

THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING: RACISM AND IMPERIALISM IN  
COLONIAL VICTORIA, 1858-1871

by

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ABSTRACT

During the nineteenth century scientific communities in Great Britain and Europe vigorously began to posit theories about the biological origins of humanity. By the middle of the century, scientific racism was a powerful intellectual force which placed humankind in a graded scale of achievement and potential. Popular interpretations of these theories very often had little basis in fact, yet were asserted as being founded upon scientific truth. This thesis will argue that ideas of scientific racism were brought by colonists from abroad to Victoria and formed the basis of race relations during the colonial era (1858 - 1871).


This study will show that in the social, political and economic spheres of colonial life in Victoria, non-white residents, specifically Indians, Blacks and Chinese, were subjected to intense and persistent racial prejudice that had its roots in the scientific speculation of the day. Furthermore, the institutionalization of racism was so powerful and pervasive as to withstand all attempts by racial minorities to achieve equality. Indians, Blacks and Chinese differed in their challenges to this


illiberality, but, ultimately, they all were unsuccessful.


Finally, it will be made evident that there was a direct, if not explicit link between scientific racism and imperialism. Racism justified British territorial expansion and the attendant subjugation of "inferior" races. In Victoria, this pattern of colonialism precipitated hostility towards the Indians, Blacks and Chinese. These non-white colonists challenged the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon race and were thus seen as and impediment to Progress, a euphemism for territorial expansion in general and racism in particular.

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The whole of a society and culture are founded in and produced so largely by its past, so that an adequate understanding of its present necessarily involves knowledge of its past.

Alfred Kroeber, An Anthropologist Looks at History

## CHAPTER I

### "ANOTHER OUTPOST ON THE ROAD OF HUMAN PROGRESS"

Events which took place between 1858 and 1871 profoundly transformed colonial Victoria. In particular, its racial composition was altered both in degree and in kind. Immigrants flooded into the area, seeking instant wealth in the Fraser Valley gold fields. Black and Chinese immigrants from the United States and overseas came to escape persecution or, as in the case of many of the Chinese, to obtain a fortune and return home. By 1871, Victoria was no longer under colonial rule and, in the case of the native Indians, their treatment came under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

It has been estimated that, during a six month period in 1858, Victoria's population swelled from under two thousand to almost twenty thousand. While many of these adventurers moved on after the end of the gold rush, the lasting result of the boom was a sudden growth in the settler population. The corollary was a pressing demand for land for an increasingly sophisticated commercial, urban complex and for settlers anxious to begin agricultural activity. The white population pressed the colonial government for surveys and homesteading lands and saw the Indians as an impediment. Public

sentiment to remove the "offensive" native from the Victoria area manifested itself in a determined effort to alienate land without compensation.

The Indians were only one of three racial groups in colonial Victoria. By examining the experiences of Blacks, Chinese and Indians within this society and placing them in a larger context of nineteenth century racism and imperialism, it is possible to understand how discrimination became institutionalized and how racism served the political, economic and social ambitions of the controlling white minority. Scientific racism gave force and respectability to illiberal actions by colonists against non-white residents.

Despite the importance of these racial groups, their historiography is suprisingly meagre. General provincial histories are dominated by a single work, Margaret Ormsby's British Columbia: A History. Historical studies of the Blacks, Chinese and native Indians are also sparse. Moreover, a comprehensive examination of racism and imperialism in the social structure of colonial Victoria has not previously been carried out.

Most provincial histories acknowledge 1858 as a year which heralded rapid urban development and population growth. Ormsby concludes from the dominant presence of

British immigrants that at this time "Victoria was being transformed from a quiet English village into a busy commercial centre which was an outpost of San Francisco."<sup>1</sup> Recent scholarship effectively challenges this perception of the city as a sleepy hamlet prior to 1858.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Ormsby is correct in essence; the gold rush was a catalyst for profound economic and social change.

The topic of race has received little historical attention. Ormsby's work is primarily concerned with economic and political change, with a genteel British elite being the vehicle and focus of this change. Ormsby does not address racial groups per se; her work mentions Chinese, Blacks and Indians but usually coincidentally to white protagonists or major events. The only noticeable treatment of race in British Columbia: A History is a brief outline of Victoria's ethnic ghettos.<sup>3</sup> Other historical works also focus on economic and political development. J. Arthur Lower's Canada on the Pacific Rim contains virtually no material on natives and Blacks and his interest in Chinese emigration to the province is placed in an economic context-as labourers for the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Historians have greatly neglected the history of

racial groups in Victoria. Even two recent general histories, Beyond the Island and More English Than the English, by Peter Baskerville and Terry Reksten, respectively, barely touch the question. Baskerville only briefly deals with racial groups during the settlement era and does not discuss racism in the context of imperialism; Reksten gives considerable information on the Indians, Chinese and Blacks, but she makes no attempt<sup>4</sup> to analyse them as a whole.

The historiography of Indians, Blacks and Chinese during the 1858-1871 period cannot be found in provincial or regional histories. Most studies focus on economic growth and various political changes within the province. Historians have not engaged in any social analysis of the experiences of the Indians, Blacks or Chinese as a whole. Furthermore, comparative studies of racial groups are almost unknown.

The exception to this observation is Peter Ward's article "Class and Race in the Social Structure of British Columbia, 1858-1939." Ward's article is a rare attempt to compare the experiences of racial minorities within a larger context of institutionalized racism. However, in his brief analysis of the settlement he did not mention Blacks and concentrated on only Asians and

Indians. Yet, Ward is virtually the only historian to engage in a comparative study as a means for social analysis. The remaining secondary sources on Blacks, Chinese and Indians vary in quality and quantity, meaning that almost no work has been done that focusses on the Victoria region during the 1858-1871 period.

James Redford, Rolf Knight, Robin Fisher and Wilson Duff have all made noteworthy contributions to native historiography. These scholars have dealt with Indians on a province-wide scale. While Fisher and Duff have written on Indian history generally, Redford and Knight have focussed on native education and native labour respectively. Of the works of the aforementioned authors, the most useful for considering racism and imperialism is Robin Fisher's Contact and Conflict. His chapter, "The Image of the Indian," provides some stimulating ideas about the emotional and intellectual response of white immigrants to the natives. This book does not deal specifically with Victoria but it does represent the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia (which were united as British Columbia on 19 November 1866), as being settlements that embraced racist ideas from abroad. Wilson Duff's work, on the other hand, is of little use in researching racism and imperialism. James

Redford's article on attendance at Indian residential schools and Rolf Knight's research on Indian labour do not deal with the settlement era nor do they focus on Victoria. Redford's article is important, however, in that it challenges the significance of white pressures to alter native work and social patterns. Works such as these, although few in number, represent much of native historiography in British Columbia during and shortly after the settlement period: a good deal of research remains to be conducted that will address issues of native cultural change, economic adaptation and political activity in colonial Victoria.

Similarly, British Columbia's Black historiography contains little specifically dealing with Victoria; nor does it place existing material in the larger context of nineteenth century imperialism. James Pilton's 1951 M.A. thesis, "Negro Settlement in British Columbia, 1858-71," is uniquely comprehensive. Although Pilton deals admirably with the facts of the Black experience in colonial Victoria, he does not posit reasons for their poor treatment other than to suggest that American immigrants caused it and that the Blacks flaunted their freedom to aggravate these same colonists. At no time does Pilton analyse why the Blacks received essentially

the same treatment as Indians and Chinese residents, despite the fact that Blacks were culturally similar to whites. Robin Winks' general study on Blacks in Canada treats B.C. briefly and mistakenly asserts that Victoria Blacks easily adapted to their new home; chapter four of this thesis will show that the Blacks never comfortably integrated into colonial society. Finally, Keith Ralston's article on John Sullivan Deas is an interesting study of one Black's success in the mainland canning industry. Ralston states it is difficult to know what effect Deas' colour had on his success yet makes no attempt to solve this problem. Ralston's work is concerned with one man, not with the experiences of Blacks per se.

Provincial Chinese history has received the most comprehensive and professional treatment of the three racial groups mentioned thus far. Patricia Roy, David Chuen-yan Lai, W.E. Willmott and W.P. Ward have made significant contributions to Asian historiography. Patricia Roy has dealt extensively with the concept of provincial fear of Asians and the results of this sinophobia, such as the anti-Chinese riot in Vancouver in the 1880's. Roy's work however, deals primarily with the post-Confederation period and thus there is still much

that historians can ask about the Chinese experience in Victoria from 1858 until 1871.<sup>5</sup> Lai's important research on chain migration and settlement patterns of Chinese immigrants suggests that concentrations of clans in certain parts of B.C. allowed Chinese who came to the area to maintain traditional allegiances. Despite these works, there is still a need for more such research, particularly during the 1858-71 period; much interest continues to be devoted to the post-Confederation era when anti-Asian sentiment intensified. As well, none of the works mentioned deal specifically and comprehensively with Victoria.

The historiography of all three racial groups, Indians, Blacks and Chinese, therefore, is characterized by a need for additional scholarly research. This thesis will undertake a study of comparative racism in colonial Victoria within the context of British expansionism and the intellectual current which gave racism substance and succour.

Immigrants of differing nationalities integrated themselves into the booming gold rush economy which had hastened the development of what was already a viable settlement.<sup>6</sup> After 1858, hotels, commission merchants and

numerous services and retail businesses were evident. By 1864, however, the decline of gold resulted in a commercial slump in Victoria; little building took place, and land prices dropped accordingly. This depression lasted until past Confederation and Victoria's population hovered between three and six thousand settlers.<sup>7</sup>

The immigrants who came to Victoria after 1858 were of diverse national origins: "French, Germans, Austrians, Poles, Italians, Swiss, Dutch, Danes, Swedes, a few Russians and, of course, English, Irish and Scotch" gave Victoria a cosmopolitan appearance,<sup>8</sup> but the British element maintained its dominance of colonial institutions.

To understand racism in colonial Victoria a brief historical outline of each racial group is necessary. The basis for treating each of these entities as a single topic is the fact that the historical experiences of Indians, Blacks and Chinese were all fundamentally dictated by the prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory actions of the white population. Although the means and extent of such treatment varied, white assumptions of their racial superiority affected their relations with Indians, Blacks and Chinese.<sup>9</sup> This racial aloofness was buttressed by popular interpretations of scientific and

pseudo-scientific research that influenced attitudes towards racial minorities and aboriginal peoples throughout the Empire.

The native Indian population was the first racial group to be affected by white settlement. Prior to the establishment of Fort Victoria in 1843, native-white culture contact occurred within the context of the maritime fur trade, beginning in 1774. Robin Fisher asserts that the Indians exercised considerable control over the maritime fur trade and were not merely "passive objects of exploitation." <sup>10</sup> The trade changed the material culture of the native people through the introduction of European commodities and stimulated <sup>11</sup> culture growth "along its own distinctive lines."

Native Indians altered traditional trade patterns to accommodate the presence of permanent trading forts, and soon began congregating around them in the hopes of gaining trade advantages. Despite the decline of the fur trade after 1843, many natives remained encamped near the forts, initially on a seasonal basis and later with more permanency. Natives from many areas of the coast became a familiar site at Victoria, much to the annoyance of white colonists.

Indians traded other primary resources, particularly

cranberries, oil and salmon. <sup>12</sup> Their traditional gathering economy persisted but was altered when it sought to accommodate the market demands of white settlers. A decline in the demand for these new trade goods was partially offset by an increasing need for cheap, abundant labour. By filling this need, however, the Indians placed their economic relevancy at the discretion of white settlers, specifically those of the Hudson's Bay Company, for they were no longer able to determine the terms of their relationship. Indians grew dependent upon Europeans for the trade goods they had initially acquired through commodities exchange and later, by the sale of their labour. "It was in this subtle way," stated Richard Mackie, "that the control over the most important natural resources of the west coast was gradually alienated from the Indians and assumed by the British traders and colonists."<sup>13</sup>

In most instances, the natives received no meaningful compensation for land which they worked for white colonists. In the early 1850's, Governor James Douglas signed treaties with various local groups, including the Sooke, Klallam, Songish (Songhees) and Saanich. These treaties were very limited in geographical extent, and Douglas' successors later denied that the

Indians ever had an aboriginal title to the land. Beginning in the 1860s, white administrators made a concerted effort to dispossess the Indians of their land. Joseph Trutch, Commissioner of Lands and Works throughout the 1860s, articulated the European belief that the natives held no claims on provincial lands. In 1867 he wrote to the Acting Colonial Secretary,

The Indians have no right to the lands they claim, nor are they of any actual value or utility to them; and I cannot see why they should either retain these lands to the prejudice of the general interests of the colony, or be allowed to make market of them either to the government or to individuals.<sup>14</sup>

The most crucial factor in post-contact native society was this inability by the Indians to exercise control over land. The nature and extent of colonial land settlement determined not only the Indians' ability to maintain traditional economic activities but, more profoundly, it dictated their social status in an increasingly hostile environment; during an era when land determined wealth and power, the Indian became poverty-stricken in both. Robin Fisher stated the implications of this situation were enormous; "The extent to which an indigenous people have retained their land is the best single criterion on which to judge their survival."<sup>15</sup>

Natives who came to Victoria seeking employment were often decimated and demoralized by disease and alcohol abuse. Measles, tuberculosis, influenza and especially smallpox ravaged the native population. Venereal disease increased during the 1860's as Indian prostitution grew. The large number of single males in colonial Victoria assured a comparatively prosperous existence for some Indian women, whose means of livelihood otherwise were extremely limited. While Indian women had enjoyed a somewhat elevated position as the wives of white fur traders, the settlement era reflected no such regard; lasting liaisons with native women steadily decreased as the colony grew. Local natives and northern tribeswomen engaged extensively in prostitution. Many were brought to Victoria for this purpose by their men or were themselves lured south by the opportunity of high wages. Aside from spreading disease to whites and natives alike, prostitution was culturally devastating as it inevitably led to "a rapid decline in the morale of the whole Indian population."<sup>16</sup>

White society after settlement was different from that of the fur trade era. Before 1843, white traders had no need to alter native society dramatically: indeed, it was to their own advantage to ensure that Indians

maintained their traditional activities. Later, missionaries, settlers and government officials laboured to change the Indian into a "Europeanized" native by imposing upon them the basic tenets of British colonialism: sedentary cultivation, education and Christianity. While some whites may have been sympathetic to the plight of individuals, they saw native society in general as something which could only be improved by inculcating it with white traditions and values. John Norris observed:

The relationship between the Indian and the white man was influenced by the general incapacity of all modern peoples who invade and absorb pre-industrial societies to understand the complexity of societies which still depend upon physical nature rather than transcend it.<sup>17</sup>

Indians in the Victoria region became de facto a racial minority during the settlement period. They were discriminated against politically, socially and economically by a white population that had neither the ability nor the desire to view Indians or their culture as inherently valuable.

The Blacks who emigrated from California after 1858 sought political and social equality in the British colony at Victoria. California Blacks had been the objects of legalized discrimination and persecution;

violence against their persons or property by whites was implicitly sanctioned by the state since Black testimony in law courts was prohibited. By 1858, a number of legislative acts and judicial decisions had intensified this discriminatory atmosphere.

San Francisco Blacks who sought relief from this prejudice considered emigration to one of three areas: Vancouver's Island, Sonora, Mexico or Central America. The decision to come to Victoria was influenced by an encouraging address given to a large assembly of San Francisco Blacks in the city's Zion Methodist Church in early 1858. Jeremiah Nagle, commander of the Commodore, speaking on behalf of "a gentleman in the service of the Hudson [sic] Bay company," told the Blacks that they were welcome in Victoria where there would be land and jobs.<sup>18</sup> The gentleman alluded to was likely James Douglas, since he was then troubled by a shortage of labour in the colony; an exodus to the gold fields had depleted the supply of male labourers.

The Blacks were optimistic and grateful about their prospects. Unlike the vast majority of the thousands who streamed into and through Victoria that year, the Blacks were not adventurers but were intent on becoming permanent residents of the colony.<sup>19</sup> Blacks saw the

prospect of political equality as particularly appealing. They were incorrectly told that after a brief residence in Victoria they would be entitled to the same political privileges as white settlers. In actuality, the rights of the Blacks were never extended as liberally as this and when they did vote it was not without incident, as will be shown in chapter four.

Victoria's Blacks were a mixture of illiterate labourers, educated professionals, skilled workers, prosperous businessmen and others with various levels of education and training. Most had little difficulty finding employment as labourers or in engaging in commercial activity. Early Black immigrants prospered from Victoria's booming real estate market, as land values soared in the months after their arrival. As a group, however, the Blacks were not conspicuously wealthy.

The greatest challenge faced by the Blacks was the social isolation and sometimes open hostility from other residents. Almost immediately after their arrival in 1858, the four hundred Black residents began to witness illiberal, prejudicial actions by some white colonists. A dispute erupted in a local Methodist church over seating segregation, and it soon became an issue involving almost

all denominations. A number of business establishments, including certain restaurants, pubs and theatres, instigated segregated seating, and Blacks were refused admission to the local volunteer fire brigade. Most Blacks reacted by reasserting their determination to resist social and physical segregation. As a group, they avoided forming a Black quarter or "ghetto" in the city. Generally, they shunned the establishment of all-Black institutions, seeing them as long-term barriers to their ultimate goal of integration. While most Blacks were unanimous in their desire for social equality, they were not able to translate this solidarity into effective, enduring political interest group action. Throughout the 1860s, the Black population remained fragmented in its political activity. Prominent Blacks such as Mifflin Wistar Gibbs and Jacob Francis attempted with little success to unite the Black vote. Although Gibbs himself was elected to city council in 1868, his victory is a credit to his own personal force rather than a general acknowledgement of Black equality; it might also be posited that British voters elected Gibbs partially as a means of aggravating colonists of American origin.

White American immigrants in the colony were partially responsible for discrimination against

Victoria's Blacks. Blacks often found Americans culpable for the treatment they received from much of the white population. While it is certainly true that this American influence did exist, it was by no means isolated to them; British colonists also held racist views, for they rarely spoke out in defence of the Blacks during the numerous instances of persecution. Ultimately, many Blacks responded to this prejudice by leaving the colony.

The Chinese were faced with much the same hostility. This reaction was more persistent and vehement over time but was not fully evident until after Confederation. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that resentment of Chinese workers and merchants had begun to grow shortly after 1858. As well, by 1870 the Chinese had already been labelled with a variety of unflattering stereotypes such as heathens, crooks and "rice-eating aliens."

Chinese immigrants came from California, particularly San Francisco, and mainland China (the southern provinces of Fukien and Kwangtung). The California Chinese journeyed north to work as domestics in Victoria, to labour in the gold fields, or to establish businesses to support the rapidly-growing Chinese population. As well, by the time gold was discovered on the Fraser, anti-Chinese sentiment was

strong in California, fueled by white residents who loudly spoke out against the "degradation of labour" that was the result of the availability of numerous low-earning Chinese workers. Similar complaints were being voiced in Victoria by the late 1860's.

Chinese sojourners left southeastern China to escape political unrest which exacerbated their poverty and to acquire wealth that could then be conveyed back to the sojourner's family in China. These two reasons are so closely related it may be argued that they are indistinguishable. As mentioned previously, the Chinese in British Columbia followed a pattern of chain migration: that is, settlement in the province often corresponded with traditional home alliances. David Lai stated "there had been a stream of migration from a few villages in China to specific places in British Columbia where lineage groups might have been maintained."<sup>20</sup>

Victoria's Chinese initially received a somewhat mixed reception. Some settlers displayed a purely sinophobic reaction; others thought the Chinese presence a benefit because of their cheap labour and beneficial services. However, once the Chinese began to compete against whites for jobs racial antagonism intensified.

The Chinese engaged in a variety of economic

activities. Chinese immigrants were involved in small scale marketing activities, from vegetable and wood peddling to larger enterprises such as running curio shops and export houses. They were also particularly active in the service sector as tailors, launderers, restaurateurs, domestic cooks and general labourers.<sup>21</sup> Chinese miners who passed through Victoria gave considerable business to local merchants and this may have encouraged Chinese merchants in San Francisco to establish retail outlets in the colony.<sup>22</sup>

The exact number of Chinese to come to the Victoria is unclear. California Chinese came as early as 1858 but not until 1860 did overseas Chinese land in Victoria; early that year over 250 Hong Kong Chinese disembarked in the city. As the decade progressed Chinese arrived in great numbers and with increasing frequency. In May, 1865, over a thousand Chinese arrived, adding to the already large Chinese presence which had been estimated at over two thousand in the previous year.<sup>23</sup> However, it must be borne in mind that many continued to the mainland and to other points on the island. The number of Chinese enumerated in 1871 was barely 250, compared to over three thousand whites. This number of Chinese is probably inaccurate for reasons discussed in chapter five.

Socially, the Chinese erected varied but exclusive institutions to serve their cultural needs and desires. Victoria witnessed the emergence of numerous establishments catering to the large Chinese population: restaurants, reading rooms, gambling houses, opium shops, and brothels.<sup>24</sup> Chinese colonists remained culturally distinct from white settlers and made no attempt to adopt Christianity or other western traditions. Although this may have assisted the Chinese in retaining their cultural heritage, it aggravated whites who feared and resented them. Physical segregation, which was initially created by Chinese who sought to create a sense of social cohesion and support, was later covertly encouraged by whites who desired a physical manifestation of existing racial disparities.

Opposition to the Chinese came soon after their arrival. In 1860, the imposition of a head tax on immigrant Chinese was first publicly suggested and in 1865 the House of Assembly heard a similar proposal. In that same year, an anti-Chinese gathering demonstrated at the Victoria docks. Local attitudes hardened during the decade and white residents became increasingly vocal on the need to protect their own interests. Charles Sedgwick stated in his thesis, "After 1866...the Chinese community

was no longer seen as made up of respectable merchants, helpful domestic cooks, and industrious peddlars, but rather masses of labourers competing with and usurping the vested interests of the Anglo community." <sup>25</sup>

The Chinese refusal to integrate into the larger community bred suspicion and antagonism among whites. This was manifested in the economic and political arenas and ensured poor working conditions and legalized discrimination against Chinese immigrants. This fear of Asians persisted until well into the twentieth century as an enduring, albeit dubious, intellectual force.

- refusal? no.  
were they allowed?

The historical experiences of the Indians, Blacks and Chinese were characterized by intolerance, condescension and discrimination. The white population controlled colonial political, social and economic institutions and thus possessed and exercised the ability to impose sanctions and discriminatory actions upon the settlement's racial minorities. Such action manifested itself uniquely according to circumstances but white responses to perceived usurpation by these races were most decisive in the political and economic spheres. Throughout the settlement era, efforts by Indians, Blacks or Chinese to achieve social parity with the white elite were effectively checked, often subtly but always

decisively. A vital component in understanding this racism is the role which intellectual currents of scientific racism played in justifying and prolonging the discriminatory treatment by whites of these "inferior races."

NOTES

1

Margaret Ormsby, British Columbia: A History (Toronto: Macmillan, 1958) 140.

2

See Richard Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital: The Economy of Vancouver Island, 1849-58," Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1984.

3

Ormsby, 167.

4

Three additional book-length contributions by amateur writers complete the historiography of the Victoria area: Derek Pethick's two books, Victoria: The Fort and Summer of Promise and Harry Gregson's A History of Victoria. These three books are mundane, chronological accounts of Victoria history derived exclusively from newspaper sources. As books for the general interest audience they provide an adequate, albeit superficial outline of Victoria's history. However, they are far from adequate for serious or scholarly research.

5

Patricia Roy is at present completing the manuscript for a comprehensive history of the Chinese in British Columbia which will include a chapter on the Chinese during the 1858-1871 period.

6

Peter Baskerville, Victoria: Beyond the Island (Burlington, Ontario: Windsor, 1986) 22

7

Ibid.

8

Frederick Walden, "The Social History of Victoria, British Columbia," Unpublished B.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1951, 13-4.

9Irene Moorhouse, "Social Structure and Ethnicity in Victoria, 1858-71," The Ascendant Historian (Victoria: University of Victoria, 1985) 3.

10

Robin Fisher, Contact and Conflict (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1977) 4.

11

Wilson Duff, The Indian History of B.C. (Victoria: B.C. Provincial Museum, 1965) 1:54.

- 12 For exhaustive detail of the early trade, see Mackie  
Op.cit.
- 13 Ibid., 59.
- 14 Colonial Correspondence, Trutch to Acting Colonial  
Secretary, 28 August 1867.
- 15 Fisher, 106.
- 16 Patrick Floyd, "The Human Geography of Southeastern  
Vancouver Island," M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria,  
1970, 86.
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of B.C.," Strangers Entertained ed. John Norris  
(Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1971) 55.
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1858-71," M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia,  
1951, 31.
- 19 Rosemary Brown, "The Blacks," Strangers Entertained,  
238.
- 20 David Chuen-yan Lai, "Home County and Clan Origins  
of Overseas Chinese in Canada in the Early 1880's," BC  
Studies 27 (1975): 12.
- 21 For a complete breakdown of Chinese occupations see  
Appendix E.
- 22 Charles Sedgwick, "The Context of Economic Change  
and Continuity in an Overseas Chinese Community," M.A.  
Thesis, University of Victoria, 1973, 10.
- 23 W.E. Willmott, "Approaches to the Study of the  
Chinese in B.C.," BC Studies 27 (1975): 46.
- 24 Ibid., 46.
- 25 Sedgwick, 21.

CHAPTER II

## THE EUPHEMISM OF PROGRESS; RACISM IN VICTORIAN THOUGHT

The startling rapidity with which the Anglo-Saxon race has been privileged, during the last twenty years, to enter upon, spread over, and bring into cultivation, large regions of the earth previously only known as abodes of desolation, is now commanding as well as deserving the careful consideration of those who are constrained to be thoughtful on the subject. History tells of no such swarming forth of any people, carrying with them everywhere a firmness and individuality of character, which is stamping the new nations they are founding with the marks of successful enterprise and the blessings of well-regulated freedom.

Columbia Mission Papers June 1860

One of the most striking events in the recent history of mankind is the expansion throughout the entire world of most European peoples. It has brought about the subjugation, and in some instances, the disappearance of virtually every people regarded as backward, archaic or primitive. The colonial movement of the nineteenth century was the most important in magnitude, the most fraught with consequences, resulting from this European expansion. It overturned in a brutal manner the history of the peoples it subjugated.

G. Balandier, "The Colonial Situation: A  
Theoretical Approach" 1951

The two views of the nineteenth century colonial movement as presented in the preceding quotations illustrate how perceptions of imperialism have evolved from those which viewed such expansionism as not only desirable but inevitable, to one which sees this same phenomenon as a rather dubious if not deplorable milestone in European history. The sentiments expressed

in the Columbia Mission Reports are mild in comparison to the assertions in support of colonialism and its implicit racism later in the nineteenth century. In Britain the broad intellectual movement of scientifically justified racism that became so prevalent by 1900 had its origins in the social and scientific thought of the previous century. These concepts of racial superiority were adapted and transported to the new colony of Vancouver Island and affected the treatment of the indigenous population as well as those immigrants who belonged to racial minorities in the colony.

For decades prior to Charles Darwin's publication of The Origin of Species in 1859, scientists in Britain had been debating the origin of man and his place in nature. By 1850, James Cowles Prichard and Sir William Lawrence, two of the most prominent thinkers of their day, concurred in their thoughts on the biological origins of man: all men, be they African bushmen or European noblemen had originated from one common ancestral family. Prichard sought to show the historical connections of the human races through the use of comparative philology, custom and physical appearance. As early as 1822, Sir William Lawrence, a London surgeon, stated that his own scientific inquiries into natural

history and the races of man coincided with Prichard's findings. By the time of his death in 1848 British science was "Prichardian"; that is, it was monogenist and, as a result of his climatological explanations of race, environmentalist in nature.

The works of Prichard and Lawrence and their conclusions about man's place in evolution were radically altered in the latter half of the century. Since the 1840's the appearance of racial interpretations of history had stimulated debate about the appropriateness of inextricably linking all branches of the human family to a common origin.<sup>3</sup> Robert Knox outrightly rejected monogenism and asserted in his 1850 work, The Races of Man, that races of men were different in origin as evidenced by their physical appearance. Knox was supported in his polygenist beliefs by James Hunt who in 1863 formed the Anthropological Society of London. Unlike the monogenist Ethnological Society of London, Hunt's society espoused racial diversity and the role of race in history.<sup>4</sup> The Anthropological Society was "an immediate success; within two years it had over five hundred members."<sup>5</sup> Although it would be inaccurate to assert that Hunt and his followers totally displaced the earlier writings of Lawrence and Prichard, the new race science

that had begun with Knox was a powerful intellectual force in Britain by the middle of the nineteenth century.

The debate between the monogenists and the polygenists continued well into the following decades after Hunt. With the publication in November 1859 of Darwin's epic work On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life, the "science of race" took on new implications not only for men of science but for Victorian society generally. Darwin's work incorporated concepts of variation, struggle, migration and extinction into an evolutionary scheme. In writing the Origin, Darwin sought to establish continuity between the development of the various races of man and as such used the notion of a chain of races to demonstrate this gradual evolution of mankind. In his own anxiety to prove that man had developed from the lower forms of life Darwin placed himself in the position of implicitly establishing a hierarchy of races. Historian Nancy Stepan observed,

The argument for continuity led, almost inevitably, to the use of the lower races to fill the gap between animals and man. Later, scientists would find it easy to interpret Darwin as meaning that the races of man now formed an evolutionary scale. 6

By 1869, ten thousand copies of the Origin were in

circulation and were read or owned by most biologists and other scientists, although, "to a far wider public, of course, it was known through reviews as a contribution to general literature."<sup>7</sup> Darwin's work soon became a scientific justification for the oppression of the poor but more strongly as a justification for the treatment of racial groups regarded as inferior to the British. The popular press was quick to seize these ideas; "evolutionary theory received its fullest coverage in newer, less prestigious scientific journals and in the popular press."<sup>8</sup> Evolutionary theories were interpreted in a social context with the result that they were either disregarded or distorted to conform to this new "pseudo-evolutionism."<sup>9</sup> This phenomenon was particularly true for the writers of less erudite periodicals, as historian M.S.J. Hodge observed in his article on Darwinism in Britain,

The main trend discernible as one descends from the more highbrow discussions is that the emphasis on...abstract and technical issues [of Darwin's theories] gives way to an intense preoccupation with the new doctrine's supposed implications for human interests and institutions.<sup>10</sup>

The misinterpretations of Darwin's theories were seldom corrected and the concept of what is even today referred to as "social Darwinism" was not in fact

explicitly asserted by Darwin; indeed, "Darwin often complained that competent naturalists failed to grasp what he was saying. Small wonder, then, that in less erudite circles there arose several bizarre misinterpretations."<sup>11</sup>

One major point of confusion among readers of Darwin was the origin of modern day man. On this point Hodge states,

Darwin...was not maintaining that living species like man had originated from other living species, for the common ancestors posited by the theory were very likely no longer represented, having long ago become extinct or transformed into new species. One reason for this widespread misunderstanding was the habit of construing any transmutations as movements up or down a universal scale of human perfection, rather than as branching extensions to a family tree. 12

By interpreting human cultures as forming a graduated scale of mankind's development it became possible to rate those that were not white, and more particularly British, as being in various immature stages of development. This belief was extended even among the British themselves. As propounded by the likes of Herbert Spencer, Social Darwinism was used as a justification for refusing state aid or protection to the poor, as it was an artificial means of maintaining an obviously weaker social

species.<sup>13</sup> Darwin's doctrines became a potent weapon that was most devastatingly used by those who knew little about science or scientific theory "to justify both class rule and race discrimination."<sup>14</sup>

It has been accurately observed that Darwinism was "many things to many people"; not only was it "a justification for laissez-faire economic policies," but it was also "an excuse for the powerful for the subjugate the weak...only incidentally, it seems, was it a scientific theory about the evolution of species by chance variation and natural selection."<sup>15</sup> To those who supported the expansion of the British empire, culture contact with the so-called primitive peoples of the colonies was part of an inevitable and unalterable evolutionary process in which the superior race would dominate. For politicians and administrators, who juxtaposed two such cultures and observed that one clearly overwhelmed the other, the superiority of the victor, was irrefutably established; "thus providing a somewhat circular justification for colonial rule."<sup>16</sup>

British immigrants who came to Victoria possessed well established and increasingly harsh notions of race.<sup>17</sup> However, a scarcity of documentation makes it difficult to know with certainty the impact of an

intellectual current such as scientific racism. As Christine Bolt observed, historians must draw conclusions about racial attitudes of the working class based on actions, rather than from words.<sup>18</sup>

On Vancouver Island, it is clear that many white colonists held--even if they did not openly advocate--notions of racial superiority. Within the scale of human achievement the British often referred to themselves as the Anglo-Saxon race and there was little doubt that this group was held as the apex of human civilization. The role of this race was to spread over the globe through imperial expansion. The Vancouver Island Gazette loudly proclaimed in 1858 that

The destiny of England is to colonise and lay the foundations of Empires in distant lands, to raise up flourishing cities under the shadow of primeval forests, and enrich the earth with settlements of English speaking men. 19

A year later the Weekly Victoria Gazette reprinted an article on British Columbia which had appeared in The London Times.

In days to come, when the Pacific coast is under Anglo-Saxon dominion from the Frozen Sea to the Isthmus of Panama, when the Australians are a powerful community, when China and the whole of Eastern Asia are penetrated by the enterprise of English-speaking races, the region now known as British Columbia will most assuredly rank among the most prosperous and most

powerful.20

Few seemed to doubt the appropriateness or ability of the British to carry out this extension of their own empire and culture. When the American Consul in British Columbia wrote that the colony lacked an adequate legal system, the Gazette reprinted a London Times editorial hotly refuting allegations that a British colony was suffering from the lawlessness characteristic of the California gold frontier.

When will the emissaries of the United States learn that notoriety is not fame, and that mischief-making on a large scale is not title to public gratitude?...the true old Anglo-Saxon instinct of law and order exists in British Columbia as it does elsewhere. 21

It is important to note that the word "instinct" is used in connection with the admirable traits alluded to in the above quotation, as there appears to have been a widespread belief that the British were inherently superior to other peoples and races. The most vigorous and likely the only, supporters of this particular belief were the British themselves. For those who might not care for British colonists, the Weekly Victoria Gazette remarked:

Most of these prejudices will vanish when they who entertain them are brought into familiar acquaintance with that union of energy and prudence, of the devotion to duty, which Englishmen so quietly blend with

the attachment to freedom; and the spirit of loyalty, truth, and upright dealing, which signalize the brighter, and I believe, the larger, portion of our national character and race. 22

As illustrated in the previous excerpt, race sometimes became a function of national origin, thus demonstrating the utter confusion that existed during this period with regard to differentiation between X nationality, culture and race. The most widespread use of the word "race" was the Darwinian version that was mistakenly applied to his idea of species. However, race was also used synonymously with what would more correctly refer to national origin (although this was occasionally broadened in scope, as in the case of the "English-speaking race"). This confusion equated human culture and human races; a moral and intellectual superiority over so-called primitive societies was attributed to those having comparatively advanced technology. This method of measuring "civilization" was superimposed on all of humanity to create a hierarchy of racial groups. For the groups that were not white, this belief virtually always operated to their detriment. Nancy Stepan wrote in The Idea of Race in Science,

The hierarchy of races was believed to correspond to, and indeed be the cause of, what most people took to be the natural scale of human achievement in the world,

with the European on top and the African or aboriginal Australian invariably at the bottom. 23

Those races that occupied the bottom rungs of this evolutionary ladder fell prey to a social milieu that saw their extinction as a "natural" occurrence. Although Darwin had never stated which races were superior to others, the fate of these tribes spoke loudly, and added more credibility to what was called Social Darwinism.<sup>24</sup> It was very seldom that any regret was expressed for the demise of the lower races; more frequently the rhetoric was effusively superficial, as in the case of an Anglican minister in Victoria who declared,

The history of European colonization has traced in characters of blood the triumphs of civilization over barbarism. Race after race of the mingled family of barbarians has died out before the cart of the victorious conquerer. 25

The unpleasant reality of imperialism was mitigated by the knowledge that the ultimate outcome would be the advancement of human civilization.<sup>26</sup>

Although the British administrators and clerics who came to Victoria paid lip service to treating non-white colonists with the characteristic Anglo-Saxon traits of justice and kindness, in reality most endeavoured to maintain physical and cultural exclusiveness. Christine Bolt observed this phenomenon began in Britain and was

later taken to the colonies by immigrants.

Culture shock was often eased for both sides by the native Briton's habit of preaching assimilation but practising residential segregation, a pattern easily transplanted and extended in the colonies, where whites, though the invaders, were determined to preserve both their distinctiveness and their vaunted superiority. 27

Since many white residents came from the United States, a brief digression on Darwinism in American thought has immediate relevancy to the topic at hand. Concepts such as Social Darwinism were brought to Victoria from America as well as from abroad.

In the United States, questions of racial origin and classification were debated as intensely as in Britain. By 1870, the processes of industrialization and urbanization and the Civil War had cast strong doubts in the minds of many Americans about the wisdom of laissez-faire economics, individualism and democracy. A search began for a set of social doctrines that could be adapted to the new realities of urban interdependence, centralization of economic structures and an individualism that was no longer based in a sense of  
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community.

The ideas of Darwin and his contemporaries, particularly Herbert Spencer, were readily absorbed by

American society and easily lent themselves to "social as well as biological speculation."<sup>29</sup> Darwin was again interpreted as advocating a system of social classification that was supposedly modelled on biological realities. Spencer as well as Darwin were used as the basis for a belief that turned evolutionary theories into "a paradigm for the behavior of men and nations."<sup>30</sup> Racist ideas that promoted the inferiority of the Blacks were evident long before Darwin but "during the nineteenth century theories of racial determinism and white supremacy were given scientific foundation, so it was believed, by physiological studies differentiating the human species into groups on the basis of color, physique, or head shape."<sup>31</sup> In America, as in Britain and Europe, social Darwinism did not create many of the beliefs to which it was so readily applied, such as the hierarchy of races, but it did "provide a set of vague though undeniably suggestive phrases and ideas to strengthen the ideology of race."<sup>32</sup>

In Victoria, physical isolation was a natural corollary to the social exclusivity which was seen by whites as being necessary to preserve themselves from infection caused by contact with lower and depraved races. Clerics used this idea as a means of justifying

racist actions and more importantly, as an explicit rationalization for spreading Christian beliefs; this conversion would "purify" the heathen and make them safe for contact with the European. In 1870, the Anglican mission gravely warned of the injurious outcome to whites resulting from close association with heathens:

Nearness to the heathen is dangerous to the Christian morals of Europeans, unless efforts are being made for the recovery and elevation of the savage. Contamination is constantly degrading even the educated Englishman to a condition lower than that of the poor heathen. 33

The heathen alluded to above was of course, the native Indian. Whites frequently implied lower races could gain social acceptance, if not equality, by adopting Anglo-Saxon habits and customs. In reality, the science of race that became so popular in the Victorian era did not allow for Lamarckian adaptation: that is, the idea that biological change could result from environmental needs. Thus, no matter how similar Blacks, Chinese or Indians were to whites, they could never be equals. According to Nancy Stepan, this new race science incorporated,

the idea of a graded scale of intrinsic animality and intelligence, embedded in animal structures and organization, the phrenologists' idea of innate differences in the organs of the brains of different races, measurable by the outward appearance of the head, and the rejection of environmentalism and the inheritance of acquired

characteristics. 34

The phrenologists were best known for their often exhaustive measurements of the heads of differing races from which they concluded moral and mental differences were inherent to a particular group. This pseudo-scientific movement found sympathy in Victoria where Bishop Hills wrote in 1863 that a wide variety of groups including "Phrenological Materialists" attended his services<sup>35</sup> In addition, an editorial in the Colonist in June 1860 referred to the findings of phrenologists while making derogatory remarks about the colony's elected officials.<sup>36</sup>

A general interest in scientific societies and their findings did exist in the colony. In 1859 the Gazette informed its readers that "a Fellow of the Linnean Society" had settled on the island and promised to provide "our readers with the results of his scientific observations."<sup>37</sup> A year later, the Colonist devoted half a column to a discussion on the discoveries of Dr. Livingstone in Africa and the alleged discovery of a white race in central Africa thought to be descendants of the Carthaginians who possessed "the characteristic superiority of the white races-the enslaving of the neighbouring blacks."<sup>38</sup> Another article, entitled

"Feeding the Negro White," posited the possibility of diet as a cause of skin colour variation when reporting that "M. de Quatrefages recently delivered a course of lectures at the Museum of Natural History in Paris, on the Unity of the Human Species and the Human races in general."<sup>39</sup> In 1863, a review of Sir Charles Lyell's The Antiquity of Man was reprinted locally after having originally appeared in the Edinburgh Review.<sup>40</sup>

Residents in Victoria not only read about racial theories but they thought about them as well. In an 1864 lecture, Reverend John Sheepshanks, chaplain to the Bishop of Columbia, asked "Who are the North American Indians and where do they come from?" and went on to conclude that they originated in Asia.<sup>41</sup> When an article from the Pall Mall Gazette on the discovery of ape-like human remains in France appeared locally in 1869, Victoria resident A.C. Anderson added that these remains "serve to show that Ancient Gaul, at no unquestionably remote period in the world's unwritten history, was peopled by a race differing in no material respect, whether in form or habits, from the normal savage of the present day."<sup>42</sup> This latter point admirably demonstrates the more widely held belief that certain racial groups, in this instance the Indians, were lower on a scale of

human development than the Anglo-Saxons; again, here was the confusion of culture and race.

Interpretations of race science and their relation to British imperialism took on an interesting implication in the hands of missionaries. For these ecclesiastics, imperialism was a divinely ordained means of delivering spiritual salvation to those races suffering in heathenism and barbarism. In 1860, Reverend Henry Mackenzie of the Anglican church told his Victoria audience that the extension of Christianity was a responsibility that they all shared.

Surely you are conscious of a great and unseen Will having been manifestly exercised in putting us—each one of us—in the way of doing something towards the saving those souls who represent races from all quarters of the globe and most of the isles of the sea? 43

The propagation of Christian doctrine was closely if not ✱ inextricably linked to political imperialism. The conquest and subjugation of foreign peoples was often softened and justified by asserting the belief that such expansionism was inevitable and by using the word "civilization" as a euphemism for British political domination. A Victoria newspaper illustrated the close link between church and state-sponsored expansionism when it wrote in 1859 on the establishment of the new colony,

"On this day then we herald to the world that Civilization and Christianity have established another outpost on the road of human progress."<sup>44</sup>

The Church of England was particularly vocal on issues relating to the various races. While some of the church's ministers did espouse racist philosophies, the Anglican church was the only one to defend the Blacks when virtually all other churches were calling for segregated seating. Missionaries from Britain may have been torn between two opposing forces when placed in the colonial context: one was to acknowledge the equality of all men and the other was to find a means to generate revenue overseas in order to continue their mission. The latter concern necessitated exaggerating the depravity of those at whom they directed their efforts. Christine Bolt has noted how British missionaries working abroad,

[In order] to justify constant appeals for funds and possibly to differentiate the faults detected in the unredeemed overseas from those diagnosed in the targets for home missions, evangelists laboured the worst features of "savage" societies as they saw them, thereby strengthening the unflattering stereotypes which Britons already entertained of the inhabitants of "heathen lands." 45

The application of Darwinian evolution to humanity did not, as might seem the case, prevent clerics from becoming involved in popularly interpreted scientific

theories of the day. While some rejected evolution as an atheistic doctrine, others accepted it as an addition to established Christianity. The accommodation of evolutionary theory to Christian beliefs is not surprising if one considers the sweeping nature of a religion that believes in the absolute power of God. David Hull concluded in his article, "Darwinism and Historiography,"

Since God was the author of all natural laws, science could not possibly come into conflict with true religion. All that had to be added to evolution was some sort of inner force or teleological principle to make evolution compatible with or even supportive of the Christian vision of man. 46

The Columbia Mission Reports that were sent from Victoria to England contained "much information of a character cheering to those who desire the extension of the Kingdom of Christ." Such sentiments usually translated into a combination of a graphic description of the depravities of the unredeemed and the positive achievements of the mission to date and concluded with an appeal for additional funds to carry on the good works thus begun. While this is not to imply that the writings of such men were either formulaic or insincere, such texts tend to support the assertion made earlier that missionaries were almost compelled to write

sensationalist material if they were to continue receiving financial aid. Darwinian evolution, which was so closely linked with the progress of mankind, was easily adapted to missionary activity since clerics saw Christianization of the heathen as an integral part of Progress itself.

A negative bias was virtually always evident when Indians were examined or described. A local cleric described native religion as "a sort of Pantheism", a belief in spirits "that underlie all their superstitions and beliefs."<sup>47</sup> In 1870, Archdeacon Woods appealed to England to start an orphanage for half-breed children who possessed "the mind and vigour of the white race [but] speak only the native tongue"<sup>48</sup>

Secular remarks concerning the natives were also superficial or disparaging. A local newspaper described the events at a native wedding ceremony as of a "decidedly grim character, and to a civilized man suggestive of anything but a wedding."<sup>49</sup> An extract from the London Illustrated News which appeared in the Gazette, described Esquimalt as an area where "the wild man still holds sway and civilization has scarce or never trodden."<sup>50</sup> Insensitivity to the Indians was sometimes illustrated in tragic circumstances; when an Indian

incarcerated for drunkenness attempted to commit suicide the incident was blithly summarized with the incredulous exclamation that "These fellows have no fear of death."<sup>51</sup>

Early colonists consistently expressed a desire to see the Indian become more Anglicized and to shun the habits of savagery. In 1860, the Weekly Victoria Gazette proclaimed that "We conceive that the elevation, social amelioration, and commercial utility of the Indians are all subjects worthy of the highest efforts of the wisdom of our senate."<sup>52</sup> However, the Indian was apparently not intended to be "elevated" to a level that was on par with the whites; when a local paper advocated the extension of the franchise to include all male British taxpayers it qualified its recommendations to "exclude Indians entirely."<sup>53</sup>

Indian women were ridiculed and treated with disdain. A poem reprinted from the Puget Sound Herald sarcastically compared the Indian woman with her European counterpart in a mock love ballad and was intended to incite mirth among its readers. The first and seventh verses of the work ran as follows:

Sweet nymph! although of dirtier hue thou  
 art  
 Than other ladies from eastern climes,  
 To thee I yield the tribute of my love,  
 To thee I dedicate these humble rhymes;

And if too faint I string my trembling lyre,  
Great Pocahontas! thou my verse inspire.

But though thou smell'st strong of salmon  
dry  
Though innocent of soap thy hands appear,  
Although thy toes turn inwards with a curl,  
And though thy skull is smash'd from front  
to rear;  
Though nameless animals thy hair infest,  
Still I do love thee of all maidens best. 54

Some observers saw the Indians as being composed of different races which were to some degree distinct from one another. J.S. Helmcken described the "wild tribes" of coastal and interior natives, stating that though the "northern people" were "more or less tamed...they appeared a different race, partly by cultivation, [that is], associating with traders, and so somewhat effeminated [sic] or civilized." <sup>55</sup> Missionaries who visited the Lytton Indians concluded from the tribe's attentiveness that they had "more life and apparently more intelligence than those [tribes] lower down the river." <sup>56</sup> In 1859, the Victoria Weekly Gazette reprinted the observations of "a gentleman well acquainted with the different tribes of Indians" in the province: the Thompson River Indians were "a rather superior race" owing to their cultivation of large tracts of land; the "Chinloes" were a "fishing race living on Fraser Lake" and the "Siccanies" were "a very wild and solitary race"

living near McLeod's Lake. Race in this context was used interchangeably with tribe or the biological equivalent of subspecies. By the end of the colonial period in 1871, this "racial classification" of provincial natives had in no way diminished. In that year Anglican documents reported of the Bella Coola Indians that "while the men and women give the idea of a fine race both physically and intellectually, the evidences of their filthy habits must certainly mark them as exceptionally low in the scale of civilization."<sup>58</sup>

Helmcken summarized his long observations of B.C. Indians by stating, "In fact I was led to the conclusion that altho' all belonged to the human family, there were different breeds, just the same as there are different breeds and varieties of dogs, each being noted for some particular quality."<sup>59</sup>

In his reminiscences, Dr. Helmcken observed that even though the Indians might make themselves "useful" to the whites by learning technical skills, "nevertheless, they are Indians still. The breed remains and will require a great deal of crossing to make a superior race."<sup>60</sup> There was, in effect, an intellectual dichotomy. Races were definitely regarded as inferior if they did not mimic European society but conversely, there existed

a strong conviction that this racial inferiority was a result of an evolutionary process that could not be circumvented by imitating the activities or appearance of the superior race. This biological determinism dictated that lower races would die out because they were not pre-ordained to survive, as was the Anglo-Saxon race. Helmcken reflected these sentiments when he wrote of the decline of the Indians at Victoria: "Socially, probably their death is of little consequence; politically it may be of more importance, although it does not seem as though they were intended to set the world on fire."<sup>61</sup>

Examination of the treatment of the Black population in colonial Victoria most clearly demonstrates that behaviour was not a strong factor in the ultimate acceptance by whites of other racial groups. Despite the reality of de facto racial discrimination, British law as it applied to the Blacks was clear: if they were British subjects, the Blacks were entitled to the rights and responsibilities of all Her Majesty's subjects. In the case of Charles Mitchell, a fugitive slave boy who stowed away on a ship that came into Victoria, the local Blacks applied for a writ of habeas corpus to have the boy released from the ship's confinement. Despite the vehement protests of the vessel's captain, Charles was

taken from the ship and soon freed by the Attorney-General. The justification for the release was simply stated as, "there stands the boy on British soil, and having touched British soil, he is entitled to the immunities of that act."<sup>62</sup> It is clear that the British immigrants took particular pride, if not perverse pleasure, in identifying themselves as a truly free nation (or "race") in comparison to the United States.

Soon after the arrival of the Blacks in 1859 a debate arose concerning their presence among whites in some local churches, a topic which is discussed more fully in chapter four. The very fact of the debate, which called for segregated seating, belies assertions of British tolerance of other racial groups, particularly the Blacks. When Reverend Cridge, one of the two ministers to oppose segregation asked for equal treatment of the Blacks, a resident writing under the pseudonym of "Henry Sharpstone" responded with a vicious denunciation of the Blacks that is worthy of lengthy reproduction, if for no other reason than the fact that it must have been somewhat representative of the prevailing climate of opinion, since its only rebuttal came from a Black.

What subtle hallucination has seized upon your mind, that it so lends its energies to overthrow caste and break down the distinction of the race?...Why misrepresent

history?...Even with the advantages of civilization, where is their literature? What have the race invented? What have they originated? In what do they excel? Certainly nothing in science, nor art, nor anything which contributes to the pride and glory of a nation. 63

Historian Christine Bolt succinctly summarized Victorian racial sentiments that were epitomized in the words of Sharpstone and are so illustrative of the close correlation that existed or was perceived to exist between culture and race in England and abroad:

What [the Victorians] could not admire were societies which, in the state of knowledge prevailing for most of the century, might have an exotic fascination but were thought to have no history: no law, no great towns, monuments or artefacts. 64

William Clarke, the minister in whose church the segregation debate first broke out, wrote to the Victoria Weekly Gazette with a quotation from the Boston Courier which stated that the Blacks sat with the whites in their own church services.

This can do us no harm, but only good. If we are the superior race as we claim to be, we can in no way better show our superiority than by helping the inferior race to share in our progress. 65

Again, as in the case of the Indians, race was used as a means of social distinction that was founded upon a supposedly scientific system of racial classification. Despite the fact that the Blacks were very similar to the

whites in every way but their colour, they were regarded as inferior. Sharpstone concluded his diatribe with an opinion that explicitly linked class and race:

From Tameriane the Tartar, to Ah-Sing the washerman-from the King of Delhi to the most vagrant Sepoy that ever closed his eyes in sleep, all have submitted to social inequality with the white race...the English nation are (sic) divided into classes. The negro has his place, there, and ever will have so long as his skin is black. 66

A London Times article that was reprinted locally referred to the emancipated slaves of the West Indies as unworthy of their freedom and instructed those at home who supported Black equality to

go out and view the negro in all the blazonry of his idleness, his pride, his ingratitude, contemptuously sneering at the industry of that race which made him free: and then come home and teach the memorable lesson of their experience to the fanatics who have perverted him into what he is. 67

The British Colonist also printed numerous snippets to amuse its readership by making jokes about Blacks. These generally portrayed the Blacks as servile and ignorant, with the "Darkey" often being presented in the stereotype of a southern negro.

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White colonists made vigorous attempts to segregate themselves from Blacks, despite the fact that Blacks adopted their customs and values. A writer to the

Colonist said that if Blacks received equality in the theatres then it must also be given in all other social areas, but the intent of her words were not to support Black rights so much as to frighten whites into concluding that equality would soon be everywhere: "If the barriers which Nature has wisely interposed between the races are to be broken down in one instance, they must be removed in another."<sup>69</sup> When one of the performers in the "theatre riot," (described in chapter four) was asked about his refusal to perform when Blacks were in the dress circle, he replied "I do not believe in any amalgamation of white and colored people."<sup>70</sup> The Chapman family viewed segregation at the theatres as important enough to advertise a separate entrance to the gallery for Indians and Blacks.<sup>71</sup> Finally, a local newspaper apparently found nothing offensive in a proposed California law that any white who married or cohabited with "a negro, mulatto, Chinese or Indian, shall be punished by fine or imprisonment, or both."<sup>72</sup>

The reasons for this racial antagonism were founded in economic competition and political conflict as well as the racist beliefs held by the whites. Keith Ralston's study of John Sullivan Deas concluded that a "grudging acceptance" of Blacks developed "although the deep-rooted

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 prejudices remained." The Blacks who came to the city were disillusioned by their treatment and eventually concluded that equality could not be had in Victoria; some remained in the city although a greater number went to Saltspring Island and still more returned to the United States after the Civil War. An excerpt from Samuel Gridley Howe's work, The Refugees from Slavery in Canada West, was included in an 1864 "Report to the Freeman's Commission" in Boston. Howe's scathing remarks on the illiberality of those whites who lived in Victoria with Black refugees are applicable to the Indian and Chinese experience in the city as well:

The truth of the matter seems to be that, as long as the colored people form a very small proportion of the population, and are dependent, they receive protection and favors: but when they increase, and compete with the labouring class for a living; and especially when they begin to aspire to social equality, they cease to be "interesting negroes," and become "niggers." 74

One local Black felt as early as 1859, that it was "utterly impossible for the African and the Anglo-Saxon  
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 races ever to live together on terms of equality."

Victoria's Chinese population were an even "lower" race than the Blacks and, in some ways, even below the Indians. Unlike the Blacks or even the Indians, the Chinese did not seek acceptance into white society. The

Chinese were racially segregated in both the social and geographical senses. The vast majority made no attempt to adopt Christianity or European customs of dress, appearance or society. A negative interpretation was attached by whites to almost all the activities of the Chinese. In 1971, Foon Sien wrote:

Their strangeness was seen as menace; their passivity as "inscrutability"; their poverty as a threat to economic standards; their single state as a threat to morals; their numbers as a threat to racial purity. 76

Some whites feared the Chinese because they believed the Chinese polluted their race. The only means of counteracting this influence, since the Chinese could not actually be prevented from entering the colony, was to purify them by means of conversion to Christianity and to instill in them European values. Britons in London expressed concern over the purity of the Victoria settlement; in 1861, Sir John K. Shuttleworth spoke before a London gathering that was attended by those interested in the missionary activities of the Anglican Church in the Columbia Mission. After the Bishop of London addressed the crowd, Sir John delivered a fiery speech in promotion of the efforts of the Victoria mission:

The Bishop of London has described the

demoralizing and depraving influences of the immigration of inferior races on our own great cities...the Chinese exercise a bad influence upon the population of British Columbia; and it is absolutely necessary that the corrupting influences of an inferior race, a degraded race, shall be counteracted [by the efforts of the Bishop of Columbia and his missionaries.] 77

Two years earlier, the Gazette had warned that a large number of Chinese were expected to come to Victoria. The article suggested that the Chinese be confined to areas needing cheap labour and that their movements be restricted. The justification for this illiberal treatment was that the Chinese were, "with few exceptions, not desirable as permanent settlers in a country peopled by the Caucasian race and governed by civilized enactments." <sup>78</sup>

By the close of the 1860's hostility towards the Chinese was widespread. In 1869, the Colonist called out for the government of Britain to assist in the emigration to the colony of British men and women in dire circumstances in their own country: "Men and women like unto ourselves, with Anglo-Saxon blood in their veins, and Anglo-Saxon words upon their tongues, drag out a miserable existence" <sup>79</sup> in England. In contrast, the Chinese were a social evil, for "their inferior civilization, their language, their religion, their

habits of living" were "hostile to the customs and prejudices of the higher and dominant race."<sup>80</sup> When the time came to address the possibility of using Asian labour to build the railway, the Colonist asserted that all Canadians "have a common interest in seeing the work done and the country settled up and developed by good Anglo-Saxon muscle-certainly not by a class that would leave nothing behind them but the railway."<sup>81</sup> In 1869, no less a person than John Stuart Mill was cited as an authority against Chinese immigration. A letter from Mill to Henry George of San Francisco was reprinted locally. Mill stated that because of the low wages earned by Chinese workers, "only a temporary good is done to the Chinese people by admitting part of their surplus numbers [into the United States], while a more permanent harm is done to a more civilized and improved portion of mankind."<sup>82</sup> Perhaps newspaper editor Amor De Cosmos best summed up what became the sentiments of many colonists towards Chinese immigrants when he said in 1871, "Let this new Empire be for our own race."<sup>83</sup>

Not all white settlers were contemptuous of other races. A resident at Yale described local Chinese miners as a "peaceful and industrious people."<sup>84</sup> Similarly, the Reverend J.B. Good confessed that the Indians at Lytton

were far more pious than the Europeans: "Were our native charges as little satisfactory as their presumed superior white neighbours, one would be tempted to shake off the dust of one's feet as a testimony against them and to leave them to themselves." <sup>85</sup> Without a doubt the most stinging and witty denunciation of the colony's bigoted population came at the hand of an author, signed "An Ass" to the Gazette in 1859. Although it is lengthy, it would be diminished by any editing of its contents:

I see a fresh batch of Indians has just arrived here, to the delight of petty retail traders, who vastly prefer them to the Chinese; and to the disgust of certain illiberal and narrow-minded men. Ours is indeed a small community, and small communities, as is well-known, have small ideas, We have been clamorous and still are so, for population, and yet blessed as we are with barely 3000 souls, we have just been driving away from our midst about 500 Indians; at this moment, if each of the inhabitants of Victoria were consulted, there would probably be hardly a soul left in the place. For instance:

The Indians would be sent away for their thieving and immorality;

The Chinese as composing a filthy and unprofitable race;

The colored population for their impudence and independence;

The Irish for hating everything English;

The Germans for liking everything American;

The Americans for being troublesome, aggressive and insulting;

The French as Roman Catholics;

The Hudson [sic] Bay Co., as a matter of course, and the half breeds as a

consequence;

The English, well one half of them should be sent away also.

Such are the results of illiberality and narrowmindedness. 86

It would be unfair, therefore, to state that all whites in colonial Victoria were overtly racist. Indeed, most said little on the topic directly and a few denounced it outright. What can be said is that the growth of the science of race in the nineteenth century caused a re-examination of an old problem--how to explain man's physical and cultural diversity. The application of scientific and pseudo-scientific theory to this question added a credibility if not respectability to familiar racial antagonisms. During the nineteenth century expansion of the British Empire brought whites into contact with groups vastly different in appearance and culture from themselves; scientific racism not only helped to explain these differences, but it often provided a justification for imperialism and the degradation of aboriginal peoples.

→ In colonial Victoria, few residents were well educated and misinterpretation of the racial science was common. However, bizarre misunderstandings occurred even within the scientific community. Small wonder then that the popular press printed inaccurate statements of "fact"

with impunity. It has been demonstrated that the average Victoria resident did not have a clear notion of scientific racism nor were the terms of the theory precisely or consistently used; often "species" was used to mean "race" or vice-versa and occasionally "class" also found its way into a debate on the proper place of certain races. This was equally true in Britain where "race often became merely a vague but potent force; an explanation of differences and antagonisms between human groups." <sup>87</sup> This was certainly the case in colonial Victoria, for the idea of inherent racial superiority was used to justify missionary activity, the displacement of the Indians, social ostracization of the Blacks and discriminatory legislation against the Chinese.

Colonists in Victoria were not unique in their views; racism was part of the ethos of the age. Whether they came from Britain or America, white settlers were influenced by the ideas of Darwin, Spencer and others like them, and used these ideas in part to construct their new society. In his article, "Darwinism and Historiography," David Hull states,

With rare exceptions...the general attitude among Europeans of the day, scientists and non-scientists alike, was that Caucasians of European extraction were vastly superior to all other segments of mankind. In the struggle for survival, they would surely win

out. 88

Racism influenced the economic, social and political opportunities of the Indians, Blacks and Chinese; unflattering stereotypes of these groups limited their integration and participation in colonial society. Scientific racism was a widely held but frequently misunderstood concept whose tenets were used selectively to explain illiberal actions. In most instances this behaviour was implicit although hardly subtle. In closing, it is worth considering the words of Dr. J.S.Helmcken as he appraised the colonization of Vancouver Island: "where once the aborigines were omnipotent the civilized man now reigns and will be obeyed: the survival of the <sup>89</sup> fittest."

NOTES

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CHAPTER III

"BANDS OF THIEVES AND BAD WOMEN": The Indians

One prominent scholar of Indian and provincial history has stated that, despite criticisms of the Hudson's Bay Company's colonization policy, Chief Factor and later Governor, James Douglas made "a crucial contribution to the establishment of the settlement frontier" by maintaining peace between Indians and whites.<sup>1</sup> This statement misses the implicit cost which the supposedly peaceful colonization process exacted from the indigenous population; the exigencies of this imperial frontier demanded the subjugation if not elimination of the native peoples. After 1858, the number of white colonists rapidly increased. The real and perceived status of the natives changed in inverse relation to this growth; while the white colonists endeavored to better their social and economic status within city, they treated the Indians as an inferior race which represented an impediment to the expansion of technology, civilization and indeed, the Empire.

Victoria's native population fluctuated in composition and in actual numbers. White colonists were greatly agitated by the presence of numerous northern natives who routinely travelled to Victoria to trade

goods, engage in prostitution, or secure employment. Settlers and politicians were angered and fearful about the frequent occupation of the harbour by thousands of northern Indians, many of whom fought with the seven hundred or so local Indians, principally the Songhees. In his 1856 opening address to the colony's first House of Assembly, James Douglas probably understated the feelings of many white settlers towards the large numbers of northern Indians who had congregated at Fort Victoria when he said, "Their presence has excited in our minds a not unreasonable degree of alarm."<sup>2</sup> The colonial authorities attempted to deal with the situation by physically removing the Indians. In March 1859, the H.M.S. Plumper and the H.M.S. Tribune towed Haida canoes to "Johnson's Pass,"<sup>3</sup> but there were misgivings about the possible ramifications of these actions. The Gazette wrote, "The Indians are very loth to go, and their forced departure may cause future trouble."<sup>4</sup> Even these measures proved fruitless when six to seven hundred northern natives arrived at the harbour soon after the expulsion of the first group, "so lately accomplished by mingled<sup>5</sup> force and moral suasion." It is not evident how this "moral suasion" was achieved, but it is likely that harsher measures would have been used had the colonists

not been so acutely aware of their numerical disadvantage.

Some settlers had once thought the presence of Indians at Victoria to be a benefit. The Indians whom the Gazette sarcastically referred to as "this valuable and productive class of immigrants," were, in 1860, considered of value as labourers and consumers by James Douglas.<sup>6</sup> Douglas himself employed Indians in domestic service at one time and his son-in-law, Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken cleared his land with native workers.

The criminal and disorderly activities of the Indians at Victoria soon became the major concern of the settlers. Thefts of produce and livestock annoyed farmers who called for the removal of these "bands of thieves and bad women."<sup>7</sup> Petty theft was a common charge. In one instance the Gazette reported an instance of a pantaloon-stealing Indian in a manner that was designed to amuse its readership while poking fun at the police for failing to capture the culprit.<sup>8</sup>

The local press fueled the indignation of the colonists by reporting at length the outrages the natives perpetrated on their own women. In 1859, an Indian knocked his native companion to the ground and "then deliberately kicked the woman three or four times on the

head" before fleeing the scene. <sup>9</sup> Such violence apparently occurred with considerable frequency but very often the "dastardly redskin" responsible for the crime escaped.

Although the Gazette enjoyed ridiculing the efforts of the city's "very efficient police", a shortage of constables was a difficulty that persisted well into the 1860's; on 21 August 1866 a letter by the Superintendent of Police was read to the Vancouver Island Executive Council "representing the want of men to complete the establishment of the police force." <sup>10</sup> Patrolling the Indian settlement took a considerable toll on the resources of the tiny police force. Officers were placed in charge of enforcing Indian regulations: that is, ensuring that the natives were in their camp by nightfall and that they remained there until the next morning. By June, 1859, four of fourteen police were placed on the "arduous duty" of patrolling the encampment. <sup>11</sup> Efforts to control the Indians were usually unsuccessful. Rather than spend additional funds on ameliorating the conditions of the Indians, settlers and administrators used the behaviour of some natives as a focus for their hostilities towards all Indians.

Disturbances at the Indian camp were not isolated to petty theivery or raucous socializing; colonists

despaired at the massive fights between rival tribes. When such brawls broke out in the camp, the difficulty in restoring order was acute. The fights were often exacerbated by alcohol abuse and could easily escalate to uncontrollable proportions. A fire that damaged a portion of the Songhees reserve in 1868 "had resulted from a quarrel between a Songhees and a Hydah. The Hydah revenged himself by setting fire to the Songhees house."<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in September of that same year an Anglican missionary described a fight among the "Skiddegates" who were encamped on the Songhees reserve:

The firing commenced about eight, and lasted until past ten o'clock. In such a case I could do nothing but send for the police, whose arrival put an end to the engagement, during which nearly one hundred shots were fired.<sup>13</sup>

In 1859, the Gazette reporting on a "pitched battle" involving gunfire commented that "there was no interruption of the amusement on the part of the police."<sup>14</sup>

Nearby settlers rarely found the activities of the warring tribes amusing. The numerical superiority of the Indians made settlers anxious over their own safety; by 1862, the white population of Southeastern Vancouver Island was estimated at approximately 6,600 people, just

more than one sixth of the native population in the two colonies at that time.<sup>15</sup> The availability of guns added to this unease. The presence of the Royal Navy alleviated much of this concern, however, for in a show of arms the British clearly had superior firepower. The Indians "knew the effect of British gunboats-marines and so forth which were occasionally paraded for them to see."<sup>16</sup> A vital component of British colonialism was the ability to intimidate aboriginal peoples by displaying a military presence that buttressed an otherwise indefensible physical occupation of foreign territory.

The fear with which white settlers regarded the Indians was often coupled with a condescending attitude toward the values and customs of native society. The predictable outcome of this situation in which the Indian was both feared and pitied was two fold: insensitivity towards Indian rights in all spheres (political, economic, social) was softened and justified by a view of the native as pathetic and helpless and therefore in need of modernization and Christianization by a beneficent white government. The real effects of efforts to civilize the heathen were not only the radical alteration of the traditional native economy, but an escalating depopulation and an internal disintegration of indigenous

values. This phenomenon was particularly obvious during the settlement era when colonization caused intensive competition for the wealth and resources of the new colony.

A crucial facet to understanding the plight of the native is the role which land occupied in establishing and defining wealth in colonial society. Settlers and businessmen required land for commercial or agricultural purposes and government officials needed land for colonial infrastructures. The demands of these three groups were in direct contradiction with the conceptual and functional tradition of native land usage. The colonial government not only rejected the Indians' views of the land as sentient and communal; it imposed a land policy upon the natives designed to promote and protect the interests of the white colonists.

The early land policy formulated by James Douglas was considerably more liberal than the policies followed by his successors. Between 1850 and 1854 Douglas, acting in his capacity as Chief Factor for the Hudson's Bay Company, signed a total of fourteen treaties with the natives of Vancouver Island. According to these treaties the government gave each family approximately 2 pounds 10 shillings along with tribal fishing and hunting rights.

Douglas' policy of establishing Indian reservations was part of a more general plan for the betterment of the Indians. In response to enquiries from the Colonial Secretary concerning the treatment of Indians by the government, Douglas,

informed the Government that he had made anticipatory Reserves in the various districts, including the Cultivated fields & village sites of the Indians, & he proposed that the Indians shd. be located on certain parts of those Reserves, & the remainder be leased & the proceeds applied to their temporal & spiritual elevation in building churches schools and houses for them to live in & providing them with teachers & ministers &c. 17

Due to a lack of funds, Douglas' plan to extinguish the proprietary rights of the Indians was stifled soon after he concluded his first treaties. In 1861, the House of Assembly passed a resolution requesting funds from the Home Government "for the extinction of Indian title in districts partially, or soon to be occupied" on Vancouver <sup>18</sup> Island. The Duke of Newcastle's response to Victoria's pleas were sympathetic, stating that he was "fully sensible of the great importance of purchasing without loss of time the Native title to the soil of Vancouver <sup>19</sup> Island." However, Newcastle firmly articulated that any costs incurred were the responsibility of the colony --no money would be forthcoming from Britain. This lack

of funding to compensate the Indians was never resolved; eventually, the government adopted the stance that the Indians had no right to any form of economic redress. During the settlement period, however, Vancouver Island's ambiguous land policy was a source of anxiety for settlers and natives alike.

Throughout the 1860's Indians remained uncertain as to the status of their land rights. In 1859, only seven years after Douglas signed a treaty with the Saanich natives, Vancouver Island Sheriff George Heaton was compelled to travel to North Saanich's Coal Point to clarify an apparent ambiguity of ownership in the treaty area. A local herdsman had claimed the Indians, "had threatened [him] in consequence of a supposed right they [the Indians] had to the land."<sup>20</sup> Heaton visited the natives and later wrote to Governor Douglas that the Indians at Coal Point displayed "a perfect satisfaction with the statement that the land has been sold-and now belongs to white people."<sup>21</sup> It is difficult to establish what had the most influence upon the North Saanich Indians--the cogency of Heaton's words or the presence of the "party of Royal marine Lt. Infantry" which had accompanied the Sheriff.<sup>22</sup> Despite his own optimistic words to Douglas, Heaton was not able to appease the

natives completely, for he also advised Douglas that the Indians were intending to visit Victoria, "for the purpose of ascertaining the limits of their own  
<sup>23</sup>  
 'Reservation'."

As settlement progressed settlers and natives disputed the land issue with increasing frequency, largely because of the absence of a clearly-stated Indian land policy. Settlers encroached on Indian reserves without authorization, or approached the government with absurd requests for land. When Thomas Harris, first mayor of Victoria purchased from Mark Coles 513 acres of land adjacent to the Indian reserve in North Saanich, he wrote to J.D. Pemberton in December 1861, "to ask you if you will on behalf of the government let me the Indian Reserve at a nominal rent...on account of keeping  
<sup>24</sup>  
 strangers from pasturing stock on it." In 1865, in response to Thomas Deans's request to fence in a large portion of the Cowichan reserve, the Acting Colonial Secretary denied the application stating he could not  
<sup>25</sup>  
 "sanction any occupation of [the] Indian Reserve."  
 Governor Kennedy received numerous complaints from natives concerning white settlers who allowed livestock  
<sup>26</sup>  
 to roam Indian Reserve lands.

In response to expanding white settlement Indians

became increasingly suspicious and uncooperative with colonial officials. In 1869, A.F. Pemberton and two officers were required to visit a reserve where Indians prevented Mahun, a surveyor, from completing his work. The Chief had claimed lands in addition to those which were being officially designated by the colonial surveyor.<sup>27</sup> By the 1870's it was no longer possible to "purchase" land rights by the distribution of paltry gifts to Indians. Natives began to suspect the overtures of white visitors and were cautious not to imply their agreement to land allocation by taking white offerings. Dr. Powell wrote of his visit to provincial Indians in 1873, "Several tribes whom I have visited have refused the acceptance of presents while their claims to land are unrecognized."<sup>28</sup>

In 1861, Governor James Douglas received a petition passed in the House "relative to the extinction of Indian Titles to this land,"<sup>29</sup> Settlers in the outlying districts of Cowichan and the Malahat were anxious for Douglas to provide official surveys. W.F. Tolmie, member of the House, pressed Douglas for a response to the petition, by inquiring of the Attorney General,

what course the Government intends pursuing in a matter so pressing by requiring attention in the Chemainus and Cowichan Districts, as until the Indian is in some

way compensated, there will be no settlement in these fertile districts, although large portions of each are already taken up. 30

Several months later, Douglas reported on his attempts to settle disputes with the natives in the Malahat area;

Agrarian dispute endangering the public peace and safety having occurred in Malahat District, I deemed it expedient in order to remove the immediate cause of contention, to enter into arrangements with the Natives for the satisfaction of their claims on the land, on terms agreeable to them and advantageous to the Colony. 53

Despite the assertions of Douglas and other colonial politicians and administrators that funds were unavailable for the extinction of Indian land claims, the fact remains that, even when monies were allocated for the natives, in some instances specifically for land claims, little or none of it was spent. After the Duke of Newcastle flatly told Douglas earlier in 1861 that the British taxpayer would not be "burthened to supply the funds" necessary to extinguish the colony's Indian title, attempts were made to allocate funds from colonial coffers. On 7 April 1862, Mr. Tolmie "moved that the Estimates be recommitted in order that the sum of £2000 for road construction to Cowichan and extinction of Indian title be reconsidered." In the following year Dr. Helmcken also suggested having funds allocated for

extinguishing native title. However, few if any of these funds were spent. Of five hundred dollars estimated for "Indian Services" for 1864, over \$495.00 remained unexpended in 1865.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, the colonial estimates for 1865 stated: "Indian Claims - Payment for lands at Chemainus, Cowichan, &c. unexpended in 1863...\$9,700.00."<sup>35</sup> Of more than thirteen thousand dollars estimated for expenditures on the Indians for the four years for 1863-1866, less than four thousand was spent.<sup>36</sup> No explanation is provided as to why these funds were not spent.

The House did at least recognize the possibility of compensating the natives for the loss of their land. In 1864 a statement of finances clearly allocated money to extinguish Indian title. It had then been stated that one reason why Crown Revenue would derive no net income from the public lands was "the amount of money necessary to be paid to the Indians to extinguish the Indian Title to portions of the land will absorb a considerable sum of the proceeds of sales thereof."<sup>37</sup>

The land question never reached a satisfactory conclusion during Douglas' tenure in office. Arthur Edward Kennedy succeeded Douglas as Governor of Vancouver Island in 1864. Shortly after assuming office, Kennedy,

like Douglas, expressed concern over the state of Indian-white relations in the colony:

The growing difficulties with the Indian population must continue to increase while the extent of their lands is undefined and their just claims unliquidated.<sup>38</sup>

Amor De Cosmos, an elected member infamous for his racist beliefs, felt the most expedient way to deal with the Indian land question was simply to take all the land from the natives, thereby avoiding survey expenses and disputes. In May 1865, De Cosmos gave notice of motion that Governor Kennedy be,

respectfully requested to take such steps as to him may be deemed advisable to throw open the Indian Reserve in Cowichan to settlement, either by the Sale or leasing of such reserve or any portion thereof to bona fide settlers. And also that a similar regulation be made & applied to other Indian reserves respecting which it may appear advisable in order to promote settlement and the development of agriculture. 39

Kennedy responded with typical indecisiveness, saying the question should "be considered and reported upon" by a three man committee comprised of the Acting Colonial Secretary, the Acting Attorney General and the Acting Surveyor General; Henry Wakeford, Thomas Wood and B.W. Pearse, respectively. <sup>40</sup> The committee issued a "Report on the Working and Effects of the Land Proclamations," which supported De Cosmos' sweeping views

but checked itself by deferring to the wishes of Great Britain, as it was widely known that the Colonial Office opposed any attempts to prevent the natives from the enjoyment of their land, particularly their village sites. The committee stated:

It would be manifestly advantageous to the government to be possessed of the land now constituting the Indian Reserves, and that the Indian titles to them should be extinguished and the Indians removed out of all districts where the White men are to settle. The land so obtained to be open to settlement as other Crown lands-it would not however be politic or expedient to do so inasmuch that there can be little doubt that the Government are bound to respect those Reserves and only to extinguish the title of the Indians on ample and fair compensation which we consider is the position of the Crown with respect to the Indians and their Reserves. 41

The Songhees reserve, centrally located on the inner harbour, was no doubt the area to which the committee directed its recommendations. Settlers who loathed the drinking and illicit activities that characterized the reserve and its environs called the natives a "nuisance<sup>42</sup> often insulting the modesty of females or families." Politicians were bedevilled as to how to rid the area of the Songhees, for the natives were occupying a site recognized by treaty as their assigned reservation. As the city had grown from a fort to a town, the Songhees reserve became an unsightly impediment to progress and

beautification. The Gazette sarcastically commented on the manner in which the House dealt with the reserve question,

The majority of the House of Assembly manifest an admirable faculty for the neglect of public business. The isolation of the Indian village would be a public benefit, therefore any action to that end must be avoided. 43

In February, 1859 House member James Yates spearheaded a movement to improve the harbour area and precipitated some heated exchanges in the House of Assembly. Yates began by inquiring of Governor Douglas if it would be possible to remove the Songhees and use the money from the sale of the reserve to improve the harbour. Douglas responded that the government was "bound by the faith of a solemn engagement" to protect the rights of the Songhees.<sup>44</sup> Douglas, however, did propose to lease portions of the reserve and have the revenue accrued therefrom spent to "raise [the Songhees] morally and socially to a higher position than they now occupy in the Colony."<sup>45</sup>

Yates considered this response "a process in fact of circulocution."<sup>46</sup> When Yates insisted that the Indians be "removed by purchase" and their reserve sold to benefit a harbour improvement fund, a fellow member, Joseph McKay

pointedly retorted that he "did not think committing a robbery upon Indians the most praiseworthy method of making improvements either in Victoria or elsewhere."<sup>47</sup>

Undeterred by McKay's allusions to his lack of scruples, Yates called Douglas' proposition "absurd" since the sale of the land would bring in such an "enormous" income that "if the proceeds were applied to the purpose intended by the Governor, the Indians would have such an idea of the value of the land that hereafter their title could not be extinguished by this means."<sup>48</sup> Yates' unhesitating

advocacy of misrepresenting land values to the Songhees drew a sharp rebuttal from another member of the House, Joseph Despard Pemberton, who,

thought in common justice the land reserved for the Indians ought to be used for their benefit; it was only now that these lands had become valuable, that the Indians were found to be a nuisance; if bad spirits were found to be the cause of preventing the improvement of Indians let the grog shops be removed. He thought if the Indians enquired how we had acquired their lands that we should stand in a much worse light than they would with their reserve. 49

When Yates moved that a select committee be appointed to consider his motion to relocate the Songhees, Helmcken, Speaker of the House, hotly declared "the motion to be a gross insult and if agreed to would be a lasting disgrace to the House: he would propose that

the subject should not even be entered upon." <sup>50</sup>

Despite objections to the manner in which Yates proposed to remove the Songhees, Helmcken suggested an address to Governor Douglas might be appropriate. The proposal stated the Songhees were not to be evicted from the harbour without compensation "in that a treaty had <sup>51</sup> been entered into with them." Helmcken raised several concerns over Douglas' proposal to have the Indians remain in their present location and to lease out portions of it to the public. One was that the value of the land "would diminish very greatly" and he noted that "when the Indians who by right now occupy this Reserve become extinct, which will probably be the case in a very few years, this Reserve would again become the property <sup>52</sup> of the Crown instead of the Town of Victoria." Helmcken proposed negotiating with the Songhees "or their Agents" for their transfer to a more "suitable" spot, such as <sup>53</sup> "Belle-Vue Island." Money from the sale of the reserve would pay interest to the Songhees for twenty years, after which time "the interest shall cease & determine and the debt be as tho' it had never existed (Always <sup>54</sup> provided the Indians exist so long)."

Although colonists anticipated and even hoped that the Indians would die out like one of Darwin's unfit

species, the government wasted no time in capitalizing on the commercial value of the Songhees reserve while it was still occupied by the natives. During a six month period in 1861, under the direction of Colonial Secretary W.A.G. Young, the government approved at least seven applications to lease land on the reserve.<sup>55</sup> A year later, Governor Douglas moved to implement the plan he had earlier outlined to improve the Songhees. House member J.D. Pemberton, magistrate A.F. Pemberton and E.G. Alston were appointed to act as agents in leasing out portions of the reserve.<sup>56</sup> The revenue accrued therefrom would be placed in an Indian Reserve Fund and used to benefit the Indians.

The Songhees lots proved to be popular leaseholds; in 1866 John Ash reported to the Acting Colonial Secretary Henry Wakeford that, "a large number of persons, perhaps forty or fifty" had their proposals to lease sections of the reserve accepted.<sup>57</sup> By 1871, a schedule of leaseholders indicates that almost all lessees held their lots on seven year terms. The exception was Lot 51, held by the Bishop of Columbia for twenty-one years; the Indian mission conducted thereon was required to pay only a nominal rental of five dollars per annum.<sup>58</sup>

In 1873, Indian Commissioner I.W. Powell stated in his Report on the Indian Tribes of B.C.,

The most important reserve in British Columbia is the Songhees in the suburbs of Victoria, which though comparatively useless in an agricultural point of view, is valuable on account of its proximity to the City. Some two or three thousand dollars have already accumulated from the portions of this land which have been leased, and in view of the prospective and important growth of Victoria, no doubt a handsome sum could be realized by further rental, or its absolute disposal. 59

There is little doubt that the Songhees leases proved to be a profitable venture but the actual administration of the fund seems to have been somewhat lacking in official supervision. In August, 1864 Augustus Pemberton informed Governor Kennedy that the revenues accrued from leases on the reserve for the previous four years which had amounted to over fourteen hundred dollars were offset by expenditures of just over eight hundred dollars. Kennedy apparently had little if any knowledge of the commission and responded with a blizzard of questions: what are the "expenses"- clothing, provisions?; what is the authority under which they operate, "the principle generally under which the trust is administered" and "what is the object of the commissioners?" Concern over the usage of the Indian fund was still evident nearly a decade later when, in

1872, Powell wrote to Spragge to find out just what had happened to the revenues from the Indian leases. Powell requested that Spragge,

instruct [him] as to the disposition of an Indian fund, now in possession of the Local Government, which has accumulated here from the rental of a portion of the Victoria Indian reserve amounting to some three or four thousand. 62

It is unclear how all the Songhess income was spent, but there is no question that the sums accumulated by the time of Confederation were considerable. There was however, no apparent consistency in giving disbursements from the Indian Fund. In March 1869, the Reverend H.B. Owens was denied reimbursement for just over one hundred dollars that he claimed to have spent on repairs and labour on the reserve. However, Reverend A.C. Garrett was permitted to use money from the fund to buy gifts for two Indian chiefs, "to secure their friendly influence."<sup>63</sup> The irony exists in the fact that these chiefs were being "influenced" with money that was legally their own!

Colonial officials also proved they were not averse to using the Indian fund for public spectacles that were of only tangential interest to the Songhees. In May 1865 Nanaimo Magistrate W.H. Franklyn wrote to the Colonial Secretary that he "was informed by the Rev. Mr. Garrett

that his Excellency wished that as many Indians as possible should be present at Victoria" for the Queen's birthday celebrations<sup>64</sup> and had offered free passage aboard the Steamer Fideliter to encourage the natives to undertake the journey. It would appear that the colonial government assumed the cost of such festivities. By 1872, the situation had altered. The government still "imported" natives to aid in this British celebration, but used the Indian Reserve Fund to finance it. W.H. Lee stated in his letter of 25 May 1872 to Joseph Howe,

It has been represented by the [Lieutenant] Gov. of British Columbia that it has been customary for some years for the government of that Province to appropriate \$500 [from the Reserve Fund] for a celebration by the Indians of the Queen's Birth-Day. 65

It seems very unlikely that the estimated 2,000 interior Indians who gathered for this celebration initiated it. Furthermore, since the money in the Indian Fund was intended for the exclusive benefit of the Songhees (from the lease of whose land the revenue had accrued initially), the appropriation of funds to pay for Queen Victoria's birthday celebrations was an extremely dubious interpretation of the Funds's objectives.

The Songhees eventually became dependent on white colonists, not only to safeguard their interests and money, but for their daily subsistence. They undertook

little agriculture on the reserve; nor was there any local industry to provide gainful employment. In time, the Songhees increasingly relied on whites for their physical needs. In 1866, Reverend Garrett questioned Colonial Secretary Young about the likelihood of providing the Songhees with staples, for the latter were "beginning to look for their annual grant of clothing, etc."<sup>66</sup> A pattern of dependency had been created that would not be altered for many decades.

Of the three racial groups studied, the Indians experienced the most profound change in their economic activities and, consequently, in their status within the colonial economy. The nature of the native economy shifted from one of subsistence to one based on the production of goods and services for the white society. Their traditional economy was an adaptation to the available natural resources and corresponded cyclically to their exploitation. The abundance of natural food sources had given the Indians "little incentive to alter nature."<sup>67</sup> The arrival of settlers, however, changed the functional meaning of the native environment; the post-contact economy of the native persisted as one of a gathering nature, but its emphasis changed in that "it became market-oriented and initiated at least a partial

profit motive." <sup>68</sup> Wild berries, particularly cranberries, were in heavy demand by white settlers, and the natives modified their traditional gathering economy to respond to this need. <sup>69</sup> Similarly, potato cultivation, which had been observed among the Straits Salish as early as 1842 by James Douglas, intensified with settlement and the resultant population increase. By the mid 1850s, the Cowichan Indians supplied potatoes to Victoria and Nanaimo as well as the west coast of Vancouver Island. <sup>70</sup> Not only did Indians provide white colonists with staple foods, but they also provided a paid labour force that was vital as long as the white population was small. However, whites treated Indian participation in the colonial economy as essentially temporary; when the population of the colony increased, the Indians were displaced by white workers and traders.

After 1843, when settlement began in Victoria, local and northern Indians congregated at the fort in search of employment or goods; Haida and other tribes arriving to trade at Victoria acquired "many blankets, powder, tobacco, whiskey and other articles" in exchange for furs and foodstuffs. <sup>71</sup> The economy of the native became increasingly diversified but it was ultimately dictated and controlled by the white population.

With the maturation and sophistication of the Victoria economy, a critical shortage of white labourers precipitated the need for extensive utilization of native labour in both the construction of colonial infrastructures and in the industrial and agricultural sectors. The use of Indian labour was extensive in non-industrial activities. J.S. Helmcken used Indians, "chiefly from the north" to clear land near the fort for his home.<sup>72</sup> These northern Indians included Haida who journeyed from as far away as the Stikine river with the object of obtaining work in Victoria so as to purchase potlatch goods for their winter ceremonies.<sup>73</sup>

Agricultural use for Indian labour was both private and commercial. As early as 1849, Puget Sound Agricultural Company farms at Gonzales, North Dairy and Church Hill all employed Indian workers.<sup>74</sup> Native labour in cultivation, land clearing, well-digging and numerous other agrarian activities continued throughout the colonial era but diminished as the availability of white workers increased.

Another sector where Indian labour was eventually replaced, in this instance often by Chinese immigrants, was that of domestic service. Prominent colonists such as J.S. Helmcken believed Indians were generally inadequate

to serve in such a capacity because of their laziness and refusal to "live in." Helmcken paid a domestic native called Dick two blankets and a shirt per month but was unimpressed by his performance and eventually employed Chinese workers. Helmcken recalled that his family "had our own Indian servants but Cecilia [his wife] used to do most of the work - Chinamen existed not yet."<sup>75</sup>

Before 1858, most Hudson's Bay Company servants were primarily concerned to exploit the native presence to their most profitable advantage. Many settlers shared this attitude throughout the settlement period, particularly those who hired Indian workers at very low wages. Both the Company and settler employers paid some of their native workers in goods rather than in currency, a practice which began in the 1840s and became a central feature of the early native wage economy.<sup>76</sup> In 1859, the government paid "scores" of Indians in Hudson's Bay Company blankets to improve the grounds around the surveyor's office.<sup>77</sup> Payment in goods allowed whites to pay relatively low wages for such work while persisting in their paternalistic treatment of the Indians. Even when natives were paid cash the rates were often below those paid to whites, as in the case of the Sooke road construction; James Douglas wrote that it was

"progressing favourably by means of Indian labour" and that natives were paid eight dollars per month while white workers "cannot be procured for under the rate of 2 and 2 1/2 dollars a day."<sup>78</sup> Low wages were paid to Fort Rupert Indians who journeyed south and found work in lumber mills, mines and fisheries "earning as a rule about \$2 per diem."<sup>79</sup>

The reality of low wages for native workers was pervasive and apparently accepted by the settler population. When "Scotty", a local character reputed to be insane, was brought before the court on drunk and disorderly charges, he offered to work in the lumber yards or the mines at "Indian wages" as an alternative to incarceration.<sup>80</sup> White administrators rarely acknowledged the discriminatory treatment of Indian labourers; on the contrary, they asserted that Victoria natives received treatment as good if not better than their European counterparts. In 1877, Andrew Elliot boasted to G.M. Sproat of what he perceived as preferential treatment of the colony's Indians;

It is undoubtedly the case that in no portion of Her Majesty's dominions has the native race benefitted so much by contact with the whites as in this Province, and it may be added that the Indians in the neighbourhood of white settlement are better off, and receive higher wages when they

work, than the ordinary European labourer.<sup>81</sup>

The native shift from a reciprocal trading relationship with whites to that of labouring dependency almost immediately resulted in an abandonment of traditional Indian habitats and activities, except, in the case of the latter, where those activities corresponded to white needs. In June 1859, the Weekly Victoria Gazette noted that the ripening strawberries and raspberries were "affording employment to squaws."<sup>82</sup>

Indian women also found employment peddling mushrooms or eggs door to door.<sup>83</sup> Natives continued in their traditional fishing pursuits but adapted it to consumer demands; the Weekly Victoria Gazette wrote that the local market for salmon was "plentifully and cheaply supplied" by Indians selling the fish at 12 1/2 to 25 cents each.<sup>84</sup>

Most Indians attempted to eke out a living as either poorly paid labourers or in small scale marketing activities. A variation to this pattern was noted by the British Colonist in 1860 when it reported that "several of the Northern [Indian] women have established small trading posts" at the Indian settlements; they purchased used clothing from the whites and resold the items at a profit to other natives.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, a year earlier Indians labelled "stick" men were said to be concerned

that the Hudson's Bay Company would enter the wood-  
 selling trade and compete for their market.<sup>86</sup>

When examining native change in the context of white settlement it is completely misleading to assert, as has Patrick Floyd, that "the essential change of the native economy was not what was taken away but what was added."<sup>87</sup> In fact, Indians became dependent on white settlers, both as sources of consumer goods and as employers. White settlement did add the possibility of Indians labouring in a variety of economic sectors, but this addition was instituted at the cost of native economic independence and, ultimately, self-determination. In 1860, King Freesy, leader of the Songhees, demonstrated an awareness of his tribe's vulnerability when he told an Anglican missionary of his distress by rumours that they were to be forced off their Victoria reserve;

They had heard it said they were going to be removed. This grieved them much. What could they do if sent away? - here they could get work, and dollar, and food, but if sent away, they must starve. 88

Native dependency on white society for economic maintenance increased as the colony grew; at the same time, white perceptions and treatment of Indians became increasingly harsh.

Prostitution was one means by which native women could earn considerable sums of money in the colonial economy. Intermarriage between native women and white traders was more common during the fur trade era than after colonization. The decline in inter-racial marriages, and the subsequent rapid increase in indigenous prostitution was indicative of a new colonial attitude; the comparatively unstructured life of the fur trade was superseded by settlers who transported notions of their own racial aloofness and superiority from abroad to the new colony. Native-white liaisons became illicit, seldom receiving the sanction of church or law.

Prostitution among Indian women remained a pressing concern of missionaries, politicians and settlers long after the 1858 gold rush ended. A writer to the Gazette complained that the road between Victoria and Esquimalt was "lined for a considerable distance with troops of young Indian females evidently for the purposes of prostitution."<sup>89</sup>

Men from the northern tribes brought their women to Victoria for prostitution and in some instances women captured as slaves were forced into this occupation. A local missionary observed in 1860,

Those [Indians at Victoria] nearest the whites are worst. Slavery has increased.

Female slaves are in demand. Distant tribes make war upon each other, and bring their female slaves to the market. You will hardly credit it, but it is strictly true, women are purchased as slaves to let them out for immoral purposes. 90

Similarly, a member of the Anglican mission observed in 1860,

A female slave has been known recently to be purchased for 200 dollars. The Indians buy their wives, but slaves are more costly. Upon an Indian woman recently killed in a brawl was found 300 dollars the wages of iniquity. 91

In 1860, the Gazette harshly accused white customers of being the principal cause of the prostitution problem and suggested "let the screw be tightly put upon the corrupters." <sup>92</sup> Furthermore, when a white miner recovered four thousand dollars in cheques which had been taken from him during a "nocturnal visit" to the Indian reserve, the Gazette quipped that he had displayed "more property than prudence" while "ruralizing in that classic locality." <sup>93</sup>

One local paper equated the status of native women in the city with Chinese females in the state of California. <sup>94</sup> This derision of Indian women was matched by a confidence in the superiority of the British race; Bishop Hills qualified his observations of a white man running a native brothel by stating that he "trust[ed it was] not an Englishman" who was involved in this

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 iniquity! Generally, white colonists were distressed by native prostitution only when it inconvenienced themselves. Rarely, if ever, were there indications that a concern existed about the degenerative effects that prostitution was inflicting upon the native peoples or their culture.

This observation can also be applied to the effects of disease and alcoholism. Rarely, and one suspects, only grudgingly did the authorities give money from colonial coffers to combat these two evils. The results of Indian disease were particularly tragic.

Local and northern Indians were highly susceptible to diseases transmitted from settlers and transients. Measles, tuberculosis and influenza claimed victims, but the most devastating epidemic was an outbreak of smallpox in 1862. In April a white traveller from San Francisco brought a smallpox virus that eventually claimed "one-third to one-half of the local Indians." <sup>96</sup> The colonial government's response was ultimately somewhat ambiguous. On 27 March 1862, Governor Douglas addressed a message to the House of Assembly:

It is desirable that instant measures be adopted to prevent the spread of the infection, and I would strongly recommend to the House the immediate appropriation of a sum of £400 to enable me to prosecute such

measures, by causing a separate building in an isolated position to be devoted to the reception of the present cases, and of others that may occur. 97

On 1 April 1862, the House Committee of Supply agreed to this request, and the money does appear in the colony's financial accounts for 1862.<sup>98</sup> The virus soon abated among the white settlers, but sporadic outbreaks within the Songhees reserve continued until the end of the decade. Douglas requested and received one thousand dollars in the 1863 estimates to continue to combat the disease; however, the colonial accounts for the following year state, "The following sums were not expended:<sup>99</sup> \$947.84 for expenses of Small Pox Hospital."

Indeed, it is doubtful that money appropriated to treat and prevent the spread of small pox was ever directed towards the Indians, who suffered the most from the disease. An Anglican missionary noted in his journal that smallpox had been virtually annihilated in Victoria, except among the natives:

October 10 The smallpox is greatly on the increase amongst the Indians in Victoria. The sick are sent to the Reserve, and placed in a small wooden building; and a man has been procured as attendant and nurse. But little can be done in the way of medical treatment. With the Indians the course of the disease is fearfully rapid; many die with scarcely any outward appearance of the complaint...a few hours, and the poor sufferer sinks beneath this frightful

scourge. 100

The Songhees reservation became the focus for Anglican missionaries attempting to aid the stricken natives. Within the Haida and Bella Bella camps the suffering was particularly acute. The Bishop recorded he had "never witnessed such horrible scenes of death, misery, filth, and suffering before."<sup>101</sup> Another outbreak in 1868 prompted an incredulous remark in the Columbia Mission Report; "in the course of a few days, forty five"<sup>102</sup> bodies were buried. Missionaries only partially succeeded in combating smallpox, owing in part to the suspicion among some natives of vaccination.<sup>103</sup>

This epidemic spread rapidly as visiting natives were sent from the city. The natives did not wish to leave, but politicians and clerics were anxious to have northern Indians, particularly those who refused vaccination, leave Victoria. The Bishop of Columbia wrote "September 10 There being several fresh cases of smallpox, the Hydahs, though unwillingly, are leaving for the North; several canoes have started."<sup>104</sup> Two weeks after their departure from the Songhees reserve, Bishop Hills stated that few of the banished Indians had reached home, most having perished enroute. The abandoned huts of the northern tribes were razed to prevent further outbreaks

among the Songhees; the hordes of natives who had congregated at the capital were gone by late 1868. "The blackened ruins of the houses and a few stray dogs are all that remain to mark the late crowded camp."<sup>105</sup>

Given the clear evidence that the Indians were devastated by smallpox, the government's decision in 1864 not to spend monies which were allocated for smallpox relief a year earlier demonstrates an appalling indifference towards the natives. Archdeacon Reece harshly criticized the colonial government for its refusal to provide funds or services to the Indians, particularly to alleviate the effects of disease and alcoholism. In 1870, Reece wrote to his colleagues in England,

I have before me as I write the Colonial Estimate for 1869. The estimated expenditure of the Government for that year is L122,250, and in that amount this item occurs: 'Expenses connected with the Indian tribes, £100!' The Indians in the colony being estimated by some at over 50,000, who pay duty on every article they consume, if it has been imported into the colony. 106

Archdeacon Reece further observed:

There does not exist an Indian hospital in the colony to ameliorate the evils which contact with a too advanced stage of civilization has brought upon its unprepared victims. 107

It is ironic that as one of the few individuals who spoke

out against the government's neglect of the Indians, Reece phrased his criticism in the context of a struggle between "advanced" and primitive races. Despite his sympathetic stance on behalf of the Indians, Reece was so thoroughly imbued with the racist and imperialist beliefs of his age that he never questioned the assumption that the whiteman's resistance to disease and alcoholism was an indication of their inherent superiority over the Indians.

Alcoholism ultimately proved to be the most persistent social problem among the Indians. The government attempted to halt the trade in "Indian whiskey" by passing a series of acts. The first of these, passed in 1854, prohibited "the Gift or Sale of spiritous Liquors to Indians." The numerous "excesses committed by drunken Indians" could only safely be checked through  
108  
legislation.

The Indian Liquor Act attempted to suppress the native liquor trade by eliminating the source of the difficulty: that is, the suppliers who were very often of European origin. In Victoria, the Indians found ready access to illicit liquor and in combination with prostitution a local cleric concluded that among the Songhees "their destruction is occasioned principally by

drink and dissolute habits."

Most of the legislation to stop the trade proved ineffectual. In 1865, the government advocated harsher penalties for selling liquor to natives, "to the extent of Corporal punishment being awarded for second

offences."<sup>110</sup> By 1870, however, the Columbia Mission Reports indicated that the government had all but abandoned the fight against the illegal liquor trade;

The Indian Liquor Law still continues in its unsatisfactory state. Nominally on the statute book, its practical operation so far as this district is concerned, is that the Indians in the Cowichan valley bring from Victoria and elsewhere, whenever they please, canoeloads of a horrible and deleterious compound known and "Indian Whiskey." 111

The colonial government frequently alluded to the cost of maintaining liquor legislation. In 1865, Governor Kennedy complained of the "worthless and degraded class of men" whose "maintenance in prison and repeated

convictions...falls heavily upon the public funds."<sup>112</sup> A year later, the House declared it was "practically impossible" to prevent sales of liquor to the Indians, "even if the whole of the Revenues of the Colony were applied to this purpose, a course entirely out of the

question."<sup>113</sup> By the mid 1860's it is evident that the government believed that no amount of money would stop

the illegal trade, and, therefore, any allocation of funds for this purpose was wasted.

The colonists' refusal to accept native testimony in the prosecution of whites selling the liquor was a partial cause of the failure to stop the trade. Despite a very real hesitancy on the part of some colonists to accept this evidence, this was not always the wish of the Colonial Office. When objections against Indian testimony in an 1858 liquor-trafficking case were raised in court, Police Commissioner Pemberton "ruled that the evidence could be received, stating that instructions from the Home Government, to this effect, were in the possession of the Governor."<sup>114</sup> Despite this information, when, in the following year, a white man was fined twenty-five dollars for selling liquor to an Indian whose testimony was later used against him, the Colonist was outraged, claiming that the Indians "are only truly happy when deceiving the whites."<sup>115</sup> One can only surmise what impact this sentiment had on the effective halting of the liquor trade, but it obviously did not buttress government policy or colonial legislation.

Administering justice to natives had implications far beyond the single problem of illegal liquor sales. British settlers found what they believed to be the

natives' own system of justice completely unacceptable. When an Indian offered to pay for a cow he had killed, Helmcken observed that this "shows how quarrels were settled Indian fashion by payment of damages. This idea of Indian law--and indeed it is their law--of payment applies even to person killed." <sup>116</sup> Reverend Holmes noted that an Indian whose daughter allegedly died of opium given to her by a "Chinaman" told him, "if [the Chinaman] will not pay me \$20 good he goes to prison." <sup>117</sup>

The Acting Attorney General stated in 1864 that imposing British justice on natives faced with criminal charges was troublesome for three reasons: the reliability of prosecution witnesses was questionable, as tribal vengeance was known to influence testimony; the Indians were generally ignorant of the trial system; and the Indians did not recognize the importance of an <sup>118</sup> oath.

Trials of native prisoners were well publicized. A Cowichan Indian, Willie Secalcher, was sentenced to hang <sup>119</sup> for the murder of two Saltspring Island Blacks. Similarly, an Indian "Mooeese" was sentenced to hang for aiding and abetting the murder of two Indians at Williams <sup>120</sup> Lake.

The actual process by which natives were tried,

particularly for capital offences, was fraught with difficulties. Although James Douglas stressed that British law was equal for Indians and whites alike,<sup>121</sup> in practice the Indians were at a serious disadvantage. Not only were they ignorant of judicial procedures but they had difficulty in finding competent interpreters to act on their behalf. In 1860 an Indian was brought to trial for the stabbing death of a Black, Thomas Brown, in the Tsimshean camp. The newspaper reported that "the prisoner<sup>122</sup> was undefended and spoke through an interpreter."

Despite the Indian's statement that he was too drunk to know what he was doing, he was sentenced to death by hanging at the Indian camp. Two days later, another native charged with the murder of an Indian woman was given the services of the same interpreter, Donald Macaulay. When instructed to read the indictment to the prisoner, it became evident that the "old H.B.Co.'s servant" was not qualified to undertake the task: "It was plain that although a professor of the Chinook and all other jargons spoken on this coast, the law's jargon was<sup>123</sup> too much for him."

In 1864, Thomas Wood, Acting Attorney General wrote to the Acting Colonial Secretary outlining the inadequacies of judicial procedures in Indian trials:

When Indian Prisoners are Indicted here in Victoria for a matter occurring at a distance they are practically without any assistance and they are profoundly ignorant of our trials or even of any trial at all. The witnesses who depose to facts against them are brought with them in the same ship and the whole trial is onesided, no witnesses can be expected to be called by the Prisoners to contradict and the prisoners cannot cross-examine or show as they might do the bias or falsehood of the witnesses. 124

Little was done to rectify these flaws in judicial procedures, although unsatisfactory attempts were made. Three years before Wood made his disparaging remarks, a bill had been introduced to amend criminal procedure in Indian trials, as the existing system had been "found to involve considerable expense, without any compensating certainty in the result." <sup>125</sup> Wood had been more direct: "it may not infrequently happen that the wrong man will <sup>126</sup> be hanged."

The treatment of Indians in the criminal courts is yet another in a long series of social forums in which they were placed at a disadvantage to white colonists. The framework through which Indians were viewed did not allow for the integration of that race with the Anglo-Saxon. Despite attempts by some whites, primarily those involved in missionary activity, to "improve" the natives, Indians were essentially viewed as "lower" on

the scale of humanity and, by implication, less deserving of those qualities for which the whites prided themselves: justice, equality and compassion.

NOTES

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2

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(Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1980) 2: 6.

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4

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5

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6

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7

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8

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9

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10

Journals, 1: 226.

11

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14

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46

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53

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54

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57

CC., Ash to Wakefield, 22 September 1866.

58

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59

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61

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CHAPTER IV"A SHARP CONTENTION ON THE QUESTION OF COLOUR": The Blacks

The treatment of Victoria's Blacks provides perhaps the strongest evidence of racism directed at the three racial groups studied. Many colonists felt the Indians and the Chinese were inferior to whites because of their appearance and customs of religion and work. By these criteria the Blacks clearly did not fall in the categorization of "lower" races; in virtually all respects, Blacks reflected the same social and moral ~~x~~ values as their white contemporaries. The Black experience demonstrated that, despite an implicit ~~x~~ assertion by the white population that equality was attainable through personal improvement, in reality skin pigmentation, rather than occupation, dress, deportment or moral values was the ultimate arbiter in determining equality and acceptance in the colony.

The Blacks who came to Victoria, beginning in early 1858, intended to settle permanently in the region. They came from the United States in order to escape persecution and the attendant social restrictions of racial bigotry. Consequently, some of Victoria's Blacks were "literate and skilled"; they were men who aspired to social equality and actively pursued economic gain.

Not every Black achieved monetary success but most had little difficulty in establishing themselves within some niche of the economy. Their skills were used in virtually all occupational strata and "within a very short time, Blacks were engaged in work at every level of the colony's economy, from manual labour to the professions." <sup>1</sup> Mifflin Wistar Gibbs is undoubtedly the best-known member of Victoria's Black community, for not only did he achieve considerable monetary success, but he was a vocal and eloquent spokesman for the rights of the Black people. Shortly after his arrival in the colony in 1858, Gibbs opened a general mercantile house in direct competition with the Hudson's Bay Company and was later recalled as being "a very successful businessman" by one <sup>2</sup> of his most respected white contemporaries.

The crucial consideration in comparing the success of some Blacks with the lack thereof among the Indians is partially attributable to the fact that the Blacks were able to invest money in Victoria's booming real estate market or establish themselves in business. In Victoria cash could easily be turned into profitable investments. For example, in 1867 Chartres Brew wrote to the Acting Colonial Secretary "an extensive land holder told me a short time since that for land near Victoria which cost

him one dollar an acre he could any day get \$150 an  
 acre."<sup>3</sup>

Six years after the arrival of the first Blacks in the colony, the California-based Black newspaper, The Liberator, commented favourably on the economic situation of Vancouver Island Blacks, who "nearly all own real estate, and are in comfortable circumstances."<sup>4</sup> This appraisal may have been coloured by the author's desire to present the Blacks in a favourable light or his own limited exposure to members of the Black community; by 1871, Blacks within the Victoria region occupied virtually every rung of the occupational ladder, and a considerable number were employed in unskilled jobs, making it unlikely that they would be in a "comfortable" economic position. Robin Winks listed Black occupations as a lawyer, restaurateur, "bakers, barbers, tailors, caulkers, and five men who held certificates to teach."<sup>5</sup> The 1871 census however, does not indicate the level of professionalism implied in Winks' statement; of 62 Blacks whose occupations are determinable fully half of these were described as being in "agriculture."<sup>6</sup> A full breakdown of the remaining occupations is listed in Appendix D, but the results clearly confirm that by the time of Confederation the Black community could not be

described as "monied" or professional in nature.

Having made the preceding assertion, two factors may have influenced this appraisal of Black occupations. The census was taken after a number of Blacks returned to America after the Civil War. Educated men such as Gibbs, who left the colony in the late 1860's, were likely to have felt that since equality was not to be had in Victoria there was little to keep them from returning "home" after the war ended. This may have resulted in the loss of many Black professionals who would have otherwise formed the upper stratum of Black society.

Secondly, a number of Victoria's Blacks moved to neighbouring Saltspring Island, an area outside the census district. Of those who left for Saltspring, many eventually became involved in agrarian pursuits such as sheep farming and crop cultivation; the Weekly Victoria Gazette stated that the forty settlers on the island in 1859 were busy "establishing themselves as agriculturalists upon their claims." However, John C. Jones, an "educated negro" with a teaching certificate from the University of Ohio, conducted school, first by private means and later with government support, as the Island's first teacher.

Generally speaking, the economic status of

Victoria's Black community was almost as varied in range as that of the predominant white group. On occasion, Black merchants and workers were the targets of discriminatory actions designed to serve as forms of economic reproach but which were often motivated by racism. In 1860, after Amor De Cosmos lost an attempt to win a seat in the Colonial legislature to the Black-supported candidate, he ran an editorial in The British Colonist implicitly encouraging others to boycott Black businesses and labourers:

What would be the daily receipts of the hundred and fifty colored labourers, restaurant, store and shopkeepers, of Victoria, were the patronage of all whites withdrawn from them. The question is important only to the colored population, in view of their projected declaration of independence, and Africanizing the colony. 8

The activities of the Blacks must be placed in the context of the era. The years immediately following the gold rush were generally prosperous, and Black residents were not perceived as an enormous threat to whites attaining wealth. The number of Blacks was relatively small, and they strongly desired to integrate into white society. However, in view of the racism which the Blacks experienced, any economic integration, if not monetary success, occurred in spite of their treatment.

The prosperity which some Blacks enjoyed allowed them to avoid being geographically partitioned off into Black "ghettos." Margaret Ormsby says Victoria's Blacks "settled wherever they chose" and rented pews "in the city's most fashionable churches." Another historian,<sup>9</sup> Frederick Walden, claimed in his 1951 thesis that Victoria Blacks established themselves "with reasonable ease" and that "Their enterprise had carried them into the forefront of society, revealed by active membership in churches, in public service organizations and in<sup>10</sup> theatre and concert work."

Neither of these assertions is supported by the evidence. The theory of an easy and natural transition from "nigger" immigrants to pillars of Victoria society is inaccurate. Walden is in fact completely mistaken while Ormsby's very brief appraisal of the Blacks is at best misleading. In actuality, there were numerous instances of racial discrimination against members of the Black community. These actions were a manifestation of a subtle yet pervasive conviction on the part of white colonists as to their own racial supremacy, a belief which was reinforced by a de facto political and social ascendancy over the city's racial minorities.

From the time of their arrival in 1858, Blacks were

received with an uneasy mixture of generosity and reluctance. J.S. Helmcken's appraisal of the Black presence at that time is ambiguous. There were, he recalled, "a goodly number of coloured people here also but no one molested them and they did not make themselves obnoxious." <sup>11</sup> The differentiation between Blacks and Americans is one that is apt to cause confusion since most Blacks were also "Americans." However, the distinction is meant to refer to non-Black settlers from the United States; when the Blacks became a topic for debate, the term "Americans" almost always referred to these white immigrants, particularly those who opposed equality for the coloured people in Victoria. Americans were frequently blamed for preventing Blacks from infiltrating social institutions. The resistance encountered by the Blacks was often blatantly racist and occasionally violent in nature.

The first of many disputes over Black segregation occurred in the unlikely place of a local church. Reverend Cridge had invited the Blacks to attend his Church of England services soon after they arrived in the colony. Shortly thereafter, a parisioner complained of the "aromatic luxury" of the negros and advocated segregation. In a letter published in the Weekly Victoria

Gazette in August 1858, an individual writing under the pseudonym of "Henry Sharpstone" angrily addressed Reverend Cridge on his policy of racial intergration, stating that

The sexton has repeatedly insulted our people by crowding negro men into the same seats with white and respectable ladies, and otherwise cast the whites and blacks together in such a regular alteration, as made [sic] the little chapel resemble a chess-board. 12

Mifflin Gibbs accused the Americans of bad grace in making complaints against the Blacks when they themselves only too often took Black women as "companions" for an "amorous intrigue or a nocturnal debauch," in their own country. <sup>13</sup> Despite the inflammatory words of Sharpstone, Reverend Cridge was steadfast in his refusal to sanction segregation, a stance that was clearly in compliance with the wishes of his superior, Bishop Hills, who wrote in 1860,

There has been a sharp contention on the question of colour; the Americans requiring that the coloured people should not be allowed to occupy the same place with them in worship. One Independent Minister, a Mr. McFye, [sic] favoured their unchristian narrowness; another maintained the English principle, that there should be no difference in the house of God. 14

In further writings, Hills stated that the Blacks were looking to the Anglicans as "the only religious body

which had stood out for their equal rights" and that the "Congregationalists...and even the Romanists have given way to the American caste prejudice."<sup>15</sup>

Parisioner response to Reverend Cridge's decision was mixed: some left the congregation, others continued to complain bitterly and still others accepted the decision. Reverend Cridge's support of the Blacks was not without its rewards; a religious schism which later necessitated Cridge's departure from the Anglican Church demonstrated the loyalty which at least some Blacks felt for Cridge when Bishop Hills wrote in 1875, "Many of the half-breeds and coloured people are gone with him."<sup>16</sup>

The Church of England was not, as suggested by Bishop Hills, the only religious body that was forced to deal with the issue of racial segregation. While Cridge was fighting the proponents of the so-called "negro corner," two ministers from the Colonial Missionary Society, Reverend William Clarke and Reverend Mathew Macfie, established missions in Victoria in 1859 and 1860, respectively. When the Blacks began to attend Clarke's services some white parisioners requested that the Blacks be segregated in a back portion of the church because they perspired profusely and that it was "uncomfortable" for the ladies. Black reaction to this

allegation was a predictable denial of the complaints and an assertion that they were being victimized because of their colour. Reverend Clarke refused to institute segregation, denouncing the disgruntled whites as being uncharitable and "unchristian."

The problem of the "negro corner" intensified when Mathew Macfie openly supported discrimination at his own services. Reverend Clarke had received virtually no support from his superiors and, to further exacerbate the situation, whites who refused to capitulate on their stand avoided his services as did Blacks who did not wish to attend a church that was de facto for Blacks only. Blacks adamantly wished to avoid segregation, as one historian observed,

Although there was a negro minister in Victoria, the negroes refrained from organizing their own congregation for they suspected that such a course would perpetuate that prejudice they were hoping to escape. 17

When Clarke realized that the Colonial Missionary Society would not support him, he desperately wrote to Governor Douglas in the hope of gaining support from some institution of authority. Clarke requested an "official certificate" which he could use as "incontrovertible evidence" that Blacks had never "been under any disabilities on account of color." A notation on the

letter indicates that Douglas concurred with Clarke's opinion, but there is no reference to him providing this certificate.

Clarke's attempts to marshal support for his stand were ultimately unsuccessful. In January 1861, the Colonial Missionary Society in London passed a series of resolutions denouncing racial segregation in its churches. The Society weakly attempted to justify its lack of support for Clarke's earlier stand by stating that "there were circumstances which naturally led to the desire to avoid, at that time, direct and authoritative interference."<sup>19</sup> For Clarke the measures were too little and too late in coming; he was forced to abandon his mission.

The election of 1860 provided another forum for racist sentiment. Attorney-General Cary informed the Blacks they would be eligible to vote by merely taking an oath of allegiance on voting day rather than having to satisfy residency requirements. Amor De Cosmos and Selim Franklin were competing for Black votes in the Victoria Town riding. When the votes were counted at the end of the election it was clearly evident that the twenty-five Blacks who had cast their votes in favour of Franklin had cost De Cosmos the election; he lost to Franklin by only

fifteen ballots.

The Blacks were jubilant; after loud requests for a speech, Gibbs addressed the crowd gathered at Franklin's victory celebration: the Blacks, said Gibbs, felt "their cup of happiness overflowing at the enjoyment of those political privileges and rights which were extended to them by a magnanimous government."<sup>20</sup> Needless to say, these sentiments were not echoed by De Cosmos who began a campaign to discredit Blacks and to arouse racial fear and hatred. In a January editorial De Cosmos wrote, "There is rank absurdity as well as gross injustice in the idea of a colored man coming here fresh from slavery and gaining the franchise in four months."<sup>21</sup> Two days later, someone writing under the pseudonym of "Shears" in the Colonist stated the Blacks "always wanted a little more liberty than white men," and that, in choosing a candidate for the election, "The only question they asked was, who is most friendly to the 'nigger'."<sup>22</sup> Gibbs responded to these charges with measured contempt:

In a word, a man who pays so little regard to genteel orthograpy as to spell negro with two g's is not likely to obtain a very warm support from colored voters. 23

Gibbs and other readers easily established the identity of "Shears"; the writing style and the accompanying

diatribe against the Hudson's Bay Company clearly pointed to De Cosmos.

Despite his election loss, De Cosmos was yet to have his day. Only a few months later, the Colonist gleefully reported that a "large number" of Black American voters had been struck from the voters list and that in future they must comply with naturalization laws in order to vote.<sup>24</sup> The Blacks, however, complied with the new ruling; in 1861 twenty-five Blacks took the oath of allegiance as British subjects.<sup>25</sup>

The 1860 election demonstrated that at least one Victoria voter opposed the racial antagonism that was directing itself against the Black community. F. Smithea wrote to the Gazette on 11 January 1860 saying he would not support the candidacy of J.J. Southgate who had given Mathew Macfie ten dollars to build a church "the very foundation of which rests upon the strongholds of prejudice and hypocrisy."<sup>26</sup> The Victoria Gazette editorially implied that the roots of De Cosmos' protestations were hypocritical since De Cosmos himself had attempted to bribe Black voters.<sup>27</sup>

In 1860 numerous and diverse discriminatory actions were taken against the Blacks, in both public and private forums. Early that year a Black launched a suit alleging

racial discrimination against tavern owner J.D. Carroll. In Bastion versus Carroll, the Black patron, Bastion, maintained that he was the victim of discrimination when, after initially being refused service altogether, he was charged fifty cents for a glass of ale for the express purpose of discouraging his patronage. The court acquitted Carroll since he was a spirit dealer and not an innkeeper, and that as such was not compelled to serve liquor to anyone.

A few months later, Jacob Francis took a similar complaint to the courts; he too received no satisfaction. The owner of a local inn at Government and Yates streets had refused to serve the complainant on the grounds of his colour. As in the earlier case, the court decided that since Francis was not a guest at the place in question, the owner was not obligated to serve him. Since Francis had suffered no injury, the case was dismissed.

In 1862, violence erupted when George Carter, described as a "mulatto from Australia," was told by the owner of the International Hotel that he must leave because he was Black. A fight ensued. In the subsequent trial Judge Pemberton ruled, that while he regretted "the present state of feeling towards the colored people," the owner of the hotel had "a right to choose his own

company." Carter, however, was fined for assault as a  
<sup>30</sup>  
 result of the incident.

In June 1862, A.H. Francis attempted to obtain service at the Bank Exchange Saloon. When the owner refused to comply, the ensuing court proceedings ruled on  
<sup>31</sup>  
 4 July that bar-keepers must serve Blacks. The ruling of the police commissioner was in fact nothing more than a reassertion of an already existing law, and as demonstrated in the preceding examples, racial discrimination against Blacks could be implicitly sanctioned by illiberal judicial interpretation of those laws.

During the saloon disputes, the infamous "theatre riots" also occurred. The first riot happened at the Colonial Theatre in July, 1860, when a Black man forced his way into the parquette seating of the theatre despite being told by the management that coloured patrons were only permitted to occupy seats in the gallery, well away from white patrons who were permitted to be in the choice dress circle area. The Black in question was "pelted with rotten eggs by some men in the gallery"  
<sup>32</sup>  
 Black being seated in the parquette. The incident at first appeared to be an isolated one until the evening of 3 November 1860, when the ticket taker refused to allow a

Black into the dress circle. The Black forced his way into the theatre and was followed by others. A general fracas ensued before the police brought it under control. In the coverage given by the Colonist, De Cosmos exploited the opportunity to stir up racial tension by stating that there could have been "no less than 100" negroes in the theatre's alleyway and that they had forced their way into the theatre armed with clubs and  
 33  
 revolvers. De Cosmos declared:

The origin of this scene of ruffianism is said to have been the exclusion of a negro named Stephans from the parquet [sic] of the theatre about a week ago. It is said that the affair had been brewing for several days; and that the riot was the result of an organized plan on the part of the colored population, who, it is asserted, came fully prepared for mischief. 34

De Cosmos reported a few days later that a repetition of the riot might occur; after having earlier repeated rumours of the Blacks sending for reinforcements from Saltspring Island and the United States, De Cosmos concluded that "quite a number of strange colored men  
 35  
 were observed moving about town."

Despite warnings from the Colonist, the incident was not soon repeated. As for the allegations levelled against the Blacks involved in the riot, charges against three were dismissed for lack of evidence and Robert

Williams, the Black accused of carrying a revolver in the disturbance, was dismissed on the same grounds.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, testimony by witnesses did not substantiate accusations of a major plot on the part of the Blacks; estimates of the Blacks in the alleyway adjacent to the door were as low as only three people.<sup>37</sup>

The second significant outburst of racism against the Blacks in the theatres occurred a year later at the Victoria Theatre. In September 1861 Mifflin Gibbs and his expectant wife, along with his friend Nathan Pointer and his daughter, took seats in the dress circle for a Royal Hospital benefit. Gibbs was soon asked to move his party to the gallery but refused to do so, insisting that they would occupy the seats for which they had paid. A performer, Emil Sutro, refusing to play so long as the Blacks remained in their place, eventually left the theatre. During the performance a bag of flour was tossed upon Gibbs' party and a fight followed during which Gibbs struck a man he believed to be responsible. After the incident was made public, the Colonist published opposing letters on the matter: "An Offended Englishwoman" wrote to say that if some individuals could not stand to mix with the Blacks "let them [those offended] by all means stay at home."<sup>38</sup> However, "An Englishman" stated that

while the whites were wrong to throw flour upon the Blacks, the concert was "a perfect swindle on a large portion of the public" for the owner should have "warned" white patrons that Blacks would be permitted in the dress circle, thus giving them the opportunity to take suitable measures. <sup>39</sup> In the trial that followed, no patron would testify as to who threw the flour, and Gibbs was fined five pounds for striking the man he believed guilty. The trial did, however, bring to light certain facts that revealed a premeditated attempt by some whites to create a disturbance; the performer Emil Sutro had been <sup>x</sup> successfully bribed to make the complaint against Gibbs, and another performer said he had been offered fifty dollars to do the same. As well, it was established that John McCrea, the local merchant involved in the bribes, had also made a large bag of onions available to throw at <sup>40</sup> the Blacks.

The Blacks appealed to Governor Douglas, and later, to Governor Kennedy to end this form of public racism. When a deputation of Blacks visited Kennedy in October 1864 and asked his assistance to stop discrimination in the theatres, Kennedy sympathized but did nothing for he "was not prepared to point out how the grievances complained of could under the circumstances be

overcome." <sup>41</sup> A year later the problem still persisted for a Black by the name of John Dunlop was refused admission <sup>42</sup> to the Victoria Theatre.

After the worst of the theatre incidents had subsided, new incidents of discrimination erupted. The first was at the Farewell Banquet for the retiring Governor, James Douglas. On 10 March 1864, one John Davis wrote to the Colonist to state that he was refusing his invitation to the festivities because he had learned that two prominent Blacks, Mifflin Gibbs and Peter Lester, had been refused tickets "because they [were] men of color." Davis was scorned for his actions and no attempt was made to correct this apparent injustice. X

Discrimination was not new to Lester. In 1860 he had been called to serve jury duty, but the defendant, John Butts, had objected to his presence and Lester had been forced to withdraw. However, when Lester had presented himself the next day no objection was raised so "he took <sup>43</sup> his seat among the jurors." This was the last time a Black was called upon to serve jury duty in a criminal case. As late as March 1872, the Blacks were protesting their exclusion from jury duty, but the House rejected a resolution requesting the Governor to instruct the Sheriff to include the names of Blacks among those X

eligible for this duty.

Blacks who wished to participate in community organizations soon discovered that they were unwanted. Shortly after their arrival in Victoria, a group of Blacks sought membership in the volunteer fire brigade. When they were denied membership they formed the Victoria Pioneer Rifle Corps. The formation of the corps was both a means of demonstrating Black loyalty to the Crown and a way of asserting their status as citizens who would not be intimidated or embarrassed by rejection. The corps originally had "about 160 members"<sup>45</sup> and met regularly to drill on the parade square. The corps, however, was not free from the adverse actions of Victoria politicians and administrators. In 1864, the corps was not permitted to participate in the welcoming parade for Governor Kennedy; by custom, military processions precede all other participants and parade organizers found the thought of Blacks heading the festival to be undesirable. By 1866, the corps had all but disbanded owing to a lack of funding from colonial authorities but more importantly from a declining morale among its membership. When, in 1865, the Colonist wondered what had become of the African Rifles, a former member of the corps explained that their "enthusiasm and ardor" had "evaporated"

because of the poor treatment they had received at the hands of Victoria's settlers. The letter went on explain that the white rifle corps had received blatantly preferential treatment by the government in the way of funding and encouragement; "In a word," it concluded, "the authorities seemed ashamed of us, and we were disgusted with them."<sup>46</sup>

While it is true that the Blacks were victims of persecution, it is equally true that there were undesirables and ruffians among their number. The offences committed by Blacks in the colony were characteristic of the population generally: brawling, selling liquor without a license or to Indians and other minor offences.<sup>47</sup> One notorious Black, Joseph Lewis, had such a poor reputation that when officer Johnson Cochrane was murdered Lewis was arrested "on account of his general bad character and the fact that the murdered policeman had in his possession a warrant for his apprehension on a charge of stealing hogs."<sup>48</sup> In 1860, the Colonist reported that a gang of Blacks had beaten a white bookkeeper, but the charge was vigorously refuted as "a base falsehood" by Blacks who could prove otherwise and who correctly suspected De Cosmos had maliciously printed the article while he was still smarting from his

election defeat.

Although life in Victoria was often punctuated by incidents of prejudice, nearby Saltspring Island was comparatively peaceful, and residents were egalitarian in the treatment of its coloured settlers. Saltspring's Black settlers came in stages, rather than as an en masse migration. In 1859, four Blacks were listed among the names of twenty-nine settlers given permission to pre-empt land on the island and in the coming years the proportion of Black settlers steadily increased as some whites abandoned their claims and other Blacks came to the island or had their families join them. In 1861, the visiting Methodist minister Ebenezer Robson commented, "of the twenty-one houses in the district, all but four were occupied by coloured families."<sup>50</sup>

Despite the comparatively large numbers of Blacks in the settlement itself, the entire island community was vulnerable to attacks from the neighbouring Cowichan Indians. In his brief history of the island, A.F. Flucke notes that the Blacks in particular were victims of native antagonism:

From the beginning the Cowichan tribesmen, although showing no really dangerous attitudes, repeatedly told the settlers that they had no right to be on the Island. This seems to have been more particularly the case with regard to the negroes, whom the

\* maybe 5 : A Wm Richardson is listed as having 5 coloured children in the school, Jan 11, 1866.  
Detailed by George?

Indians insisted on regarding as inferior to themselves, with no claim to the respect normally shown to the whites. 51

The colonial government was well aware of the difficulties that could result if the local Indians chose to be hostile to the Saltspring settlers, be they Black or otherwise. In 1860, Governor Douglas assured the House of Assembly that the natives in the colony were "in a perfectly tranquil state" but qualified his remarks with the following warning:

The House of Assembly will have to provide the means for extinguishing by purchase the native Title to the Lands in the districts of Cowitchan, Chemainus, and Salt Spring Island, which are now thrown open for settlement. The purchase should be effected without delay, as the Indians may otherwise regard the settlers as trespassers and become troublesome. 52

In fact, the Indians were already frightening the island's inhabitants. On 9 July 1860, Thomas Lineker complained of the fighting and murderous activities of the Cowichan and Bella Bella Indians at Admiralty Bay. Although the hostilities were among the Indians, Lineker was clearly distressed that hostilities might be turned  
53  
against the settlers at some future date. Very little could be done by any of the island's settlers to curtail the vandalism and violence which was directed at them by the Indians; the natives "robbed the negroes' houses and

crops without compunction."

In 1868 the troublesome activities of the Indians apparently took a violent turn against the Blacks. One of the island's earliest settlers, William Robinson, was robbed and shot dead in his cabin. A mere eight months later, Giles Curtis, another Black settler, was murdered in much the same fashion. In 1869, J.T. Hollins, a white settler, complained to the Colonial Secretary that his family had been fired upon by Indians. Hollins indicated that he was very much aware of the hostilities that had ended so tragically for the Blacks; "all the settlers, as well as myself are quite uneasy and unsettled, several Murders having been committed on the Island, within the last twelve months." In that same year an Indian suspect named Tschuanhuaset was brought to trial for the murder of William Robinson after being turned in by another native. While it is difficult to know how reliable the informant was or how fair a trial the native received, the Indians were the first to be accused of any wrongdoing; Tschuanhuaset was found guilty and subsequently executed for the murder of Robinson.

Despite difficulties with the Indians, the documentation of the history of the early settlement on Saltspring Island indicates that the Blacks did not

experience the racial discrimination that was so prevalent in Victoria. One author has attributed this comparatively egalitarian settlement to intermarriage between the Blacks and those of other races: "Among whites, Indians, and Polynesians, the Blacks became just another group—and not always a distinct one, thanks to intermarriage."<sup>56</sup> There is however, virtually no evidence of a significant degree of intermarriage. If one were to use Victoria as a yardstick to measure the likelihood of Blacks and whites or Blacks and Indians marrying, the conclusion would be that it was indeed unlikely; the 1871 Victoria census shows that of 1,050 households surveyed, only two indicated the probability of such interracial marriages.<sup>57</sup> Since the Blacks clearly did not face the same antagonism as on Vancouver Island, the possibility cannot be altogether abandoned, but such an idea should be considered given the contradictory evidence of the 1871 census.

The question still remains as to why the Saltspring Island Blacks did not suffer the same discriminatory treatment as their Victoria counterparts. Charles Irby identifies four features of Saltspring Island Blacks: they immigrated via Vancouver Island, not directly from the United States; they immigrated over three years, not

en masse; they were a free population, not runaway slaves; and their hopes, fears and ambitions were essentially the same as whites.<sup>58</sup> He therefore concluded: "These factors, built upon an initial policy of ethnically mixed immigration and reinforced by a local history of geographic and social mobility, prevented the development of a distinctive black culture group or<sup>59</sup> culture history."

The factors which lead to the above conclusion do not answer the question posed. Firstly, the vast majority of Blacks who came to Victoria were not runaway slaves. Secondly, the Blacks who lived at Victoria also had essentially the same ambitions and desires as those on Saltspring. Finally, there is no reason to believe that a short sojourn on Vancouver Island would significantly change the Saltspring Blacks from those who remained at Victoria. With regard to Irby's belief that gradual immigration to the Island was helpful in minimizing the impact of the Black presence, one must remember that Saltspring Blacks represented a higher percentage of the population than at Victoria.

It is more likely that the comparatively peaceful life of the Island's Blacks is attributable to the nature of the Saltspring community; agrarian life allowed little

opportunity for social interaction, so that had the Island even possessed the facilities for such activities it is unlikely the residents would have had the same leisure time to enjoy them that Victoria's urban population possessed. Furthermore, farms were scattered geographically, whereas Victoria's residents lived comparatively close to one another, allowing for daily personal contact and the possibility of racial conflict. Also, the isolation of the Island and the mutual fears of the Indians may have acted to create a spirit of cooperation among Blacks and whites. While it is probable that some white settlers held racist attitudes, the nature of their island farm life made racism more distinctly a preoccupation of less vulnerable urban colonists.

One factor yet to be considered in the lives of colonial Blacks, on Saltspring Island and particularly in Victoria, is the possible impact of American immigrants upon them and their reception by whites. Robin Winks' statement that "Victoria's establishment accepted the Negroes from the outset, thus setting the tone to which many British residents responded,"<sup>60</sup> is misleading because it exaggerates the impact of this "establishment" in forming a public climate favourable to Blacks and it


speaks only of the British residents and ignores the city's numerous other racial and ethnic groups, particularly the Americans. As well, the statement is premised on the assumption that British settlers were less racist than other groups, making them more open to positive influences vis-a-vis the coloured population; in fact, on the numerous occasions of discrimination, the British element and, in particular, the colonial authorities rarely aided the Blacks. The Blacks accused the British of precisely the opposite of Winks' assertion; too often, the English allowed themselves to be cowed into adopting "American" racism. Silence on the part of the vast majority of whites on issues of Black discrimination was an implicit sanction of this behavior. Furthermore, it becomes increasingly evident that a certain portion of the British element clearly played both sides of the race issue to their own advantage. As the "superior" British race, they could belittle the Americans for the enslavement of the negroes and affect pretensions to racial equality for the colony's Blacks that were essentially meaningless. However, when outbreaks of racism did occur, the British were quick to blame the Americans while ignoring their own failure to translate their professed liberality into deeds.



Even if one were to adopt a more charitable stance toward the British settlers, the American influence undoubtedly had a detrimental and significant effect upon the Blacks. As F.E. Walden concluded:

If the Americans did not at first achieve high official positions in Victoria, they made their influence felt in more subtle though hardly less effective ways. The city in appearance became a small, but remarkably similar reproduction of San Francisco. Entertainment and organized social life of theatres and societies drew largely from American customs and memberships. So that while the British group may have had the initial advantage of officialdom, the American element gradually asserted itself through the social medium. 61

This assertion was certainly true for a Black correspondent of the Pacific Appeal. On a visit to Victoria in February 1864 he wrote, "There is as much prejudice and nearly as much isolation in Victoria as in San Francisco." <sup>62</sup> Without doubt, the "American" influence permeated all sectors of colonial society but was most powerfully felt in the social sphere.

The Blacks themselves did not denounce their national origin even though white Americans contributed to Black social unease. Victoria's Blacks came from the British and other West Indies as well as from America; those who did come from the West Indies numbered "fifteen to twenty" by 1861, while the remaining Blacks came to

Victoria from the United States. <sup>63</sup> American Blacks were anxious to keep their ties with their homeland, rarely forgetting "their traditional allegiance, <sup>64</sup> sympathies and friends" in California. Randolph Lapp asserted of the area's Blacks, "While large segments of the American black community sank deeper and deeper roots into the Vancouver Island community..their contacts with San Francisco were never broken." <sup>65</sup> In Victoria this was definitely the case; Blacks carefully watched American events and maintained traditional American celebrations. The American Blacks would celebrate the July 4 American day of Independence by gathering for an annual picnic at Cadboro Bay. <sup>66</sup> In 1863, Peter Lester and a number of  others donated nearly three hundred dollars to the anti-slavery movement in Pennsylvania, and when the Speaker of the House of Representatives visited the colony in 1865, Mifflin Gibbs and A.H. Francis told Mr. Colfax that the Blacks had watched U.S. events with "intense interest." <sup>67</sup>

With the end of the Civil War and the emancipation of the Blacks, a number of the colony's coloured settlers returned home. Given the fact that they had never realized the equality they had hoped to find in Victoria  there was little compelling them to stay. Mifflin Gibbs, so long the spokesman for the Blacks, returned to the 

United States in the late 1860's, having never conquered  
"that mildew-like feeling that lurks in the hearts of our  
enemies, i.e. prejudice."  
68

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CHAPTER V"RICE-EATING ALIENS": The Chinese

Discrimination and persecution against the Chinese differed from that experienced by the Blacks and the Indians in that it was more vehement and persistent. Unlike the Blacks, the Chinese did not possess a strong desire to integrate into the white community, a factor which antagonized colonists who regarded their own race as superior to that of the "heathen Chinese." The Chinese population became the target of overt political discrimination as well as pervasive, though hardly less subtle, social ostracization.

Many Chinese came to Victoria as sojourners, rather than as permanent settlers. Some, who came as a direct result of the Fraser gold rush, travelled northward from California<sup>1</sup>; others came directly from mainland China. Both groups apparently came with the same intention of profiting from the wealth of the gold rush and, very often, returning "home" with that wealth.

In the case of those who came directly from China, a number of factors combined to act as a powerful impetus for the large scale sojourning of Chinese in the nineteenth century. Victoria was only one of many areas in North America, Great Britain, Europe and Africa which

felt the immediate results of the diaspora of Chinese people during the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Many rural Chinese were displaced politically and economically by the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1865). Political unrest precipitated massive emigration particularly from the southern provinces of Shantung and Canton.

Chinese sojourners who left for the west could usually do so without creating great hardship for the families they left behind. W.E. Willmott has written that, "In southeastern China an emigrant left behind him a family embedded in and supported by a lineage in which other men could take over some of his functions," thus<sup>3</sup> alleviating difficulties for those they left behind.

This kinship network has also been a topic of study by geographer David Cheun-yan Lai who concluded that the Chinese who settled in Victoria (after Confederation) were part of a larger phenomenon of "chain migration": that is, extended families or clans from a specific region in China emigrated to British Columbia in steady stream, thereby populating some regions with a particular clan or family network. Lai's quantitative study of this phenomenon concluded that "there had been a stream of migration from a few villages in China to specific places in British Columbia where lineage groups

might have been maintained. Although Lai's study period is after the settlement era, there is no reason not to conclude that similar patterns of emigration occurred before 1871.

The effect of this migration was a further preservation of the Chinese identity as distinct from other settlers in the colony. While they saw themselves as being racially distinct, their primary social motivation was not to be "accepted" by whites but instead to preserve the networks of clan and family lineage which they transplanted from China to Victoria. The recalcitrance of the Chinese in assimilating into the colony fostered fear and resentment in other colonists. Whites feared the Chinese appearance and social behaviour and resented the economic competition they presented to local merchants and labourers.

A number of Chinese had been brought to Victoria from San Francisco to work as domestics in the households of American immigrants. The first of many Chinese who came directly from China arrived in Victoria on 18 April, 1860 on board the Norwegian ship "Hebe." This voyage brought 255 immigrant Chinese from Hong Kong to the colony's shores and five years later, over 1,000 additional Chinese disembarked in Victoria. One source

quoted by W.E. Wilmott, maintained "there were more Chinese than non-Chinese in Victoria during the 1860's, and when Governor Kennedy arrived in Victoria in 1864 the first man to shake his hand as he stepped off the boat was a Chinese businessman" who was said to be part of a delegation from the more than 2,000 Chinese said to be in Victoria at that time.<sup>6</sup>

The Chinese settled in a district near Johnson street called "little Canton."<sup>7</sup> Unlike the Blacks, the Chinese sought to segregate themselves physically from non-Asian colonists. The population of the Chinese community fluctuated seasonally as during the winter Chinese and white miners from the mainland came to Victoria. In November 1859, for example, the Weekly Victoria Gazette wrote a "large accession to our population may be shortly expected from British Columbia."<sup>8</sup> Edward Mallandine, compiler of the Victoria Directory soon found that assessing the precise numbers of the Chinese was not a simple matter; in 1874 Mallandine wrote to the Mayor and Council of Victoria City to ask that a peace officer conduct a census of the Indians and the Chinese because "great reluctance is displayed by the Chinese, who refuse in almost every case [to] provide information." Mallandine felt that if the

police took the census "the difficulty would disappear."<sup>9</sup>  
In 1871, Sergeant Macarthy had conducted a census of the Victoria area and made no mention of difficulty in enumerating the Chinese; the Chinese may have misled Macarthy without his knowledge or it may have been that, by 1874, the anti-Chinese sentiment was by then strong enough to make the Chinese reluctant to disclose their exact numbers. The arrival of Chinese immigrants was published in the daily press and reports of dozens or hundreds of additional Chinese arriving in the colony would doubtless have added to white anxieties, making the Chinese themselves aware of the necessity of concealing the extent of their population.

One characteristic of Chinese demographics was the disproportionately large ratio of males to females. The first Chinese female to enter the colony came in March 1860. "Mrs. Kwong Lee," accompanied by her two children, was reported to be "the first Chinese female that has ever set foot in the colony."<sup>10</sup> Very few other women followed. Fully four years later, the first wedding of two "celestials" took place in Victoria, and in 1871 only twenty-eight Chinese women were listed in the census. They were outnumbered by their male counterparts at a ratio of almost eight to one.<sup>11</sup> Given this fact, it is

surprising to find the Colonist announcing in 1872 that the selling of Chinese women in Victoria prevails "to an alarming extent."<sup>12</sup> An explanation to this declaration could be found in a number of realms: the census figures are incorrect; it took few such sales to constitute the use of that particular adjective; or Amor De Cosmos was once again exaggerating circumstances to further racial antagonism. It would seem unlikely that considerable numbers of Chinese females could have made their way into the colony without attracting notice, particularly since the introduction of Chinese females was feared as ruinous to the colony.

Victoria's Chinatown provided numerous activities for its inhabitants. At one time three facilities offered Cantonese opera. Restaurants and reading rooms were common as were gambling houses, opium shops and the brothels which rapidly "proliferated."<sup>13</sup> Chinese gambling activities soon became infamous among local residents, for games often erupted into brawls. In 1861, twenty-five Chinese gamblers were taken to the local jail for their activities and other arrests involved serious injuries<sup>14</sup> that had been sustained in gambling-related fights.

Chinese associations arranged for the disinterment and shipment of bones to China for burial.<sup>15</sup> In May 1869,

the Colonist noted that the bodies of twelve Chinese were on their way to China via San Francisco and that "a ghastly cargo" of five hundred corpses would leave San Francisco for the "Flowery Kingdom."<sup>16</sup> Before being shipped out of the colony some bodies were temporarily placed in storage in the Chinese "Dead House" on Store Street. This facility was once a topic of brief concern over its effect on the public health but after inspection was deemed to be no threat. In October 1871, the "Dead House" burnt to the ground. Since the companies that brought out Chinese workers were sometimes responsible for returning their bones to China, the destruction of the house could prove to be a considerable monetary saving, a point which led De Cosmos to conclude that the fire was "caused designedly."<sup>17</sup>

In Victoria there was little which the Chinese colonist desired that he could not obtain within his own racial community. Chinese merchants "acted as intermediaries between white society and immigrant Chinese" by providing goods and employment.<sup>18</sup> The Chinese community could not operate in total exclusion of other residents, but it was able to a large degree to isolate itself culturally from the rest of the colony. Associations and societies provided much needed social

services and reinforced racial exclusion by operating within a context of lineage or clan networks that were independent of white settlers. However, allegiances to particular groups had the opposite effect of weakening the solidarity of the Chinese as a potential pressure group.<sup>19</sup> One must conclude the latter point in view of the ineffectiveness of the Chinese to combat discrimination which grew rapidly in the late nineteenth century.

Despite their inability to curb effectively such political racism, Victoria's Chinese population did preserve its ethnic identity. Throughout the colonial period the Chinese were little more than tolerated, and they were unable to combat racial hatred. The Chinese immigrants did not perceive of themselves as "British" subjects. This lack of a nationalistic identification can be at least partially attributable to the heritage which they brought with them from China:

The Chinese migrated from a state that was not a nation and they conceived of themselves primarily as members of local extended kin units, bound together by ties of blood and language and only secondarily, if at all, as "citizens" of the Chinese empire. 20

Ties of clan and family were the most important, if not the only factor which acted to effectively transfer and

maintain the Chinese identity in British Columbia.

The Indians also feared and mistrusted the Chinese;  
Stella Higgins has suggested that, despite their various tribal origins, the Indians all "agreed on one thing—they looked down on the Chinese for their work habits."<sup>22</sup> Such condescension may be attributable to the fact that Christianized Indians found the Chinese habit of working on Sunday to be shameful. However, it must be borne in mind that native/Chinese hostility may have resulted from competition for jobs. Great numbers of hard-working, low-earning Chinese labourers caused further economic dislocation to Indians already experiencing hardship in a changing colonial economy. There is reason to conclude that an influx of Chinese workers infringed on the economic activities of the Indians, particularly in domestic and labouring capacities, in much the same way that they threatened white workers by the end of the settlement period. Racial animosity between the Chinese and the Indians is reflected in the census of 1871. Analysis shows that of the 1,050 households in the census area only two homes were jointly occupied by Indians and Chinese.<sup>23</sup> Physical violence between these two groups was<sup>24</sup> infrequent in Victoria but was common on the mainland. In 1858, the Chinese were accused of supplying the

Indians near Fort Yale with arms and ammunition and the Gazette implied that this was not an isolated incident.<sup>25</sup> As a rule, however, the two groups had little contact with one another.

Despite their pronounced lack of social interaction, the Indians and Chinese experienced at least one common European phenomenon: attempts at Christianization by white missionaries. In the case of the Chinese, such efforts were short-lived and unsuccessful. The conversion of the "heathen Chinese" was a lively topic of discussion at a "very fully attended" public meeting in Victoria's Lyceum Theatre on 25 November 1861 which enthusiastically resolved:

That the Chinese who are coming in large numbers to our shores claim our sympathy and efforts for their spiritual amelioration; the history of Missions amongst them proving that they are capable of being influenced by Christian truth. 26

In that same year, the Bishop of Columbia wrote of that a special agency should be "devoted to this interesting people."<sup>27</sup>

Local missionaries were not the only ones concerned with Victoria's Asian element. In 1861 the Lord Bishop of London gave a fiery address on the urgent needs of the missions in far off Victoria.

With regard to the Chinese, this work is not

only the performance of a duty towards those who are in great want of our instruction, but it is very necessary for the preservation of the religion of the colony...unless the colonists bestir themselves to make, by God's blessing, these Chinese into Christians, the Chinese will very soon turn the colony into a mere domain of heathendom. 28

The Bishop's oration of dire portent was met with loud shouts of "hear, hear" from his English audience. It is important to note that the Bishop articulated the common fear held by whites of racial contamination by this inferior people.

Early enthusiasm notwithstanding, the efforts of missionaries to convert the Chinese were feeble; even the Bishop of London's own Church had abandoned such efforts by the 1880s. Attempts by Methodist clergy was uninspiring; a missionary wrote in 1887,

Evening classes were once started for the Chinese to teach them to read, but while they eagerly attended them with the object of learning the language, they showed no intention whatever of going on to learn the faith of Jesus Christ. 29

The Chinese were never receptive to British evangelism. Attempts to convert them as a race were abandoned, yet such failure only served to increase the notoriety of the Chinese as irreclaimable.

The Chinese were feared and disliked because of their racial characteristics, but perhaps the most

vitriolic denunciations of the Chinese occurred as a result of their economic competition. Chinese workers worked long hours for low pay and were able to succeed financially where others might have floundered. The peasant origin of many of them meant immigrants <sup>30</sup> "possessed a business acumen which was exportable."

This characteristic also applies to the Chinese who came to Victoria from San Francisco. The first Chinese in San Francisco were wealthy merchants seeking trade in the booming city. Many set up trading houses which <sup>31</sup> "subsequently branched northward to Victoria." At the same time that Victoria's economy was prospering, hostility was developing in California against the Chinese labourers, who were in direct competition with white workers. The discovery of gold on the Fraser in 1858 was a signal for northward immigration to Victoria.

Financial gain was the chief motive for many of the Chinese who came to B.C. as unskilled labourers. Such an immigrant had a "clear intention of returning home" and <sup>32</sup> of "eventually being buried in his village." However, not all of the city's Chinese were able to find work after their arrival; in 1865 it was reported that "considerable distress" was evident among the new Chinese immigrants, "some of whom are reported to be actually

starving." <sup>33</sup> Areas where Chinese labourers did find work were in agriculture, mining, domestic service and, after Confederation, in railway construction. In fact, cheap Asian labour was initially seen to have distinct advantages to Victoria's white settlers, as Dr. J.S. Helmcken recalled some years later:

About this time [1858] too, some Americans, not being able to obtain domestic servants... sent to San Francisco for their own Chinese servants. [These Chinese] let their friends know what a good field there was here, so the Chinese heathen soon became abundant and then they monopolized the market garden and the washing trade. At this time the Chinese were believed by all to be an advantage and an improvement. Previous to their advent, the supply of vegetables had been scant. 34

At one time all immigration was vital to the growth of the city. Edward Mallandaine proclaimed in 1860: "let the never-failing stream of immigration supply the labour for the ever-to-be continued work." <sup>35</sup> Chinese miners were not always an unwelcome portion of the colony's population; when it was known that a "considerable" number of these workers were leaving British Columbia as a result of hostility by white miners, the British Colonist on 1 July 1865 urged a stop to the trend, as the white population was still too low and the Chinese contributed money to the colony in the form of business

licenses and general revenue. Chinese miners en route to the mainland spent an average of twenty dollars each in stores owned by Victoria merchants, most of whom were white, a factor which may have been an impetus for Chinese merchants to emigrate from San Francisco. A similar recognition of the economic if not social value of the Chinese was evident when in 1859, a correspondent from Yale wrote of the Chinese miners in comparatively positive terms: "They are a peaceful and industrious people-pay cash as they go, and their trade is not inconsiderable."

By 1871, the Chinese in the colony were involved in both professional and unskilled occupations and a considerable number were engaged in some form of merchandising activity. Chinese miners did not work exclusively on the Fraser River; in 1865 the British Colonist observed that the "greater number" of the Chinese entering the city were heading to the Sooke and Leech River gold diggings and that "500 to 1000" were expected to seek work there. Other occupations which were listed in the 1871 census for Victoria included: tailors, cigarmakers, barbers, two doctors, several grocers and almost a dozen "washmen." The largest numbers for given occupations were those in agriculture and

trade, although a half dozen were listed as cooks. What is significant is that for almost any essential service it was possible for the Chinese to patronize one of their own race, thus minimizing the culture contact between the whites and themselves.

In Victoria, the antagonism which had sent some Chinese north from California was very soon apparent among white merchants. In 1865, white wood dealers loudly accused Chinese wood-peddars of hawking unlicensed wood;

the wood is hawked about from House to House, and sold at prices which quite defy the Legitimate Tradesman...Our business has in consequence decreased 50 per cent...and will shortly ruin it all together.41

These allegations were directed at Governor Kennedy and the matter was referred to Charles G. Wylly, the assessor. Wylly flatly stated the charges were unfounded and, in replying to Kennedy, unsympathetically appraised the issue:

Up to the present time, the two petitioning firms, together with one other, now dissolved, engrossed the wood and coal business of the City: the Chinese have now stepped in and do certainly undersell them: for this State of things, the remedy lies with the Complainants. 42

The Chinese community had powerful roots in the Victoria but did not use this power to gain acceptance by

white settlers. They sought primarily to preserve their own culture. The industry of Chinese workers may ultimately be at least partially responsible for the preservation of their ethnic identity, but their acceptance of poor working conditions and low wages set a precedent for the future economic conditions of B.C.. Once it had been created, "this labour market became a self-perpetuating institution," that maintained a racially divided labour force within the province. 43

Although the Chinese did work for wages that were often lower than those of their white counterparts, they did not always accept working conditions they believed to be unreasonable. In at least two instances, Chinese workers went on strike for higher wages; in 1867, miners in Nanaimo struck and in early 1872 Chinese cooks in Victoria did the same. Although Nanaimo is outside of the geographical borders of this thesis, inclusion of this incident is important since it provides an indication of how it was viewed in Victoria. In both of these cases the response to Chinese actions was hostile. When the miners wished a raise to \$1.50 a day from one dollar, the British Colonist reflected that white miners received a full two dollars a day for the same work and since "he (John Chinaman) cannot well be replaced even at the

advanced rate, it is probable that his demands will be  
 complied with." <sup>44</sup> The article explained that even though  
 Chinese labour was cheaper, employing whites would be  
 more "profitable" since they were clearly superior  
 workers to the Chinese. When Chinese cooks went on strike  
 in 1861, the same paper stated,

The Chinese cooks about town have struck for  
 higher wages. They are already overpaid at  
 \$25 and \$30 per month; but like Oliver  
 Twist, these yellow pagans cry for more. The  
 demand ought not to be acceded to. 45

Amor De Cosmos was well known for his racial hatred  
 of the Chinese but what is less known is that the Amor De  
 Cosmos who was vehemently condemning the Chinese by the  
 late 1860's, had spoken against the imposition of a poll  
 tax on Chinese immigrants in 1860:

A heavy poll-tax would repel a class of  
 immigrants that we cannot at present afford  
 to dispense with. They may be inferior to  
 Europeans and Americans in energy and  
 ability; hostile to us in race, language  
 and habits, and may remain among us a Pariah  
 race...we are disposed to accept them as a  
 choice between two evils-no white  
 immigration or a Chinese immigration. 46

The remarks of De Cosmos in many ways epitomize the  
 sentiments that were doubtless held by many of his white  
 contemporaries. The use of Chinese labour was acceptable  
 only insofar as it did not compete with the interests of  
 white workers. It is clear that Chinese workers were seen

as a distasteful albeit necessary component in colonial development. However, racial hostility was not purely a function of economic competition; racist beliefs were pervasive in colonial Victoria and were directed against non-white groups for reasons that had little or no basis in economic reality.

When the Chinese did compete for jobs against white workers, the response was often to juxtapose the two races in an attempt to incite fear and anger against the Chinese. For example, an article in the Colonist railed against the dangers of Asian labour in the Nanaimo coal mines, warning that for the families of white workers their own "children [will be] deprived of bread by these rice eating aliens."<sup>47</sup> More than a decade earlier the same paper had reprinted an extract from the San Francisco Bulletin that opposed Chinese emigration by strongly stating that "the aggrandizement of the Chinese" did not make a country richer, whites must prosper instead.<sup>48</sup>

Local papers consistently reported anti-Chinese events and news from California, no doubt with the intention of establishing parallels in Victoria. White miners in California had attempted to "drive out" their Chinese counterparts in 1859, and in the following month,

outbreaks against the Chinese had risen owing to the fact that miners' wages had "fallen considerably" as a result of Asian workers.<sup>49</sup> Chinese immigration brought many problems to California, not just the lowering of wage rates. The Weekly Victoria Gazette asked, in April 1859, how such immigration would affect B.C. after describing the situation south of the border:

The evils resulting from their [Chinese] influx, [to California] are the degradation of labour—the depression of its rates of remuneration—and the gross immorality consequent on the presence of the female portion of the immigrants...which in its results on the sanitary condition of the resident population, in that State, is almost as terrible as its consequences in a moral point of view. 50

Chinese immigration increased throughout the settlement period despite the dire warnings of the local press. The British Colonist commented favorably on immigration laws introduced in the United States that were ostensibly designed to prevent the large-scale importation of "coolie" labour for southern plantations but that had a de facto result of discriminating against all Chinese wishing to enter the country. The article concluded that the "bill is admirably calculated, if not intended, to produce the broader result," of decreasing Asian immigration overall.<sup>51</sup>

Chinese in colonial Victoria participated in the

economy generally under the tolerance of the whites but often in spite of deliberate actions to curtail Chinese business and workers. This was done primarily through attempts to discourage immigration of additional Chinese or in at least one instance to penalize Chinese already in the city. Colonial politicians made deliberate attempts to single out Chinese under discriminatory legislation. In March 1865, the suggestion was made in the Colonial Legislature that, "a tax of \$100 [be placed] upon all persons who sell opium or allow opium to be smoked, eaten or drunk or their premises." <sup>52</sup> Such a description was synonymous with the common behaviour of the Chinese. Five years earlier, a public meeting debated a proposal to charge all incoming Chinese a head tax of one hundred dollars. Although the debate did not lead to legislation, in 1865 a member of the Colonial Legislature proposed a ten dollar head tax "on all Chinamen coming into this country." <sup>53</sup> Again, in 1871, Arthur Bunster, Member for Nanaimo, proposed discriminatory legislation against the Chinese in the form of a fifty dollar annual head tax. Bunster embarked on a diatribe against the Chinese in which he accused them of avoiding legitimate taxation. He loudly proclaimed, "I want to see the Chinamen kept to himself and foul diseases kept away from

the white people." <sup>54</sup> Bunster was left to withdraw the motion but it leaves one to wonder whether the other Members showed no interest in the proposal because they deemed it was unjust or because it was presented in an embarrassingly clumsy and obvious fashion by a rather inarticulate colleague.

The Chinese did not always accept the racist treatment of other colonists. Not only did they occasionally take job action but the Chinese appealed to executive authority for individual redress or collective action to stave off discriminatory proposals. In 1860, a delegation of three Chinese residents headed by merchant Kwong Lee, was given an audience with Governor Douglas to express their concern over a rumoured head tax. They left with Douglas' assurance that he had no intention of <sup>55</sup> introducing such legislation. Shortly after Arthur Kennedy became Governor of Vancouver Island in 1864, a Chinese contingent visited him to express their loyalty to the Queen and their hope for fair treatment under his <sup>56</sup> leadership. A year later, businessman Koo Loo wrote a letter to Governor Seymour to complain that a white man, Mr. Scott, had commissioned him to hire 29 fellow Chinese to work on road construction on Douglas Street and now owed him over seven hundred dollars. Koo Loo asked if the

government owed money to Scott, and if so could it be redirected to himself. Seymour replied, "I fear we cannot assist our fellow 'citizens'," since the government had no outstanding bills with Mr. Scott.<sup>57</sup>

Chinese who came to Victoria readily participated in the local economy but they virtually never integrated socially. This cultural exclusiveness exacerbated the anger of white settlers who feared a culture they could not understand. Whites especially resented the monetary success of the "foreign devils." In his study of colonialism and ethnicity, Chester L. Hunt observed this as a truism for many countries in which Chinese immigrants achieved economic prominence:

Their [Chinese] economic success naturally brought upon them the jealousy of the ethnic majority and this was aggravated not only by the fact that physical features differentiated them sharply, but also by their promotion of organizations and schools relating to their own culture. 58

When examining the social environment of the Chinese, one must consider the questions: How did white perceptions influence Chinese living conditions? Was Chinese exclusivity a cause of or a reaction to these perceptions? Given the evidence, it is likely that the introspective nature of the Chinese community was exacerbated but not caused by negative social perceptions

held by white colonists. The Chinese propensity to transfer allegiance patterns to new environments was not unique to Victoria, nor was the subsequent reaction by non-Asian settlers to this self-imposed social ostracization.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Chinese workers were tolerated in direct relation to the service and convenience that they provided to white settlers. Racial prejudice was most blatant and vitriolic when white economic interests were threatened although prejudice was not exclusively a function of this competition. British colonialism as it was applied in Victoria made virtually no allowance for the absorption of racial groups divergent from white settlers. Chinese workers were poorly paid and eventually became the target of social and political action on the part of whites to prevent their economic development. This created an untenable social reality for the Chinese: discrimination directed towards the Chinese impelled them to further exclusivity, which in turn generated more fear and hostility among whites because of the refusal of Chinese to assimilate. Like the Indians, the Chinese were scorned by whites who were angered at their refusal to adopt the social customs of a racially superior group--namely themselves.

NOTES

- 1 Sien, "The Chinese," 211.
- 2 Stanford Lyman, "Contrasts in the Community Organization of Chinese and Japanese in North America," ed. Robert Macdonald and Peter Ward. British Columbia: Historical Readings (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1981) 639.
- 3 Willmott, "Approaches," 41.
- 4 Lai, "Home County," 9.
- 5 Pethick, "Summer," 30.
- 6 Willmott, "Approaches," 45-6.
- 7 Ormsby, B.C., 167.
- 8 WVG., 19 November 1859.
- 9 VCA, Mayor/Manager's Series, E. Mallandaine to Mayor and Council, 10 January 1874.
- 10 Colonist., 1 March 1860.
- 11 Ibid., 31 May 1864.
- 12 Ibid., 18 August 1872.
- 13 Willmott, "Approaches," 46.
- 14 See :Colonist., 15 February 1860; 15 November 1861; 14 June 1870 and 11 February 1871.
- 15 Willmott, "Approaches," 46.
- 16 Colonist., 9 April 1869.
- 17 Ibid., 4 October 1871.
- 18 Sedgwick, "The Context," 18.
- 19 Lai, "Home County," 29.

- 20 Lyman, "Contrasts," 645.
- 21 Norris, Introduction, 18.
- 22 Higgins, 23.
- 23 See Appendix B.
- 24 See Colonist., 5 March and 28 May 1859 and 10  
April 1860.
- 25 WVG., 14 August 1858.
- 26 ACA, Mission Reports., Third Report, 25.
- 27 ACA, Bishop Hills Collection, Bishop of Columbia  
to the Secretary for the Society for the Propagation of  
the Gospel, 8 May 1860.
- 28 ACA, Mission Reports., Third Report, 61.
- 29 ACA, Bishop Hills Collection, Correspondence  
In/Out, 1840-1914, 14 October 1887.
- 30 Willmott, "Approaches," 41.
- 31 Ibid., 43.
- 32 Ibid., 42.
- 33 Colonist., 19 June 1865.
- 34 Smith, Reminiscences, 187.
- 35 Edward Mallandaine, First Victoria Directory,  
1860, 15.
- 36 Colonist., 1 July 1861.
- 37 Sedgwick, "The Context," 10.
- 38 WVG., 4 June 1859.
- 39 See Appendix E.
- 40 Colonist., 17 March 1865.
- 41 CC., Richard Broderick et al to Governor

Kennedy, 10 October 1865.

42

Ibid., Charles Wyley to Governor Kennedy,  
November 1865.

43

Ward, "Class and Race," 595.

44

Colonist., 24 July 1867.

45

Ibid., 4 January 1872.

46

Ibid., 8 March 1860.

47

Ibid., 2 September 1871.

48 Ibid., 12 March 1859.

49

WVG., 12 March and 16 April 1859.

50

Ibid., 2 April 1859.

51

Colonist., 30 December 1869.

52

Journals., 1: 174.

53

Ibid., 3: 325.

54

Colonist., 27 January 1871.

55

Ibid., 8 March 1860.

56

Ibid., 5 April 1864.

57

CC., Koo Loo to Governor Seymour, 1865.

58

Chester Hunt, Social Aspects of Economic  
Development (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966) 55.

CHAPTER VI"THE TRIUMPHS OF CIVILIZATION"

The development of colonial Victoria cannot be fully appreciated without an understanding of three concepts: imperialism, colonialism and racism. Imperialism was the impetus for the foundation of the colony, colonialism was the vehicle, and racism was the lubricant which allowed "men [to be] civilized off the face of the earth." <sup>1</sup> In Victoria, as in many other colonial settlements, these three forces acted under the guise of "Progress" to decimate and oppress aboriginal peoples and other "inferior" races. Colonists in Victoria nurtured a cultural relativism which gave them a false sense of superiority over Indians, Blacks and Chinese. This racism was manifested in numerous and diverse discriminatory actions; non-white colonists could not effectively challenge the hostilities they faced in the social and economic spheres.

The first group to feel the impact of colonization were the Indians. While there may have existed a degree of reciprocity between the whites and the Indians during the fur trade era, whites who came to Victoria with the express purpose of settlement did so "not so much to accommodate to the frontier as to re-create the

metropolis." <sup>2</sup> Whites sought to create an environment which did not allow for the incorporation of the indigenous population. Despite persistent attempts by missionaries to "save" and "reform" the Indian, in reality the adoption of white values and habits would never assure them equitable treatment.

In the words of one of Victoria's Black residents, those of his race came to the colony of Vancouver Island "not to seek social favors, but to enjoy those common social rights that civilized, enlightened and well regulated communities guarantee to all their members." <sup>3</sup> Those aspirations were rarely, if ever, realized in Victoria during the settlement period. As a race the Blacks never experienced sustained and demonstrated equality with whites; they were subjected to frequent demonstrations of persecution by white settlers of British and non-British origin.

The Chinese who emigrated to Victoria remained distinct from the larger white population, a fact that antagonized other colonists. Chinese exclusivity is not unique to Victoria's development; Stanford Lyman observed in his study of overseas Chinese that "cultural exclusiveness" was "a world historical event." <sup>4</sup> The Chinese response to discrimination was to become

increasingly introspective, and while they were not entirely isolated from white society, Victoria's Chinese were unable to develop an economic, political or social base from which to prevent the widespread persecution which developed in the years after Confederation.

Persecution was consistently inflicted upon the three races studied throughout the 1858-1871 period. The Indians were either scorned or, conversely, pitied. In the latter instance, white perceptions of the Indians as an immature race had a broader implication than merely placing them at the bottom of the scale of civilization; Indians were treated as children, unable to control themselves or to make judgements about their future as a race and therefore desperately in need of paternalistic guidance by missionaries and politicians. Some white colonists frequently alluded to the cost of administering Indian affairs and apparently felt little regret at the prospect of the native race succumbing to "civilization."

The treatment of the Chinese was similar to that of the Indians in a number of instances: whites loathed Chinese ceremonies, language, dress and religion. However, the Indians were deemed superior to the Chinese because natives adopted features of white society such as Christianity. Whites feared and resented the Chinese for

their refusal to "Anglicize" themselves. Whites treated women of both these races as threats to white racial purity and Indian women in particular were ridiculed.

The Blacks, by contrast, did have many apparent similarities with white colonists. Blacks were Christian, and generally speaking, exhibited the same moral values as whites. Furthermore, they spoke English and dressed in a "European" fashion. Despite these factors, Blacks were persecuted and shunned socially. Contrary to what whites implied to the Chinese and Indians, adopting the trappings of Anglo-Saxons was not a means of receiving equitable treatment in colonial Victoria.

All three races were victims of persecution. This was particularly true when an "inferior" race competed economically with whites. In Victoria, there was a very close connection between the social and economic causes of racial antagonism. The white population was tolerant of limited economic achievement, as with the Blacks, but was extremely hostile to Chinese competition. Chinese success directly threatened white workers and indirectly challenged the latter's notion of white racial superiority. There is no doubt that economic competition produced the most vehement applications of racism by whites.

Indians, Blacks and Chinese responded differently to persecution. The Indians did not organize interest groups to promote their needs. Some Blacks did resist prejudice but many simply left the colony. The Chinese occasionally sought ways to defend themselves but these efforts were sporadic and ineffectual. After 1871, anti-Chinese sentiment intensified, and the Chinese were unable to reverse a tide of hostility that then swept the province.

Not all colonists were overtly racist and in some instances individuals did protest the treatment of the colony's racial minorities. When Governor Douglas stood firm on his commitment to honor the rights of the Songhees to occupy their village site at Victoria, he was ridiculed by Amor De Cosmos for having "bow and arrow proclivities."<sup>5</sup> However, a man such as James Douglas had both the official stature and personal strength to withstand the "vituperative abuse" that, said the Gazette, filled the pages of the British Colonist and was the result of "an ill-directed, jaundiced and disappointed mind."<sup>6</sup> Amor De Cosmos was without doubt an extremely outspoken man. Although his views may have appeared unusual, in fact there were few instances where he was challenged in his denunciations of the colony's racial minorities. Given the cultural heritage that most

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of Victoria's settlers brought with them from abroad, it is more likely that men such as De Cosmos reflected rather than formed public sentiment towards the Indians, Chinese and Blacks.

It may well be posited by some that the relations which existed between whites and other races was a result of class antagonisms and not so much vague notions of prejudice and racial superiority on the part of whites. In attempting to address this issue in the context of Victorian Britain, Christine Bolt concluded that "racial and class prejudices were so intertwined in Victorian times that it is hard to separate them."<sup>7</sup> This was true in colonial situations other than Victoria; Immanuel Wallerstein observed in his study of African colonialism that when considering factors of social differentiation such as education, occupation and income, "functional stratification took on the face of racial stratification."<sup>8</sup> In Victoria, the difficulty in analysing race relations along class lines becomes evident when one considers the treatment of men such as Mifflin Wistar Gibbs. Intelligent, articulate and a successful owner of his own business, Gibbs and other Blacks like him were shunned from the company of virtually all economic classes of white society. The

treatment which the Blacks received in Victoria necessitates the conclusion that the most compelling feature of Black/white relationships was racial prejudice and not class conflict. This is not to say that class antagonisms were not present but rather that, if one were to rate the relative importance of race and class in colonial Victoria, or Africa as suggested by Wallerstein, one would have to conclude that the two cannot be isolated from one another and furthermore, that race could be a determinant of class.

It is also important to recall the decided lack of social interaction between all four racial groups, a point further strengthened by the absence of inter-racial cohabitation in colonial Victoria. After 1858, marriage or cohabitation between races was an increasingly rare occurrence and the pattern remained true across all class boundaries. Peter Ward observed in his study of racial minorities in post-Confederation B.C. that there was a low incidence of inter-racial marriages, and he concluded that "the family, the basic unit of social organization in the community, also revealed the profound ethnocentric impulse which divided provincial society."<sup>9</sup>

One scholar has argued that prior to 1843, Vancouver Island "was the object of competition between the

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Imperial interests of Great Britain and the territorial aspirations of American homesteaders." <sup>10</sup> Throughout its development, Victoria maintained ties to Britain and continued to be influenced by political and intellectual currents that were eventually incorporated into its own social milieu. American influences continued to play a decisive role in colonial events, directly by the presence of numerous American immigrants and indirectly by the desire of British colonists to define themselves as distinct from those same immigrants.

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It is not entirely clear how Britain viewed Victoria, but according to A.G. Dallas' correspondence from the United Kingdom in 1866, "nobody" he stated, "in this country gives two straws what becomes of V.I. or B.C." <sup>11</sup> In Victoria, however, sentiment towards Britain and the empire was for the most part positive. It is this concept of "empire" and imperialism that gave colonists in Victoria a common basis of sentiment with the rest of Canada. The loyalty and attachment which colonists on Vancouver Island and later, in the province of British Columbia, felt for Great Britain was just part of a developing national sentiment that was emerging in Canada in the 1870's and would continue until the turn of the century. In The Sense of Power, Carl Berger traces the

Victoria  
Canada

birth and development of the "Canada First" movement through key figures of Canadian nationalism such as George Grant and George Denison. Berger asserts that "Canadian imperialism was one variety of Canadian nationalism - a type of awareness of nationality which rested upon a certain understanding of history, the national character, and the national mission."<sup>12</sup> Berger's belief that Canadians wanted an imperialism that was compatible with their own national aspirations is consistent with the sentiments of pre-Confederation Victoria. The cult of the Anglo-Saxon that was evident in central Canada by the last decades of the nineteenth century had been influential in Victoria since before<sup>13</sup> Confederation.

The "idea of imperial unity" was one of the central features of the Loyalist tradition that had been such a strong impetus to Canadian imperialism in the East.<sup>14</sup> In Victoria the bond with Britain was said to be "indissolubly strong" and colonists expected to receive guidance when appropriate; in 1869 an article reprinted from the Imperialist warned of the dangers in extending the franchise indiscriminantly to other racial groups, as was the case in the United States, and predicted a similarly odious outcome for the British colony, "unless

the strong hand of imperial power reaches in upon our growing confusion and not only commands but enforces common sense and order."<sup>15</sup>

In discussing the growth of Canadian imperialism in central Canada and the assertion of the Loyalist legacy, Berger posited that the economic depression and the political upheavals of the 1880's were catalysts for the development and reassertion of these two currents of sentiment.

It is in times of trial that the sense of nostalgia for a heroic history is heightened and in the midst of turbulence and change that traditions are the most useful for maintaining the assurance of security.<sup>16</sup>

In colonial Victoria the settlement era witnessed rapid economic changes as well as significant political alterations. The 1858 gold rush produced dramatic economic growth yet the next decade was a period of stagnation. Concurrently, the demography of the colony was altered to include significant numbers of American settlers whose presence challenged the national identity of British colonists and whose Black element further compelled them to choose a national alignment. Large numbers of immigrants from diverse racial and ethnic origins may have given Victoria its cosmopolitan facade, but they also stirred a need to identify with an entity

that was familiar and powerful. Political upheavals in the colony could only serve to further this need; in 1858 the colony was removed from under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company. Less than a decade later the Vancouver Island colony was united with the mainland and, by 1871, that colony had joined Confederation. In the short space of thirteen years Victoria underwent all the trauma, turbulence and public debate that accompanies such changes. Economic depression and political uncertainties in Victoria caused colonists to look to the United Kingdom as a means of sustaining tradition and achieving security through a link with empire.

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This connection with empire implicitly brought with it the ideas that made the growth and sustainment of colonialism possible. Racial minorities in Victoria were subjected to various forms of racial discrimination throughout the settlement era. To understand this phenomenon is to understand not only the history of the area or the groups themselves but the place of those same individuals, be they white or otherwise, within the larger context of an intellectual current that swept across the colony and the nation. The science of race was an antecedent to British imperialism and as such became as much a factor in conquest as the institutions that were

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transplanted from abroad. Indeed, the very reality of British expansion and the subsequently successful establishment of overseas colonies initiated a circular and interdependent belief system between notions of race and aspirations to political imperialism; Anglo-Saxon superiority justified the initiation of colonialism, while the implantation of "civilization" in these "abodes of desolation" reaffirmed their place at the top of the racial hierarchy. Victoria was no exception to the world wide penetration of these ideas.

It has been noted by one scholar of Victorian racial attitudes that "falsehood feeds upon the credulity of the ignorant."<sup>17</sup> Misunderstanding and fear as well as confused or distorted notions of scientific racism influenced actions by whites towards Indians, Blacks and Chinese. The operation of these factors led to an institutionalization of racism that was never effectively challenged during the settlement era and, in the case of the Indians and the Chinese, lasted well into the present century. The science of race did not create prejudice in colonial Victoria; it did however greatly contribute to its longevity as an intellectual force in the province. By ensconcing illiberality in scientific reasoning, racism gained an acceptability, if not respectability, that

*Racism*

allowed individual colonists to mitigate their own culpability for the decimation of the Indians or the persecution of Blacks and Chinese. In literally every sphere, political, cultural and economic, racist beliefs operated against the interests of these minorities. Circumvention of prejudice was rarely possible because of the powerful and pervasive manner in which it permeated colonial institutions. For the Indians, Chinese and Blacks, political agitation, religious conversion or class mobility could not transcend the barrier of racism that they sought to overcome.

NOTES

- 1 Smith, Reminiscences, 330.
- 2 Fisher, Contact, 96.
- 3 Colonist., 5 February 1859.
- 4 Lyman, "Contrasts," 641.
- 5 Ibid., 16 May 1859.
- 6 WVG., 15 September 1860.
- 7 Bolt, "Race," 142.
- 8 Wallerstein, Social Change, 5.
- 9 Ward, "Class and Race," 594.
- 10 Wright, "Settlement," 21.
- 11 J.S. Helmcken Collection, Add.Mss. 505, Vol.1,  
A.G. Dallas to J.S. Helmcken, 30 October 1866.
- 12 Carl Berger, The Sense of Power (Toronto: U of  
Toronto P, 1970) 9.
- 13 Ibid., See 59, 65, 80.
- 14 Ibid., 102.
- 15 Colonist., 23 July 1869.
- 16 Berger, Power, 95.
- 17 Bolt, Victorian Attitudes., 5.

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## APPENDIX A

Population Statistics at April, 1871.

		% of Total	
White Males	1,662	44.4	
White Females	1,257	33.5	77.9
-----			
Indian Males	141	3.8	
Indian Females	216	5.8	9.6
-----			
Black Males	127	3.4	
Black Females	90	2.4	5.8
-----			
Chinese Males	223	6.0	
Chinese Females	28	.7	6.7
-----			
Total Population	3,744	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Ratios: Males to Females by Racial Group

White	1.32:1
Indian	.65:1
Black	1.41:1
Chinese	7.96:1

Overall Population Ratio 1.35:1

Children: Aggregate Figures

		% of Total Population
Male	548	14.5
Female	625	16.7
Total		<u>31.2</u>

Source: 1871 Census in Esquimalt Charges Book, 1862

## APPENDIX B

Household Composition by Racial Group

	Frequency	% of Total
Exclusively Indian	84	8.0
Indian/White	57	5.4
Indian/Black	2	.2
Indian/Chinese	2	.2
Exclusively Black	62	5.9
Black/White	17	1.6
Black/Chinese	0	0.0
Exclusively Chinese	96	9.1
Chinese/White	15	1.5
Exclusively White	715	68.1
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	<u>1050</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Source: 1871 Census in Esquimalt Charges Book, 1862

## APPENDIX C

Determinable Occupations in Exclusively Indian Households

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Silversmith*	1
Total Exclusively Indian Households	84
Total Households	1050

\* All occupations in Appendices C,D and E are categorized in the manner in which they appear in the original document.

Source: 1871 Census in Esquimalt Charges Book, 1862

## APPENDIX D

Determinable Occupations in Exclusively Black Households

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Agriculture	31
Baker	1
Barber	1
Cabman	1
Clothier	3
Cook	1
Drayman	1
Dressmaker	1
Grocer	1
Livery and Stable-Keeper	1
Merchant	1
Mining	1
Restaurant	1
Shoemaker	1
Stovemaker	1
Tailor	3
Teamster	3
Tinsmith	1
Trade	7
Washman	1
Total Exclusively Black Households	62
Total Households	1050

Source: 1871 Census in Esquimalt Charges Book, 1862

## APPENDIX E

Determinable Occupations in Exclusively Chinese Households

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Agriculture	20
Barber	3
Cigar Maker	2
Cook	6
Fishman	1
General Trader	2
Grocer	9
Medical Doctor	2
Merchant	1
Tailor	2
Trader	11
Washman	10
Woodcut(ter?)	3
Wood Dealer	3
Total Exclusively Chinese Households	96
Total Households	1050

Source: 1871 Census in Esquimalt Charges Book, 1862

## APPENDIX F

Partial Population Statistics of Racial Groups in Victoria,  
1853-1873

Year	White	Indian	Black	Chinese
1853		800(a)		
1856		700(b)		
1858			~800(c)	
1863	6000(d)	800(e)		
1864				2000(f)
1865	5143	785	162	307(g)
1871	2919	357	217	251(h)
1873		120(i)		

Sources

(a) Sir Henry Trevan, Dairy on H.M.S. Virago MG.24/F40  
PAC

(b) J.S. Helmcken Papers ADD.MS. 505 PABC

(c) Mifflin Wistar Gibbs stated in his autobiography, Shadow and Light that "Three of four hundred colored men...and their families, settled in Victoria." (p.63).  
Bea Hamilton wrote in her book, Salt Spring Island that approximately 800 Blacks came to Victoria. (p.10)

(d) P.Floyd, "The Human Geography of Southeastern Vancouver Island" (p.87)

(e) W.E. Wilmott "Approaches to the Study of the Chinese in B.C."

(f) All 1865 statistics taken from Philip Hankin, Colonial Correspondence 18 January 1865 B-1332, File 706A PABC

(g) All 1871 statistics taken from 1871 Census in Esquimalt Charges Book, 1862 GR428, Vol.1 PABC

(i) I.W. Powell in Report of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for British Columbia, 1872. (p.24)

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