



University
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

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BSc (University of Ottawa, 2004)
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“‘Claiming Refuge’ A Settler’s Unsettling History of Hot Spring Cove”

Department of History

Monday, July 22, 2019
10:00 A.M
Clearihue Building
Room B215

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. John Lutz, Department of History, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Patrick Dunae, Department of History, UVic (Member)

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Dr. Misao Dean, Department of English, UVic

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Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

This thesis surveys the long human history of Hot Springs Cove, British Columbia, a small inlet on the west coast of Vancouver Island (formerly known as Refuge Cove). The study spans the period from the arrival of the earliest indigenous inhabitants, at about 10,000 years ago, to the present day, and draws upon archeological research, archival documents, other local histories, and ethnographic studies of Nuu-chah-nulth society, as well as some original interviews with contemporary users and inhabitants of the area.

Geographically, the study focuses primarily on the immediate vicinity of the Cove, and the territory of its traditional inhabitants, the Manhousaht. However, the lens of analysis is widened very regularly to encompass the larger region of Clayoquot and Nootka Sounds, bringing in the perspectives and experiences of neighbouring groups such as the Hesquiaht, Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht, as well as non-indigenous settlers in communities like Tofino. Periodically, the lens pulls away still further, to examine influential national and global trends.

This thesis has two key objectives. First, it aims to be a comprehensive, academically-sound survey of a place rich in history but only mentioned intermittently in other sources. The hybridization of micro-historical techniques and a local history approach is intended to ensure adequate contextualization and analysis, while also preserving rich and engaging detail. Engagement, it must be said, is the other key goal. From the outset, the author has aimed to create a publicly-accessible accessible work of public history intended to be read by a wide audience who, it is hoped, will learn much about the experiences and impact of colonization on the West Coast.

To maximize this learning, four broad didactic themes are traced throughout the narrative. Exploring 'perceptions of place', this thesis illustrates how differing worldviews led the Nuu-chah-nulth and Euro-Canadian settlers to interact very differently with the same landscape. By tracing changes in 'human-environment interaction', this study aims to shed light on the destructive pattern of repeated resource-overexploitation that emerged post-contact. Examination of 'colonization as a

process' lays bare the steady re-conceptualization and re-shaping of the landscape and its inhabitants set in motion by the arrival of Europeans. At the same time, a consistent emphasis on 'indigenous agency' is meant to show how the Nuu-chah-nulth actively adapted to, resisted and even re-shaped colonial processes. Ultimately, the recent resurgence in Nuu-chah-nulth political and economic power is interpreted as laying the ground-work for a profound reshaping of local dynamics in the coming years. Broadly speaking, this thesis argues that the history of human settlement, colonization and interaction that occurred in and around Hot Springs Cove can serve as an informative microcosm of the larger forces, events, and patterns that shaped the entire region. It concludes with the author's appeal for his neighbours – both indigenous and non – to seek to better understand each other's history, reckon with the profound impacts of colonization, and work towards reconciliation and co-existence in a way that will preserve the area's irreplaceable uniqueness.