985), p. 98.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-103.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
39. John Pultz, The Body and The Lens: Photography 1839 to the Present (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1995), pp. 8-9.
40. Bernard Marbot, "Towards the Discovery (before 1839)," A History of Photography: Social and Cultural Perspectives, ed. Jean-Claude Lemagny & Andre Rouille (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 15.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
43. Jamake Highwater, The Primal Mind: Vision & Reality in Indian America (New York: Meridian, 1981), p. 88. For further information regarding native physical/spiritual perceptions see Robin Ridington, Trail to Heaven: Knowledge and Narrative in a Northern Native Community (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988), and Hugh Brody Maps and Dreams (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988).
44. Margaret B. Blackman, "Copying People," Northwest Coast Natives Response to Early Photography," BC Studies, No. 52 (Winter, 1981-82), p. 104.
45. Alfred L. Bush & Lee Clark Mitchell, The Photograph and the American Indian (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. xii.
46. Terence Wright, "Photography: Theories of Realism and Convention," Anthropology & Photography 1860-1920, ed. Elizabeth Edwards, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 20.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.
48. *Ibid.*

49. Georges Didi-Huberman, "Photography - scientific and pseudo-scientific," A History of Photography: Social and Cultural Perspectives, ed. Jean-Claude Lemagny & Andre Rouille (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 74.
50. Susan Sontag, On Photography (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), p. 158.
51. Cf. Leipziger Anzeiger, 1839 in Gisele Freund, Photography & Society (Boston: David R. Godine, 1980), p. 69.
52. Silversides, Face Pullers, pp. 6-10. For further discussion regarding the issue of First Peoples fear/uneasiness regarding photography see section on "George Mercer Dawson" under "Frame 4: Perceptions."
53. Sontag, On Photography, p. 154.
54. Albert Renger Putzsch, "Photography and Art," Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913-1940, ed. Christopher Phillips (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Aperture, 1989), pp. 142-143..
55. Schwarz, Art and Photography, p. 17.
56. "But the true modern primitivism is not to regard the image as a real thing, photographic images are hardly that real. Instead, reality has come to seem more and more like what we are shown by cameras. It is common now for people to insist about their experience of a violent event in which they were caught up - a plane crash, a shoot-out, a terrorist bombing - that "it seemed like a movie." This is said, other descriptions seeming insufficient, in order to explain how real it was. While many people in non-industrial countries still feel apprehensive when being photographed, divining it to be some kind of trespass, an act of disrespect, a sublimated looting of the personality or the culture, people in industrialized countries seek to have their photographs taken - feel that they are images, and are made real by photographs. (Sontag, On Photography, p. 161)
57. Silversides, Face Pullers, p. 145.
58. Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), p.45.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

60. Sontag, On Photography, p. 5.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
62. Blackman, "Posing the American Indian," p. 69.
63. Barthes, Camera Lucida, p.45.

Chapter 3

Medium & Photographer

The fact is that Indians have repeatedly posed for the camera in ways they assumed were expected, even as photographers have just as persistently set scenes they envisioned as natively apt. Little as that pattern has altered over a century and a half, however, particular expectations have clearly changed along with more general standards of composition. Any meeting of cultures, after all, both challenges and confirms expectations in ways exposed with peculiar force through the camera lens. For that is photography's singular prerogative among the pictorial arts: to register all that falls within the camera's range, exposing the photographer as ineluctably as his subject, revealing furtive assumptions as tellingly as open biases.

Lee Clark Mitchell¹

Mitchell's historical account of Native Americans in photography stands out brilliantly against the backdrop of literature produced by historians thus far on the subject. In his brief twenty-six page introduction to the extensive catalogue for the 1985 Princeton exhibition, *The Photograph and the American Indian*, Mitchell weaves a narrative that pays close attention to the attributes of photography which reflected and embodied European technology and imperialism, while also taking full account of the roles performed by photographer and subject as they interacted with one another and the medium. He views the coming together of two cultures as a dynamic interaction rather than simply as the dominance of one over the other. But the far reaching scope of *The Photographer and The American Indian*, which covers the photography of natives from its beginnings to the present, creates a text built on generalities. The focus remains those

through-lines in the photographic record which are reflected in the stereotype – that is, with generalities one is generally forced to focus on those particulars which may stand for the whole. Consequently, while Mitchell's introduction moves beyond the issue of stereotype to look at how precisely photography works as a medium and particularly as a medium within a cross-cultural framework, when the text moves into a division of historical periods (1845 to the 1880s, the 1880s to World War II, the 1940s to the present) stereotypes become the central theme again due to the author's inability to focus on particulars within such expansive photographic periods. As Mitchell himself points out, "Of course, the wider one casts an interpretive net, the less accurate are firm chronological distinctions, and for that reason it is worth bearing in mind that the three "periods" are no more than a convenient arrangement, to be treated with due caution."² Despite the cautionary note the fact remains that much of what occurred within the photography of native people remains obscured by stereotypes and is lost in the larger picture. However, a useful aspect of the broad scope of the text is that it does illuminate the influence that technological change had on the photographer in regards to the limits and possibilities of how, or whether, one photographed. Also in Mitchell's concluding period, from the 1940s to the present, he moves beyond the European photographer to show briefly the relationship that native photographers had with the camera. However, it must also be noted that the role of First People as photographers is a topic worth exploring on its own rather than as a brief conclusion to European photography of First Peoples.

While it has been necessary to bring to the light of day the propensity of

photography of First Peoples to create overarching “types” for the consumption of the public, I feel that we must broaden our scope and decentralize the stereotype. We must look at the blurred fringes of photography’s objective magnifying glass, investigate the photographer’s thoughts, and regard First Peoples not as silent background but as active agents. We must view the camera not as a simple mechanical device but as the mechanical extension of a medium in which subject and photographer participate. It is a medium which may influence and direct the actions of subject and/or photographer as they respond to its presence and are restricted by its limits. The subject and photographer operate within the environment of photography. Like guns, cameras shoot, and as with guns the debate arises, “Do cameras kill people, or, do people kill people?”

In answering this question, it is difficult but not impossible to determine what photographers were thinking when they photographed First Peoples. Many photographers kept journals of their work to a lesser or greater degree; others wrote on related topics if not specifically about their photographs. Also available are records of what the photographer’s goals or purpose in taking the photographs were, whether for official surveys, or government expeditions, or commercial ventures. At the same time, bringing the active participation of First Peoples to the forefront is difficult because little record remains of what they had to say about photography, and much of what does remain is given in second-hand accounts. One is often reduced to relying on what one can decipher from the pose of the subject in the photograph. The difficulty with such an approach is to limit the analysis to what is physically present in the photograph without assuming the “voice” of First Nations Peoples by making assumptions regarding their thoughts about

the photographs being taken.

In regards to the medium of photography itself, one should look at which European standards of composition and technique were brought to the photography of First Peoples as opposed to what methods were developed and created specifically for the purpose of photographing First Peoples. Which European traditions of artistic thought or scientific thought were brought to the photographs by the photographer? Did the photographer keep up with the latest photographic techniques? How did the equipment and technology influence the photographic process?

In contrast to Mitchell's sweeping approach this chapter will focus locally on the Northwest Coast of British Columbia, and its scope will be limited predominately to the period 1858 to 1890. Its aim is to de-centre the role of stereotype in representations of First Peoples. The year 1858 marks the commencement of the gold rush in British Columbia and the arrival of photographers seeking a living (and possibly a fortune) by photographing the events and the people who would flow into the province. It did not take long for these photographers to turn their cameras towards the First Peoples living in British Columbia. The time frame of this chapter, though somewhat arbitrary, covers the period of the large format camera. While there were during this era some other technical developments - most significantly improvements in the required exposure time for photographs - these developments were not as dramatic as George Eastman's invention in the 1880s of a hand held box camera that used celluloid film. With the arrival of Eastman's Kodak the burdensome equipment of the previous decades was on the way out and the era of "point and click" had arrived. The amateur photographer was set to

dominate the scene. Since my focus is on the different through-lines occurring in the work of the photographer I have felt it best not to muddy the waters by analyzing photography across different technological epochs, but rather, to focus on a limited number of photographers and their work in one photographic period. In this way, one can feasibly come to a conclusion as to whether a particular photographer did or did not have an explicit overall intent to his work, and whether or not a common method could be identified for the photographers as a body.

Frame 3: Technology & Technique

At the most basic level the camera controls and limits photographers in their endeavours by virtue of its mechanical and chemical operations. Which subjects are to be photographed and in what manner they are presented within the frame of the photograph is dependent on the concrete limitations and possibilities of photography as a technical process. Available for the photographers who arrived on the heels of the 1858 gold rush were the daguerreotype and the wet-plate albumen and collodion processes. According to André Rouille, “The daguerreotype, which had great success in Europe, found in America an even more fertile soil for the development of prosperous businesses throughout the United States and Canada. Though the collodion began to be used in Europe by 1851, it was not until the latter half of the 1850's that it began to make headway in America.”³ However, despite its slow acceptance collodion would eventually supersede the daguerreotype.

Initially, Daguerre's 1839 patented daguerreotype was of limited value for it was restricted to producing photographic images of still-life. The shortest exposure times possible were eight to ten minutes and half an hour was not uncommon. Busy, bustling, cities like Paris were thus depicted by empty streets. People did not even show up as blurs unless they remained stationary for several minutes. Portraiture only became possible with improvements to the camera which allowed more light to pass through to the negative. However, even with such improvements, subjects had to have their heads

made immobile with braces in order to ensure that they did not move. Consequently, while improvements continued in regards to the mechanical aspects of the camera (specifically the improvement of camera lenses) improvements in the chemical aspects of photography were necessary. Bromine and chlorine were added to the original iodine to 'fume' the plate before exposure, thus accelerating the sensitivity of the plate, which allowed braces to be removed.⁴ By 1843, four years after Daguerre's introduction of the daguerreotype, the time of exposure had been reduced to anywhere between one second and two minutes, depending on weather conditions and the format of the daguerreotype.⁵

The initial use of collodion⁶ for photography in 1851 did little to change exposure times or the actual photographic operation but it did allow for the future progress of photography by establishing a satisfactory negative-positive process. For the first time detailed negatives could be developed inexpensively. The inexpensiveness of the collodion process, its superb detail and excellent gradation opened the way for it "to supplant all earlier photographic processes - daguerreotypes, calotypes, and albumen."⁷

The daguerreotype and collodion were both used extensively on the Northwest coast during the 1860's and 1870's, with the latter gradually supplanting the former over this time. Photography during the period was a cumbersome process to say the least. Since it was not yet possible to print an enlargement from a negative, large cameras were required in order to obtain a print of a reasonable size. These cameras were awkward at best on long excursions. The glass plates themselves were both fragile and hefty, weighing nearly a pound each. Many a tale is told by photographers of their time and effort going for naught due to glass-plates breaking somewhere along the way. In

addition to these problems, the photographer had to bring all the chemicals and paraphernalia required to build a darkroom in the field, since the processing of chemicals had to be carried out under lightless conditions. Furthermore, the photographer was dependent on the weather, since the sun was the only adequate light source. Even the shortest of trips could be an ordeal as the following archival account of a short excursion from Victoria by Richard Maynard illustrates:

Sooke and Leech River, Aug 28 - Sept. 1, 1880

- Aug. 28 - Lv. Victoria and got to Goldstream and stopped night at Gilmour's
- 29 - Got two more pack animals besides our own two and left for Kennedy Flat, over a rough trail arriving that evening.
- 30 - Lv. For Sooke Lake -got on top of a Mtn. Where I photographed the Lake - Day dull and cloudy took 2 views - got back very tired.
- 31 - Started for Sooke Canon 2 miles distant took views and went back for more plates - then went 2 ½ miles father down and took 2 more views of another Canon and took 2 views of junction of Sooke and Leech with the "boys" fishing in the river and plenty of trout on the rocks, but very small -
- Sep. 1st - Got the horses and started for the north fork of the Leech over a very tough trail - Hardly fit for a horse, got there O.K. but disappointed with scenery as it is too confined. Took one view of the Forks, but don't expect much. Started back to camp - stopped at Bucan Bar Canon to photograph - Killed a large snake. My turn to cook - had trout breakfast. Took views up Leech River (3) and another at the junction of L. and S. previous plate is wrong. The boys have shot 2 deer, they are good eating but poor - Trout are fine. Five of the boys left last night for "Deception Gulch"

to hunt expect them back tomorrow. I intend leaving one day before the to take views - too foggy coming in. J. [--?] Reed and Miller had lunch then we went up the Sooke River and took views of Indians fishing.⁸

In this brief hunting expedition (Maynard using a camera, his friends using rifles) we have evidence of the problems which arise from: the use of pack animals, poor lighting conditions caused by bad weather, difficult terrain, and Maynard's own exhaustion, all of which were endured to acquire a few views to sell to prospective customers. While on the surface such problems would appear relatively neutral in influencing images of native people, such problems limited when and how photographers took pictures and who they photographed. The problematic nature of photography and the resources required also restricted photography as a domain to professionals. The camera limited images to daylight hours, and by and large interior shots were impractical. Though a photographer might have had the special privilege of witnessing a traditional ceremony, he would have found it impossible to photograph inside a long-house, and anything occurring at night would have been out of the question. Due to the lack of sunlight during the winter photography was also largely restricted to the summer months, a time when native villages were vacated for foraging and fishing necessary to prepare for the winter. Consequently, winter festivals and ceremonies were out of reach of the camera's eye. Isolation allowed many native people to avoid the photographic process well towards the end of the century. Even in the Queen Charlotte Islands which were regularly visited by sailing vessels, it was not until 1878 that we have verifiable evidence of photographs being taken by the surveyor, George M. Dawson. While there was the

lucrative incentive of a commission, government expeditions to visit native groups, led by the likes of Indian Commissioner I.W. Powell and Governor A.E. Kennedy, also provided photographers with opportunities they would otherwise not have had due to the financial costs and requirements of lengthy trips. Government ships and supplies provided the means for many portraits and views of natives and their cultural environment. Richard Maynard, Edward Dossetter, and Frederick Dally were just a few of those who took advantage of the opportunities offered by such government expeditions.

As discussed earlier, Maynard had the opportunity to accompany Powell and Indian Agent Blenkinsop up the West Coast of Vancouver Island in 1874. The official business of the trip was of a diplomatic nature with Powell wanting to show the good intentions of Her Majesty's Government towards natives and to secure general peace. Another part of the official rationale for the trip was a census to be made of all the tribes. While there is some indication that Powell's personal perceptions and official goals may have colored Maynard's work to some extent, what is apparent from the photographs taken by Maynard on this trip is that it was an unrivaled opportunity for him. He made no other series of photographs quite like the ones he took during this excursion on the H.M.S. Boxer. On other occasions his work usually focused on native artefacts like totem poles, architecture, and fishing implements, but on this trip Maynard focused on the people themselves. He had the opportunity to photograph people largely untouched by the cultural change occurring to the south. (See Fig. 15)

Even when the weather cooperated and the problem of reaching one's subject

matter was successfully resolved, there remained the problems involved in operating the camera itself. By the 1870s exposure times had been reduced to an average time of thirty seconds, but thirty seconds was still a long time to have your subject remain motionless. Today we have the problem of holding a smile or blinking at the wrong moment. Try not flinching for thirty seconds. The exposure time was only a small part of the time it took to make a portrait. To produce an image on a wet-plate negative one had to complete an entire set of procedures before the negative dried. This involved covering the delicate glass-plate with iodized collodion, bathing it in a silver-nitrate solution, carefully exposing it, and then developing it all in a matter of about ten minutes.⁹ Consequently, it is often difficult to determine how either European subjects or native subject felt about the process, as both left images that seem to have been cast in stone - emotionless. (See Fig. 16-18)

Yet it was First People who were labeled stoic and demure while Europeans were apparently left unscathed by the emotive drain of photography.¹⁰ In this instance the slow exposure time of photography helped to entrench an already widely held notion of native people, one that has existed for hundreds of years in the form of the cigar-store Indian.¹¹ But if one overlooks the production aspects of photography, one may assume a specific intent to produce stoic visions of First Nations Peoples where there may have been none. If an analysis remains focused on the stereotypes of First People, one can lose sight of the fact that the photographic procedures may have been the same for both First People's and Europeans. By turning the focus towards the medium itself, in this case, to the production conditions, it becomes apparent that one should perform not an analysis of "native

subjects” before the camera but an analysis of “subjects” and of the differences and similarities in what they confronted and experienced when standing before the camera. It can then be determined whether photography created a stereotype specific to a given subject or whether it promoted a stereotype already in existence. By using a comparative analysis of subjects one can also move away from a bi-polar native/European analysis and compare Europeans to Europeans to determine how the images of natives fit into such a context. For instance, while Europeans did not view themselves personally as stoic and demure, what effect did the camera’s slow exposure time have on assumptions regarding, the stranger, the celebrity, or the politician?

Even interpreting the gaze of a subject is problematic as it is not necessarily apparent from the gaze whether or not a subject was an active participant in the photographic event. Though a native subject may appear to be uninvolved, staring off to the left or right but not at the camera, this effect may instead indicate a photographer’s instruction rather than disenchantment. A photograph by Frederick Dally illustrates the common practice of also having European subjects look not directly into the camera but to either the left or right.(See Fig. 19) This last point is not so much a technical issue as it is an example of style and form. It may therefore act as a convenient bridge to the role that European traditional modes of art and mechanical craftsmanship played in the production of photography of native people.

If one is to argue that photographers created “types” of native people, he must not merely look at how those types played out in the context of native photography, but also make comparisons within the photographic genre as a whole. Through a genre-wide

comparative analysis one can attempt to come to understand whether or not the techniques used by photographers to create “types” were unique to the photography of natives or whether those techniques were a common result of operating within the photographic medium. If photographers did not have a special mode of operation for photographing First Nations Peoples, then the whole notion that photographers made a conscious effort to design an “Indian” type comes into question. However, whether photographers established specific photographic techniques with regards to First Peoples or simply used already available European photographic techniques is not necessarily an either/or issue.

According to Pultz, the early photographers were not young burgeoning artists but operators of a mechanical device. The first photographers rose out of the ranks of the technicians, and their photographs expressed a mechanized unassuming process which illustrated a matter-of-fact approach characterized by plain, empty backgrounds which typified the space of a work-shop or laboratory. The portraiture tradition of painters who used painted backdrops depicting drapery, columns, scenic tableaux and other conventions was initially alien to the photographic medium.¹² Europeans apparently did not initially arrive at the photographic form with a fully formed pre-conceived aesthetic understanding of how the form should operate or be molded. However, when photography did leave the lifeless contours of the laboratory, Europeans turned to what they did know, the painted tableaux which initially served as photography’s antithesis. They did so through the collaboration between the artist who took an interest in the newly created form and the technician who exercised the skills of an artisan. Such a collaboration occurred, for

example, as early as 1845 between the Scottish painter David Octavius Hill and the photographer Robert Adamson. Together they took portrait and genre scenes and “moved the body from the vacant space found in early photographic portraits to one occupied by other beings, thus providing a social context.”¹³ (See Fig. 20) Hill and Adamson further borrowed from artistic traditions by taking advantage of the problematic aspects of the calotype process. While the calotype had the advantage of using a paper negative from which numerous copies could be made, these copies were less sharp than daguerreotypes because the paper fibers diffused the light which passed through the negatives in the printing process. Hill and Adamson thus used,

the fact that calotypes described more through tonal effect than through detail, and made their pictures seem more artistic by modeling them after the heavily shadowed art of the seventeenth-century Dutch painter Rembrandt van Rijn, and Adamson drew also on Rembrandt’s conventions of group portraits to arrange individuals into seemingly naturalistic scenes, as in *Edinburgh Ale*.¹⁴

However, while photographers borrowed portraiture techniques from the traditions of painting, their bourgeois market yearned not for Rembrandt but for more mundane subjects. The mechanical and simplified production of the camera was what pleased the aesthetic taste of the growing middle-class. Where photography had once been influenced by the traditions of painting, after A. E. Disdéri’s patent of the *carte de visite* in 1854, painters became guided by the demands of the bourgeoisie; and as Gisela Freund states:

Artists whose livelihoods depended on flattering bourgeois taste eventually produced paintings of lower quality. ‘The pretty, the commonplace, the polite are what really please

them most. The precisely drawn miniature, the flat and dry painting in pleasant reds and greens, the smooth sculpture, the faithful reproduction of the smallest detail. . . .'¹⁵

While painters adjusted to the demands of the new market photographers were a product of that market, as Freund says:

The great mass of the public that responded to this kind of precise, *juste milieu* painting was uneducated. Economic progress had indeed opened up the possibility of education for the masses, but intellectual freedom did not develop as quickly as economic freedom.... It was exactly this average public that made up the bulk of the photographer's clientele. The photographer, who had risen along with his clients, was also uneducated. He could only do what his predecessors had done, which was to copy the accepted styles, bringing to the art of photography only acceptable aesthetic values.¹⁶

The truly successful photographers were not artist-photographers like Felix Nadar, who focused on individual expression, but the likes of Disderi, who responded to his clientele as a successful businessmen, interpreting their economic wants and intellectual needs. Though members of all professions and social classes went before his camera, true personalities were reduced to conventional social types. While the artist-photographer continued the painting tradition of emphasizing the head in portraiture, the new commercial photographer photographed the entire body. Props used in these photographs distracted the viewer from the subject in order to present a type rather than an individual.¹⁷ (See Fig. 21) As Freund points out, "The typical props of a photographic studio in 1865 consisted of a column, a curtain, and a pedestal. Leaning against the pedestal, the subject was photographed full-length, or bust-size. Picturesque or symbolic props indicating the social status of the model filled out the background."¹⁸

The photographers who worked out of Victoria became involved in photography as a trade, and treated it exactly as that, a trade. It was a commercial venture requiring certain learned skills and knowledge. Like their Old World counterparts these photographers did not produce images of individual expression but rather social types delineating one's occupation or social standing. Individual subjects were interchangeable in a studio environment of finite props and backdrops. An ornate oak banister defined status. Mrs. A.W.S. Black could thus be interchanged with Archibald McKinley and William Manson as the personification of that status. (See Fig. 22 & 23) Even apparent indications of individual personality were themselves stock symbols; for example, Mrs. Black's femininity was defined by the handkerchief she held, while her social standing was further enhanced by the piece of paper held in her other hand, indicating that she was literate, educated. The outdoor backdrop, rugged boots, hat, and jackets of McKinley and Manson, on the other hand, indicated an association with the outdoors. Their photograph also illustrated the difficulties of structuring social types out of studio props: the necessity of showing social standing via the banister is complicated by the need to place this indoor prop in an outdoor scene. Nor was the photographer less prone to the social type when he turns the camera on himself. (See Fig. 24) Francis G. Claudet thus used the conventional portraiture of a gentlemen standing beside a small writing table with some paraphernalia of his occupation: in his case, one photograph beneath his hand rested on the table as he held another photograph in his right-hand. The prop beside his left-hand is also likely to have been a photographic device. The "type" was not restricted to the studio. The backbone of photographic commercial enterprises in the youthful colonies of Vancouver

Island and British Columbia were the numerous depictions of settlers conquering nature. People themselves thus became interchangeable props in scenic views of road building, the construction of bridges, and the mining of land and rivers. These settlers became characters in a story of transformation and progress. (See Fig. 25 & 26)

As one studies how photography operated at its point of origin in Europe and how such practices were transferred to the North America continent, it becomes apparent that photographers did not alter their techniques to any great extent when they turned their cameras on native people. Rather, they continued to create social types as they had done before with European subjects. What had changed was the subject of their focus and the relationship that existed between the photographer and that subject. When Dally photographs a native man and woman with a blank background he was not consciously seeking to decontextualize the native pair from their cultural background, but instead executing a photograph in the mundane manner of the technician. (See Fig. 27) Like the technicians who began the photographic movement in Europe, Dally was performing his mechanical craft at its infant stage. Photography of native people and photography on the Northwest coast as a whole was just beginning. There were no stock props to pull out to represent native people, and in general props were in very finite supply. The shortage can be seen by the blank backgrounds and limited use of props in the photographs of Claudet and of Mrs. Black. For Dally at this point the clothes and the people themselves said enough about the social type represented: "Indians".

However, as with European subjects, props were used when available to represent Indian subjects. Consider the case of the photograph taken by Dally of some "Interior

Salish”, who had traveled along with other interior chiefs, to New Westminster during the 1860s to meet Governor Seymour. It would appear that Dally perhaps used a “tomahawk” to represent the warrior savage of the past by juxtaposing the defiant gentleman, holding the “tomahawk” with the two more subdued men beside him, one of whom, holds a staff with a royal crown representing the peaceful Indian. (See Fig. 28) While this photograph indeed presents us with two of the stereotypes many other writers have focused on, it is less than evident that Dally had an intention to portray these stereotypes. He may have simply made use of what was at hand in order to contextualize his subjects as he would a European subject, though possibly his staging was based on unconscious preconceptions.

If one assumes Dally was portraying stereotypes, the analysis must be restricted to simply demonstrating the existence of such an agenda. In fact in this case, it would appear that Dally’s use of the staff and axe-pipe had in part a documentary function since the items displayed were gifts from Queen Victoria. According to *Shuswap History: The First 100 Hundred Years of Contact*, “Each chief was presented with a staff and axe-pipe which showed recognition of his status.”¹⁹ But when one comes across the “Interior Salish” photograph in the British Columbia Archives the photograph is without textual explanation beyond its designation as “Interior Salish”. Consequently, if one assumes that a set number of stereotypes were promulgated in the photography of First Peoples, archives and museums contain thousands of photographs from which it is quite easy to piece together a photographic record depicting such an agenda. If a photograph cannot be interpreted within the framework of stereotypes it might even be regarded as an anomaly

proving the rule. On the other hand if one takes a broader approach based on the hypothesis that photography in general creates stock characters it becomes feasible to explore the possibility that photographers may have been ideologically or aesthetically diverse. In other words this second approach is more open ended and may allow for the investigation of more diverse scenarios. Not only are the intentions of the photographer at issue, but the significance of photography as a medium is at issue as well.

The complete subordination of the subject to the photographic scene is exemplified in several studio portraits taken and “constructed” by Hannah Maynard circa 1890. Unlike other early photographers who had productive but short careers in Victoria the Maynards’ photographic careers covered an extensive period from 1866 to the year of Hannah’s retirement in 1912. Hannah’s portraits of native people from the 1880s were elaborately contrived and fit quite well into the romanticism of the noble savage genre. (See Fig. 29-31) In the case of “Teenie” a pastoral scene is created via a natural backdrop with grasses, wood and rocks brought into the studio to make the photograph appear more authentic. Yet it is known that Teenie lived in Victoria near Fort and Cook street circa 1890-95.²⁰ In a second case, a photograph of Mrs. Maynard’s washerwoman was taken in 1865-66 but later the subject was placed in a photograph of a Haida village, taken by Richard Maynard, 1884. However, it is important to realize that such photographs were not representative of the general photographic work done of native people by the Maynards; rather, these two photographs seem to represent Hannah’s personal exploration of the creative possibilities to be found in photography as a medium.

As can be seen in the initial portrait of Mary, the background is plain and, except

for the bag beside her, the photograph is devoid of props. Hannah's portraiture of Mary is bland, much the same as a studio portrait by Dally, as described above. However, her portraits of European subjects were also originally uninventive as we saw in figure 18. But twenty years later, in the 1880s, a certain eccentricity began to emerge, and with it Hannah explored photographic potentials. She thus created intricate montages with miniatures of the children she had photographed in the past year and sold them annually as her "Gems". (See Fig. 32 & 33) And though she maintained contact with the latest photographic trends through reading and through correspondence with magazines like the *St. Louis Practical Photographer*,²¹ she also anticipated trends with more complex forms. One photographic trend was to create a portraiture having the "appearance of a spirit sculpted in stone." Thus a sitter posed behind a paper mache bust with the head missing; unwanted body parts could later be scraped off the negative. However, Hannah used a more complicated method. As Claire Weissman Wilks states,

unwanted body parts of the body, like arms severed at the elbow, were covered with black cloth and the rest of the body, especially the subject's hair, eyebrows, and clothes were covered with a white powder. The result was a sculpted stone spirit, or the appearance of one, standing in a photographic gesture that suggested the shadow on the other side of the mirror. Hannah called these figures "Living Statuary or Statuary from Life". But far from picking up on a popular fascination in the late 1880s, she had mastered the techniques by the beginning of the decade. The evidence is there in the fascinating Gems.²² (See Fig. 34)

Hannah may also to some extent have anticipated twentieth-century surrealism with her fascinating double-exposures in which she acted out scenes with herself. Where other

photographers used double exposures as an amusing photographic trick Hannah appears to have employed them to provide a commentary on life. This was especially true of a somewhat disturbing photograph in which her grandson looks up at his own torso mounted on a lamp stand. (See Fig. 35)

Though these photographic accounts may appear far off topic, they cannot be ignored for they provide a context for Hannah's work with native portraiture, a context quite unlike that of any other photographer in British Columbia. They show that although she did indeed create romantic visions of the two native individuals described above, such depictions were more a function of her own experimentations with the medium than with her developing a specific style regarding native portraiture. Though the photograph of Mary may seem completely abhorrent in its extensive darkroom manipulation, such manipulation was part and parcel of the work being performed by Hannah on European subjects, including her own family members, at the time. In fact the cut and paste method used for Mary is mirrored in a *carte de visite* done for Arthur John O'Reilly, where Hannah places the image of O'Reilly posed with cricket equipment from the *carte* in a scenic landscape (Fig. 36 & 37). In the cases of both Mary and O'Reilly, Hannah attempts to produce a context she deems appropriate.²³

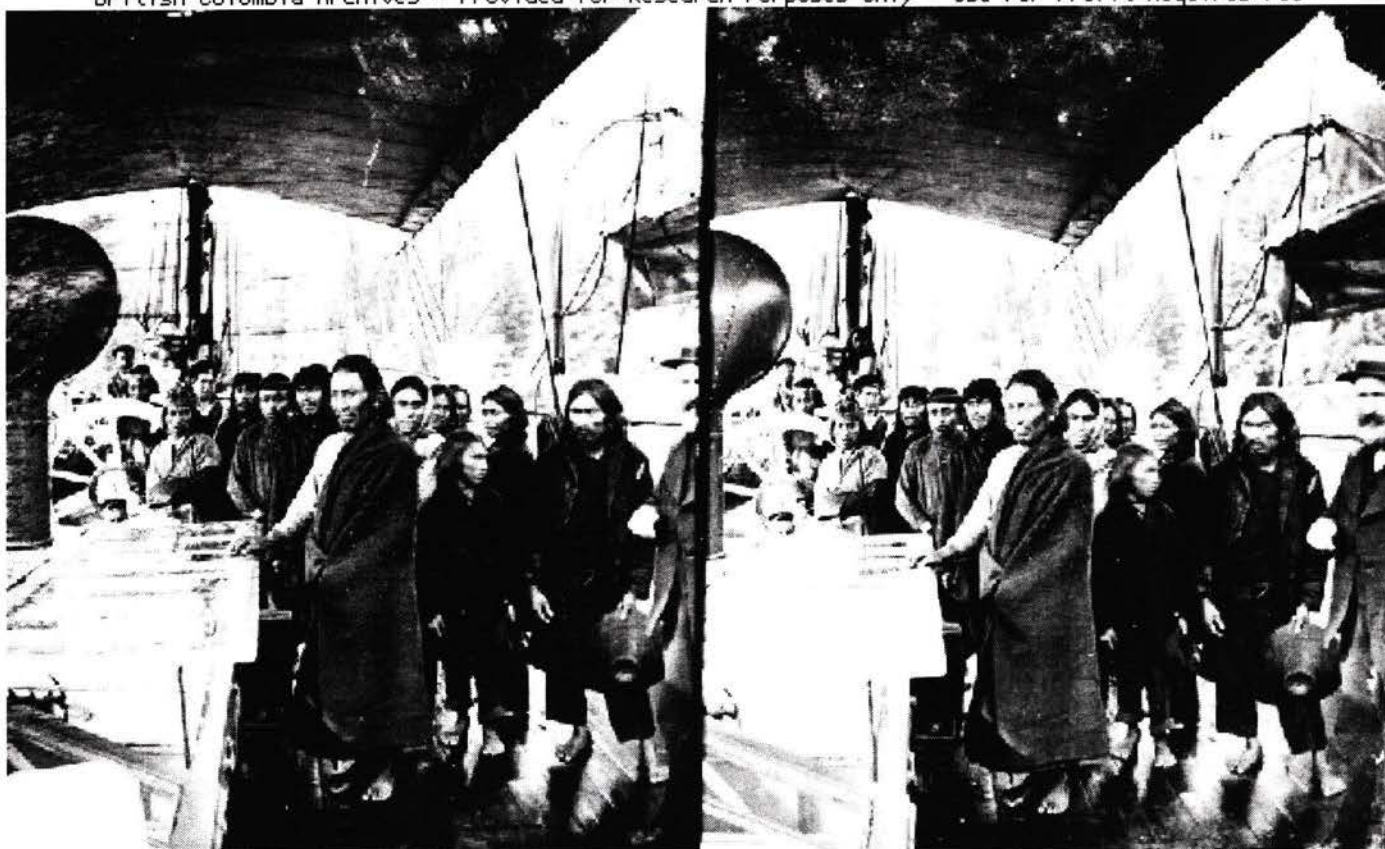
Before leaving this topic it must be noted that there is at least one clear exception to the general pattern of transferring photographic techniques practiced in Europe to the genre of native photography in North America. This was the use of native people as scenic markers. (See Fig. 38 & 39) Whereas Europeans had certainly been used as a means to give scale to a view, these subjects did not normally add any further content to

the view. Native people, on the other hand, were used to express the exotic nature of the view and present an identifiable context of place - the North American frontier. In such photographs the native people were not the central focus but rather merely accented the scene. As we see in *Farm at Cowichan* and *Spence's Bridge - Cooks Ferry* the two native individuals become inanimate non-participatory decorative objects. In one instance they accent a majestic mountain and provide contrast to the ingenuity of European engineering. In the other they add an exotic presence to an otherwise generic cottage scene of middle-class gentlemen or country folk. The native subjects are reduced to a symbol of former wilderness and exemplify the ability of Europeans to transform that wilderness into the everyday of a "civilized" society.



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Fig. 15. Maynard notes: *Sept. 8+9, 1874 Refuge Cove (Manhorsetl): S[tereo] Squaws at same place.*
Richard Maynard, HMS Boxer Trip, 1874, 5x7 Stereo wet plate.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. I-50660.



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Fig. 16. Maynard notes: *Sept 7: Started down [Alberni] Canal stop at Green Cove + took two photos of Indians aboard.* These were the third and fourth photos taken on board. Richard Maynard, HMS Boxer Trip, 1874..
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. G-05844. See Fig. 11.



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Fig. 17. Richard Maynard, HMS Boxer Trip, 1874. Fourth photo taken on trip. It would appear from the central figure that not only did the long duration of the photographic process create "stoic Indians", it also was tedious and boring at times. Courtesy: BC Archives, No. I-50662. See Fig. 10.



Fig. 18.
Stelly, Mr. & Mrs. George Sr. (Nee Katherine Mirkle).
Hannah Maynard, ca. 1869.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. A-06621.

Fig. 19.
Robert Burnaby, James Lowe,
Thomas Lett Stahlschmidt.
Frederick Dally, ca. 1866-70.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. B-01612.





Fig. 20. Edinburgh Ale (James Ballantyne, Dr. George Bell, and D.O. Hill).
Robert Adamson and David Octavius Hill, ca. 1845.
Carbon print from original calotype negative by Jessie Bertram,
1916, 6 1/4 x 8 1/4". Courtesy: Spencer Museum of Art,
University of Kansas.



L'ACTEUR Gueymard



LE PEINTRE Descamps



LE SAVANT Ortolan



L'ÉCRIVAIN Paul d'Ivoi

Fig. 21. "Disderi represented the new school in portraiture: props and full-length shots reduced the subject to a stereotype much as the physionotrace once did (clockwise from top left: *The Actor*, c. 1860; *The Savant*, c. 1860; *The Writer*, c. 1860; *The Painter*, c. 1860)."

Gisele Freund, Photography & Society
(Boston: David R. Godine, 1982)



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Fig. 22.
Archibald McKinlay, William Manson.
 Charles Gentile, ca. 1863-1866.
 Courtesy: BC Archives, No. G-00598

Gentile was operating as a photographer in Victoria between 1863 and 1866, whereupon he announced that he was going to Europe to publish a series of views but in 1867 he opened a studio in San Francisco. It is possible that Gentile's plans were aborted due to losing a Square Deal Box containing Photographic and Stereoscopic views of places in British Columbia and Puget Sound. Gentile photographed both First People and European subjects.

Fig. 23.
Mrs. A.W.S. Black,
 Charles Gentile, 1865.
 Courtesy: BC Archives,
 No. G-00591.



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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: G-00591 Black, Mrs. A.W.S.



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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: G-07033 Claudet, Francis George

Fig. 24.
Francis George Claudet,
Photographer: unidentified, ca.1860s.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. G-07033.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: B-84968 Thompson River, Bridge At The Junction With The ...

Fig. 25.
Thompson River, Bridge at the Junction with the Fraser River.
Richard Maynard, ca. 1868.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. b-04968.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: A-01842 Judge Needham and Party At Dr. Carrall's Cariboo ...

Fig. 26.
Judge Needham and Party at Dr. Carrall's Cariboo Office, Settlement of Grouse Creek Bar.
Frederick Dally, Sept. 1867.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. A-01842.

In Fig. 25 the European settlers act as props to define who uses and built the bridge which has transformed the rivers division of the landscape into a triumph of human ingenuity - the river has become mundane. In Fig. 26 authority figures stand at a doctor's office in the midst of a landscape completely transformed by man. Nature has been expunged and settlement put in its place. These are the stereotypes created to define the European settler.



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Fig. 27. Untitled, carte de visite.
Frederick Dally, ca. 1866-70.
Courtesy: BC Archives, D-05700.



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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=B-03803 [HP034249]

Fig. 28. *Interior Salish.*

Frederick Dally, ca 1866-1870.

In this image we have the two men on the left who appear relaxed juxtaposed to the man on the right who sits defiantly with a "tomahawk" in his hand. Did Dally suggest the posture or did the individual take his cue from holding the "tomahawk"? Whose idea was it to hold the axe-pipe?

Courtesy: BC Archives, No. B-03803.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: A-02193 teenie Or tina Of Victoria

Fig. 29. *"Teenie" or "Tina" of Victoria.*
Hannah Maynard, ca. 1893.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. A-02193.



Fig. 30. *Haida Mary*.
Hannah Maynard's washerwoman.
Hannah Maynard, 1865-66.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. F-09011.

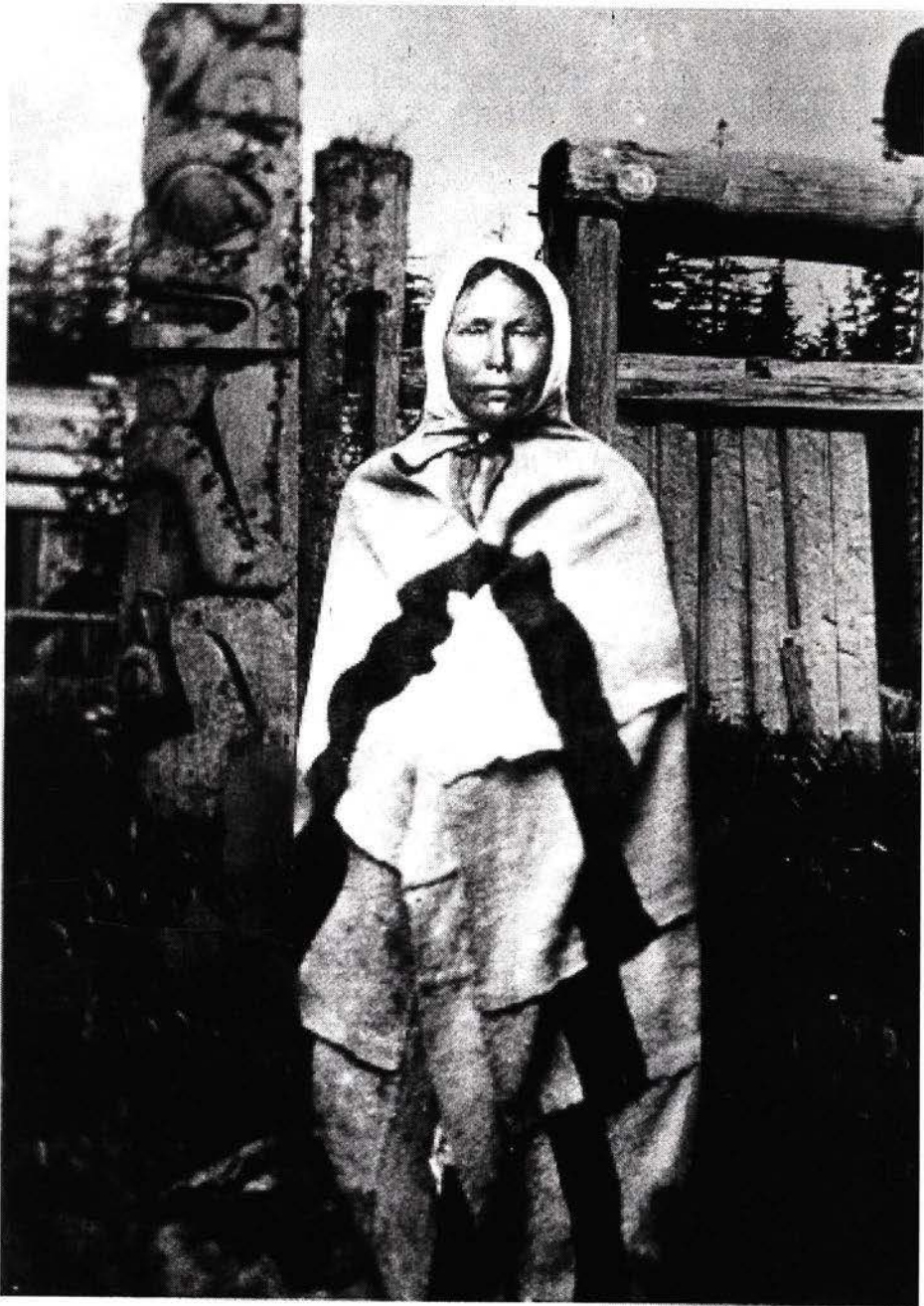
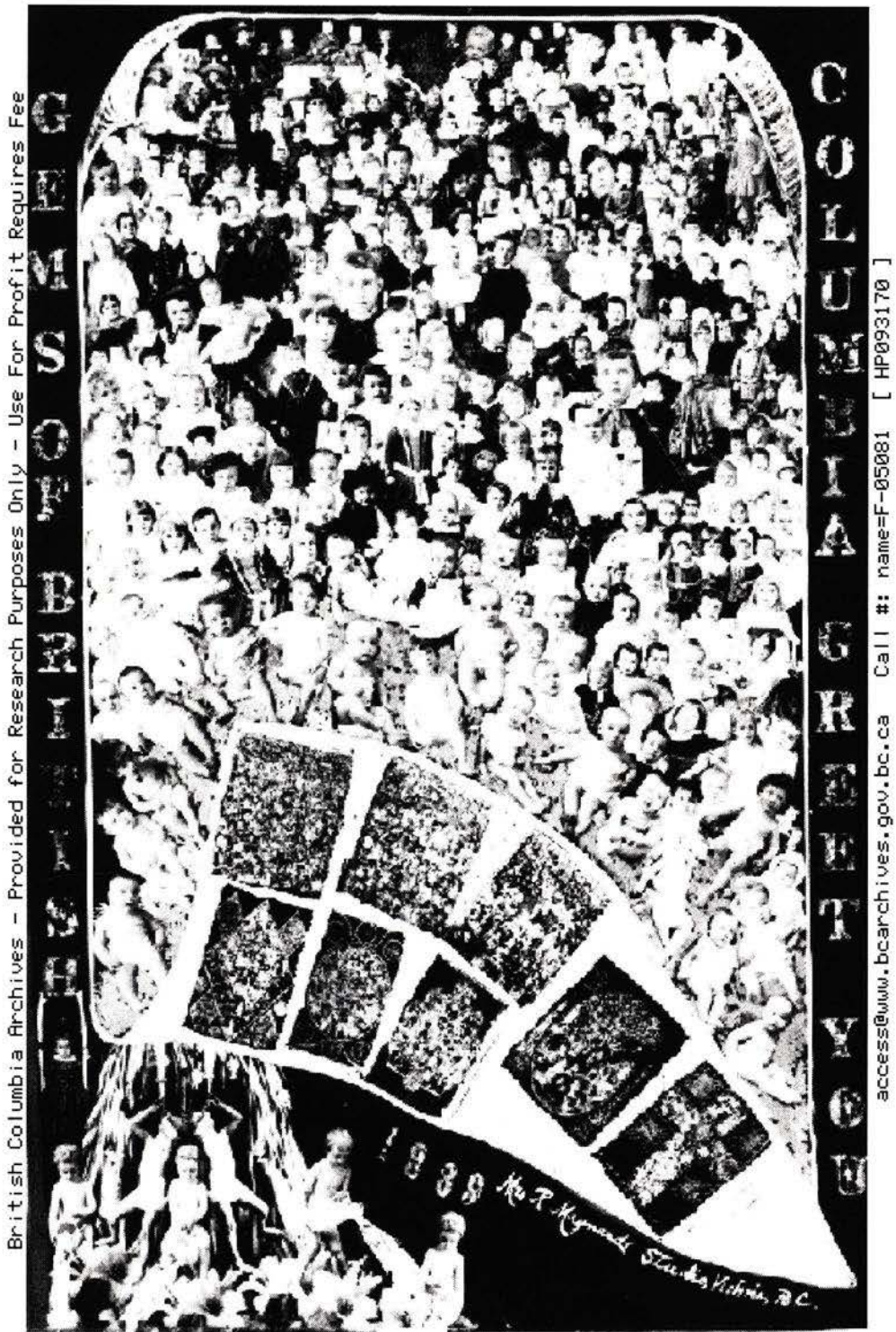


Fig. 31. *Haida Mary*

Made by combining Fig. 23 with a view from *Kayung*,
a Haida village, by Richard Maynard, spring 1884.

Hannah Maynard, ca. 1884.

Courtesy: Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, B.C.
PN5311.

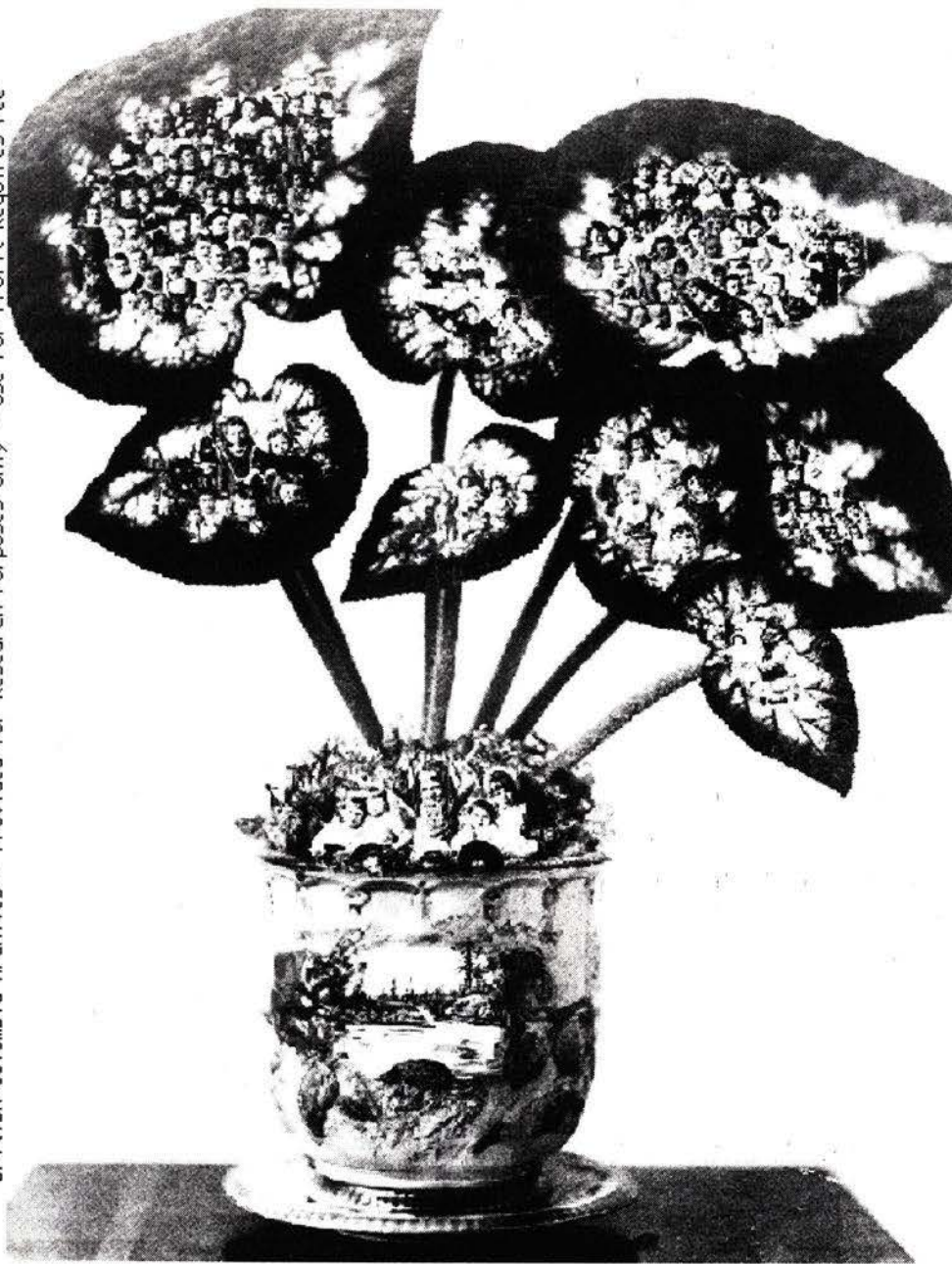


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Fig. 32. *Gems of British Columbia, 1888.*
Hannah Maynard.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. F-05081.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=E-09401 [HP092015]

Fig. 33 *Gems*. Hannah Maynard, 1884. Courtesy BC Archives, No. E-09401.

"There was a dieffenbachia plant in the Maynards' parlor. In 1884, she covered the leaves with little faces and put faces in the potting earth, too. They are faces from her early *Gems*: 1881 in the upper right leaf; 1882 in the bottom left leaf; and 1883 in the earth. The landscape on the jardiniere is a photograph of a local landmark, the Gorge." Claire Weissman Wilks, [The Magic Box: The Eccentric Genius of Hannah Maynard](#)



Fig. 34. *Living Statuary*. Hannah Maynard, 1884.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. F-05958 & F-05959.

"This allegorical presentation of a smiling and then weeping girl appeared in Gem 1884, the year after Lillie's death [Hannah's daughter]."

Claire Weissman Wilks,
The Magic Box: The Eccentric Genius of Hannah Maynard



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Fig. 35. *Hannah Maynard and nephew Maynard MacDonald*
Framed portraits (top to bottom): Emma Maynard (Mrs. MacDonald daughter of Hannah & Richard); Adelaide Maynard (1st wife, Alfred H. Maynard); Lillian Maynard (daughter of Hannah & Richard).
Hannah Maynard, multiple exposure, ca. 1893-97.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. F-5031.



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access@uubc.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name-F-07563 [HP050137]

Fig. 36.
Arthur John O' Reilly, b. 1876.
Hannah Maynard, ca 1885.
Maynard Collection.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. F-7563.

Fig. 37.
Arthur John O' Reilly, b. 1876.
Composite between a view
by Richard Maynard and the
above studio portrait by Hannah
Maynard, ca. 1885-1890. Maynard
Collection.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. C-3936.



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access@uubc.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name-C-03936 [HP050133]



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: C-08165 Farm At Cowichan

Fig. 38. *Farm at Cowichan*. Frederick Dally, ca. 1866-70.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. C-08165.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=A-03570

Fig. 39. *Spence's Bridge - Cook's Ferry - Where gold was first found.*
Charles Gentile, ca. 1863-1866. Courtesy: BC Archives, No. A-3570.

Frame 4: Perceptions

Interwoven into the photographic structures of form and technique are the individual perceptions of photographers. The perceptions or ideas that photographers had of First Peoples did not act on their own to define the photographer's work but rather were amalgamated both with the structure of the photographic medium and with the ways the medium was defined and understood. Furthermore, photographers were influenced by their reasons for taking photographs and by the clientele for whom they took photographs, i.e. by what function the photograph was to serve. Whether the photograph was a part of a geographical expedition or whether it was meant to relay information regarding the interests of the Indian Agency, its function largely determined what would or would not be found within the frame of the photograph. This section of the thesis tries to unweave five photographer's individual perceptions of First Peoples from the other dimensions of photography and to analyze the individual influences that photographers had on their work.

Hannah and Richard Maynard

Richard and Hannah Maynard's pursuit of native people as photographic subjects was largely fueled by commercial incentive. However, their pursuits were neither meticulous nor systematic. In fact "pursuit" is a somewhat misleading description of how native subjects came before their camera lens, for they came to the genre mainly as a result of fortunate opportunities like Richard Maynard's participation in Indian Commissioner I.W. Powell's expedition on the H.M.S. Boxer in 1874. Richard Maynard did not systematically seek out photographs of First Peoples but made use of the opportunities that presented themselves. His photographs of natural landscapes and the progress of settlement far outnumber the photographs he took of First Peoples and/or their cultural artefacts. Generally the photographs Hannah Maynard took of First Peoples were restricted to interesting characters she saw on the streets of Victoria, though both Hannah and Richard took photographs of native villages and First Peoples while taking vacations on short cruises up the coast. These photographs have much in common with today's tourist snapshot.

What can be learned regarding the Maynards' perceptions of native people is largely found within the reasons they had for taking photographs. Some were meant to fulfill a request, others to show friends back in Victoria where one had been; and many were taken to sell. The Maynards' journals elaborate little on how they viewed native people or how they regarded their culture. Instead the journals give a pointed account of their approach to photography in the field. They relay information about where and when

a photograph was taken and about what was involved in taking the photograph.

Richard and Hannah both typified the burgeoning middle-class artisan photographer. When Hannah met Richard Maynard in England he was a twenty-one year old apprentice bootmaker who yearned to be a seaman. He worked the masking trade in the summer and made boots in the winter.²⁴ Shortly after their marriage they set sail to Canada in 1852. Initially they settled at Bowmanville, Canada West, where Richard again took up his trade as shoemaker.²⁵ In addition to their son George, who had been conceived at sea, Richard and Hannah had another three children while in Bowmanville. The Maynards were living a respectable artisan lifestyle when Richard left to seek a fortune in gold along the banks of the Fraser River in British Columbia. In his absence Hannah took up the study of photography, most likely with “R&H O’Hara of Bowmanville, Photographers, Booksellers, Insurance Agents, Etc.” After making a respectable sum of money from prospecting Richard returned to retrieve his family. They arrived in Victoria in 1862, and it is believed that in that same year Hannah established Mrs. R. Maynard’s Photographic Gallery. However, Richard did not immediately enter the photographic business alongside his wife, but rather headed up the Stikine River to involve himself in placer mining; and on his return he once again took up the occupation of shoemaker.²⁶

The work carried out by the Maynards within the photographic medium reflected their artisanal background: they developed a respectable business which involved a certain degree of craftsmanship and skill. When Richard entered the photography business on a full time basis he became generally responsible for the fieldwork including

photographic views and stereoscopes - while Hannah took care of the studio side of things, including portraiture and processing. However, because Hannah did at times venture out into the field, the line between her work and Richard's is blurred.

To add to the confusion over who exactly took particular photographs was the fact that credit appears to have been given to Richard during the early period of Hannah's photographic business to adhere to Victorian propriety. Hannah was the only woman photographer with her own business in nineteenth-century Victoria.²⁷ As David Mattison explains,

Two of the earliest references to the Maynard's work list Richard as 'the photographer of Johnson Street', yet his shoe store was actually on Fort Street, several blocks away. This suggests, but not conclusively, that Hannah was the photographer but used Richard's name, and only when her photographs became better known than his did she begin to take credit, occasionally and perhaps unintentionally, for the work he was doing.²⁸

The *St. Louis Practical Photographer*, with which Hannah maintained a consistent correspondence, on more than one occasion credited Hannah as the photographer when describing Richard's work. One instance involved photographs Richard took in Alaska;²⁹ another, involved a photograph of 'The Victoria Arm' for which Richard won first prize in the professional category of an 1890 contest.³⁰ However, in an 1894 article, "The Photographer among the Seals," *The Practical Photographer* did at last clarify that Richard primarily did the outdoor work and that it was Hannah who taught Richard the process of photography.³¹

Richard's and Hannah's journal entries regarding their field work were

remarkably the same. Both used words that were brief but to the point in describing their photographs and the context of those photographs; what distinguished Hannah's journals was their reflection of the holiday air of her excursions, while Richard's writing reflected the more work-oriented approach of his trips. When Hannah and Richard traveled together their travels seems to have been more of a holiday than a business trek, and on these occasions it seems that Hannah acted as the writer. The following excerpts illustrate their different styles,

Hannah: Had a nice time and arrived at Opitset [?], Clayoquot Sound [at] ½ past 5. A great number of indians came out to the ship. We had tea, then left the ship with several ladies and gentlemen [to] pay a visit to the indians that plundered the bark "Mustang" a few years ago. We bought some baskets from them also gave them a few presents. Named a baby after one of the ladies that was with us then (we) left for the steamer. Got to it just at dark.

(Excerpt from transcript from the Princess Louise excursion Aug. 1879)³²

Richard: 22
Aug

.... I got to work securing an Indian & canoe & went across to the point and took Wrangel in pouring rain then took a Chief's Grave & then an Indian Carved Pole, then an Interior of an Indian house - Then to Chief Shakes & took the Interior - Then the old Chief outside. Then another of the Pole with the Chief in another dress.

(Excerpt from "Diary of trip to Alaska on S.S. Dakota," Aug. 7-26, 1882)³³

For Hannah, the encounters with "Indians" in Clayoquot Sound are all part of an exciting outing during which tourist curios could be collected. What could be more exciting than participating in an exchange with "Indians" who had in the past been a violent threat to vessels? Richard on the other hand makes it clear that he is at work and

proceeds to lists the results of that work. A further example of Richard's pragmatism were his remarks made two days prior to the above entry regarding the absurdity of collecting Indian memorabilia, "Got passengers ashore. Crazy after Indian Curios. All I have bought is a map of the Coast. 50 cents (175 in Victoria)."³⁴ Richard remains pragmatic even among a boat load of tourists. However, what is unusual about the above excerpt is that it provides us with an example of Richard paying attention to the clothing of his subject. He took two photographs of Chief Shakes, each using a different type of dress, an event that is untypical of most of Richard's work which depicted native people as he found them, wearing day to day clothing whether traditional, European, or a combination thereof.

The result of Richard's work ethic is a collection of photographs which on their own say little as to how Richard perceived or felt about indigenous culture. What they do speak to is his ability to make full use of photographic opportunities and a strong dedication to his work. Photography for Richard was a commercial venture, and if he couldn't get a view because of weather, he took photographs of what was available:

7 Monday Morning [...] Got my tent rig[g]ed to take some Indians[.]
Tried 2 plates & got drowned out with rain. Started down Alberni
Canal [...] Stopt [sic] at Green Cove & took 2 stereos of Indians on
board [...] Still raining. Anchored for night[.]³⁵

(See Fig. 16 & 17)

Richard's account of these photographs taken on the H.M.S. Boxer gives no indication of his personal opinion of those he photographed nor does he give any account as to the purpose of the photographs beyond his having the opportunity to take them in the midst of a deluge of continual rain. Nor is any further insight gained when these photographs are

placed in the context of the series of photographs taken on the Boxer Trip. They do not fit in with the depiction of natives in a perpetual, unchanging state as could be argued in regards to the *Naked Indian* portrait described earlier (Fig. 10), for these photos show people in a state of cultural flux. Some wear the more traditional blanket while others wear European shirts and trousers, and the central figure wears both. The sailors have not become the central focus as they had in the photograph taken at Nootka Sound (Fig. 11) but are in the far background where they can be overlooked.

What we seem to gain from these comparisons is not insight into Richard's ideas regarding natives but instead insight into what he is not doing. He seems to have no set agenda for how he photographs natives. His sole interest appears to be to produce a series of photographs for the public back in Victoria and to fulfill certain requests made by Indian Commissioner I.W. Powell who had provided him with what he most likely saw as a wonderful photographic opportunity. It is not a specific style by Richard that links the photographs of the Boxer trip together but their documentation of those people with whom Powell had set out to reaffirm social ties. The photographs document the leaders of the native communities that Powell met with, such as those aboard the Boxer, as well as those of the native communities themselves. Another notable feature is that all the photographs taken on the Boxer Trip were stereoscopes, a popular attraction to consumers who wished to view a three dimensional image of exotic people and places. This feature consequently reaffirms Richard's commercial interest.

Yet despite Richard's disdain for Indian curiosity-seekers, several photographs taken on the Boxer Trip have more in common with the photographs taken on his

excursions with Hannah Maynard than they do with the other photographs taken on the Boxer trip. What we find in photographs taken on excursions by the Maynards together are images which reflect the tourist snapshot of today. (See Fig. 40 & 41) In both the photographs taken by Richard and Hannah at Masset and Gold Harbour on the Queen Charlotte Islands, one sees the depiction of Europeans in front of Haida artefacts, in the first case a totem and long-house and in the second a Haida village. These photographs are evidence of a trip made. A place seen. And the fact that it was us who went, not you! The two photographs are the trip which will be revisited over tea with those unfortunate enough to be left behind in Victoria. The photograph (fig.11) of sailors sitting in canoes with natives rendered as scenic backdrop appears to be more in line with these two photographs than it does with the series taken on the Boxer Trip. Yet the use of First People and their artefacts as backdrop is also not a constant since in *Indians & Sailors* there is a very comfortable inter-mixing of sailors and natives sitting along the log, including one sailor holding a baby. (See Fig. 42) In fact while this photograph may fit the tourist genre by its display of an event to discuss back home, it also perhaps has the feel of many a family reunion where the photographer-participant steps outside the event to record it. People are not so much posing for the camera as Richard is photographing “what is”. Consequently some people face the camera while other people are preoccupied in various matters, but there is no clear distinction of the “Indians” as “other” separate from the sailors.

What then can we say about the perceptions of the Maynards and about how those perceptions influenced their work? There are only a few small hints available in their

journals. On Richard's trip with Newton H. Chittenden to the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1884, he expressed the dependency he and Chittenden had on native guides. For example in an entry he writes, "Sekoonin Rivers where we camp for night. Mr. Chittenden up the river found the best drinking water since leaving Pt. Simpson. If we had not an Indian, he would not have found it."³⁶ Given Richard's laconic style the guides must have impressed him greatly.

In Hannah's more expressive style we find an interesting description of her experience when she took some views while on a Princess Louise excursion in 1879 with Richard:

We are now on top of a high rock taking a view of the indian camp whilst Maynard down to his tent, me on the top with the cameras. *3 indians came up with nothing on but a piece of old blanket, however they did not kill me.* We took two negatives when the whistle blew for the starting, so it was pack up and off for the steamer.³⁷ [JL: italics]

Sandwiched between Hannah's matter of fact description of what she did is a statement implying the possibility of being killed by barely clothed Indians! It is hard to believe that she was serious regarding the potential threat. Rather she was more likely being ironic. In either case, her words do allude to a view which held natives as primitive savages.

From this limited evidence it remains unclear how the Maynards' beliefs concerning natives may have affected their photographic work involving native subjects and the question remains open as to how similar Richard and Hannah's views regarding native people were. What is clear is that their work with native topics was driven largely

by commercial interest and by a desire to experiment artistically. Where Richard generally explored the boundaries of the colony, Hannah explored the boundaries of the photographic medium. Their photographs reflect more their own pursuits than any grand stereotypes they held of native people. Even on a single trip Richard could move from an ahistorical depiction of native people, to a clear depiction of them in the present, to using them as a scenic backdrop, to a comfortable cultural interchange. What can be said about the Boxer Trip is that it was distinct from his other work in that he focused on people whereas he generally focused on native villages, totems and houses. While the photographic work of the Maynards does not necessarily fit any set genre of stereotype, I am not implying that the Maynard's never participated in the objectification of First Peoples. For example, Hannah's studio portrait of Richard and Captain Chittenden is an example of the exoticizing of the trip made by the two men to the Queen Charlottes through the use of a native artefact (See Fig. 43). The two men are photographed with what was presumably supposed to be a scenic backdrop of the Queen Charlotte Islands. One holds a Haida argillite totem while the other holds a rifle. From this image one could surmise that these two men had gone out and bagged themselves a trophy like any great hunter-explorer. The argillite represents the exotic nature of their expedition and the exotic "Indian" cultures that they came in contact with. Today the image may have somewhat of a more bemusing effect on the viewer as they contemplate the great skill needed to track down the sly argillite. But such examples re-emphasize the discordant nature of the work of the Maynard's and the fact that their work cannot be easily reduced to a bi-polar contrasting of stereotypes.

Before I leave the work of the Maynards I would like to take into consideration Figure 44. Though the subjects continue to remain anonymous as in most photographs of First Peoples, this photograph does not fit comfortably with other types of photographs by Richard for it is simply a great photograph. Its composition is wonderful. It presents neither the assimilated Indian nor the primitive Indian but instead a picture of two people getting on in their years. It is a comfortable scene of home. The viewer wants to know what is beyond the door; yet what is visible also speaks volumes, if not about the people in the photograph then about the viewer's own past. In my opinion this photograph cannot be satisfactorily explained by a discourse analysis of stereotypes. But must it therefore be dismissed as an anomaly or a mistake? To do so would be simply to reproduce the assumption that the Maynards had a set purpose to guide how they photographed. It is my contention that they did not and that they were guided by their artisan attitude not by assumptions of what an Indian was or of how to photograph them in particular.

Frederick Dally

Frederick Dally is an interesting character in the history of photography on the Northwest Coast for while he was first and foremost a commercial photographer he took a keen interest in the ethnography of First Nations Peoples. Though his photographic career was brief, spanning only four years from 1866 to 1870, his extensive documentation of First Peoples continued to influence perceptions of First Peoples long after he left Victoria, since photographs of his were transferred along with his business to Green Bros. in 1870;³⁸ and many of these photographs later entered the possession of Hannah and Richard Maynard. Dally had been originally listed in the *Victoria Colonist* as a consigner of goods in 1864, and it was not until 1866 that he opened his photographic studio. He was an extremely motivated photographer who traveled throughout British Columbia making himself available to potential customers over a wide area including the Cariboo, Barkerville, and Yale. Upon each return, he would notify Victoria of his arrival with advertisements in the *Colonist*, for example,

Mr. Dally

Desires to inform the Inhabitants of Victoria, and its vicinity that he has returned from the upper country with a choice Collection of

New Photographic Views
Of

Mountain Scenery and other highly
interesting subjects.

CARTES DE VISITE.

Groups.

And views taken with the greatest
care and in the best style of

photographic art, and warranted
to give satisfaction.
The gallery is situated on Fort
Street,
Victoria, B.C 39

Dally's ethnographic interests may have partly derived from his commercial incentives, since his use of ethnographic captions delineating the band or tribe each native subject came from likely made his ethnographic cartes more collectible (Fig. 45). However, such commercial incentives do not wholly explain Dally's preoccupation with native "types". If it was a purely commercial venture it is likely that Dally would not have been the only photographer to take up the obsession. The Maynards whose careers spanned five decades did not produce anywhere near as many images as Dally produced of First People. In fact much of the Maynard collection of native images was a result of their acquisition of Dally's work. No other photographers during this period were as meticulous as Dally in noting where their native subjects originated. Yet Dally did not go in the direction that Edward S. Curtis would take, which involved stripping away adopted European dress for more traditional clothing. Dally instead focused on representing the tribal affiliation of his subjects. Dally's studio portraits appear to be more interested in the physiology of First Peoples than in whether they wore European or traditional clothing.

It is difficult to shrug off Dally's work as simply fulfilling certain stereotypes held by Europeans because the incentives behind his *carte de visites* did not preclude him from creating photographs of a more intimate nature. For example, with the photograph *Indian encampment on the Fraser River* (fig. 46) the objective space between the

photographer and the subject has been limited by a short foreground, and the frame of the photograph has been closed in around the native subjects to create a more intimate image as the natives and their encampment predominate the photograph. Furthermore, while the subjects do address the camera it is not apparent that Dally has arranged the subjects but instead it would seem that he photographed them where they sat. This photograph presents the viewer with a style that could be at times far more intimate than many of Dally's outdoor photographs of miners and settlers. In fact he often used settlers as stock characters within a photographic metaphor of progress and transformation (Fig. 47). The frame of the photograph is extended to include a greater foreground and background depicting the transformation of settlement, and the settlers become a symbol of European endurance and progress.

What then influenced Dally's work? His photography of native people is not so much to be explained as a product of his role as professional photographer but as a product of his role as amateur ethnographer. Dally had not come to Victoria as a simple artisan who had acquired the mechanical skills of photography but as a man who had been educated at the first technical school in England, the Christ Hospital Mathematical School, also known as the Blue Coat School.⁴⁰ Not only was Dally a well educated man, his self-portrait shows him in masonic order regalia and represents his self-image as a gentleman within a hierarchical framework (See Fig. 48). The notes which he wrote to accompany and give explanation to his photographs were meticulous, and in many instances he turned to authoritative written sources, such as John Keast Lord, *The Naturalist in Vancouver Island and British Columbia* and Viscount Milton, *North-West*

Passage by Land. At times Dally produced elaborate descriptions of photographs that would have appeared to the untrained eye as relatively insignificant, and imagining any commercial value for some of these photographs is difficult. *Indian Salmon Cache, Yale, B.C.* (Fig. 49) thus appears to be a compositionally unenthusiastic photograph of a tree with a couple of boxes, but this unnoteworthy photograph becomes significant when counterposed to Dally's text. His words bring life to these unassuming boxes by contextualizing them in the active native culture for which they were built. Though the following descriptions by Dally are difficult to associate with absolute certainty to Fig. 49, it is probable that one of them was a companion to that photograph. In any case both descriptions illustrate Dally's informative way of writing and his admiration for native ingenuity:

No. 39 The Indian salmon caches are principally to be seen on the mainland of British Columbia, the two shown in the view were near to the Indian rancherie at Yale on the Fraser River, in front of one may be seen the long pole with an oval shaped net at one end used by the Indians to land their fish with [JL: poles can be seen but it is unclear if the net is present in this photograph], they build a light platform of poles jutting out of the clefts of the rocks overhanging the river and two or three short planks to stand upon... they certainly are very light and picturesque to look at, but for anyone but the most skilled to stand upon most dangerous,....

No. 41 The Indian Salmon cache in our enquiry is placed up a high pine tree for greater security to store the fishes in for winter use, out of the way of their dogs or other thieving vermin, they are very ingenious structures and the supports are formed of poles and planks tied and fastened together in such a way as to sustain and rest very heavy weight upon, the Indian may rest assured that no other Indian will dare to rob him of any of its contents, as such depots are scrupulously regarded....⁴¹

Whereas these descriptions were a part of a correspondence to accompany specific

photographs, Dally's notes regarding his expeditions throughout British Columbia and regarding the natives living along the North West coast commonly cover a variety of topics from indigenous artefacts (including Indian cradles, masks, and money shells) to sources of subsistence, such as herring and candle fish. Of special significance is Dally's treatment of a burial site since his description breaks the silence surrounding such photographs by most other B.C. photographers (See Fig. 50). The general photographic record makes it quite apparent that photographers had a predilection to photograph burial sites. If a photographer took any substantial interest in natives as photographic subjects, it is a general rule that somewhere in their collection will be at least one photograph of a burial site. On its own one may conclude that this marked some morbid fascination by Europeans with death or that they were fascinated by how others ritualize death. However, Dally's text gives another layer of insight, for he does not simply dismiss such rituals as superstition. Instead he analyses them and notes the artistry in the carvings which adorn the site. His account contextualizes the unknown and presents, if not a full understanding, at least a well grounded European understanding of the physical ritual.

Dally's understanding of native culture and his desire to learn about that culture appears to have allowed him greater intimacy with his subjects in the field than other photographers were able to attain, whereas the writings of photographers like Richard Maynard and G.M. Dawson appear to show that they kept a social distance between themselves and the natives who accompanied them or whom they met on expeditions.⁴² Dally broke the barrier between European and "other" with good hearted fun and competition. This is shown in an incident which he related in the journal of his 1868

journey to William Creek in the Cariboo, when he endured a six hour rain storm along with Chin-e-mit-ze, the Chief of the Nin-cam-shins, who was to guide Dally as far as his home on the Thompson River. Dally wrote,

I thought that I would see who complained of the weather first so we walked and talked apparently taking no notice of our situation, the indian occasionally looked around to see how I bore it, but he could not trace any dissatisfaction in my face, at last when we were in sight of the house [JL: the next rest stop on the route], he looked round and seeing my clothes clinging to me like a drowned rat he laughed aloud when he thought of the sorry figure I should make before the men in the hotel, and he exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Dally!! Mr. Dally!!" he could say no more.⁴³

The ability to relax into an informal relationship with natives allowed Dally to take relatively informal photographs like that of the *Indian encampment on the Fraser River* (Fig. 46) above, and the two photographs seen in Figure 51 and 52. In these photographs we see neither the stiff cardboard cut-out nor the squatting, face-peaking-over-the-knees pose, but instead relatively relaxed postures. In these two photographs Dally managed to depart from stereotypes and to photograph his subjects in remarkably European-like poses during the 1860's, in the very early stage of photography in B.C. Generally such postures for native subjects did not begin to be photographed until the 1880s and 1890s. Whether it was the subject's choice to pose in such a manner or Dally's arrangement of these subjects, these poses show that Dally had a relaxed relationship with those he photographed. If the subjects made the conscious choice to pose in such a manner, then Dally was at least flexible enough to allow such freedom. If he directed the poses, then he was not curtailed by presupposed postures for natives as opposed to

Europeans. He recognized some form of individuality by posing his subjects differently.

However, where Dally's personality and amateur ethnographic interests may have allowed him to develop photographs in the field that were not predicated on stereotypical images, his studio work operated on the assumption of physiological types. If we return to the photographs in Fig. 45 we see the use of a relatively standardized scientific methodology to create portraits of the various indigenous groups along the Northwest Coast. The vast majority of his studio portraits were photographed at the same focal length, and in a number of cases both frontal and side views were taken. If one interprets the written descriptions not simply for commercial purposes one may interpret them as approximating a scientific means of categorization along the lines of native group and place of origin, thus denoting specific ethnic "types". Such "types" did not represent individuality. They generally represented in visual form an ideology which held that a person's mental capacity and personality were determined by their physiology. The body defined race, and race defined the characteristics of a person. Dally's studio work seems to be more akin to the work of T.H. Huxley than to his own work in the field. Pultz thus describes Huxley's project as follows:

In Great Britain the President of the Ethnological Society, TH. Huxley (a distinguished professor of biology and popularizer of Darwinism), was asked in 1869 by the Colonial Office to devise instructions for the "formation of a systematic series of photographs of the various races of men comprehended within the British Empire." The system he conceived called for unclothed subjects to be photographed full - and half-length, frontally and in profile, standing in each exposure beside a clearly marked measuring stick [Fig. 53: JL]. Such photographs reproduced the hierarchal structures of domination and subordination inherent in the institutions of colonialism. The photographs showing fullest compliance with

Huxley's method were of subjects over which the state had absolute control: inmates at the Straits Penal Colony, prisoners in South Africa, and Aborigines in South Australia.⁴⁴

Like Huxley's project, Dally's studio portraits seem geared to categorize and measure. It is not hard to visualize the stand used by Dally between two Sheeshat men as being replaced by a measuring stick. (See Fig. 53 & 54) Secondly, the subjects of Dally's studio work would have found themselves in a not altogether un-similar position of compliance as the prisoners in South Africa and the Aborigines in South Australia. For his subjects would largely have been recruited from those staying at the Songhees reservation adjacent to Victoria or from nearby groups like the Cowichan. These people felt the full brunt of the dramatic cultural change occurring during this period, and consequently such hardships left them on a very unequal footing with Europeans. While they certainly would have insisted on some form of compensation for photographs taken of themselves, they may have been more inclined to undergo the process than those living more out of reach of the omnipresent European influence. Furthermore, Dally did not have to treat his studio subjects on a basis of equality as he did with people he photographed in the field, for he did not rely on these studio subjects for his survival. In the field, Dally was dependent on the skill and knowledge of native guides.

Moreover, natives living in or near Victoria were not generally enwrapped in European gossip detailing stories of savage "Indian" murderers. Rather, Europeans had continual interactions with natives near Victoria through trade and the use of their services for such tasks as transportation between shore and visiting vessels, and this familiarity extinguished overt fears of violence. Theft was more on the minds of

Victorians than the fear of being murdered. An address by Governor Douglas to the miners in Victoria largely encapsulated the general feelings held by Victorians at the onset of the 1858 gold-rush:

Let me say one word about the Indians. They are all friendly, and all thievish, therefore have an eye to your things, and do not leave them exposed, for in that case the Indians will steal them. Get on with them as quietly as you can, and Government will protect you. Be careful of your revolvers, and be not too ready to use them in your own cause.⁴⁵

At least in the view of Governor Douglas the threat of violence did not rest so much with natives but with miners. Stories of dangerous “Indians” seem to have been reserved for the largely unfamiliar groups to the North and those encountered in the interior. As the following early description of a trip up the Fraser shows, as one moved away from the centre of European control, the fear of violence and purported violence of natives generally grew:

The Indians, as high up as the “upper Big Canon,” (25 miles above Fort Yale,) are not as troublesome, but on the contrary, kind and willing to work at comparatively low wages. The influence extended over them by the Hudson Bay Co. is wonderful, and reflects great credit upon the Company..... They may pilfer a little, but if rum is kept from them, any other crime is almost unknown. They will serve the white man faithfully as guides or boatmen, for a small amount of money or cast-off clothing. A penny whistle or a brass button takes wonderfully, and three friends of mine were carried half a day in a canoe for the former article. However, the tribes along the “Upper Big Canon,” having had less intercourse with the whites, and not being brought so fully under the influence of the H.B.Co., are inclined to be hostile. In one or more instances they have stopped miners on their way up to the forks of Fraser and Thompson Rivers, and forced them to surrender

their coats and even boots, together with at least a portion of the provisions the poor fellows had lugged many miles on their backs. I am told on credible authority, so bold and audacious has this tribe become, that on Monday or Tuesday last, a party of Frenchmen were stopped, when an Indian proposed to trade some salmon for jerked beef, which offers being declined, one of the Indians shot the Frenchmen through the head....⁴⁶

Those natives who entered Dally's Victoria studio did not receive the European respect that natives further afield may have inspired either intentionally, or unintentionally, due to European fears. The belief in the potential violence of natives appears to have influenced Dally on his trip with Governor A.E. Kennedy around Vancouver Island in 1866 on the H.M.S. Scout. While taking a view, he reacted to the arrival of native people with great fear even though all encounters up to that point had been quite peaceful,

At 7a.m. under steam again passing numerous small islands all densely wooded on our way to Clayoquot Sound. At two o'clock I took a photographic view of the Ahousat village, Capeha the chief, which appears to contain about 500 inhabitants. It is a long village situated in a beautiful bay, at the foot of a large rounded mountain covered with pine trees, when I put my head under the focusing cloth of the camera to my surprise on withdrawing it, I found myself surrounded by about twenty of the natives squatting on the ground watching my movements, and as I had chosen a small hillock jutting out into the bay on the right hand side to get a full view of the village, I could not imagine how they came there without being seen, so I packed up the camera as quickly as possible, and found in my pocket a plug of tobacco which I cut unto small pieces and gave them to the natives as far as they would hold out and then raised my hat to them and [darted off (?) dotted off (?)] to the dingy.⁴⁷

This reaction, which must have seemed rather peculiar to the people Dally fled from,

cannot be explained by Dally's own personal experience but was probably related in some way to the newspaper clippings noted by Dally in his journal regarding acts of murder against white men by natives residing along northern Vancouver Island.⁴⁸ The significance of his reaction is not only that it shows that Dally may have acted differently to natives he encountered abroad than to those in his studio, but also that despite his ethnographic knowledge of natives he still remained in large part an outsider. While Dally may have been on familiar terms with natives in Victoria as he implies in a reminiscence at the gravesite of Tyhee Freezie's, Chief of the Nitinats,⁴⁹ he reduced that familiarity to "type" in his studio portraits. In the field his photographic representations of individuality and photographic intimacy are shadowed by a guarded respect. Though many of his writings relate an analytical, relatively unbiased, account of native culture, he maintained a Eurocentric point of view in judging the viability of First Nations Peoples culture against European standards, as seen in his statement, "The natives of Vancouver Island are still in a primitive state only one step removed from barbarism and have no horses, cattle, sheep, pigs nor goats, cats, cocks and hens, the dog is the only domesticated animal."⁵⁰ (See Fig. 55) Furthermore, while Dally points out what he finds admirable in native culture, he also invokes European aesthetics to indicate what he finds displeasing and it is in these descriptions that one finds the limits to Dally's understanding of native culture, as can be seen in the following description, "Imitations of the most hideous monsters conceivable are carved for masks from cedar wood and by a clumsy arrangement of strings these masks are made to roll the eyes and open and shut the mouth...."⁵¹

Dally's interest in native people from the perspective of an amateur ethnographer created a complex photographic collection that cannot be understood as representing any systemized approach by Dally towards photographing native people. On the one hand his interest which delved below the surface level of photographing natives for commercial value allowed him to acquire a photographic intimacy with his subjects that other photographers operating in the 1860s and 1870s were unable to attain. Yet his ethnographic commitments were such that in his studio portraits he acquired the imperializing force of the burgeoning social sciences which subordinated the "other" as racial type void of independence and individual uniqueness. Dally reflected in his work an admiration for native culture but that culture remained subordinate in his mind to European culture.

Though it is not fully known why Dally gave up the business of photography and departed from Victoria in 1870, what can be determined through correspondences and materials available in the archives is that he maintained a keen interest in the ethnography of First Nations Peoples in British Columbia. In part Dally may have left Victoria seeking the promise of greater monetary gains since he departed to Philadelphia to enrol in a school of dentistry. Dally was also promised eleven hundred and thirty one dollars for the negatives that Green Bros. purchased but he never succeeded in obtaining the money owed him.⁵² Dally may have also been prompted to leave Victoria because he yearned to return home to England and family. During his stay in Philadelphia he had some correspondence with his sister Emma, and it appears that his endeavours in Philadelphia were geared towards returning to England. In 1872 with the completion of

his degree in dentistry he did in fact depart for England.⁵³ However, his interests in ethnography did not completely disappear, for he continued his ethnographic pursuits in the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland and in the Royal Geographic Society⁵⁴ It also appears that Dally may have been well aware of the historical significance of his work, for not only did he keep detailed accounts regarding his photographs and his travels in British Columbia, but near the end of his life at the age of seventy-six he began a correspondence in 1913 with British Columbia's Provincial Librarian and Archivist, Mr. Scholofield, to transfer to the British Columbia Provincial archives those views and cuttings that remained in his possession. Dally had not given up all of the products of his four year career in British Columbia, and while he entered negotiations with British Columbia's Provincial archives concerning remuneration for the two strong boxes of material he sent to the archives, he asserted by such action that the material was of significant value to the history of British Columbia.⁵⁵

George Mercer Dawson

Unlike the other photographers studied, George M. Dawson is an authoritative figure of some importance on the Canadian historical landscape. He made a name for himself both in his published work concerning geology and in the ethnographic interests he derived from his geological field work. In the words of Douglas Cole and Bradley Lockner he was,

... one of the most remarkable field scientists of the nineteenth century.... Along with [his] ability to synthesize from field experience, Dawson possessed the finest attributes of a practical geologist - the ability to inventory coal and mineral deposits and prospects and to analyze current mining activities. As well, he drew maps, collected fossil, plant, and insect specimens, and most significantly, investigated the ethnology of British Columbia's Native peoples, with published papers on British Columbia languages on the Interior Salish, the Kwakiutl, and, perhaps his best work, on the Haida.⁵⁶

Dawson was also in the fortunate position of being the first documented photographer to take photographs on the Queen Charlotte Islands, which he did during his 1878 geological expedition for the Geological Survey of Canada. On the expedition he used a dry-plate camera and took at least 63 views.⁵⁷ (See Fig. 56 & 57)

On their own Dawson's photographs appear benign. They show an interest in the merits of Haida architecture and design. But these photographs cannot be properly understood apart from the reason Dawson traveled to the Charlottes, which was to perform a geological survey of the island. As he notes, he and his staff had to constantly "keep in mind that as a rule those [photographs] illustrating geological or physical

geographical features are really the important ones and constitute the main object of having a camera with a party.”⁵⁸ Secondly, Dawson’s photographs must be put into the context of his published ethnographic and geological work. Thirdly, and not least, the photographs must be understood in terms of how they were informed by Dawson’s position in Canadian society.

How did his social position affect his view of the “other”? During his visits to the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1878 and the following year, 1879, Dawson was acting as a geologist for the Geological Survey of Canada. He came to this position not as a subordinate but as a member of the educated Canadian elite. His father, William Dawson, was an educator who became principal of Montreal’s McGill College in 1855. It is possible that Dawson’s interest in geology derived from his father’s continued interest in that field, but at any rate Dawson enrolled in the three-year program in geology and mining offered by the Royal School of Mines in London in 1869. After his graduation in 1872 he returned to Canada, and on his father’s insistence he accepted a position as naturalist and geologist with the joint British/American survey of the international boundary from Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains. Dawson’s original aim was to attain a position with the Geological Survey of Canada, and fortunately for him a position there was kept open so that when his work with the boundary survey was completed he could and did join the Geological Survey. On July 1, 1875 he began his initial appointment as a geologist with the Montreal-based Survey.⁵⁹

The first two photographs of Dawson’s shown here as Figs 56 & 57 depict the Skedan Indian village from a distance. The photographs attempt to incorporate within

their frame information concerning both the natural landscape and the transformation of that landscape by humans. His photographs of Haida villages share similar traits with his photographs of geographical landscapes (See Fig. 58 & 59). In both, the foreground, middle-ground, and background are equally proportioned, and the photograph is intended to include as much information as possible. While rudimentary aesthetic concerns are visible, the composition is largely uninventive. Dawson's interest in native architecture is thus congruent with his role as geologist and seems to largely derive from that role. As a geologist and surveyor he defines the landscape, determines its potential geological value, and evaluates how it can best be transformed for human use.

The use-value of land and its transformation depicted in Dawson's photographs is reflected in Dawson's official report concerning the Queen Charlotte Islands, found in the *Report and Documents in Reference To the Canadian Pacific Railway, 1880*. In this report his central concern is the commercial development-value of the Queen Charlotte Islands in regard to such pursuits as mining, fishing, farming, and forestry. The Haida come into consideration only as they pertain to possible development - that is, as regards to their own future use-value, or with reference to activities on the island at the time of the report or earlier (e.g., the sea-otter fur trade, which by this point had dissipated). It is not until the last paragraph of his five page report that Dawson specifically focuses on the Haida and even there his focus continues to be on future economic development. To this end he considers the possibilities of Haida assimilation:

Though unfortunately much demoralized, owing to the habit of frequenting Victoria and other towns, the people [Haida] are naturally more intelligent than most of the natives of the coast. They appear to

be peculiarly apt in the simpler mechanical arts, and are expert and bold canoemen. They are frequently employed on coasting vessels, and would be of essential service as assistants in mills or fisheries established on the islands. No steps have yet been taken to do away with the Indian title on the lands of the Queen Charlotte Islands. Small tracts of land have been secured by special purchase in several instances, but owing to the strict ideas of ownership among the Haidas, the manner of the abolition of the Indian title may be a difficult question. (30th May, 1879)⁶⁰

Dawson's photographs, like his report, by and large exclude the Haida themselves except as a reference to the landscape and its use. It is perhaps significant that one of the rare photographs taken by Dawson of Haida people was a picture of those who had recently gathered at Yatza to raise the first pole of the newly established village. (See Fig. 60) A similar example is his photograph of Tanu in which the people preparing for a potlatch are not only dwarfed by the totems in the view but are included because a carver is putting the finishing touches on a frontal pole.⁶¹ His interest in the people remains an interest in their transformation of the landscape.

Dawson's motives put an interesting twist into the analysis of the Yatza photograph for which he stated that while he sought to get as many of the people as possible into the picture, most "disliked the idea, & especially the women, not one of whom appeared." (Fig. 60) Blackman's analysis of this photograph in "Copying People" revolves around the issue of how natives responded to photography and of whether or not they were afraid of the process. While she notes that the simple absence of people in much of Dawson's work is due in part to his interest in Haida architecture, it is now apparent that his concern with Haida architecture also dominated his photography of the people.

The question which remains is how did native people react to Dawson and his interest in them, or his lack thereof? Were they aware that Dawson's real interest rested with their cultural products? Rather than a fear of photography was the reluctance of the native women to be photographed a response to Dawson's personal attributes or to his role as an official member of a geographical survey? By 1884 Maynard was running into problems of confusion as natives interpreted him to be a surveyor and hence he faced confrontation. In one incident, upon emerging from beneath a camera's black cloth, Maynard confronted "a deputation of red men prepared to interview him under the impression that he was surveying the island for some nefarious purposes, but on its being explained that the white man only wanted pictures, the explanation was deemed satisfactory"⁶²

While it may be impossible to ascertain Haida concerns regarding the purpose of Dawson's visit to the Charlottes, one can make some reasonable speculations as to their response to Dawson himself, and of his response to them. There is the possibility that their mutual responses may have been divided along gender lines. Dawson was a product of Eastern Canada's elite, and this may have influenced his behavior in such a way that he identified more with the Haida male elite, for example, Chief Edenshaw and Chief Hoo-ya of Yatza, whom he photographed. (See Fig. 61) Added to this was Dawson's physical appearance. His youth had been dominated by the spinal illness, Pott's disease, which caused affected vertebrae to soften and collapse, and made his spine twist and curve. His growth was consequently stunted and his upper body permanently deformed. "He never attained more than the stature of a ten-year-old and always had the bulky torso of a

hunchback.”⁶³ How did the Haida react to a man who was physically diminutive yet held authority over his crew? It seems clear that Dawson’s own social relations were affected by his physical appearance, and that he preferred the isolation of the field to the isolation he felt in the social world of Montreal. As he attested in 1880 during his first summer not spent in the field in five years, “I can’t say I find being here in the hot weather at all equal to being in the woods, not that I feel the heat, but the solitude is more oppressive because less natural.”⁶⁴ How did Dawson’s own attention to his physical appearance affect his relation to women, in this case Haida women? An acquaintance noted, “Keenly sensitive as he was by nature he felt his deformity deeply and abstained from going into that society which his mental gifts and graces fitted him to adorn.”⁶⁵ Dawson’s own social sentiments and the Haida response to those sentiments or to his physique may well have influenced who he photographed although how precisely such social dynamics contributed to Dawson’s work remains unclear.

Perhaps the greatest significance of Dawson’s photographic work is due to the fact that Dawson did not take photographs for their own sake. The main tool of his public career was words; his photographs served as secondary tools to the main body of work he produced. Consequently, one cannot understand how the photographs represented First People without an analysis of his published works. While Dawson’s photographs remain silent on the Haida, published works like, “The Haidas,” published in the August 1882 issue of *Harper’s Monthly Magazine*, his “Memorandum on the Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia,” published as “Appendix 9” in the *Report and Documents in Reference to the Canadian Pacific Railway, 1880*, and his journals all address diverse aspects of

their culture, from ceremonies and oral stories to Indian languages. Nor did he confine himself to observations on the Haida, for he also published works on other British Columbia native groups as well as broadening out to look at Canada as a whole, in such works as *Notes and Observations of the Qwakiool People of Northern Vancouver Island and Adjacent Coasts*, 1887, and in the 1879, vol. 9, no. 3, edition of *The Canadian Naturalist and Quarterly Journal of Science*, “Sketches of the Past and Present Condition of the Indians of Canada.”

Whereas Dawson’s photographs shed no particular light on how he viewed the Haida and interpreted their culture, his writings go to great lengths to explore Haida culture and express his opinion on their culture. Yet like his photographs the Haida remain in many ways absent from his text. Like his photographs his words efface the people but do so not by the actual omission of the Haida but by subsuming them into views of racial type, mental inferiority, and cultural inferiority. Dawson lacked any sympathy for First Peoples, and he lacked any understanding of the meaning behind their visible cultural traits. In his view the people themselves would soon no longer exist or their culture would be effaced through their assimilation.

Dawson’s most widely read publication was probably “The Haidas,” due to its appearance in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*. This article was accompanied by a number of etchings based on his photographic work which an artist had animated by including depictions of Haida in action. In the first etching a man pulls a canoe onshore. In another, Haida are seen in their canoes which are contrasted to a European sailing vessel. Another photograph of Chief Edenshaw and Chief Hoo-ya is transformed so that

an image of two men merely standing and waiting for the photographer's indication that the process was over is changed to a dynamic illustration of one man leaning outward and pointing to some event outside the frame, while he makes contact with the other man whose attention is also directed to the unknown scene. Despite their animation the two men are without individual identification and have become abstract representations - "Chiefs of the Haida Indians"

Unlike the illustrations based on Dawson's photographs which were given the breath of life by the artist who embellished them with human activity, Dawson's text in the *Harper's* article relegates the Haida to a position of inferiority relative to European culture. Though he regards the Haida as the most interesting people on the Northwest Coast, his overall view of First Peoples is less than enthusiastic as when he treats their work ethic:

Along the coast of British Columbia the Indians are almost exclusively fishermen. They engage in the chase in a very limited extent, and seldom venture far into the dense forests, of which they appear often to entertain a superstitious dread, peopling them in imagination with monsters and fearful inhabitants. While some of these tribes are still little improved, or have even deteriorated from their original condition, others are moderately industrious, and apply themselves to work in various ways.⁶⁶

In this quote regarding the general industriousness of Northwest Coast Peoples one notes that Dawson disparages the possible "superstitious" reasons behind why coastal people did not hunt on an extensive basis. Such a critique follows the idea held by many Europeans in British Columbia that a culture based on fishing for subsistence was less than worthwhile as it required little effort on the part of the people involved. As Dawson states in regards to his observations of the *Qwakiool People*, "It is comparatively easy at

all times to obtain a sufficiency of food, and food is at some seasons - as during the salmon run - to be had in the greatest abundance with very little effort. Beyond this, there is nothing more to occupy their time fully and to keep them out of mischief.”⁶⁷

Before specifically commenting on the Haida themselves Dawson comments on the geography of the Charlottes, and again a use-value analysis occurs in which he describes initial contact with the Haida and the trade which followed from that contact, especially that in furs. In his analysis of the Haida in particular he begins with a description of a drastic population decline and then moves into the issue of their industriousness. Their industriousness for him is linked both to the future of the Haida and to the future of “white” prosperity,

To the northeast, it is true, a wide stretch of low and nearly level country occurs, which may some day support a farming population, but at the present time its sombre woods, filled with dense undergrowth, and barricaded with prostrate trunks in every stage of decay, offer little to induce either Indian or white to penetrate them. The Haidas, therefore, though cultivating here and there along the shores small potato patches, are essentially fishermen.⁶⁸

The future for both “whites” and “Indians” alike is to be found in overcoming the barriers presented by nature and in taming nature.

Dawson’s greater interest in the Haida than in other Northwest Coast People was largely based on their craftsmanship and on how well their skills compared to European methods, As he wrote appreciatively, “The canoes are skillfully hollowed.... they are made to assume a most graceful form, and show lines which would satisfy the most fastidious ship-builder.”⁶⁹ Praise of craftsmanship was linked to admiration of a lifestyle

less sedentary than that of neighbouring tribes and by the authority ascribed to the Haida through a perception of them as a warrior culture,

In their larger canoes the Haidas do not hesitate to make long voyages on the open sea; and in former days, by their frequent descents on the coast of the mainland, and the facility with which they retreated again to their own islands, they rendered themselves more dreaded than any tribe from Vancouver to Sitka.⁷⁰

One also finds in the *Harper's* article Dawson's continued interest in architecture which was explored in considerable detail. He praises Haida architecture on the basis of its superiority over other coastal native architecture with the comment:

The general type of construction of houses with the Indians of this part of the northwest coast is everywhere nearly the same, but among the Haidas they are more substantially framed, and much more care is given to the fitting together and ornamentation of the edifice than is elsewhere seen.⁷¹

The Haida are thus praised for having attributes that are more European and less "Indian".

Dawson's admiration for Haida skills is firmly rooted in a European cultural context and when those skills are applied to purposes rooted at the core of Haida culture and spirituality, he is unable to adequately interpret the meaning of such pursuits and is less than sympathetic. Thus in Dawson's description of Haida architecture the totem pole is initially dismissed quickly with the remark, "The door is usually an oval hole cut in the base of the grotesquely covered post, forty or fifty feet high, which we may call the totem post, but which to the Haidas is known as *kechen*."⁷² Dawson quickly proceeds to an in-depth description of the interior of the long house. However, due to the prominence of

totems in Haida villages, he is forced to deal later with the issue of the totem pole in more detail. His description of how a totem pole is constructed is adequate, but his descriptions of the features are reduced to generality,

The log is hollowed behind like a trough, to make it light, while the front is generally covered with a mass of *grotesque figures*, in which the animal representing the totem, or clan, of the person for whom it is made takes a prominent place..., to remain a thing of *beauty* till, under the influence of the climate, it *becomes gray with age and hoary with moss and lichen*,”⁷³ (JL: italics).

For Dawson meaning is lost behind the “grotesque figures,” and while he uses the term “beauty” it would appear that his first use of the word “grotesque” in his initial description of a totem and his repetition of it in the above quote expresses his overriding opinion regarding the aesthetic qualities of totem poles. The term “beauty” on the other hand is used merely as a counterpoint to the deterioration caused by the environment. If Dawson does have any sense of the “beauty” of the totems it is of them as a product of human endeavour and consequently, nature is vilified for it reduces what man has created. He is unable to credit Haida carvings as true art along the lines of European aesthetics, consequently the most they can be seen as is “a peculiar type of art.”⁷⁴

Dawson’s misunderstanding of meaning becomes clear as he ponders the origins of the Haida and their culture. He trivializes their social customs through a comparison to European fashion and regards their ceremonies as meaningless:

We are led to ask ourselves in particular in regard to the Haidas, what has been the origin of the grotesque but highly conventionalized art which exhibits itself in many of the works of these people, and the social customs which, with a power almost as strong as that of fashion among ourselves, causes them to devote so much of their

time to ceremonies apparently meaningless, but which serve to form the bonds and rough working machinery of society among-them?⁷⁵

Dawson responded to this question regarding Haida art and social custom by pondering whether the Haida originated from a highly skilled people who for one reason or another left their place of origin to find themselves on the shores of the Charlottes, and in the process degenerated through the loss of much of their art, skills, and knowledge. Or were they a people separated from the rest of humanity who were slowly developing towards a civilization like that of Mexico or Peru before they were interrupted by European contact. Though he noted that such questions could not be answered fully, he opted for the degenerative theory by noting that frozen the Behring Strait may have acted as an over-land passage from Asia during the winter and also that Japanese junks were known to go off course and traverse the entire Pacific.⁷⁶ Despite what Dawson found commendable in Haida culture, he ultimately concluded that their culture was a product of degeneration.⁷⁷ He is unable to find any sense of in-depth meaning in Haida culture.

Dawson's photographs and writings reflected the tradition of European realism, for which meaning rests with the object itself and with how well that object, as an art form, represents the real. His photographs were taken at a distance and represented only the physical presence of Haida villages on the geographical landscape. He never investigated the cultural significance/meaning of the totem poles through close-ups of the detailed images on the totems. There was no reason to do so. For according to Dawson's writings there is little significant meaning in these images. He was unable or unwilling to understand an art form based not on realism but on a perception of the world that includes

not only the verifiable and measurable but also the unverifiable and unmeasurable. The fact that the Haida do not readily represent the real in their art distinguished them in his mind as native and as of a different mind from Europeans: "Though the artist may be able to copy nature faithfully enough when he tries, as witnessed in some of the masks used in dancing, he in most cases prefers to follow certain conventional ideas which appear by long usage to have become incorporated with the native mind."⁷⁸

Dawson subscribed to the nineteenth-century idea of a hierarchy of races and cultures in which mental and moral capabilities were limited by one's race. Consequently, to attribute to the Haida the notion of a "native mind" was to attribute to them a position inferior to that of Europeans, as he noted in regards to the Qwakiool People, "The condition of these people is in no sense bettered by endeavouring to teach them moral maxims or religious dogma. They do not appreciate the truth of the former, nor can they in their low mental state rightly understand the latter."⁷⁹ He was likewise unable to attribute any significance to Haida ideology, and despite the fact that he went into great detail, for example, concerning a Haida origin story, in the end he dismissed the story and others like it as childish, saying, "Similar childish stories serve to explain the origin of light and the prized oolachen fish."⁸⁰

In the end, Dawson's interest in the Haida was one which sought not to know the Haida but to understand an object threatened either with literal extinction or at least with cultural extinction. While Dawson saw the oral stories as childish they were for him important in investigating the origins of North American aboriginal people who he thought of as "a people semi-barbarous, and disappearing even before our eyes in the

universal menstruum of civilization....”⁸¹ Not only were the Haida effaced by Dawson’s photographs, they were to his mind effaced by the inevitability of civilization’s progress; they consequently would cease to exist either altogether or as a distinct people. Dawson noted in “Memorandum on The Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia,” that while the Haida might not literally cease to exist, their culture would cease under assimilation. He recommended that all endeavors to assimilate native people should be carried out. Dawson was not interested in Haida culture per se but in their productive value as citizens of Canada.

Under the light of Dawson’s written work his photographs become far more than benign studies of the architecture of Haida villages. On their own these photographs would most likely be overlooked by historians looking for signs of the generic stereotypes imposed upon First Peoples. But it was the absences, what was left outside the frame, that was of paramount importance for conveying the stereotypes held by Europeans. For is it not the job of stereotypes to efface culture, meaning, and as a result efface the people themselves?

Edward Dossetter

So little is known about Edward Dossetter that one would feel the compulsion to pass him over if it were not for the artistic mastery of the photographs he left behind. What is known is briefly stated: Dossetter was one of many American photographers who set up business in Victoria for a short time. The time of his residency in Victoria is unclear for there are photographs attributed to Dossetter in the archives which are considered to have been taken in the 1870s, and one as early as the 1860s.⁸² However, according to archivist David Mattison's *Camera Workers: The British Columbia Photographers Directory, 1858-1900*, Dossetter resided and worked in Victoria from 1881 to 1890. During his stay he had the opportunity in 1881 to accompany Indian Commissioner Israel W. Powell on an inspection tour of the Northwest coast aboard the H.M.S. Rocket. In contrast to the references Powell made to the photographs taken by Maynard on the 1874 Boxer trip, there is no mention made in his report to Indian Affairs of the photographs taken by Dossetter.⁸³ Yet these photographs attest far more to their official documentary role regarding the Commissioner's inspection than did Maynard's from the 1874 trip. At the same time they render an individual style to Dossetter, as well as shedding some possible light on his background.

Unlike the photographers discussed above, Dossetter did not merely display competency in his field, but rather showed an intimate relationship with photography which points either to an artistic background or to the influence of a very competent teacher. (See Fig. 62-65) Whereas the other photographers understood the basics of

composition regarding their subject matter and balanced their scenes with foreground, middle ground, and background (often in parallel to each other), Dossetter took simple scenes and created a dynamic presence by juxtaposing diagonals with linear lines. In his pictures, lines curve! A photograph of a native village by him does not merely say, "Here are the totems, enough said," but invites the viewer to journey along the path - into their midst. Maynard and Dally may have had their artistic moments, but for Dossetter the bland was the exception proving the rule of excellence.

Offsetting Dossetter's personal mark on his work was the purpose of that work as defined by the Powell expedition. Unlike the work of the previous photographers, in which stereotypes of the assimilated versus the savage Indian arose periodically out of the concerns of governmental agencies, the presence of such images in Dossetter's limited portfolio are numerous. It thus becomes apparent that, while Powell may have influenced Maynard on a couple of occasions with his vision of a noble past, on the 1881 voyage Powell wanted images which would show natives being assimilated into Canada's European make-up. Thus we have images of women spinning wool or of a Reverend with his congregation. Natives are being taught useful skills and their souls are being saved. (See Fig. 66 & 67) A photograph of two Haida chiefs, both holding canes, and dressed in the first case in a soldier's uniform, and in the second in a gentleman's coat, contrasts with the savage and frightening image of four Haida chiefs dressed in the apparel of *s'aliga*, the "possessed" or "shamans" who collectively performed in the winter dance ceremony.⁸⁴ Dossetter's photographs give nod to a superstitious and disturbing past and portray a future in which native cultures give way to the European

present.(See Fig. 68 & 69) His images of people generally appear very formalized and staged, and are reminiscent of Curtis' later work. But rather than effacing any cultural change in order to present a romantic image of the past, Dossetter's intention seems to be to draw attention to the cultural change.

Without denying the part these photographs may have played in fulfilling the imperial function of the Department of Indian Affairs, however, one can also usefully recognize that Dossetter's own personal photographic methods to some extent seem to subvert the functional intent of the photographs. In his portraits, as with the *Two Haida Chiefs*, Dossetter is able to bridge the distance between himself, the camera, and the subject, thus allowing for the inherent objective nature of photography to be somewhat softened. Though he may not bridge the cultural space, he does bridge the physical space. For example, in his photograph *Woman in Yan*, the physical space is breached but a question remains as to how much the subject was participating in the process. (See Fig. 70) Similarly, despite the formality of most of his portraits, he is not beyond allowing a young boy to peer around a corner in a doorway to watch what unfolds. (See Fig. 71) No longer is the image merely another photograph of an elder woman weaving a hat. The picture breaks away from its role of displaying native industry to become a dynamic living image.

Finally, consider Dossetter's photograph of a group of native women and children before a totem pole with the village stretching out and off the left frame of the picture (See Fig. 72). Though the scene is clearly staged, it does not have most of the other traits of portraits taken on the 1881 trip. The people are dressed neither traditionally nor in

purely European fashion. Rather than a distant view of a village the image is close and personal. If the people were either to act as a marker indicating the size of the totems or were presented as examples of the culture which created the totems, then why not one or two individuals? Dossetter does have other photographs of people against the backdrop of a village or long-house but at a much greater distance. Most photographers would have been satisfied with a photograph of only the totem poles. Have the aesthetic qualities of this photograph drawn me to desire its role to be unique? What was Dossetter's intent?

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Fig.40.
Masset, Q.C.I.
 Richard Maynard, ca. 1888.
 Courtesy: BC Archives,
 No. G-09234.

This photograph was most likely taken on an excursion to the Queen Charlotte Islands by Hannah and Richard Maynard in 1888 on the Princess Louise.

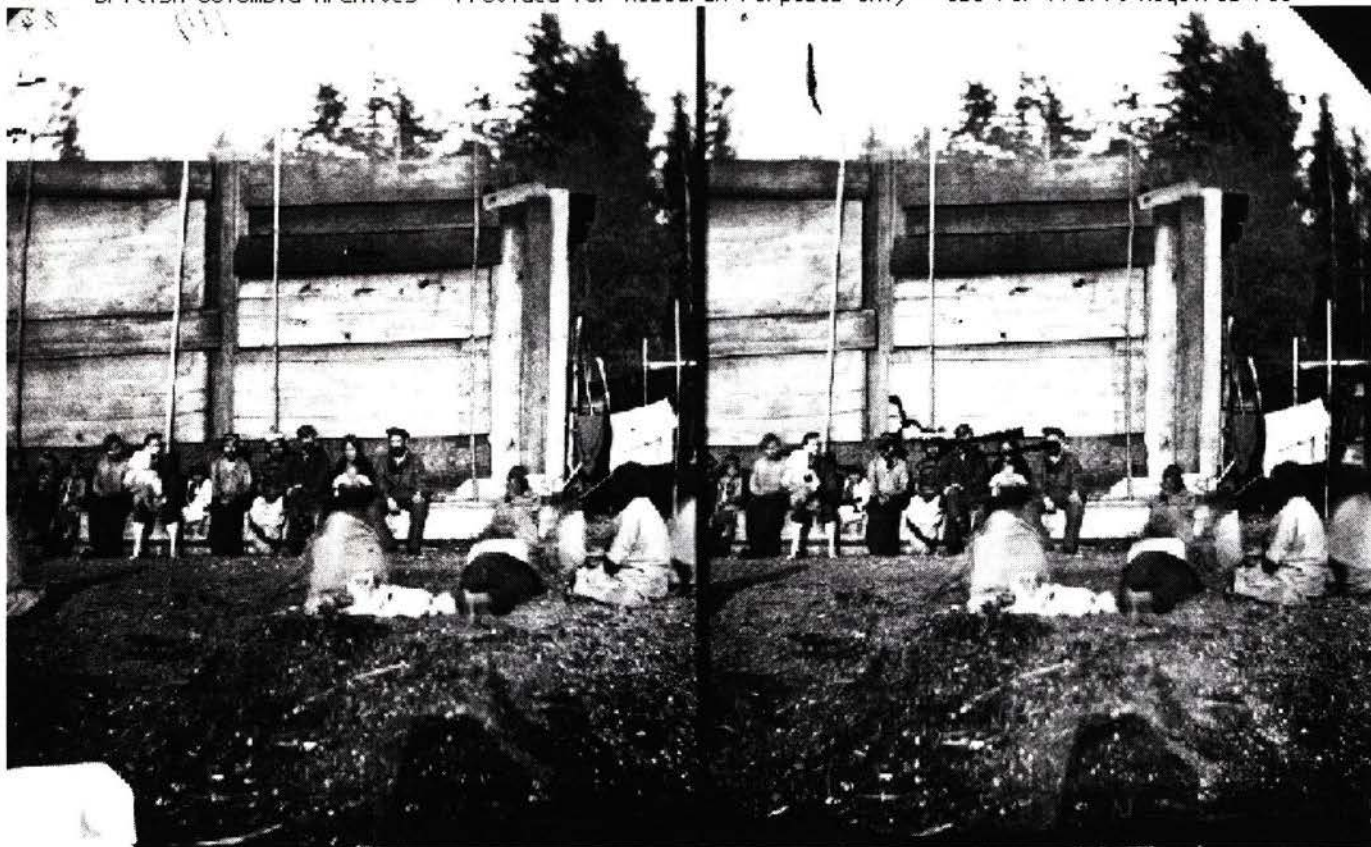
Fig. 41
Gold Harbour, Q.C.I.
 Note: Mrs. Hannah Maynard in profile at the base of totem pole.
 Richard Maynard, 1888.
 Courtesy: BC Archives,
 No. G-00822

Like the above photograph, taken on an excursion on the Princess Louise.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=I-50661

Fig. 42. *Indians & Sailors.*

Maynard notes: *Sept 14. Alert Bay (2) "Chief's House."*

This corresponds to No. 24 in listing or maybe (4) *"Indians + Sailors."*

Richard Maynard, 5x7 stereo wet plate, HMS Boxer Trip 1874.

Courtesy: BC Archives, No. I-50661.

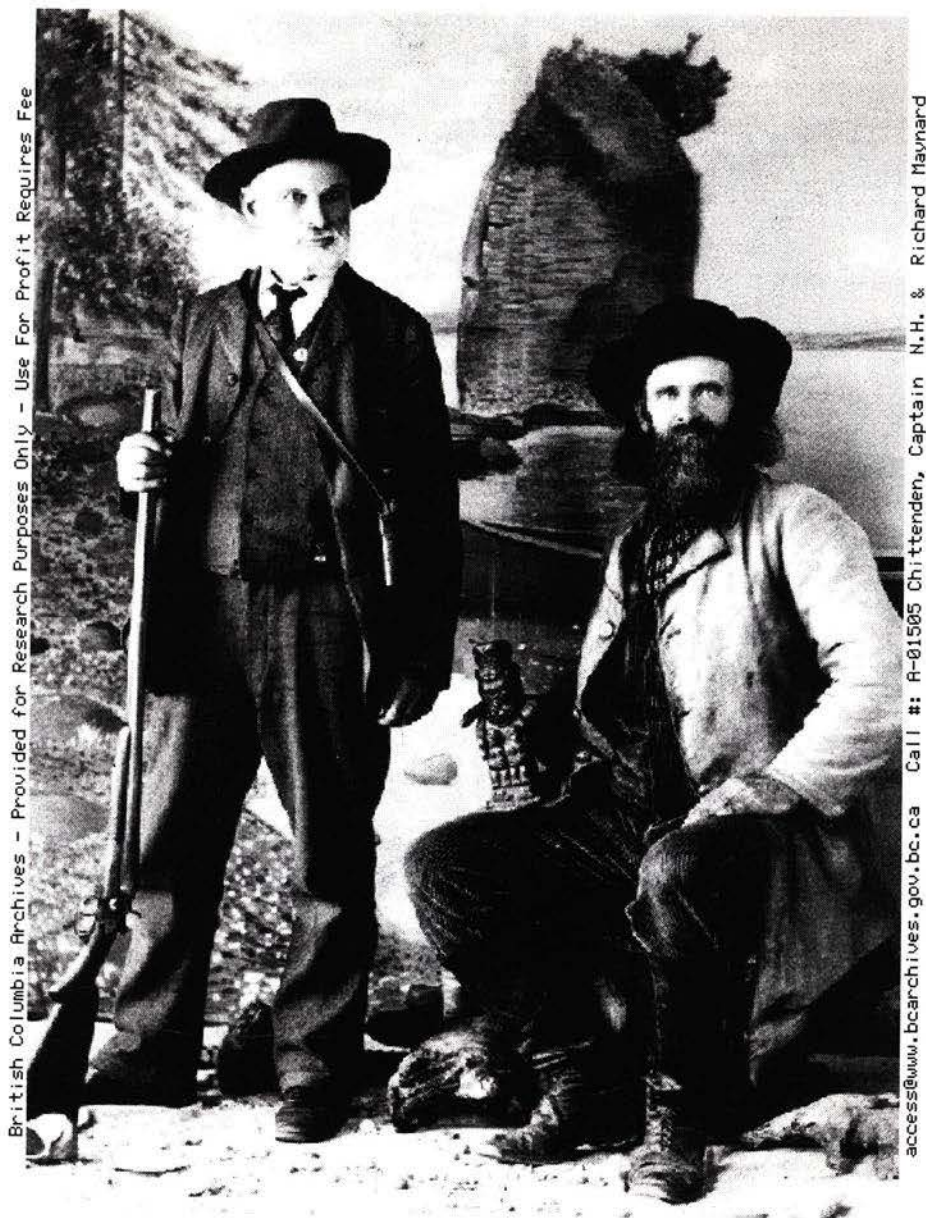
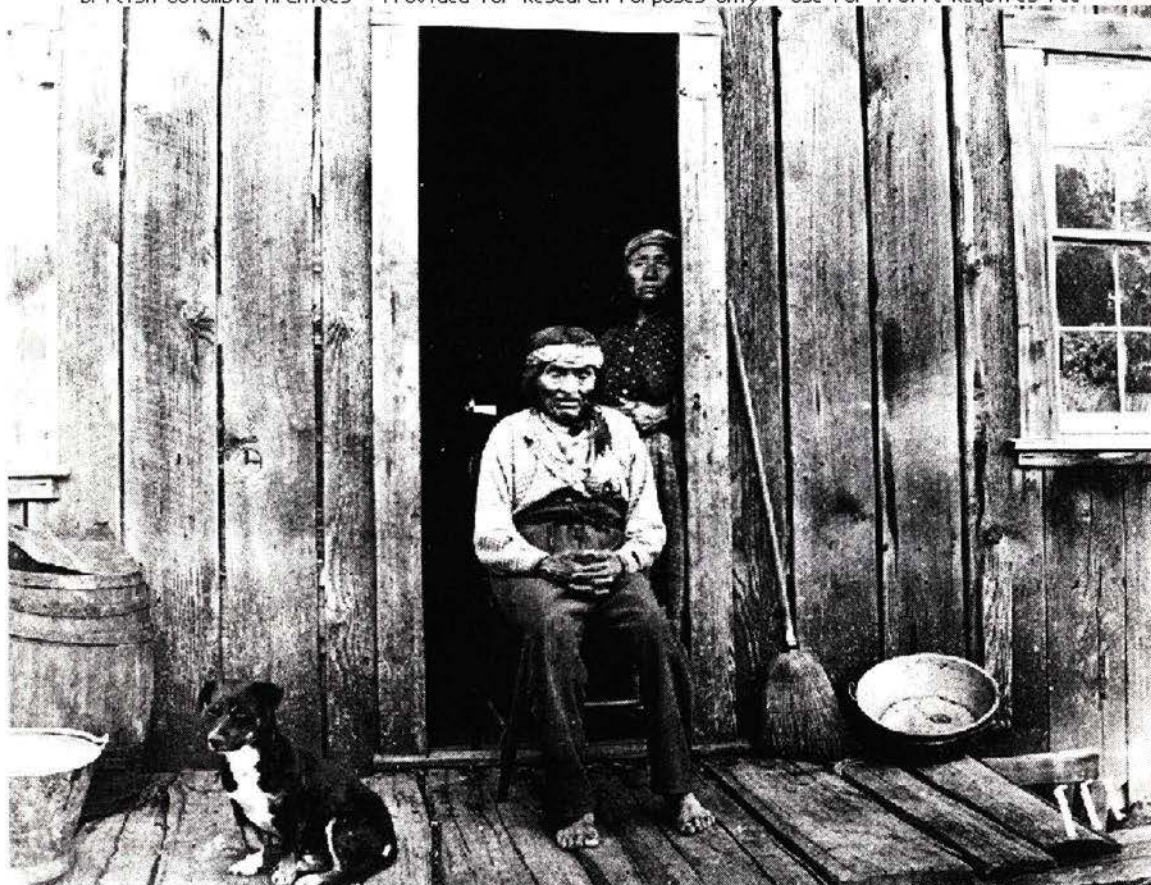


Fig. 43. *Captain N.H. Chittenden & Richard Maynard.*
Hannah Maynard, 1884.
Courtesy: BC Archives: No. A-01505.

**Note: Maynard stands holding the rifle and
Chittenden sits holding the argyllite totem.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=C-08042 [HP054037]

Fig. 44 Maynard Collection. Courtesy: BC Archives, No. C-08042

The photograph shown here is a part of the Maynard collection and is not ascribed to either Richard or Hannah. In general Richard photographed outside the studio. Like most photographs taken of First People a name is not given for the subjects within the picture and in this case no description is available. But it is a powerful image: it is familiar - a family porch scene, but it leaves us with questions - what is past the door? who are these people? It is simply a couple at home with their dog, a photograph of people but not necessarily of natives. Compositionally the photograph is wonderful.

It does not fit easily into a discourse concerning stereotypes.

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access@www.bccarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: nameF-03402 [18992308]

F-03402 *Chemanus Chief, Flat head*

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access@www.bccarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: nameF-08311 [18994668]

F-08311 *Songhish Indians, Van Is*

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access@www.bccarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: nameF-08530 [18994648]

F-08530 *Fort Rupert Indian*

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access@www.bccarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: nameF-08533 [18994625]

F-08533 *Fort Rupert - Vancouver Island*

Fig. 45. Frederick Dally, studio portraits, carte de visite, ca. 1866-1870. Courtesy: BC Archives.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=C-89290 [HP857619]

Fig. 46. *Indian encampment on the Fraser River.* Frederick Dally, ca. 1866-1870. Courtesy: BC Archives, C-9290.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: R-83819 Heronville, Heron Claim Miners. [L To R - Findlay ...

Fig. 47. *Heronville, Heron Claim Miners.* Frederick Dally, ca. 1868. Courtesy: BC Archives, No. A-03819.



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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: B-00883 Dally, Frederick

Fig. 48. *Frederick Dally*.
Frederick Dally, 1868.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. B-00883.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=C-09272 [HP057601]

Fig. 49. *Indian Salmon Cache, Yale, B.C.*
Frederick Dally, ca. 1866-1870.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. C-09272.

See page 132 for a detailed description of this photograph.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=C-09270 [HP057599]

Fig. 50. *Indian Chief's grave at Chapman's Bar.*

Frederick Dally, ca. 1866-1870. Courtesy: BC Archives, No. C-09270.

"No. 57 Zadoskis Grave by the side of the Fraser River is one of the handsomest of the Indian mausoleums in that country. He is represented carved in wood with the base stuck upright in the ground, having a piece of folded printed calico bound as a band round his neck, and his legs encased in or ornamented with another piece of printed calico of a lighter color, various deceased members of his family are represented in carved figures near to his own effigy, his family totem or crest which was a bear is also artistically carved about the grave of which the family was very proud, there was also suspended from one of the poles his gun but having the lock previously removed to prevent robbery; and also for his convenience and comfort on his arrival in the happy hunting grounds are also several brass and copper kettles disposed about the front part of the grave but with holes purposely knocked in them, so as to render them unfit for any worldly thief and most likely for himself also in that future home, for if there are no more tinkers in that home whence they have departed to, than the one they have left they certainly will fare badly indeed. No doubt they take the chances."

- Frederick Dally (Excerpt from Correspondence)
BC Archives, Add. Mss. 2443, Box 1, File 13.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=C-09279 [HP057608]

Fig. 51.
No Description
Frederick Dally,
ca. 1866-1870.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. C-09279.

Both of these images show very Europeanese poses. If Dally is directing such posture it shows that Dally has not codified his subjects in a singular vision of what is Indian but allowed for individual identity to be represented as far as is possible within the realm of European ideas of photographic portraiture.



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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: F-00165 Harrison River Indians

Fig.52.
Harrison River Indians.
Frederick Dally, 1867.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. F-00165.

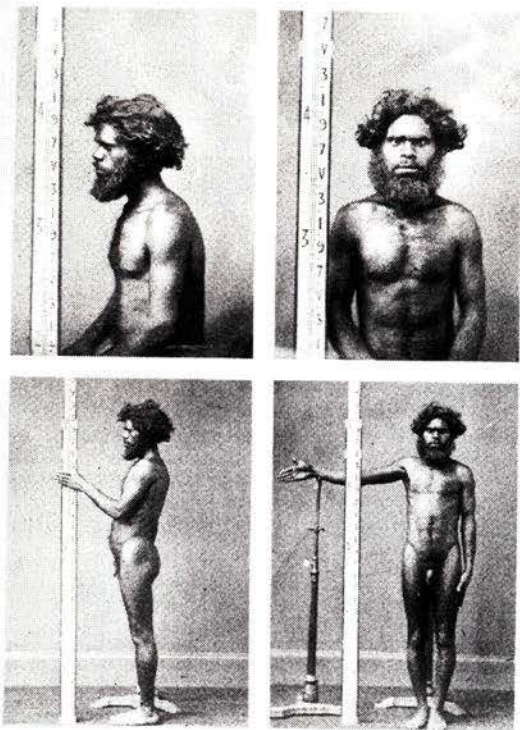


Fig. 53.
Untitled.
(Man from South Australia photographed according to Huxley's instructions).
Photographer (Unknown), c. 1870.
Courtesy: Imperial College Archive London.

Fig. 54.
Sheeshat Indians.
Frederick Dally, ca. 1866-1870.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. F-08306.

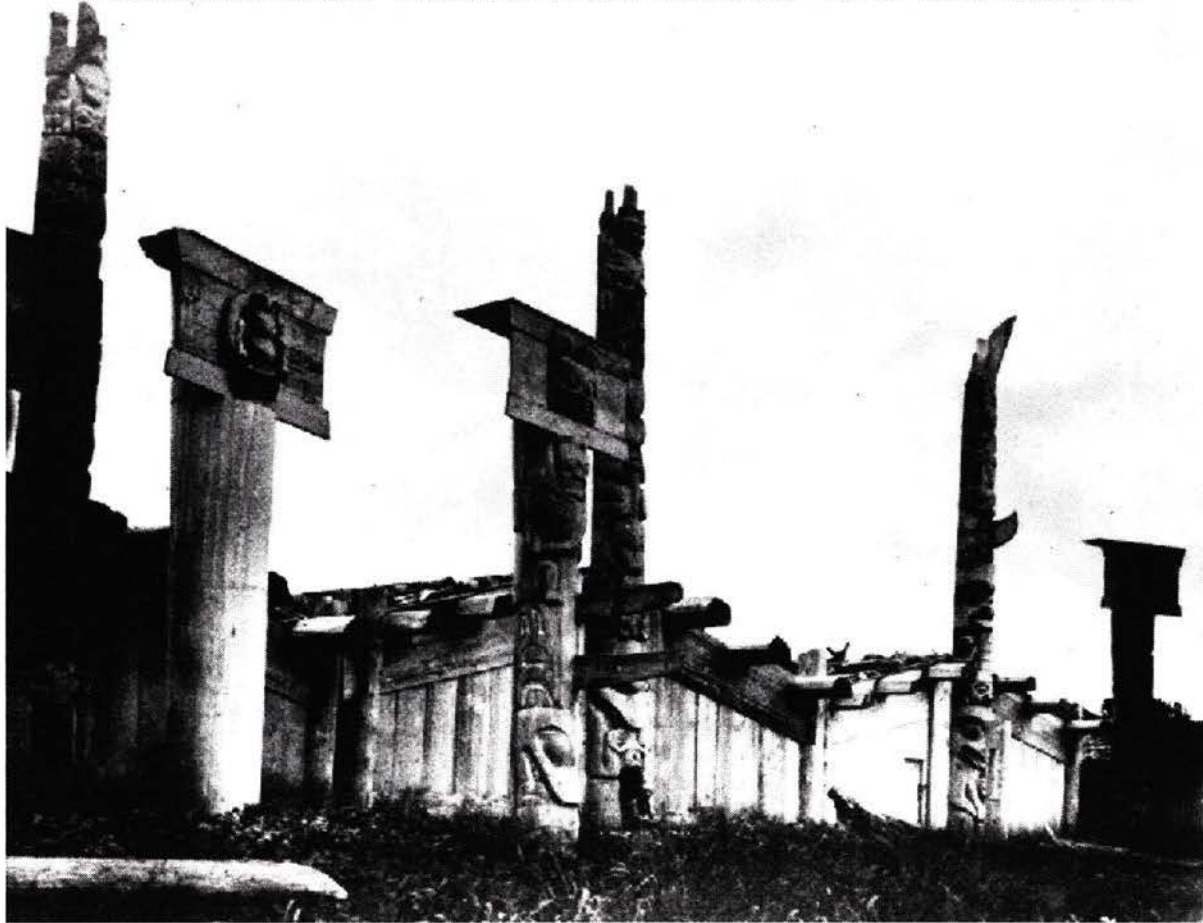


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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=F-08306 [HP894499]



Fig. 55. *Indian distribution feast or potlatch*, Songhees Reserve just outside of Victoria. Frederick Dally, ca. 1866-1870. Courtesy: BC Archives, No. C-09284. While Dally was able to gain greater intimacy in his photographs than most photographers of this period, he still remained an outsider looking in, as were all the European spectators of this potlatch.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=C-09257 [HP057585]

Fig.56. *Houses and carved posts - Skedans*
George M. Dawson, 1878-79.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. c-09257.



Fig. 57. *Skedan Indian Village.*
George M. Dawson, July 18, 1878.
Courtesy: NAC PA44329.

British Columbia Archives - Provided for Research Purposes Only - Use For Profit Requires Fee



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: F-08584 Summit Lake Looking South

Fig. 58. *Summit Lake Looking South, Peace River.*
George M. Dawson, July 27, 1879.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. F-08584.



Fig. 59. *Dolomite Narrows, Burnaby Strait.*
George M. Dawson, June 26, 1878.
Courtesy: NAC PA51091

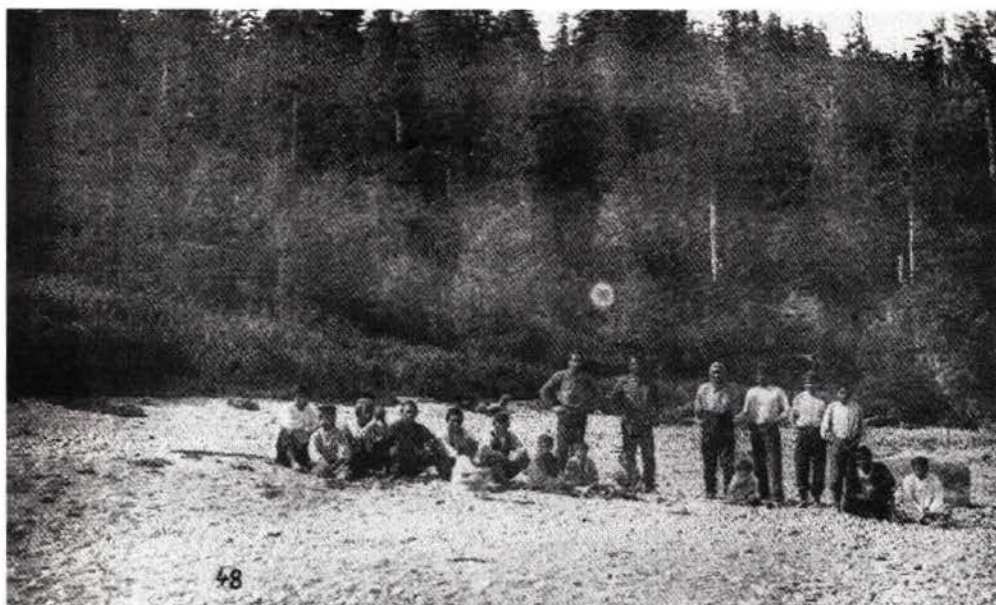


Fig. 60. *Group of Haida Indians, including Chief Edenshaw.
Second from Left, Standing.*
George M. Dawson, August 23, 1878.
Courtesy: NAC PA38154.

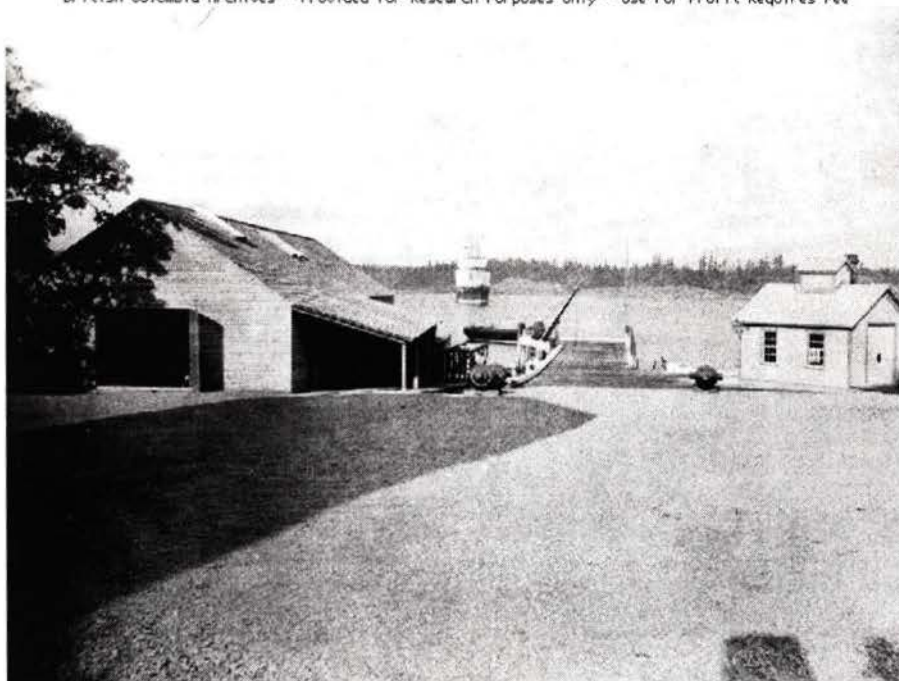


Fig. 61. *Edenshaw and Hoo-ya, Chiefs of Yats at Masset.*
George M. Dawson, August 23, 1878.
Courtesy: NAC PA38147.



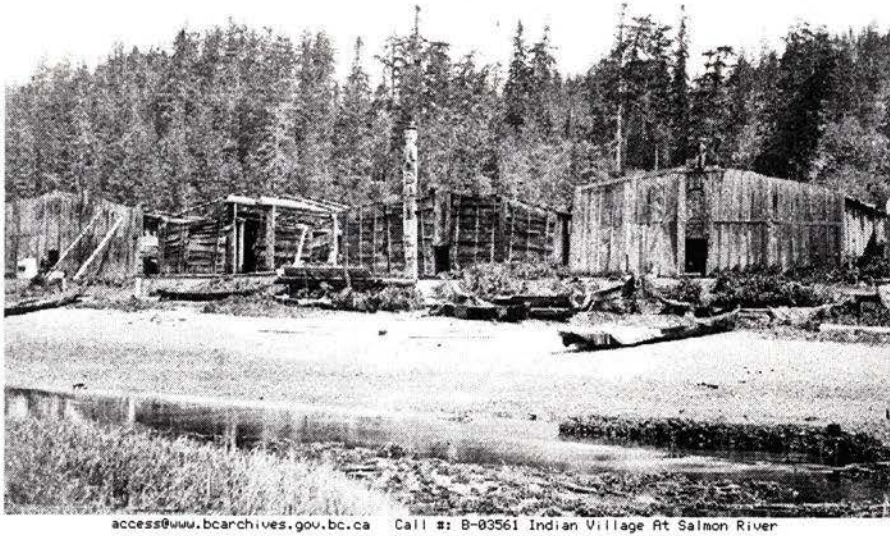
access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: D-07006 Stikine River Canyon

Fig. 62. *Stikine River Canyon*
Edward Dossetter, 1881
Courtesy: BC Archives, D-07006



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: A-05985 Scene From The Dockyard Wharf,

Fig. 63. *Scene from the Dockyard Wharf, Victoria, B.C.*
Edward Dossetter, 1881.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. A-05985.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: B-03561 Indian Village At Salmon River

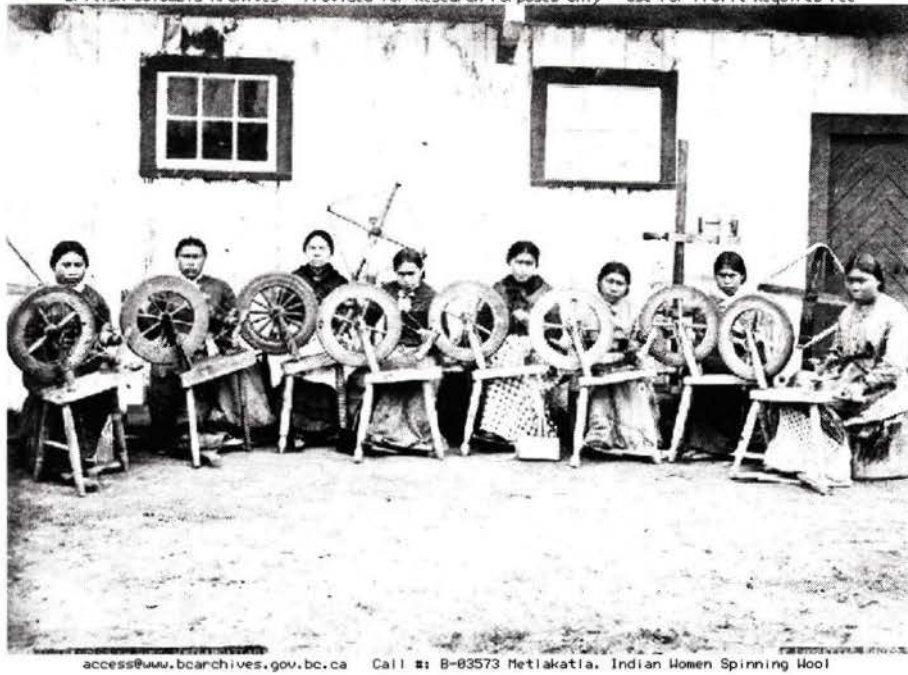
Fig. 64. *Indian Village At Salmon River, Comox - Strathcona.*
Edward Dossetter, 1881.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. B-03561.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: B-03588 Masset, Queen Charlotte Is.

Fig. 65. *Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands.*
Edward Dossetter, 1881.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. B-03588



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: B-83573 Metlakatla, Indian Women Spinning Wool

Fig. 66. *Metlakatla, Indian Women Spinning Wool.*
Edward Dossetter, ca. 1881..
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. B-03573.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: B-83538 Rev. Crosby & The Congregation Of Fort Simpson Church

Fig. 67. *Rev. Crosby & The Congregation of Fort Simpson Church.*
Edward Dossetter, 1881.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. B-03538.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=B-03590 [HP033609]

Fig. 68. Four Haida Men, Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands.
Edward Dossetter, 1881. Courtesy: BC Archives, No. B-03590.

"It is the first photograph ever taken of masked dancers on the Northwest Coast. K'ude, also known as Dr. Kude (second from left), was a famous chief and shaman. Chief Xa'na, on the right, has a charcoal tattoo of a hereditary crest on his chest. The men have bird down sprinkled over their hair and shoulders, and their shirts and leggings are decorated with puffin beaks and quillwork."

- Daniel Francis, Copying People, 1860-1940, p.32.



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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: D-04292 Haida Chiefs In Skidegate, Queen Charlotte Is.

Fig. 69. *Haida Chiefs in Skidegate, Queen Charlotte Islands.*
Edward Dossetter, 1881.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. D-04292.



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access@www.bcaarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: B-03589 Woman In Yan, Queen Charlotte Is.

Fig. 70.
Woman in Yan, Queen Charlotte Islands
Edward Dossetter, 1881.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. B-03589.

Fig. 71.
Old Haida Woman, Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands.
Edward Dossetter, 1881.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. B-03592.



British Columbia Archives - Provided for Research Purposes Only - Use For Profit Requires Fee

access@www.bcaarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: B-03592 Old Haida Woman, Masset, Queen Charlotte Is.

British Columbia Archives - Provided for Research Purposes Only - Use For Profit Requires Fee



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: B-03593 Indian Village, Queen Charlotte Is.

Fig. 72. Indian Village, Queen Charlotte Island.
Edward Dossetter, 1881.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. B-03593.

Chap. 3 - Endnotes

1. Alfred L. Bush & Lee Clark Mitchell, The Photograph and the American Indian (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. xi.
2. Ibid., p. xv.
3. André Rouille, "The Rise of Photography (1851-70)," A History of Photography: Social and Cultural Perspectives, ed. Jean-Claude Lemagny & Andre Rouille (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 36.
4. Ralph Greenhill & Andrew Birrell, Canadian Photography: 1839-1920 (Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1979), p. 24.
5. Bernard Marbot, "The New Image Takes its First Steps (1839-50)," A History of Photography: Social and Cultural Perspectives, ed Jean-Claude Lemagny & Andre Rouille (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 24.
6. Mitchell points out that collodion was not simply a new chemical process useful to photographers but emblematic of photography's link to Europe's imperial ventures, "It was no mere accident of historical circumstance that linked photography with imperialism; quite the contrary, the expertise crucial for first a photograph, then a photographic industry, accrued directly as a result of the centuries-long process of colonial acquisition." (p. xi) "Most dramatically, the first satisfactory process for printing photographic images on paper was the result of the invention of guncotton in 1846. Its derivative, collodion, was used initially for military dressings before being adapted for the wet-plate process that was popular through the 1880s." (p. xxvi). Bush & Mitchell, The Photograph and the American Indian.
7. Ibid., p. 42.
8. Richard Maynard, B.C. Archives, Maynard Research, Box 1:3, Folder - "Sooke and Leach River, Aug. 28 - Sept 1, 1880."
9. Bush & Mitchell, The Photograph and the American Indian, p. xvi.
10. Francis, The Imaginary Indian, p. 85.
11. Ibid.

12. John Pultz, The Body and the Lens: Photography 1839 to the Present (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1995), pp. 14-15.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Cf. Léon Rosenthal, Du romantisme au réalisme, essai sur l'évolution de la peinture en France de 1830 à 1848, Paris, 1914, in Gisela Freund, Photography & Society (Boston: David R. Godine, 1980), pp. 60.
16. Ibid., pp. 60-61.
17. Ibid., p. 61.
18. Ibid., p. 63.
19. John Coffey, Ed Goldstrom, Garry Gottfriedson, Robert Mathew, Patrick Walton, Shuswap History: The First 100 Years of Contact (Kamloops: Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, 1990), p. 24.
20. B.C. Archives, Maynard Collection, "Teenie" or "Tina" of Victoria, Neg. A-02193.
21. B.C. Archives, Maynard Research, Box 2:3.
22. Claire Weissman Wilks, The Magic Box: The Eccentric Genius of Hannah Maynard (Toronto: Exile Editions Ltd., 1980), pp. 10-11.
23. In Blackman's article, "Studio Indians: Cartes de visite of Native People in British Columbia, 1862-1872," Archivaria, no. 21, (winter 1985-86) she notes that the Maynards produced "several" composite images but how many several refers to is never expressed. (P.84) Beyond the one composite of "Mary" that is easily accessible to the public in the B.C. Archives I have on a cursory inspection of the Royal British Columbia Museum's photo archives only been able to come up with an additional four composites. Five composites appears to be a relatively low number considering that Blackman attributes 42 studio cartes of natives to the Maynard's. (p.70) However, there are many unfinished cut-outs made by Hannah from the acquired Dally collection which were not placed on backgrounds that exist in the B.C. archives collection of the Maynards. One wonders whether these photographs were ever completed and if not what Hannah had intended for them?
24. Wilks, The Magic Box, p. 5.

25. Greenhill & Birrell, Canadian Photography, pp. 90-91.
26. Wilks, The Magic Box, p. 5.
27. David Mattison, "Richard Maynard: Photographer of Victoria, B.C.," History of Photography: an international quarterly, vol. 9, no. 2 (April-June 1985), p. 111.
28. Ibid.
29. St. Louis Practical Photographer, III, 9 (sept, 1879).
30. Mattison, Richard Maynard, p. 112.
31. "The Photographer Among the Seals," The Practical Photographer (May 1, 1894), pp. 109-11.
32. Hannah Maynard, "Princess Louise, Excursion, Aug. 1879," B.C. Archives, Maynard Research, Box 2:3, Folder - "Around Vancouver Island on Princess Louise Aug 13-22, 1879."
33. Richard Maynard, "Diary of trip to Alaska on SS Dakota," B.C. Archives, Maynard Research, Box 2:3, Folder - "Alaska Aug 7-26, 1882."
34. Ibid.
35. Maynard, "1874 Around Van.[ouver] Island on HMS Boxer," B.C. Archives, Add. Mss. 1077, vol. 47, file 2A (Maynard Research, Box 3:3).
36. Maynard, B.C. Archives, Maynard Research, Box 2:3, Folder - "Q.C.I. (Chittenden), April-May 1884."
37. Hannah Maynard, "Princess Louise, Excursion, Aug. 1879."
38. David Mattison, Camera Workers: The British Columbia Photographer's Directory, 1858-1900 (Camera Workers Press, 1985).
39. Frederick Dally, B.C. Archives, "1862-1883 Correspondences and Letters," Add. Mss. 2443, Box 1, File 18, & Victoria Colonist, Feb. 17, 1869.
40. Joan Bellinger, "Frederick Dally: Pioneer Photographer," Canadian Frontier (Annual, 1976), p. 25. This article provided me with the information regarding Dally's attendance at the "Blue Coat School" but I would also like to thank Dr. John Money for the full name of the school and its background.

41. Dally, B.C. Archives, "Correspondences and Letters," Add. Mss. 2443, Box 1, File 13.
42. B.C. Archives, Maynard Collection, Box 1-3. My observations concerning the writings of G.M. Dawson were drawn from a variety of his published works, including the publication of his journals posthumously under the title, To The Charlottes, ed. By Douglas Cole and Bradley Lockner (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993). For complete reference details see the following references concerning the section specifically dedicated to George Mercer Dawson: 56, 60, 66, & 67.
43. Dally, B.C. Archives, "Correspondences and Letters," Add. Mss. 2443, Box 1, File 7.
44. Pultz, The Body and the Lens, pp. 24-25.
45. Victoria Colonist, July 19, 1858, p. 1.
46. Ibid., July 7, 1858, p. 2.
47. Dally, "Memoranda of a trip round Vancouver Island & Nootka Island on board HMS Scout, Captn. Price A.D. 1866, for the purpose of visiting the Indian tribes by his Excellency Sir. A.E. Kennedy the Governor, Wed. Aug. 9th 1866," B.C. Archives, "Correspondences and Letters," Add. Mss. 2443, Box 1, File 9.
48. Ibid.
49. Dally, B.C. Archives, "Correspondences and Letters," Add. Mss. 2443, Box 1, File 10. Dally had this to say concerning one personal meeting with Tyhee Freezie, "On one occasion I met Tyhee Freezie at the house of a settler in Esquimalt Harbour, he was feasting off a duck and had it in both hands, by the neck and tail, his hands shone with grease and as I pleased him on my entrance by doffing my wide-awake he came and rubbed his greasy hands both back and front three times up and down to honour me in some way with his tribe, which performance I could not understand."
50. Dally, B.C. Archives, "Memoranda of a trip round Vancouver Island & Nootka Island," "Correspondences and Letters," Add. Mss. 2443, Box 1, File 9.
51. Dally, B.C. Archives, "Correspondences and Letters," Add. Mss. 2443, Box 1, File 14.
52. Ibid., File ?, p. 27.
53. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

54. Ibid., File 16.
55. Ethelbert Olaf Stuart Scholofield, "Originals 1900-1915," Add. Mss. 491, Box 1, File 1.
56. Douglas Cole & Bradley Lockner, ed., To The Charlottes: George Dawson's 1878 Survey of the Queen Charlotte Islands (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993), p. 7.
57. Blackman, "Of 'Peculiar Carvings and Architectural Devices': Photographic Ethnohistory and the Haida Indians," Anthropology & Photography, 1860-1920, ed. Elizabeth Edwards (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 137.
58. PAC, op. Cit., vol. 98, G.M. Dawson to A.E. Barlow, 21 July 1898, from, Greenhill & Birrell, Canadian Photography: 1839-1920, p. 113.
59. Cole & Lockner, To The Charlottes, p. 6.
60. George M. Dawson, "Appendix No. 9. Memorandum on the Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia," Sanford Fleming, Report and Documents in Reference to the Canadian Pacific Railway 1880, pp. 142-143.
61. Blackman, "Of Peculiar Carvings," p. 138.
62. "Queen Charlotte Island Exploration," Victoria Colonist, June 1, 1884, p. 3.
63. Cole & Lockner, To The Charlottes, p. 6.
64. Ibid., p. 7.
65. Ibid.
66. George M. Dawson, "The Haidas," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, No. CCCLXVII, Vol. LXV (August, 1882), p. 402.
67. George M. Dawson, Notes and Observations On the Qwakiool People of the Northern Part of Vancouver Island and Adjacent Coasts, Made During the Summer of 1885, With A Vocabulary of About Seven Hundred Words, (Fairfield, Wash: Ye Galleon Press, 1973), p. 25.
68. Dawson, "The Haidas," p. 403.
69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., p. 404.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., p. 405.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., p. 407.
76. Ibid., pp. 407-408.
77. Ibid., p. p. 408.
78. Ibid., p. 405.
79. Dawson, Notes and Observations on the Qwakiool People, p. 26.
80. Dawson, "The Haidas", p. 407.
81. Ibid.
82. Edward Dossetter, Photographic Collection, B.C. Archives.
83. Blackman, "'Copying People': Northwest Coast Native Response to Early Photography," BC Studies, No. 52 (Winter, 1981-82), p. 94. However, while there is no official mention of Dossetter in Superintendent Powell's report to the Department of Indian Affairs, according to Douglas Cole, photographs commissioned from Dossetter on the 1881 trip were included with a collection of 791 native artefacts sent to New York's American Museum of Natural History. I have found no evidence in the archives or in Cole's account, however, that Dossetter was aware that his photographs were meant to be distributed in this way. Dossetter's photographs reflect the Canadian Government's interests in the assimilation of First Peoples and consequently appear to reflect the interests of the Department of Indian Affairs. Douglas Cole, Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985), p. 83.
84. Ibid.

Chapter 4

The Subject

Thus far I have explored a variety of influences which come to bear on the production of a photograph. But as of yet I have not stepped from behind the camera for any extended discussion of the third player in the photographic process, the subject. I do not want to speculate at length as to what native people thought or felt about photography, since my emphasis is on European perceptions of native people and photography. However, it is important to consider the subject as a participant in the act of photography. Too often over-emphasis is given to natives being acted upon rather than being active agents in their own right. Native people were not only acted upon but were often active in the photographic process. They could usually accept or refuse to be photographed. However, such decisions may have been sharply curtailed by the necessities of different situations, depending on who was in a position of authority or power.

Having considered some aspects of the question of whether native people feared the camera and having put this question itself into question, I will consider here the dynamics which developed between native subjects and photographers in this period regarding what or who would or would not be photographed. I particularly want to investigate how native people presented themselves to that representative of Europe's modern era, the camera, and consider what the significance of this presentation was. In essence, did natives pose differently from Europeans and if so how?

Frame 5: Action/Reaction

As subjects of the photographer's eye, native people could usually choose or refuse to be photographed, and they regularly did both. Described earlier was the incident in which Dally high-tailed it back to the ship when he was surrounded by a group of natives.

Whatever the reason in his mind for the hasty departure, the incident exemplifies that photographers did not assume an unhindered right to take photographs. Later in the same trip Dally wrote in his journal,

Sunday the Governor and Mr. Harkin at 8am visited the indians at Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound, and the village had just the same appearance that it had when Capt. Cook visited it nearly one hundred years previously and the engraving of the village as shown in his voyage might have answered for a photograph of it as seen by the ships crew, I was about to take a photo of it but was prevented for appearance sake.¹

A perfect opportunity to create a romantic rendition of the past was passed up because it was deemed inappropriate or problematic in some way.

Often whether a photograph was taken or not depended on the outcome of a financial transaction which occurred prior to the subjects' pose for the picture. Such transactions on the photographer's part were not simple gestures but an exchange between an individual who required a service and another individual who could provide the service. The photographer did not necessarily get his way, as recorded by Richard Maynard in an incident which occurred on his 1884 trip with Captain Chittenden. He wrote, "Mr. Mackenzie wanted me to take a photo of two images & an indian to stand in the centre to

set off the size, he wanted pay would not take a blanket, so we put other things around & photoed them.”² The native individual in this scenario was not about to become their referential exotic object for a simple blanket, thus Maynard and Mackenzie had to do without. A native subject may have become an ornamental object in a photographer’s view but this did not extinguish the very active role taken by the prospective subject before the photograph was taken. A service was rendered for a price. But we can only speculate as to whether or not such photographs might have been refused if the subject had fully understood the use and distribution of the photograph. Or would they have asked for more money? Are we making assumptions of what First People understood about the use of photographs taken of them?

It was not beyond a photographer to be less than honest in his pursuit of a photographic opportunity. When traveling in Alaska, Maynard wished to photograph a village but the Chief objected, saying it was his town. Maynard responded by saying that he had orders from the government. Consequently, the Chief backed down and Maynard took two views. The problem with Maynard’s response to the Chief’s objections was of course that Canada had no jurisdiction in Alaska.³ Refusal to participate in photography did not only exist outside of the frame. Those who had less freedom to choose to be photographed, like people who were part of a church congregation or children who resided at a mission, could perhaps only voice their objections through body language, refusing the role bestowed upon them by looking down, closing the eyes, and/or ignoring the presence of the camera. (See Fig. 73) In this photograph of *Reverend and Mrs. Harrision with Haidas*, the man on the far right looks down to the ground and

disassociates himself from the process, while the others, including Rev. and Mrs.

Harrison look at the camera. The third man from the left and the woman to the right of him may also be non-participatory or they may have simply closed their eyes. It is interesting that disruptions occurred in the photographer's authority over his subjects in a photograph which clearly delineates between the authoritative standing figures of the Reverend and his wife and those they stand over, their Haida congregation.

One could also define their opposition to the camera in a much more active way by cursing the photographer, hiding from the camera, or using obscene gestures. Since the creation of the instamatic, we have all on occasion had a moment where we visually rendered our thoughts on a photograph being taken without our permission. In 1890 Robert Reford, a shipping magnate from Montreal, came to the Queen Charlotte Islands with George Eastman's new Kodak No. 2. In one of his Kodak snapshots an old woman turns to the camera and says what is on her mind, the photograph is titled, *Lady using bad language*.⁴ (See Fig. 74) The woman is unable to prevent the snapshot from being taken but she refuses to be an object and defines her subjective presence within the frame.

However, native participation as subjects was not exhausted by either financial interest or refusal. First Nations Peoples themselves also sought out photographs and saw within the process positive attributes. Dally notes that while Chin-e-mit-ze acted as a Scout for him during an 1868 trip in the interior, Chin-e-mit-ze, "told all the indians he met, that I was a great chief and could work wonders with a small piece of glass, face work especially, and that I wanted pictures to show to the great white chiefs living a long distance off to show him that the indians had good hearts towards the white man...."⁵

Though it may be construed that Dally may have supplied this excuse for his photographs to Chin-e-mit-ze to procure co-operation, this does not detract from the fact that native people could see photography as a useful means to present themselves in a good light to the European leaders.

As early as 1864, there is a mixed account of King Freezy I and his wife visiting Charles Gentile's studio to have their portrait taken.

- ROYAL CARTES DE VISITE - His Majesty King Freezy I, and his royal spouse the Queen of the Songhees, visited the city yesterday, and honored Mr. Gentile, Photographic artist of Fort street, by sitting for their portraits. Their Majesties appeared to be highly delighted with their counterparts, although in neither case could the words of the poet be applied with justice, "Love and beauty still that visage grace." Before taking his departure the wily but uxorious old King requested the artist to *potlatch* his better half *four bits*, which was immediately done, and the *chickamen* having been safely ensconced in the folds of the Royal robes (three point blankets) their majesties stalked off with a dignity becoming their exalted station.

Victoria British Colonist, Feb 2, 1864, p.3

Here we have an incident in which it is apparent that King Freezy and his wife chose to have their portraits taken, and despite the journalist's satire appear to have dressed for the occasion. But it is difficult to ascertain if they left with a copy of the photograph themselves. Unlike a European visitor to the studio who would have paid for the honour of being photographed by Gentile, Gentile pays for the honour of photographing King Freezy and wife. However, only twenty years later, there are clear indications of photography being used by natives for their own purposes. Participants in potlatches are gathering around to have their photographs taken (See Fig. 77) and photographs are being produced which one would commonly regard as suitable for a family album. For

example, in *Bella Bella in front of long house*, (Fig. 75) taken in 1894, we see a group of people who have adopted European dress and seem well acquainted with photography. Everyone is present and participating in the photographic process and like any family photograph they have dressed in their best clothes for a photograph which will enter a family album for posterity. Even representations similar to the European “nuclear family” are becoming apparent in the photographic record by the late 1880s, early 1890s (See Fig. 78).⁶

But learning to present oneself to the camera was not an immediately understood thing. If one was isolated from the European cultural mainstream, keeping up with the technological changes could be problematic at best: “In 1885, for example, a Tlinglet Indian boarded an Alaska Steamship Company steamer docked at Sitka and, seeing a photographer taking pictures on deck, requested to be photographed. An observer noted, ‘The Indian stiffened himself into his most rigid attitude and when the process was over could hardly be made to stir from his pose.’”⁷ Unbeknownst to the Tlingit gentleman the dry-plate had by 1880 reduced the exposure time to one-sixth to one-twelfth of the wet-plate process. I now turn to how First People presented themselves to an unknown medium.

Frame 6: The Pose

The photographer who began as technician and/or artisan had to learn the requirements, limitations, possibilities, of his medium, and, knowing nothing else, heavily relied on the traditions of the painter's portraiture, developed within the aesthetic of Renaissance and Enlightenment realism. Similarly, the subject had to learn to pose for the new photographic medium. With the new medium the European subject could no longer depend on the painter's brush to take liberties with the flesh and overlook blemishes and imperfections. The painter was no longer there to correct for poor posture. The inner beauty and dignity once rendered by the painter was no longer an artistic interpretation of a person's inner strengths but was primarily dependent on outer appearances. The subject actively had to keep that posture straight, put on their Sunday best, make sure that their best side was showing, and above all not move. One had to strike a pose. "I said don't move!"

Today we do not even think about how to do this. Images inundate every moment of our lives and the moment a camera pops up we freeze into a smile or some act of defiance. It is second nature, instinctual, as McLuhan wrote, "... the complete transformation of human sense-awareness by this form [photography] involves a development of self-consciousness that alters facial expression and cosmetic make-up as immediately as it does our bodily stance, in public or in private."⁸ But we have forgotten that the pose is not a natural reaction but a learned response to a mechanical device.

Like Europeans, First Peoples did not initially know the process of photography. It was not only the photographer who had an active role to play but also they themselves who had a role to play as subjects of that photography. But unlike European subjects, native subjects were further hindered in their knowledge of photography in that they had no portraiture tradition to draw on, nor did they function within a realist and positivist world perspective. The camera was not initially their cultural representative, it was Europe's. Contact with the photographer and his camera was not contact with a simple mechanical device but contact with a definitive embodiment of the European modern era and all it represented - Enlightenment thought, rapid urbanization, and the dominance of the bourgeoisie.

Consequently, as we see in Charles Gentile's *Our Party at Lillooet*, 1865 (Fig. 76), which shows Governor Frederick Seymour with Indian Chiefs at Lillooet, the initial response by First Peoples seems to be no response. That is, at least to my eyes, the two chiefs in the photograph do not actively partake in the act of photography. They appear simply to stand, whereas the European subjects are well acquainted with the camera and pose. The Europeans each actively present an individual posture that they best feel represents themselves: one man sits with his leg up and a dog in his lap, another leans with an arm against a post, the woman in the centre gives a profile, etcetera. While I would argue that in this instance Gentile would most likely have preferred more participation on the part of the two chiefs, since they were the focus of the official visit,⁹ as I showed earlier with Dally's, *Farm at Cowichan* (Fig. 38) and Gentile's *Spences Bridge - Cooks Ferry* (Fig. 39), it was not beyond the photographer to use such passivity

for his own ends. Native subjects became exotic photographic markers of place.

As the Northwest Coast Peoples became more involved with the rapidly growing European population and its culture and commerce, a development of an understanding of the role that subjects perform before the camera became apparent in the photographic record. This initial pose eventually progressed to an image reflecting the European ideal of the family photograph, as we have seen with the Bella Bella photograph above - a photograph suitable for the family album, with all the European trappings including how one poses and the suits and dresses one wears. But the development of how First People presented themselves was neither linear nor simple. Familiarity with the camera depended upon whether one was located near to European settlement, or residing near or at a Mission, or whether one was isolated - in terms of both distance and accessibility. Before continuing with the analysis of how First Peoples' posed for the camera I would like to pause to recognize that First Peoples' understanding of their role as subjects did not simply culminate in the fulfillment of the European ideal of portraiture and that by the turn of the century First Peoples were taking their own photographs. An interesting introduction into this topic is Ira Jacknis' essay "George Hunt, Kwakiutl Photographer," found in the anthology, *Anthropology and Photography: 1860-1920*, which shows that the development of First Peoples understanding of how to pose for a European photographer was a part of their own movement towards using photographic knowledge for their own purposes. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider how First Peoples used the camera differently from Europeans or similarly to them.

A great part of how any person presents oneself to the camera is dependent on what

one wears. Photographers took photographs of natives in a variety of dress ranging from traditional blankets, to European work clothes and casual wear to military suits, gentlemen's suits, and ladies dresses and sweaters. In the case of photographs showing the "good work" that missions and schools were doing at assimilating Indians, the European dress was not so much a personal choice as a dictate of the church. But often military uniforms and gentlemen's suits were a prestigious gift to chiefs and were regarded as a noble means to present oneself before the camera. By the 1890s European suits and dresses were a standard means for First Nations Peoples to present themselves to the camera (See Fig 77-79). Within this fashion one finds evidence of the cultural flux and transition which occurred as a result of the cultural exchange between First Peoples and Europeans.

The European suit was a development both of bourgeoisie aesthetics and of functionality. It was primarily designed for a growing white-collar professional class who performed sedentary duties and sat behind desks. When the working-class man wished to present himself before the camera in the best light, like his bourgeoisie counterpart he identified with the suit. However, rather than showing commonality between working-class and bourgeoisie the suit was a re-enforcer of class hegemony. As John Berger has noted, "the static photograph shows, perhaps more vividly than in life, the fundamental reason why the suits, far from disguising the social class of those who wore them, underlined and emphasized it. Their [working-class/peasants] suits deform them."¹⁰ (See Fig. 80&81) The suit did not enhance the labourer's appearance as it would a banker's. The labourer had broad hands and shoulders, and a body formed from strenuous activity.

As Berger states,

We can note, however, traditional peasant working or ceremonial clothes respected the specific character of the bodies they were clothing. They were in general loose, and only tight in places where they were gathered to allow for freer movement. They were the antithesis of tailored clothes, clothes cut to follow the idealized shape of a more or less stationary body and then to hang from it!¹¹

The differences that John Berger had found between two classes of the same culture and their ramifications can also be found in the cultural clash between Europeans and Northwest Coast natives. If for a moment we return to Dossetter's photograph of *Haida Chiefs in Skidegate*, (Fig. 68) we find two men decked out in their finest but they look awkward and uncomfortable in the European clothing. Their pants are baggy, making their legs look stunted and their hands disappear into sleeves. European culture was a difficult fit. Yet at the same time we see the adaptability of native people and a visual cue of the changes occurring in their lives as they grow into European dress. There is a movement from the initial gifts of ill-fitting suits and military uniforms to the wearing of functional European clothing in daily life. With the use of European clothing one finds evidence of divergent cultures coming together, there are ebbs and flows between European culture and the cultures of First Peoples, and one can distinguish those First Nations Peoples who were only subject to the changes following from limited trade and contact from those who were very much involved in the deeper cultural changes brought about by extensive trade, close proximity to Victoria, or involvement with missions or schools. As Berger discovered, bodies conformed to one's lifestyle and clothes conformed to the functions they were designed to accommodate. Thus it can be

determined through the photographic record that cultural changes were occurring as native people's bodies began to conform to European clothing and the clothing was made to conform to their evolving lifestyle.

It was perhaps the children of intermarriages who most clearly reflected in a concrete way the cultural changes which occurred during this period. Such a person is exemplified by Dossetter's photograph of a *Half-breed Skidegate Woman*. (See Fig. 82) Here we have a woman who is posing for Dossetter - posing! She has one arm behind her back, a hand in her pocket, she is making direct eye-contact with the camera, and her dress fits her and suits her. What identifies her as being native is that the viewer is told that she is a half-breed, and she has been positioned in front of a totem pole. However, what the viewer lacks is any knowledge as to whether she identified herself as white, Indian, both, or neither. But if one was to make an educated guess, one would assume from her clothing, posture, and hairstyle that she has grown up in a European environment.

In contrast to the photograph of this Skidegate woman taken by Dossetter in 1881, we have a photograph taken by Dally, circa the 1860's, described as *Hydah Klootchman*. (See Fig. 83) The woman appears very comfortable in her distinctly European clothing, and the clothing is well fitted, but she does not appear to be comfortable with the photographic process. She is not actively participating but rather looking off to the side of the camera at a point presumably indicated by the photographer. While it was common practice not to have the sitter look directly at the camera, many photographs of European sitters show active participation. In their posture and facial features there is an expressed concern to get the pose right. Consequently, Dally's photo presents a dilemma with this

image, for the clothing speaks of someone well acquainted with European culture, and presumably for that reason familiar with photography, but the woman does not actively play out her role as subject. In this instance, such an image may indicate that the woman had not freely chosen to have her photograph taken or chosen to wear the clothes she did. Since Dawson was the first to photograph the Haida on the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1878, and this photograph was taken in a studio, it is safe to say that Dally probably took the photograph in his Victoria studio. This woman may have been a member of the permanent Haida settlement on the Songhees reserve. Her clothing may have come from participation in the church-schoolhouse established in 1860 on the reserve, headed by Alexander Charles Garrett.¹²

However, not only does one find in the photographic record evidence of Northwest Coast culture in transition and evidence of active First Peoples participation in that transition, one also finds evidence that calls into question my use of the moderate term “cultural flux” since the changes that occurred were rapid and dramatic. With the 1858 gold-rush not only did prospectors, many of whom became settlers, swarm in from across the continent but they also came from China and from across the empire. The existing colony of Vancouver Island was joined by the colony of British Columbia in 1858 and a short eight years later, in 1866, the two colonies became one, followed by British Columbia joining confederation in 1871. Four years after the onset of the gold-rush the Northwest Coast indigenous population was decimated by the 1862 smallpox epidemic. Many would say that my term “cultural flux” is all too soft a label for what amounted to cultural genocide. But here too one can examine the posture of a subject to throw light on

the rapidity of the cultural changes occurring for Northwest Coast People.

Those First Peoples who had the least respite from the inundation of European culture were the native groups in the vicinity of Victoria. Many of these people were photographed by Dally in his studio, most likely for a small fee. One example was the gentleman who posed for the photograph, *Cowichan Siwah*. (See Fig. 84) My own initial response to this photograph was that he appears to be a dejected figure. His eyes are cast down and are not focused on any particular point of reference. He would appear to be disconcerted and frowning. His clothing is tattered and worn; he is quite unlike a European subject who would never have been found before the camera in such a state, not only because the subject would not wish to be portrayed in such a manner, but because the photographer would rarely impose such an image on a European patron.

In my analysis of the studio portraits of Dally, Maynard, Charles Gentile, and G.R. Fardon, in the British Columbia archives, I found only two photographs of Europeans that were not of either well dressed lower middle-class or upper middle-class people. One was of a woman who appears to have been possibly an entertainer or perhaps a prostitute. Whatever her background was, her general appearance and clothing style is out of the ordinary (See Fig. 85). As always, one must remember that the photographers of this period were generally commercial artists and the photograph of this woman would be a saleable product, unlike photographs of the general poor. The second photograph is an early photograph of the Maynards taken in 1864 which depicts them as a working-class family (See Fig. 86). The photograph is in sharp contrast to their later images as a successful middle-class family. The European subject in these studio photographs

generally had the power of his or her patronage unlike the native subject who for the duration of the photograph was in the subservient position of employee. The exception to that rule, both in North America and Europe, were those Europeans who found themselves subservient to the state as a prisoner or as a resident of an asylum.

On a few occasions Hannah Maynard went no further than the street to find native vendors, who survived by selling such goods as potatoes or clams, to use as her subject matter (See Fig. 87). A number of her studio portraits are of people who appear to a European audience to be unkempt or in difficult circumstances, with worn clothes hanging off of their bodies (See Fig. 88). These images speak of those who had little or no power to say no to the photograph, for the financial compensation was sorely needed. However, as I explained in the preface to this thesis, in regards to Fig. 3, this is difficult territory. What we today interpret as hardship may have been regarded by family members in the past as strong, powerful, and personal photographic images. Without first-hand verbal accounts one cannot determine definitively whether or not those who posed for the studio portraits desired to be portrayed as they were. It is likely, however, that like King Freezy I and his wife, those First Peoples living near and in Victoria were well acquainted with the photographs of Europeans and with their modes of presentation to the camera. I believe that, given the opportunity and the financial viability, these native individuals would have preferred to go home and prepare for the photograph rather than be taken off the street - that is, if they desired to be photographed at all. This does not necessarily mean that they would have replicated a European mode of dress or style.

Yet Dally's and Hannah Maynard's studio photographs do not bespeak a systematic

exploitation of indigenous people. They are a part of the dynamics occurring in the cultural landscape of the 1860s, 70s, 80s. The agency that a native subject may have had depended on their status in their own community and their status in the European community. Were they a chief? Were they a guide on whom the photographer relied? Was the photographer dependant on their cooperation to get a photograph he had gone a few hundred miles to get? The native subject's co-operation was also based on his or her relation to the European commercial system. How neighbourly did one need to keep their policies? For example, Haida women may have been able to object to Dawson's photographs along cultural lines, but were the men as free to do so when Europeans regarded them as the authoritative figures and partners with whom one built political and trade ties? Native agency was also dependent on whether one knowingly or unknowingly was the object of European fears.

Photography is not a solitary act but requires the participation of the subject on some level. As First Peoples learned the role played by the subject, they increased their participation and learned how to present themselves to the camera - how to pose for it. Many of those who participated moved from the position of a passive object to that of an active participant. Unfortunately, this did not end the exploitive possibilities of photographs of natives. First People were not usually the recipients of the photographs, and in the end they did not have control over their distribution.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: F-05400 Queen Charlotte Is. Rev. & Mrs. Harrison With Haidas

Fig. 73. *Queen Charlotte Islands, Reverend & Mrs. Harrison with Haidas.*
Richard Maynard, ca. 1880s.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No .F-05400.



Fig. 74. *Lady using bad language.*
Robert Reford, 1890.
Courtesy: PAC, C-60794.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: D-04111 Bella Coola Indians In Front Of Longhouse

Fig. 75. *Bella Bella in front of longhouse.*
Photographer: unknown, 1894.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. D-04111.



Fig. 76. *Our Party at Lillooet*

Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, Frederick Seymour,
Second Front, A.N. Birch, right. Charles Gentile, 1865.

Courtesy: PAC, No. C-88938. Note: The two native chiefs are
the same men who hold an axe-pipe and staff in Fig. 28.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=D-01496 [HP061434]

Fig. 77. *Potlatch at North Bend, B.C. Oct. 1895.* This photograph shows First Peoples celebrating a traditional ceremony but by 1895 suits and formal dress primarily had been adopted for the occasion and for the presentation of themselves to the camera. Courtesy: BC Archives, First Peoples Album, Misc.Vol. 1, No. D-1496.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=C-08039 [HP054034]

Fig. 78. *Indian Group-British Columbia. ca. 1880s-1890s?* Note that in this photograph three generations are represented and the sharp contrast between the first generation and the second, the former wearing the more traditional blanket and the latter very European in dress. Courtesy: BC Archives, No. C-08039.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=E-00203 [HP077343]

Fig. 79. Shesht Chief, Makomas, and his wife.

Original photograph was taken on the westcoast of Vancouver Island, B.C. ,ca 1905. The movement towards the adoption of European clothing was neither linear nor universal. Factors such as isolation and the placement of trading forts and missions came into play. Nor can we rule out personal preference or desires to maintain traditional non-European ways of life. Courtesy: BC Archives, No. E-00203.



Fig. 80. "The musicians give the impression of being uncoordinated, bandy-legged, barrel-chested, low-arsed, twisted or scalene. The violinist on the right is made to look almost like a dwarf. None of their abnormalities is extreme. They do not provoke pity. They are just sufficient to undermine physical dignity. We look at bodies which appear coarse, clumsy, brute-like. And incorrigibly so." (Berger, About Looking, p. 31)

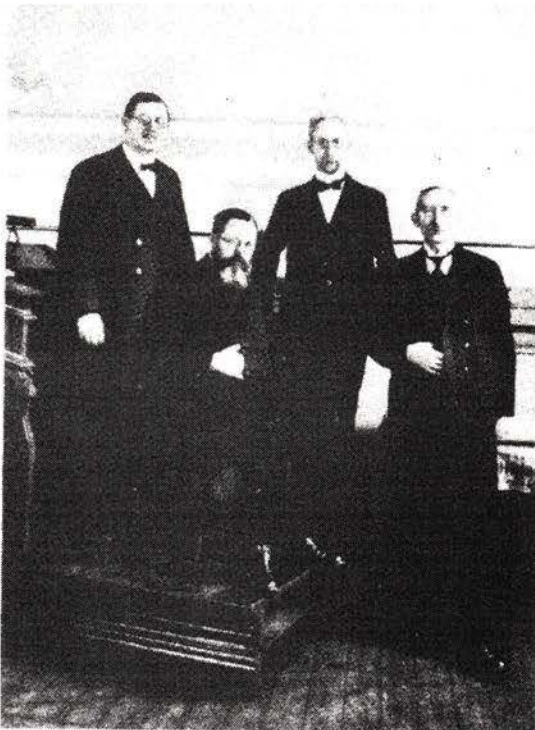


Fig. 81.
"I have deliberately chosen a Sander photograph which looks old-fashioned and could easily lend itself to parody: the photograph of four Protestant missionaries in 1931.

Despite the portentousness, it is not even necessary to make the experiment of blocking out the faces. It is clear that here the suits actually confirm and enhance the physical presence of those wearing them. The clothes convey the same message as the faces and as the history of the bodies they hide. Suits, experience, social formation and function coincide." (Berger, About Looking, p.33)



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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: B-03594 Half-breed Skidegate Woman, Queen Charlotte Is.

Fig. 82.
Half-breed Skidegate Woman,
Queen Charlotte Islands.
Edward Dossetter, 1881.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. B-03594.

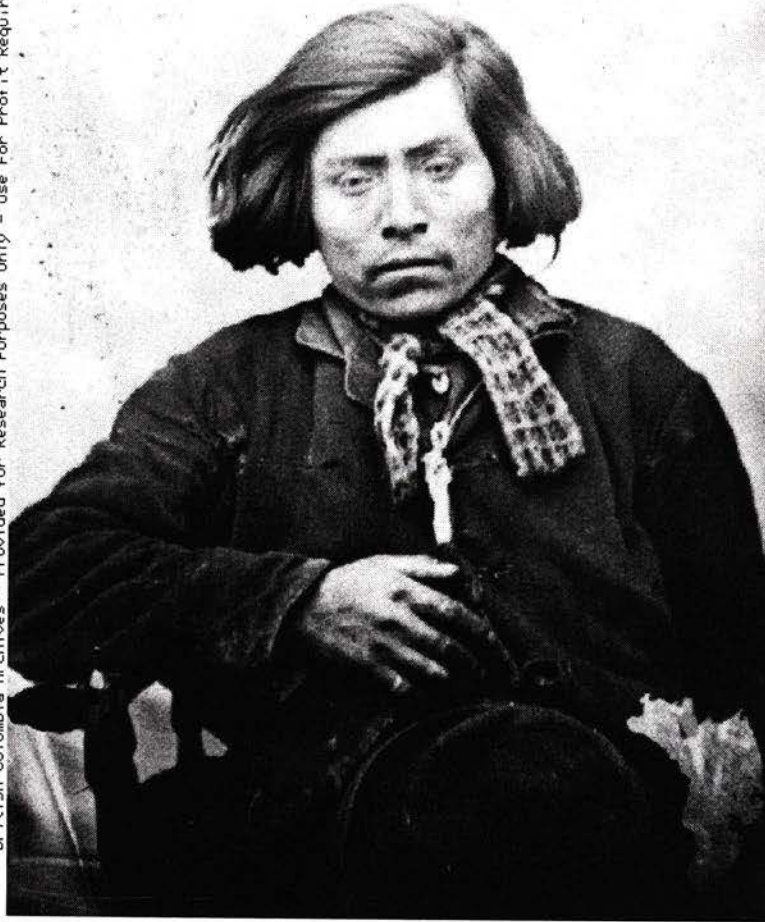
Fig. 83.
Hydah Klootchman.
Frederick Dally,
ca. 1866-70.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. F-08367.



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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: naseef-08367 [HP094505]

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=F-08523 [HF094647]

Fig. 84. *Cowichan Siwah*
Frederick Dally, ca. 1866-1870.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. F-08523.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=F-06219

Fig. 85. *Unidentified Woman.*
Hannah Maynard (?), Maynard Collection.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. F-6219.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=F-05050 [HP093235]

Fig. 86. *Richard Maynard and Children*. Hannah Maynard, 1864.
The photograph was taken two years after Richard returned
to Victoria with Hannah and his family.
Courtesy: BC Archives, No. F-05050.



Fig. 87.
No Description.
Hannah Maynard, ca. 1865-75?
An example of Hannah's use of
native street vendors as studio
subjects. Note the basket of
potatoes.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. f-08925.

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access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: nameF-08925 [HP094576]

Fig. 88.
Cowichan.
Frederick Dally, ca. 1866-70.
Courtesy: BC Archives,
No. F-08524.



British Columbia Archives - Provided for Research Purposes Only - Use For Profit Requires Fee

access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: nameF-08524 [HP094646]

Chap. 4 - Endnotes

1. Dally, "Correspondences and Letters," B.C. Archives, Add. Mss. 2443, Box 1, File 9.
2. Richard Maynard, B.C. Archives, Maynard Research, Box 2:3, Folder - "Q.C.I. (Chittenden), April -May 1884,"
3. Maynard, "Diary of trip to Alaska on SS Dakota," B.C. Archives, Maynard Research, Box 2:3, Folder - "Alaska Aug. 7-26, 1882."
4. Blackman, "Copying People," p. 100.
5. Dally, "A Journey to William Creek Cariboo," B.C. Archives, "Correspondences & Letters," Add. Mss. 2443, Box 1, File 7.
6. In Victoria Wyatt's analysis of the work of Lloyd Winter & Percy Pond in southeast Alaska she notes a marked difference between commercial portraiture and private portraiture of natives in regards to their clothing. In the first case, participation by natives was largely for economic reasons and commercial photographs depicted natives wearing street clothes which "showed signs of wear" and in which the people did not look prosperous, while in the second case private photographs showed "subjects dressed in elegant European clothes that were presumably quite expensive." (Victoria Wyatt, "Interpreting the Balance of Power: A Case Study of Photographer and Subject in Images of Native Americans," *Exposures*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Winter: 1991/92), p. 27.) While the clothing worn in Figs. 75, 77 & 78 are not as elegant as those used as examples by Wyatt I believe there is a similar pattern in British Columbia, for the clothing is still well kept and would appear to be examples of one's Sunday's best. The clothing also remains a sharp contrast to the worn clothing of natives who participated in studio portraiture (See Fig. 84) The finer clothing found in the private photographs taken by Winter & Pond may in fact be a product of the later date of their work as they had not established their studio until 1893.
7. Blackman, "Posing the American Indian," p. 70.
8. McLuhan, Understanding Media, p. 177.
9. The native Chief who stands on the right in Fig. 76 in fact appears to be an individual of significance as he is the same person who was photographed by Dally holding a staff with the British royal crown, see Fig 28. Note that an apparent lack of active response within the photographic process can not be equated with a lack of activity or a passive role within the event being photographed. Much is left outside the frame and the two chiefs in Fig. 76 were important individuals meeting with Governor

Frederick Seymour. They were likely included in the photograph due to their importance.

10. John Berger, About Looking (New York: Pantheon books, 1980), pp. 30-31.
11. Ibid., pp. 34-35.
12. David Mattison, B.C. Archivist's Personal Notes - "Octagonal Building in Victoria, 1860," & Time Colonist, "Islander Magazine," Sunday Feb 14, 1988.

Chapter 5

Frame 7: Dissemination

It has been argued above that the photographic process is a dynamic interplay between the photographer, the subject and the camera which mediates between the two. But photography also has a quality unique as an artistic medium, it effaces its creator and places in her/his stead the viewer. Yet little investigation has occurred into this aspect of it. With the photographer replaced by the viewer the image becomes an unmediated presentation of "truth". How did the individual viewer read such truths? What narratives did they infuse into the photograph? Who precisely bought photographs of First People? Residents, visitors, miners, Victorians, men, women? Were the *carte de visites* of natives kept alongside cartes of celebrities or separately? Were they viewed among company in front of the fire or sent off to distant relatives? In large part these questions must be left unanswered here because the information is simply unavailable. Where the postcards of the CPR are a part of an entire genre of tourism and company promotion, there is little direct evidence as to the dissemination of photographs during the early stage of photography in British Columbia. Consequently, little or no attempt has been made to seek out viewer response to or the circulation patterns of native photographs. However, there are a few pieces of the puzzle here and there that throw light onto the influence of these photographs and that remind the historian of the importance of dissemination. For in this field the historian too disseminates her/his interpretations of the photographic

record through publications.

Not only does the reader interpret native photographs through the mediated text of the historian but they also are influenced by what magazine they find articles in, and by what articles precede or follow the historian's article. For example, Margaret Blackman's article, "Posing the American Indian" was published in the 1980 October issue of Natural History that had as its cover a photograph of a moose. The Blackman article was preceded by an article concerning giant anteaters. While Blackman puts forth an argument concerning the prevalence of stereotypes in the photography of First Peoples, First People are once again excluded from modern society by being situated within nature, within the history of nature. The article is not included in a magazine concerning North American social history but Natural History. Books are also mediated through how they are presented to the reader. Did the reader pick a copy up in a history section of a bookstore, a library, or a tourist gift shop? Is a book concerning photographs of First Peoples to be collected in the same way as the original photographs, as a tourist memento picked up in a gift shop, or is it presented within a historical discourse as it would be in the history section of a bookstore?

The dissemination of photographs regarding First Peoples of course began with the photographer's commercial promotion of such photographs. One could promote work either through newspaper advertisements or displays in a studio gallery (See Fig. 89). In the first case, an example of an advertisement by the Maynards is interesting in two respects. First, as late as 1884, Hannah Maynard was the officially recognized photographer. Her husband was given no credit for his contribution. Secondly, and more

significantly, it was not the portraits or views of First People which were promoted in the photographs but native carvings. The promotion of the carvings reaffirms that the Maynards were not nearly as interested in documenting First People as they were in documenting their artefacts.

Most of the photographs that the Maynards had pertaining to First People were in their possession because much of Dally's work had fallen into their hands. Dally, who also used newspaper advertisements, had "displayed prints in his gallery where the public could examine the samples and place orders for copies for their album or carte-de-visite collections. He...[had] leather bound albums and cardboard mounts specially made and imprinted with his name for the presentation of large and small prints."¹ In Figure 90 we see an example of how Dally's photographs would have been displayed. It shows a representative milieu of the "Indian types" created in his studio alongside two views, one of which represents the culture that Dally was so interested in. While he displayed difference via the racial types, he also created a singular context for them with the view of the canoes: all are Indians, all use canoes. Yet the variety of dress or undress of those in the portraits disrupts notions of clearly distinguished stereotypes like the savage or the assimilated Indian. The *Hydah Klootchman* image is a polar opposite of the *Chemanius Chief* but there are multiple variations in-between. The Chemainus Chief is in fact depicted both with and without a shirt. This leads one to ask how clear was the vision Victorians had of First Peoples? Preconceived notions certainly did exist with regards to First Peoples but how clearly formed were they and how dependent on circumstance?

Dally also promoted his work by presenting photographs to newspaper staff,

Photographic — Mr. F. Dally has placed upon our table a magnificent photographic picture of the Indian tribes taken when assembled on the Reserve last month, to celebrate their annual festival. The picture exhibits an Indian group under the most favourable circumstances, but its intrinsic merit lies in the artistic execution, which is Mr. Dally's best style, which fact is a sufficient commendation of the work.²

Here we find the native subjects of the photograph subordinated to the artistic merit of the photographer, and newspaper reports could be far less subtle than this in advancing ideas different from those expressed privately by a photographer. For example, in the case of Dally's H.M.S. Scout trip, we have a wonderfully detailed private account of various indigenous cultures along with a detailed account of Dally's personal interaction with First People on the trip, but what the public received from the *Victoria Colonist* was an article which listed only the grievances held by natives and the primary facts regarding the official purpose of Governor Kennedy's trip.³

The dissemination of Northwest Coast First People's images was not limited to Victoria. Hannah Maynard maintained a correspondence with the *St. Louis Practical Photographer*, to which she sold her yearly "Gems". Her letters discussed photographic techniques and at times she sent examples of Richard's views of native villages under her own name. An article in the *St. Louis Practical Photographer*, September 1879, commented on her materials under the title "Editorial Chit-chat":

Again they come, all the way from Alaska and Victoria, B.C. the most interesting views we have ever seen from those far off regions, Mrs. Maynard is one of the most industrious and persevering ladies we have in our business. She stops at no impediment, in our Art, but is a regular go-ahead, even beating our Yankee girls two to one in photography. Among the views before us are:

“Shake’s house, Indian Chief at Wrangle”, “Indian carvings at Wrangle”, “Castle at Sitka”, “Russian Church, Sitka, Mount Papoff in distance”, “Interior of Russian Church at Sitka”, “Yellow Cedar trees at the Khan”, “Indian Camp”, “Sitka, looking toward Silver Bay,” “Sitka from Alaska Island”, “Silver Bay, Sitka”, “Indian Hut”⁴

However, it is unknown whether any of these images ever made it to press, for at this time even in a magazine dedicated to photography, the publication of photographs was limited.

What photographs were reproduced accompanied articles. In 1894 an article was published that detailed a trip made by Richard Maynard to the Pribiloff Islands, and photos by Richard illustrated the story, “The Photographer Among the Seals.”⁵

Photographs were also distributed through published government reports and anthropological organizations. After Dally’s return to England, in 1872, it appears that he may have become a member of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland as well as a member of the Royal Geographical Society. At any rate he did participate as both an observer and an orator in the former. One presentation that we are aware of by him was titled, “Exhibition of Ethnological Specimens from British Columbia, by Dr. F. Dally”⁶ Whether or not he used photographs on this particular occasion is unknown but it is likely that he would have shown some of his photographs at some point during his participation in the two societies. As noted earlier in the thesis, Dally had retained two strong boxes of material from his stay in British Columbia. Chittenden’s exploration of the Queen Charlotte Islands for the British Columbia government was published, and Maynard’s photograph of the men – native and European alike, resting around the camp – made it into that publication as an etching.⁷ (See Fig. 91 & 92) What is of particular

interest here is the liberties the artist took with the photograph, dispensing with the problematic smoke from the fire, filling in background detail, and including the photographer in the image. What is unclear with this image is whether or not a reader would have understood that the four men in the background were native or not. While the photograph clearly defines the physical features of First Peoples, the etching blurs away the differences between European and native.

The death of a photographer did not necessitate their work's disappearance under layers of dust. Instead, the distribution of images made by early photographers of First Peoples has continued till the present. After the deaths of Richard and Hannah Maynard, the dissemination both of their work and of the collected works of other photographers like Dally persisted through sales conducted by their son Alfred H. Maynard. Beyond demand from the general public, requests for indigenous photographs were made by such educational institutions as the University of Washington's Washington State Museum in 1931, the Seattle Public School System in 1930, and the University of California in 1930.⁸

From an earlier institutional request made prior to Hannah's death in 1918, we get a glimpse into the reasons behind why a museum would request photographs from the Maynards. Charles C. Willoughby, of Harvard University's Peabody Museum, wrote, "I am trying to get together photographs showing Indians in all parts of America in as nearly the primitive dress as possible, for scientific purposes. Can you tell me about the date that your photographs were taken?"⁹ Although the Maynards did not have any clear intention of photographing natives in a "traditional primitive state", this did not prevent

the use of their photographs for such purposes. Despite the Peabody's preference for the photographs Willoughby also wrote that he did not expect there to be very many photographs available which would show the traditional dress because in his view "Indians" had "early adopted white men's clothing." In other words the Peabody wanted "authentic" images for its scientific work, since such images would be "truer" than the living breathing fact of First Peoples.

Similarly the works of early photographers continue to be published today in various popular forms. Dawson's original article, "The Haidas," published in 1882 in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, was resurrected in 1965 to be republished in a little book by the Shorey Book Store (Seattle, Washington) and was eventually reprinted at least four times by this company. The fourth edition, 1973, sold for \$1.00. Apparently, still in 1973, no proviso, or contextualization, were deemed necessary, as Dawson's work was republished exactly as it had been in 1882.

In a *Canadian Frontier* issue: "27 Exciting Stories From Canada's History," Joan Bellinger's article, "Frederick Dally, Pioneer Photographer," is written in the manner of an adventure tale, in which Dally is the adventurer. Although the article deals with Dally's adventures with miners (four photographs concerning mining are included), and First Nations Peoples are not the focus, the article opens with a scenic view of *Quamichan Indian Village - Vancouver Island*. The lone reference to First Peoples regards their remains and Dally's bravery concerning those remains:

It was near the old stone church, that he found a pile of human skulls, evidently left over from some long ago tribal battle. When the photographer picked one up to look at it closely,

a large snake darted its head at him out of an eye socket. The snake must have been more frightened than Dally for he later picked up the same skull and sent it back to London where it is in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons.¹⁰

In other words, the article uses references to natives merely to add spice to the grand adventures of Dally.

Dossetter's photographs in 1972 likewise found their way into the British Columbian magazine, *Canada West Magazine*, which celebrated the days of the gold rush and the frontiersman. His work, having little or no context to begin with, was presented there with only brief captions. In these captions one may most clearly see the problematic nature of photographs that exist without historical or cultural context for they can be attributed whatever context the author feels fit to place upon them. According to the introductory notes to the magazine, indigenous people were no longer vanishing; they had ceased to exist, or at least their culture had ceased to exist, "The pictures from his [Dossetter's] albums show a vanished way of life on the North-west coast."¹¹ Evidently those First People living on the Northwest coast in 1972 were no longer regarded to have a culture of any significance. One had to look into the past to find the "authentic Indian". The language of the captions beneath the photographs established First People as "other" and as existing in a subordinate and passive role,

These exceptionally fine looking Haida chiefs at Skidegate were photographed by Dossetter in their "white man's" clothes, attire which, at that time, they took considerable pride in wearing.

Some girls from the Hwa Swelth tribe, although a little shy, manage to pose for Dossetter. Note the girl on the

extreme right wearing a “button blanket.”¹²

(See Fig. 93 & 94)

The photograph is unable to give narration to itself. It is unable to represent the context from which it was taken. The frame thus forms the boundaries of a symbol which the viewer imbues with meaning from personal knowledge and experience, from information provided in captions and/or from the context of other photographs. Yet the context of other photographs requires a certain knowledge of the photographs to inform the viewer of what order the series of photographs is to be arranged in. The first caption builds an idea around the photograph without supplying the necessary context as to why the Haida chiefs wore the military coat and European suit. Also, the chiefs are placed in subordinate positions to “white men” for they are not regarded as the norm but “exceptional”, and while the clothes belong to them the possessive refers still to those who gave them the clothes; they wear the “white man’s’ clothes”. The second caption places the girls in the passive role of shy little girls who had trouble posing for Dossetter although there are absolutely no indications from the photograph that these girls are in any way shy. They might just as well have been bored, angry, or suspicious of the photographer. The narrator of these photographs narrates from his/her own particular vantage point without any clear reasons for interpreting the photographs as he/she does. What primarily contextualizes these photographs is their placement in a popular local magazine which romanticizes the bygone frontier days of British Columbia in which Indians reside outside of time.

Edward S. Curtis continues to shape our vision of First Peoples, and his image of

First Peoples is as popular as it ever was if not more so. Calendars and date books mark off the days with visions of the past. But to many people Curtis' images no longer represent a vanishing way of life but are a reflection on a people who have persevered and had the resilience to bounce back and refashion themselves under noble traditions for the present. Yet the consumer of these images continues to perceive indigenous people in an idealized manner. First Nations Peoples are seen through photographs like Curtis' as the purveyors of a knowledge that we should all aspire to, rather than as ordinary people coping with the day to day events of life. For example, many environmentalists hold First Peoples up as protectors of the earth but forget that many First Peoples make their living at logging and other resource industries. The romantic mind set forgets that within the many groups of First Nations Peoples there is a diversity of opinion.

Alongside the work of Curtis can now be found the collected photographic works of Canadian photographers. However, these books result from the endeavours of historians in the archives and are comprised of works by photographers who never envisioned their own photos in such a published form. These books often question the objective nature of photographs of First Peoples and the intent of the photographers, who photographed not for First Peoples but for those of European descent. Yet are these new works free of the exploitive nature of past endeavours? The market is still largely made up of tourists, who can pick up Daniel Francis' *Copying People* on the B.C. ferry as they cross from Vancouver to Victoria. Silversides' *The Face Pullers* is 184 pages long, only twenty of which is text. Can one entrust the reader to at least read the brief text written to accompany the photographs? Is this a concern of the historian? What are the

implications of presenting history in such popular formats?

I do not want to be misunderstood. I admire the intent and overall analysis of both Francis and Silversides. Francis attempts to situate First Peoples within a living culture. He writes, "These photographs are emphatically not meant to document the disappearance of the 'real' Indian. They are meant to show vibrant living cultures in the process of adapting to change, not cultures suitable for framing and hanging in a museum."¹³ There is indeed a necessity to make the public aware of these images and their problematic nature. As Silversides points out,

While a few of these images are quite well known, most, surprisingly, have never seen the light of day.... If more of these images were accessible to and consulted by both academics and the general public, the history of the myth-making and the reality behind the white race's often misguided notions about Native people would surely become more evident.¹⁴

However, just as historians critique the artefacts of the past, they must also critique their own representation of those artefacts. Francis legitimately analyzes Curtis' work, for no one can get around the impact this man's photographs have had on how we see First Peoples. As Francis writes,

Curtis's work has been so extensively reproduced - in books, as postcards and posters, even on T-shirts - that the nostalgic, romantic Indian he portrayed has become something of a visual cliché. No other photographer has found such a wide audience for a particular version of aboriginal "reality."¹⁵

Yet despite Francis' assertion that Curtis' images have become a "visual cliché," this cliché is used on the front cover of his own book to represent the book - to sell the book. It is rather debilitating to one's argument if they use the object of their critique for similar

purposes, as in this case, to sell once again the image of the traditional noble Indian. One is faced with a catch twenty-two - in order to disseminate ideas it must be commercially viable. But rather than feed the consumer what is already known, why not disrupt the images facing them on the bookshelves with something less familiar and create a discourse of difference?

Perhaps the use of a Curtis image to sell *Copying People* would be less problematic if it were not for the fact that Francis vehemently attacks the use of native artefacts and imagery for tourism in *The Imaginary Indian* and gives no sense that tourism can be a positive or useful tool.¹⁶ Yet Francis' work is a part of the tourist trade. In my opinion the use of native imagery for tourism is not a problem in and of itself, for First People are active agents in tourism - acting both for and against the use of native images in tourism and using those images in positive and negative ways. Rather Francis' contradictory stand is the objectionable issue.

Both Silversides and Francis have written a survey history for the uninitiated, covering the pre-World War II history of photography. The problematic nature of such surveys is that generalities become representative of the whole. Is this not what these authors argue against when they critique the stereotypes found in the photographs of First Peoples. Silversides concludes his text with the statements,

That these nostalgic images were made at all underlines the fact that while white photographers may have learned much about the Plains Indian, they never understood the culture.

This is not to say that the photographs are not attractive, indeed, many of the portraits are aesthetically extremely pleasing. They simply do not possess integrity

of purpose.¹⁷

How is the reader to determine “integrity of purpose” if no analysis of the intentions of individual photographers is given? It is not obvious that because a photographer did not understand the culture of those he photographed that he did not have a certain integrity in his pursuit of those photographs. The list of photographers that Silversides gives is so extensive that one quickly forgets their names, which means that once again the photographer is effaced from the photographic process. The viewer is left to define meaning without background information or historical guidance.

Though I cannot speak on how representative Silversides’ collection of photographs might be, a brief analysis of Francis work is worthwhile. Francis’ argument is a normative example of the critique of stereotypes. He assumes that the intent of the photographer is either to represent native people as noble/savages or as assimilated Indians. But his overview creates assumptions about particular periods which do not stand up to close analysis. It has been argued in this thesis that the early period of photography was the period of the large format camera, during which photographers did not generally have any clear approach to the photography of First Peoples and the trends in representation that were apparent were problematized by discrepancies. Yet Francis’ analysis would lead the reader to believe that the production values informing Curtis’ work were similar to that occurring in the period 1860 to 1900. That is, techniques of manipulation were routinely used by photographers in British Columbia during the late nineteenth century, similar to those used by Curtis. Francis states, “The cartes were made in a studio setting, though photographers often isolated the Native figures and re-

photographed them against a village backdrop, recognizing that for non-Native customers the more exotic the scene the better.”¹⁸ In my research the only photographer I have clearly found to do such reformatting is Hannah Maynard, and she did so only on a few occasions.

Out of the 135 images included in Francis’ *Copying People* only 26 were taken prior to 1890, the period of the large format camera. Francis divides his book into two historical photographic periods; the first chapter is “The Pioneers, 1860-1900,” the second chapter, “Peoples of the Coast,” and the third chapter, “Peoples of the Interior,” cover 1900-1940. If we use Francis’ division of periods, 49 images were from the pioneer period, 1860 to 1900. The specific context of these images is lost in a book which covers both the decline and rise of First Peoples’ populations, the industrialization of British Columbia, the development of First People photographing themselves, and perhaps most importantly, the technical evolution from a technology which required time and patience on the part of both photographer and subject, to a technology easily handled by amateurs. Both Francis and Silversides neglect to critique changes in the medium they study.

One final issue that I will raise before leaving the topic of popular histories is the limitations in using aesthetics as a criteria for choosing photographs for publication. Francis and Silversides both include aesthetics as a criterion for including or excluding images in their books.. While the analysis of a body of work that one finds aesthetically pleasing is not problematic in and of itself, as Edward Said exemplified in his critical analysis of Rudyard Kipling’s Kim,¹⁹ this does not absolve the historian from analyzing what was left behind, left missing from a discourse, simply because it was not pleasing to

the eye or flattering to the artist. One must ask why an image lacked an aesthetic appeal - was it because of the composition or the condition of the subject? What do the items rejected for publication have to say about the photography of First Peoples?

MRS. R. MAYNARD,
Photographic Artist

AND

DEALER IN ALL KINDS OF PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS.

Views of Victoria and British Columbia,
also Alaska and the Carvings of the West
Coast Indians, on hand in large variety, and
for sale at reasonable rates.

DOUGLAS STREET, VICTORIA, B. C.

Fig. 89. Advertisement for the Maynard's Studio
In The West Shore, vol. 10, Sept. 1, 1884.

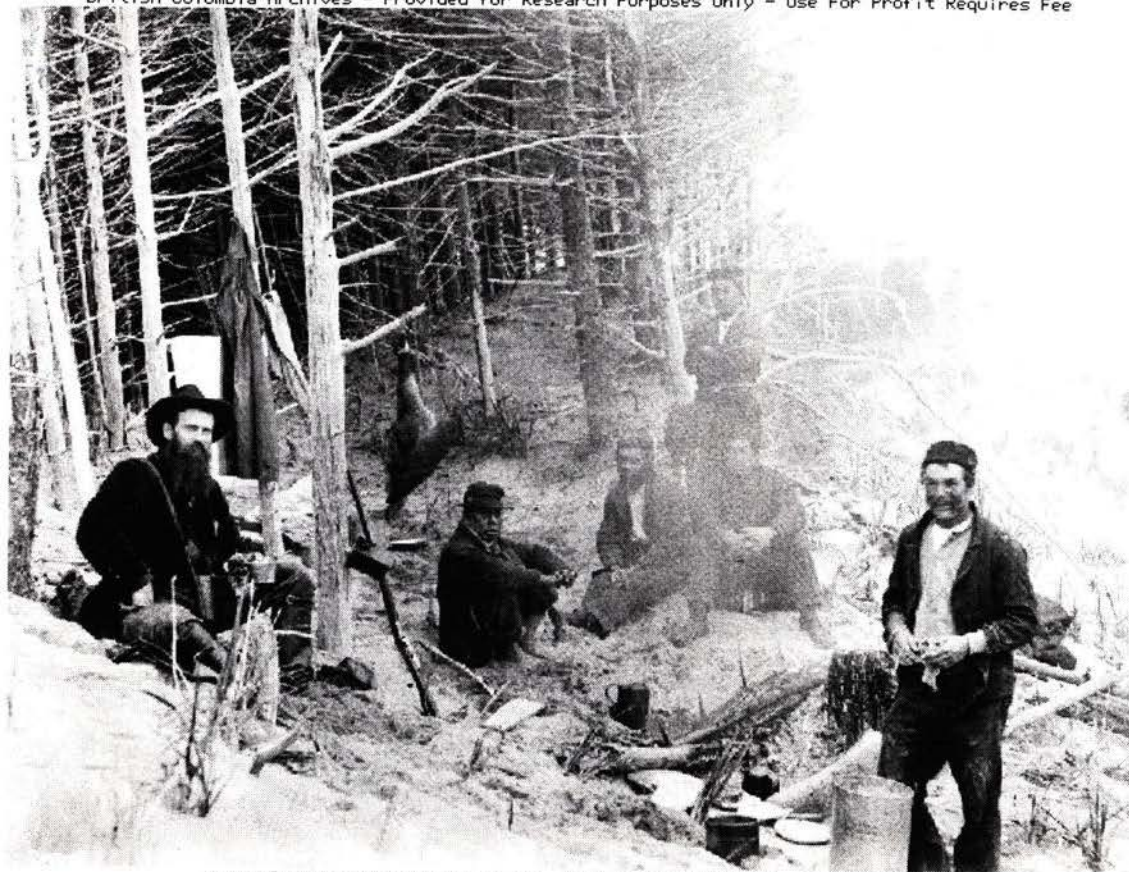


Fig. 90. An example of a page from one of Frederick Dally's Albums, used to display prints for customers. Courtesy: BC Archives, No. G-03768.



CHITTENDEN AND PARTY AT CAMP MAYNARD, QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS.
From Photo by R. Maynard.

Fig. 91. *Chittenden and Party at Camp Maynard, Queen Charlotte Islands,*
From Photograph by Richard Maynard. Etching from Newton H. Chittenden,
Official Report of the Exploration of the Queen Charlotte Islands for the
Government of British Columbia (Victoria: Printed by authority of the
Government, 1884). See Fig. 92 for actual photograph.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: name=A-02042 [HP005166]

Fig. 92. *Captain Chittenden [Rose Spit] at Camp Maynard, Queen Charlotte islands, April 28, 1884.*

Richard Maynard. Courtesy: BC Archives, No. A-2042.



access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca Call #: B-83537 Members Of The Kwa Swelth Tribe

Fig. 93.
Members of the Kwa Swelth Tribe
Edward Dossetter,
1881. Courtesy:
BC Archives,
No. B-03537.



Fig. 94.
Members of the Kwa Swelth Tribe as found in "Dossetter's Queen Charlottes," *Canada West*, vol. 4, No. 4 (Winter, 1972).

Note the cropping used with the *Canada West* example. Aesthetics may have been the primary factor in the way the photograph was shown but what also occurs is an expunging of the two girls who actively move about, restless in front of the camera. A hint of boredom is replaced by shyness.

Chap. 5 - Endnotes

1. Joan Schwartz & Lilly Koltun, "A Visual Cliche: Five Views of Yale," BC Studies, No. 52 (1982), p. 119, from, Margaret B. Blackman, "Studio Indians: Cartes de visite of Native People in British Columbia, 1862-1872," Archivaria, no. 21 (Winter, 1985-86), p. 72.
2. New Westminster, British Columbian, May 27, 1869, B.C. Archives, "Frederick Dally, 1862-1863 Correspondences and Letters," Add. Mss. 2443, Box 1, File 18.
3. Victoria Colonist, Aug. 21, 1866.
4. "Editorial Chit-chat," St. Louis Practical Photographer, III, 9 (Sept, 1879).
5. "The Photographer Among The Seals," The Practical Photographer (May 1, 1894), pp. 109-110.
6. Dally, B.C. Archives, Correspondences and Letters, Add. Mss. 2443, Box 1, File 16. Documentation of Dally's participation in the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland includes a letter of invitation, a notice of a meeting, and the notice quoted in the text of the thesis noting that Dally is one of three readers. The only documentation of Dally's participation in the Royal Geographic Society is an incomplete Candidates Certificate for Election. The name, title, residence portions are filled in and it is signed by two members but the dates for proposal and election remain blank.
7. N.H. Chittenden, Hyda Land and People: Official Report of the Exploration of the Queen Charlotte Islands for the Government of British Columbia, (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Government, 1884).
8. B.C. Archives, Maynard Research, Box 1:3, Folder #2, "Add. Mss. 1077, vol. 20."
9. Ibid.
10. Bellinger, "Frederick Dally: Pioneer Photographer," p.28.
11. "In this issue ...," Canada West Magazine, vol. 4, No. 4 (Winter, 1972).
12. "Dossetter's Queen Charlottes," Canada West Magazine, vol. 4, No. 4 (Winter, 1972), p. 10.

13. Daniel Francis, Copying People: Photographing British Columbia First Nations, 1860-1940 (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1996), p. 48.
14. Silversides, The Face Pullers, p. 2.
15. Francis, Copying People, p. 49.
16. Daniel Francis, The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), pp. 186-187.
17. Silversides, The Face Pullers, p. 146.
18. Francis, Copying People, p. 12.
19. Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), pp. 132-162. "Two factors must be kept in mind as we interpret *Kim*. One is that, whether we like it or not, its author is writing not just from the dominating viewpoint of a white man in a colonial possession, but from the perspective of a massive colonial system whose economy, functioning, and history had acquired the status of a virtual face of nature. Kipling assumes a basically uncontested empire." (P. 134)
"Kim is a work of great aesthetic merit, it cannot be dismissed simply as the racist imagining of one disturbed and ultra-reactionary imperialist. George Orwell was certainly right to comment on Kipling's unique power to have added phrases and concepts to the language — East is East, and West is West, the White Man's Burden; somewhere East of Suez — and right also to say that Kipling's concerns are both vulgar and permanent, of urgent interest. One reason for Kipling's power is that he was an artist of enormous gifts; what he did in his art was to elaborate ideas that would have had far less permanence, for all their vulgarity, without the art." (P.150)

Conclusion

The initial period of photography on the Northwest Coast from 1858 to 1890 was one of a dynamic relationship between First Peoples, photographers, and the camera.

Photographic form and method had not yet evolved into any concrete structure. What was understood to be the photographic method was broadly derived from a tradition of realism which had evolved in painting, and no set approach to the photography of First Peoples had yet been developed. Instead those methods used to photograph Europeans were transferred to the photography of First Peoples. Alongside technical limitations on the possibilities of photography as a medium there was the cultural influence of a new epoch in European society: the practicality, positivism, and “mass individualism” of the bourgeoisie was reflected in the photographic medium. Photography’s fragmentary presentation of the world – its ability to break down reality into instances of people, place, and time – was not something to be abhorred but was celebrated as a separation of the individual from the mass. Yet at the same time the individual remained attached to the mass in her or his role as a “social type”. The photographer’s dependence on a knowledge of traditional poses, their limited number of props, and the sitter’s need to define her or himself within a social context created photographic types: the banker, writer, refined lady, etcetera. The stock representation of First Peoples was an extension of the repertoire of representations developed to photograph people of European descent. The difference was that First People had greater limitations on control over their own

image.

The arrival of photography on the Northwest Coast involved a clash of ideologies, a clash in ways of perceiving the world. Whereas First Peoples found it odd to experience the world purely on the basis of its physicality, and especially in this case to view the world in purely visible terms, photography represented a vision which held realism to be the modern credo. According to Carlo Rim, Europeans by the twentieth century came to celebrate time as something concrete,

Photography has given a material guise and body to time, which otherwise eludes our human grasp. It has given them to time the better to take them back again. And so it has destroyed the confused and eminently literary notion we have of the past. Thanks to the photograph yesterday is no more than an endless today.¹

Unfortunately, the enduring image celebrated by Rim was devastating to the depiction of First Peoples, for they were not afforded the benefits of modernity but were cast aside as an endless reflection of the past rather than participants in the present, a timeless “other” to “our” enduring present.

At the same time the magical qualities which First Peoples are so often believed to attribute to photography represent an undercurrent of belief that Europeans too long held and continue to hold towards photography. As Sontag wrote,

Such images [photographs] are indeed able to usurp reality because first of all a photograph is not only an image (as painting is an image), an interpretation of the real, it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask.

.... What defines the originality of photography, is that, at the very moment in the long, increasingly secular history

of painting when secularism is entirely triumphant, it revives - in wholly secular terms - something like the primitive status of images. Our irrepressible feeling that the photographic process is something magical has a genuine basis. No one takes an easel painting to be in any sense co-substantial with its subject, it only represents or refers. But a photograph is not only like its subjects, a homage to the subject. It is a part of, an extension of that subject; and a potent means of acquiring it, of gaining control over it.²

Through the photograph we can make contact with a person in the past. The chemical process which produces a photograph is a result of the light which is reflected off the body of the subject: the photograph is a literal extension of the subject. The idea that photography was simply an enigma to First Peoples, or a representative of a cultural clash between First Peoples and Europeans rather than a process which included cultural exchange, is problematized by the fact that, while the technical and philosophical ideas behind photography were largely foreign to First Peoples, First Peoples were perhaps more sensitive to those aspects of photography which left Europeans like Balzac ill at ease. What has been defined as an irrational fear of photography by First Peoples may be better interpreted as an outsider's understanding of the dangers inherent in giving up control of one's own image - giving up control over a piece of oneself.

In a similar vein, as subjects of photography First Peoples also problematize the issue of stereotype-analysis, for they have been active agents in the photographic process. Photography often involves the conscious participation of both the subject and the photographer. This was especially true of the period of the large format camera because the photographer could not simply point and click but instead required a subject's

agreement to be photographed. Not only did First Peoples participate in the photographic process but they also on occasion actively sought out photographers. While one must maintain an awareness of First Peoples' personal agency within photography, one must also maintain an awareness that though photography often involved a conscious participation on the part of both the photographer and the subject it does not necessitate that participation be equal and on a level playing field.

Though the photographer is a product of his culture and society she/he must also remain culpable for his or her acts. But it is my view that historians cannot simply assume an explicit general intent on the part of all photographers to represent First Peoples in only fixed stereotypical motifs which Europeans found useful and palpable as a representation of the "other." To do so risks creating our own stereotypes of European photographers. I am not claiming that there were no stereotypes, but that their existence must be a matter of research not just a set of assumptions. We must investigate the works of individual photographers, investigate individual perceptions, investigate individual modes of operation, and compare them to one another in order to discern differences and commonalities. In short, I am arguing for a pluralism of approach within the confines of early photographic technique and method. Photographs cannot be adequately understood on their own and must be placed within a social context which includes the context of their creation; in terms of time, place, method and purpose. Whereas the photographs of Dawson may by themselves appear benign, his text affirms a vision of First People which was negative and a product of stereotypes. What was of import in his photographs were the absences. The Maynards on the other hand had no clear approach: at times they

affirmed stereotypes; at other times they did not.

All the photographers treated in this thesis were equal in their culpability for acting as reporters of events, concerning First Nations Peoples and the Northwest Coast, to a European audience, rather than acting as recorders of events for those they photographed. Consequently, the photographs are stripped of the context of lived experience. The European viewer may not have the requisite lived experience to fully comprehend the photograph. For Berger the inherent problem with photography is this stripping away of context that occurs when photographs are displayed in the public sphere,

The contemporary public photograph usually presents an event, a seized set of appearances, which has nothing to do with us, its readers, or with the original meaning of the event. It offers information, but information severed from all lived experience.³

Berger believes that the lack of context should be resolved and photographs reincorporated into a “living” context via the photographer acting not as a reporter to the rest of world but as a recorder for those involved in the events. This is not to say that only those who lived an event photographed may understand that photograph but that the photograph ought to be placed within the context of that lived experience. Photographers who took photographs of First Peoples acted as reporters of the “other” to European society and as such they decontextualized their images of First People. The emphasis was not on the people they photographed but on the people they distributed the photographs to – their market.

The photographers treated in this thesis are long since dead, and it is we the historians who now find ourselves in the position of recorder. How shall we record the

fragmented history found in the photographic record? It is my belief that we should remain aware of the medium under study so that we may not be caught off guard by the photograph's ability to be a part which stands for the whole, and the photograph's ability not simply to act as a representation but to be regarded as the thing itself. Despite its evidential power, the undeniable fact that what lies within the frame of the photograph has been, as Barthes defines it, its noeme,⁴ the photograph is without meaning until it is placed within a narrative text of time, place, and event. Elizabeth Edwards thus maintains that at the same time that we build up a general story, the fragmentary nature of that story must be laid bare. In essence we should make clear that it is history that we write, and we should make our presence known as we make the photographer's presence known. As Edwards wrote,

If then the fragmentary nature of photography presents theoretical problems, at an evidential level the problem has a certain familiarity. All history is constructed of selected fragments, a process which starts with event-registration and continues with continual retrospective assessment and reworking. Likewise, in anthropology "significant" structures of a culture are observed, the fragments of informants recorded and the final work born of synthesis and then generalization, the fragments become moulded to a unifying account of 'culture.' So, in photography, the specific moment becomes representative of the whole and the general.⁵

It is this impression of a general whole that should be broken down in order to present to the reader photography's fragmentary nature.

The photograph says nothing. It is the photographer, the subject, and the historical viewer/interpreter, including the historian, who imbue the photograph with meaning from

their experience and knowledge. As each sees and speaks upon the image, they have the power to further efface the subject and/or efface the previous interpreter of the image by injecting the photograph with meaning from their own experience. One discourse is layered upon another and the context of the photograph is further removed from the original event. Generalizations may be built upon previous generalizations, and the photograph may thus become representative of a type. But if we affirm the presence of each discourse, whether it be the photographer's, or that of a publication, or the historian's, frictions may arise among the multiple narratives: differences may become evident and the constructed nature of the stereotype may be revealed.

As one explores the photographic record it is my belief that we should remain aware of its lack of narrative. It is we who narrate. There are literally thousands upon thousands of images to use to develop a particular narrative. One who seeks stereotypes shall find them. But what of the images that do not bespeak of "Indian" but of a person? Plurality must be sought out. Difference included. One cannot assume that because something does not fit it must be a mistake. Difference can prove the rule as much as repudiate it. We are fortunate that one of photography's attributes is that, in Sontag's words,

From its start, photography implied the capture of the largest possible number of subjects. Painting never had so imperial a scope. The subsequent industrialization of camera technology only carried out a promise inherent in photography from its very beginning to democratize all experiences by translating them into images.⁶

Much is to be derived from the photographic record if one keeps in mind the layers of meaning that have been placed upon the photograph by its viewers, its position in the

archives (how it is presented to us informs our reading of the photograph), its juxtaposition both literally and chronologically to other photographs, the discourse written around the photograph (journals, newspaper articles, government documents), its original purpose, its role today, and its place in time - how its original audience would have interpreted the photograph, what significance the photograph may have for the present, and how historians interpret the photograph in accordance with the period to which they associate it.

The British Columbia Archives in which I have performed my research are of particular interest because their photographic records are not restricted to professional historians and those fortunate enough to take the time and effort to journey physically into the archives, since they are now also available on the internet. Approximately 10,000 images out of around 100,000 photographs are easily downloadable and available across the world. Many of these photographs are of First Nations Peoples. Some have a brief description, year, place, photographer, but many have yet to be described. What new layers of meaning are being placed on these images? The meanings attributed to these photographs will certainly be diverse in range, for viewers may be from varying backgrounds across the globe, and the images they view are not relegated to any particular order. Therefore contradictions in interpretation will most likely arise and conflicting images will most likely be found. With accessibility reaching far beyond the academic, historians will likely find their analysis under new worthwhile scrutiny from those with legitimate alternative perspectives, while at the same time they may face the responsibility of ascribing a context to photographs which have been cut off from their

point of origin to float freely over the internet. Yet at the same time that the archival photographs of First Peoples are being reinterpreted abroad so to are they being reinterpreted or interpreted anew within the archives themselves, for many native individuals visit the archives on a regular basis to look into their own past and reflect on photographs of family members. For them discourses exist around their photographs which are quite unlike those of the standard professional historical literature. What do the interpretive differences say about the diverse perceptions of these images?

Conclusion - Endnotes

1. Carlo Rim, "On The Snapshot," Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913-1940, ed. Christopher Phillips (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Aperture, 1989), p. 38.
2. Sontag, On Photography, pp. 154 & 155.
3. Berger, About Looking, p. 51.
4. Barthes, Camera Lucida, p. 77.
5. Elizabeth Edwards, "Introduction," Anthropology & Photography, 1860-1920, ed. Elizabeth Edwards (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 8.
6. Sontag, On Photography, p. 7.

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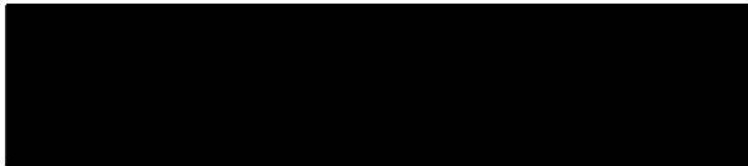
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