

# **This Land is Our Land: The Politics of History- Telling in the Making of British Columbia**

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*The settler makes history; his life is an epoch, an Odyssey. He is the absolute beginning ... The settler makes history and is conscious of making it. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country he clearly indicates that he himself is the extension of that mother country. Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his own nation in regard to all that she skims off, all that she violates and starves. – Frantz Fanon.<sup>1</sup>*

This paper examines the role that historians played in asserting British sovereignty in British Columbia in the early twentieth century. I was drawn to the topic after reading Chad Reimer's *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 – 1958*. His chapter, "A Greater Britain on the Pacific: History in the Edwardian Age," introduced me to R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S. Scholefield, and F.W. Howay, three historians who published major works of BC history between 1900 and 1920. Because so little is known about this group, I decided to look closely at their roles in fashioning the region's past. In particular, I wanted to know how each historian defined the beginning points of British Columbia's history. I was especially interested in their conceptions of indigeneity. In order to highlight the innate British identity of the region, these historians had to confront one major issue: how to eliminate the idea of Indigenous sovereignty. To explore how these historians attempted to accomplish this task, I intend to study how they constructed representations of Indigenous peoples, and how they portrayed the region's 'founding fathers' in the process.

As I pursued this issue, I became intrigued by the work of a small group of prominent anthropologists – Franz Boas, James Teit, John R. Swanton, and Edward Sapir – who were presenting a very different story of indigeneity in the Pacific Northwest. They used local Indigenous historical perspectives, ethnogeography, subsistence patterns,

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<sup>1</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 21 – 23.

and ancient origin stories as a way to assert Indigenous sovereignty. By studying their works, I could see an effort to present the Indigenous peoples as the original inhabitants of the region. While following the work of these two groups, I decided to look at how the Indigenous peoples were articulating their place in the story of the region. This avenue proved to be rich with sources. Between 1900 and 1920, the Indigenous leadership throughout this province was organizing large political-protests to argue its case that all newcomers to the province were living on unceded Indigenous territories. In a long series of petitions, chiefs from across the province asserted that they were the true and legitimate sovereign peoples in the province.

What I saw in all of this activity was a heated intellectual battle for control over the region's history. In the end, the Edwardian historians won. Not only did they ignore the anthropologists' writings on Indigenous history and culture, but they also ignored the Indigenous protestors' parallel messages on this point. Instead, they stayed on their narrow course and redefined the Pacific Northwest as a distinct, British cultural zone. It helped that they and their work were supported by the provincial government which aimed to sever the Indigenous claim to the land-base.

These tensions form the root of my thesis. As we move into the twenty-first century, I argue that historians of British Columbia need to acknowledge the political role of their discipline, in particular, its narrow, racist underpinnings. For example, the three historians under study here founded and stocked the British Columbia Provincial Archives. My thesis is an attempt to understand how their endeavours were attempts to claim the Pacific Northwest land-base for the British settlers against the claims of the

Indigenous peoples of the region, and to encourage other historians to explore these efforts.

### The Edwardian Historians

At the close of the nineteenth century, J.R. Seeley, the founding father of British imperial history, called on his colleagues to promote the significance of the British Empire. He wanted it known that the colonies – Australia, New Zealand, the West Indies, Canada, South Africa, etc. – were not enclaves of British citizens, but rather “offshoots of the mother country, Greater Britain.”<sup>2</sup> Seeley framed the idea of race as a means of promoting nationhood and empire. He argued for a strictly British definition of the British Empire.<sup>3</sup> In other words, these were British lands where other races would be absorbed into the dominating people.<sup>4</sup>

In British Columbia, a small group of local historians – Alexander Begg, John Kerr, and Oliver Cogswell – identified with Seeley’s ideas. Because they lacked a central archive or library however, they were unable to accomplish Seeley’s goals. It was left to another generation of historians to complete the task of creating a British identity in British Columbia.<sup>5</sup> The historians of the Edwardian Age – R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S. Scholefield, and F.W. Howay – worked to create a British claim to the Pacific province of Canada. They formed a trio with similar values.

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<sup>2</sup> Catherine Hall, *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Reader* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1 – 2. Seeley refined his definition even further for a strictly English definition of race, but the Edwardian historians reinterpreted this definition to mean British to foster a greater sense of community amongst the white settler population of British Columbia.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Chad Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784-1958* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 44 – 46.

### R.E. Gosnell

R.E. Gosnell (1860 – 1931) was born in St. Francis, Quebec but raised in Ontario near Chatham.<sup>6</sup> He left high school early to work as a school teacher and then as an editor of Port Hope's *Times* and Chatham's *Planet*. In 1888, he moved to British Columbia to take a job with Vancouver's *News Advertiser*.<sup>7</sup> According to Terry Eastwood, "Gosnell was a journalist if he was anything."<sup>8</sup> He had little training as an historian. What Gosnell had however, was a passion for local history, and in British Columbia, this assisted in his career advancement. Through an earlier association with Ontario's Macaulay Club, an organization centered on debating and theatre, he had undertaken work on a local history research project. In British Columbia he saw a huge potential for extensive historical work. From his perspective, aside from the work of Hugh Bancroft, Alexander Begg, John Kerr, and Oliver Cogswell, the region's history was a blank slate.<sup>9</sup>

Gosnell made quick inroads with British Columbia's provincial government. In 1893 Premier Theodore Davie selected him to be the province's representative for the Dominion Committee on Canadian History.<sup>10</sup> The group was assigned to choose appropriate, historical textbooks that emphasized federalism. In the same year, Davie appointed Gosnell as British Columbia's first permanent Provincial Librarian. Gosnell used his influence with Davie to pass the Library Act, which enabled him to acquire

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<sup>6</sup> Henry James Morgan, ed. "Gosnell, R. Edward," in *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography*, ed. Henry James Morgan (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1898), 392.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Terry Eastwood, "R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S. Scholefield and the Founding of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1894 – 1919," *BC Studies* 54, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 40.

<sup>9</sup> Eastwood, "R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S. Scholefield and the Founding of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1894 – 1919," 41.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 40.

information, regardless of the format, concerning British Columbia's history.<sup>11</sup> Until being dismissed from his position due to a change in government in 1898, Gosnell acquired many documents (he received two thousand pamphlets from Alexander Begg and Gosnell provided a thousand pamphlets from his collection) as a beginning for the Provincial Library.<sup>12</sup>

Gosnell had a severe personal problem that affected his job situation: he was a serious alcoholic. Premier James Dunsmuir overlooked this and appointed him in 1900 as both his personal secretary and head of the Bureau of Information, thus formalizing his role with the Provincial Library.<sup>13</sup> In 1904, however, Gosnell left his provincial position to work as an editor at the *Victoria Colonist*. He maintained this role until 1906, during which time he wrote and published his first major historical work, *A History of British Columbia*. Its reviewers noted many mistakes and flaws, and Gosnell later admitted that it had failed in many respects.<sup>14</sup>

Gosnell's career received a boost in 1908 when Premier Richard McBride appointed him to the position of British Columbia's first Provincial Archivist. The new premier was initially concerned with how to fund an archival program. When Gosnell suggested an exhibit to celebrate the centenary of Fraser's 'discovery' of an inland route to the west coast, McBride had a change of heart.<sup>15</sup> Gosnell viewed his archivist role as an extension of his role as historian. The archives and the Fraser Centenary Exhibit

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<sup>11</sup> Eastwood, "R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S Scholefield and the Founding of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1894 - 1919," 50.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 44 - 46.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 45 - 47.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 49 - 50; Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 - 1958*, 51.



provided him with a chance to exercise both capacities. Through documents, he could argue that the true history of the region started with the arrival of the British. The archives and the Fraser Centenary Exhibit reflected this idea, as British sources were the first entries into the archives and were used to construct the exhibit.<sup>16</sup> Gosnell placed emphasis on the Hudson's Bay Company. He credited the company with having tamed the Indigenous peoples of the province and having created a viable claim in the region for Britain. He gathered many documents for the provincial archive from company posts.<sup>17</sup>

Gosnell's actions reflected his bias towards Britain. Most of the first archival collections he gathered had tangible links to Britain. Gosnell assisted in the formation of the British Empire League of British Columbia, and used his literary work to argue for stronger ties with Britain. He acquired sources that had connections to the British Empire, which in turn could be used to argue for the importance of the empire and the need for more sources.<sup>18</sup>

Gosnell turned race into a defining feature of the provincial archive. He excluded the Chinese, Indian, and Japanese peoples from the province's history with the rationale that they were aliens and hence not a part of the province's past. He adopted a similar stance in relation to 'Indians.' Lacking written sources, Gosnell considered 'Indians' as separate from the history of British Columbia. He highlighted the explorers, the men of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the multitude of encroaching settlers as builders of the province and its past, and as the region's heroes. They were the people to be

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<sup>16</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 - 1958*, 54; the complete list of sources that Gosnell employed are listed in British Columbia Provincial Archive's Department, *Simon Fraser Centenary, 1808 - 1908: Checklist of Books and Pamphlets* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1908).

<sup>17</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 - 1958*, 56 - 57.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

remembered.<sup>19</sup> This idea fit with J.R. Seeley's view of history as it emphasized the racial dimension of the empire: the British as Anglo-Saxons were to be cemented in the empire's past.<sup>20</sup> After his work on British Columbia's provincial archive and the Fraser Centenary Exhibit, Gosnell moved out of the archives and into other government jobs until 1916 when he returned to Ontario. Gosnell eventually returned to British Columbia where he died in 1931.<sup>21</sup>

### E.O.S Scholefield

E.O.S. Scholefield (1875 – 1919) followed a path similar to Gosnell's. Born in Britain in 1875, he moved with his family to New Westminster, British Columbia in 1887. After graduating from Victoria High School, he earned a position with the provincial government as a page in the Legislative Assembly. Through this position, Scholefield met Gosnell, who hired him as an assistant.<sup>22</sup> As Gosnell's assistant, Scholefield took over Gosnell's work while he was away from his office. The young page quickly learned the ropes of the library. He became chief librarian from 1900 to 1910. After the Fraser Centenary Exhibit, when McBride's government withdrew its funds for the archive and Gosnell vacated his post, Scholefield carried the project forward. With the help of Judge F.W. Howay, he excelled at this work.<sup>23</sup>

Scholefield acquired major documents for the archive. He focused mainly, like Gosnell, on items dealing with exploration, the fur trade, and the gold rush: all subjects

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<sup>19</sup> Reimer, *Writing of British Columbia History, 1784 – 1958*, 60 – 70.

<sup>20</sup> Hall, *Cultures of Empire*, 2.

<sup>21</sup> Eastwood, "R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S. Scholefield and the Founding of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1894 – 1919," 50.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 50 – 51.

dealing with Britain. Scholefield tried to attain documents from Spain, but his endeavours were not successful. He was successful however, in gaining access to the records of the Hudson's Bay Company in London, and he travelled to various places in British Columbia, Alaska, Washington, and Oregon to collect more items for the archives.<sup>24</sup> Most importantly, Scholefield arranged an agreement with the Bancroft library in Berkeley, California to copy and transfer items from their collection to British Columbia's archive.<sup>25</sup> Scholefield published some primary documents that pertained to exploration, the Nootka Sound Crisis, the gold rush, and the colonial governments.<sup>26</sup>

Scholefield shared Gosnell's biases. He collected materials from post-European contact periods; for example, maps illustrating Europe's thirst for scientific knowledge. Scholefield emphasized the idea that through these forms of knowledge the region had become British. Other European nations had lost any such claim due to an absence of documents. Like Gosnell, Scholefield viewed the early explorers, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the early settlers as men who made the 'empty spaces' they 'discovered' into British territories.<sup>27</sup>

The documents collected by Scholefield were highly racialized. Scholefield believed that the Anglo-Saxon, or Aryan, race represented the height of evolution, an idea again that J.R. Seeley championed.<sup>28</sup> Scholefield, like Gosnell, excluded peoples of Asian descent from the province's past because of what he perceived as their inferior and alien

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<sup>24</sup> Eastwood, "R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S Scholefield and the Founding of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1894 - 1919," 53 - 54.

<sup>25</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 - 1958*, 51.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 55, 67 - 70; Hall, *Cultures of Empire*, 2.

<sup>28</sup> Hall, *Cultures of Empire*, 2.

nature. He also excluded Indigenous peoples from history on grounds that they lacked written records. In addition, Indigenous peoples lost their claim to the land because the written records that existed showed that the land was not being used in a satisfactory manner.<sup>29</sup> Scholefield's reasoning matched Gosnell's, and perhaps was only more explicit than Gosnell's in his loyalty to Britain.<sup>30</sup>

When Scholefield died in 1919, he left an extensive legacy: articles in *British Columbia Magazine*, written-collaborations with Gosnell and Judge Howay on *British Columbia: 60 Years of Progress* and *British Columbia: From the Earliest Times to the Present*, respectively, and the ensured continuation of British Columbia's archive. As Reimer notes, the archive had become a hub of scholarly endeavours, and despite its biases, it helped continue the historical discipline into the twentieth century.<sup>31</sup>

#### Judge F.W. Howay

Judge F.W. Howay was the third member of the Edwardian history group. Howay (1867 – 1943) moved to New Westminster with his family in 1874. Like Scholefield, during his youth Howay encountered many of the province's so-called pioneer heroes. Howay graduated from high school, and was initially accepted into an arts program at McGill University. Howay later earned a law degree in 1890 from Dalhousie University. During his time at Dalhousie, Howay befriended the future

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<sup>29</sup> They were not being used according to European concepts of how land should be developed and employed for the betterment of the peoples that resided on or near them.

<sup>30</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 – 1958*, 61 – 66; BCA, British Columbia Provincial Library: Letterbook Correspondence Outward, 1900 -1913, GR 146, Volume 1, p. 133, Mflm 3620, Letter to Captain Wilfred Scholefield from E.O.S. Scholefield, 9 September 1902.

<sup>31</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 -1958*, 51.

premier of British Columbia, Richard McBride, and their friendship continued after they returned to the west coast.<sup>32</sup>

Howay's legal education prepared him to deal with historical research in a more critical manner than Gosnell and Scholefield. At the time, Dalhousie's law program required library research and seminar work. His education taught him to look for internal consistency as well as other perspectives to see if they corroborated each other. In this sense, Howay was the closest of all the Edwardian historians to a professional historian.<sup>33</sup>

After failing to defeat McBride in the provincial election in 1907, the Federal Liberals appointed Howay as a judge of New Westminster's County Court. McBride encouraged him to participate in the Fraser Centenary Exhibit. This was the beginning of Howay's historical writing career; he started writing books and papers for journals as well as educational texts. Additionally, he penned popular histories for magazines such as *The Beaver*. Like Gosnell, he celebrated the pioneers of the province's past. Howay was determined to challenge the notion that British Columbians of Anglo-Saxon descent lacked a substantial history. His volume of *British Columbia: From the Earliest Times to the Present* became the paramount piece of British Columbian history, and it held this position until Margaret Ormsby's work in the 1960's.<sup>34</sup>

Howay's works expressed similar ideas and themes that Gosnell and Scholefield were pursuing. History, Howay argued, could be used as a moral guide for the present. Like so many of his peers, he opposed Asian immigration. In his view, Asians were

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<sup>32</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 - 1958*, 71 - 72.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 71 - 72, 87.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 72 - 73, 82.

temporary visitors in the province, and thus, not entitled to its history. Howay also excluded Indigenous peoples from his history. He believed they were people without a history, and for this reason should not have claim to the region. Unlike Gosnell and Scholefield though, Howay used his legal background to argue against Indigenous claims to the land. He posited that the land was British through European international law. However, Howay's ideas regarding British Columbia's Indigenous peoples changed as he developed as a historian.<sup>35</sup>

From the beginning, Howay separated himself from Gosnell and Scholefield on a number of issues. Howay was against using individuals to explain historical forces. He also noted divisions within the province's Anglo-Saxon populations, specifically between Vancouver Island and the mainland. Howay felt that this division impacted the political development of British Columbia, something that Gosnell had not discussed. Howay was also not staunchly imperialist: he did not perceive such grand projects as the Canadian Pacific Railway as connecting the British Empire. His greatest deviation from his two Edwardian colleagues was his acknowledgement that historical works of the province needed to reflect the fact that the Indigenous peoples were present before the arrival of Europeans.<sup>36</sup> This however, did not entitle the region's Indigenous peoples to the land. On this latter point, Howay agreed with his colleagues.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 – 1858*, 74, 79 – 80, 81 – 82.

<sup>36</sup> Each of the historians started their historical works with Europeans however, Howay's second chapter in *British Columbia: The Making of a Province* centred on the region's Indigenous peoples. In that chapter, though, the Indigenous peoples were still only understood through their relation with Europeans. See R.E. Gosnell, *A History of British Columbia* (Victoria: Hill Binding Co., 1906), v; E.O.S. Scholefield, *British Columbia From the Earliest Times to the Present* (Vancouver: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914), x; F.W. Howay, *British Columbia: The Making of a Province* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1928), vii.

<sup>37</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 – 1958*, 75, 77 – 78, 79 – 80.

Howay accomplished much in his historical career. He helped create the Canadian Historical Association, and he served as president of both the Royal Society of Canada and the Champlain Society. Howay's work helped turn history into an academic discipline at the University of British Columbia. He published extensive analyses of primary sources dealing with the fur trade on the west coast. Many present day historians continue to use his publications on the maritime fur trade. Howay's work on the maritime fur trade caused a shift in his view of British Columbia's Indigenous peoples. After consulting the works of James Teit and Franz Boas, he concluded that the province's aboriginal peoples were not the 'savages' that most British Columbians believed they were. Ultimately, Howay's work gave the region a more complex understanding of the young province's past.<sup>38</sup>

#### Premier Richard McBride and the Founding of a Provincial Archive

In order to establish a British identity for the Pacific Northwest Gosnell, Scholefield, and Howay coordinated with the provincial government to establish a provincial archive. Conservative Premier Richard McBride propelled this mission. After Gosnell discussed the creation of Fraser's Centenary Exhibit, McBride offered seven thousand dollars to him to create the archives in addition to the travelling exhibit commemorating Simon Fraser's 'discovery' of the river that bears his name.<sup>39</sup> The river connected the inland and coastal trade zones for the Montreal-based Northwest Company (later the London based Hudson's Bay Company). McBride wanted the archive to

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<sup>38</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 – 1958*, 83 – 85, 89, 94.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

celebrate the province's founders, most notably Simon Fraser.<sup>40</sup> As a native British Columbian raised in New Westminster, he saw the provincial archive as a political tool that confirmed the legitimacy of the British hold on the province. Placing the archive within a wing of the Provincial Legislature reinforced its role as an instrument of the state.<sup>41</sup> McBride's support for the provincial archive depended on having available funding: in 1909 McBride removed Gosnell from his office due to a scarcity of resources.<sup>42</sup> When capital materialized in 1910, McBride rekindled his interest in the archives, but appointed Scholefield instead of Gosnell to the position of provincial archivist. McBride remained committed to the project: "from 1912 through 1916, British Columbia spent more per capita on its archives than any other province."<sup>43</sup>

To strengthen the British character of the provincial archive, Scholefield stressed the importance of collecting maps. These sources redefined the region as a British domain, and thus placed the region squarely in a colonial framework.<sup>44</sup> The Edwardian historians highlighted prominent British explorers such as James Cook and George Vancouver as performing the 'heroic' task of incorporating the Pacific Northwest into the 'civilized' world. Gosnell, Scholefield, and Howay claimed that Spanish and Russian documents were either unavailable or unreliable. They excluded alternative understandings of the Pacific Northwest such as Indigenous concepts of the region from

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<sup>41</sup> Eastwood, "R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S. Scholefield and the Founding of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1894 - 1919," 57.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1783 - 1958*, 50.

<sup>44</sup> Cole Harris, "Social Power and Cultural Change in Pre-Colonial British Columbia," *BC Studies* 115/116, no.2 (Autumn/ Winter 1997-98): 48; Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 - 1958*, 55.



this mapping project. This guaranteed that the provincial archives achieved a singular perspective and reaffirmed the region's so-called British heritage.<sup>45</sup>

Through the provincial archive, the Edwardian historians expressed their support for history based on Rankean principles;<sup>46</sup> that is, these historians supported the philosophy that empirical evidence was the most essential piece to writing history.<sup>47</sup> Similar to Ranke, these historians "insisted that only written records could keep history alive."<sup>48</sup> In this historical understanding, documents ensconced within the archives imbued works of history with objectivity.<sup>49</sup> With the provincial archives, the Edwardian historians attempted to solidify their authority because it made their writing objective and authoritative under Ranke's historical view. It also determined valid sources, and constituted what was history.<sup>50</sup>

### The Power of Credentials

The Edwardian historians were deemed credible scholars because they gained high standing within the province. They took leading roles in local academic societies: the Natural History Society of Victoria and the Vancouver Art, Historical and Scientific

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<sup>45</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 – 1958*, 55 – 56.

<sup>46</sup> By Rankean, I mean history according to Ranke's ideas.

<sup>47</sup> Kasper R. Eskildsen, "Leopold Ranke's Archival Turn: Location and Evidence in Modern Historiography," *Modern Intellectual History* 5, no.3 (November 2008): 431.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 437. In this article there is a direct quote from Ranke's work where he stated "I think that [periods without documentary traces] should be excluded from history ... as they contradict the principle of documentary research." See L. von Ranke, *Aus Werk und Nachlass*, ed. W.P. Fuchs, 4 Vols. (Munich, 1964-75), 4: 84, quoted in Eskildsen, "Leopold Ranke's Archival Turn," *Modern Intellectual History* 5, no.3 (November 2008): 437.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 442.

<sup>50</sup> Indeed, government officials used the archives to refute the idea that Indigenous land claims had not been extinguished. See British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), British Columbia Premier Papers, GR 441, Box 149 File 2, Memorandum For Mr. Vance Regarding Indian Title Question in British Columbia From Committee on Moral and Social Reform.

Association founded, respectively, in 1890 and 1894.<sup>51</sup> Through these organizations, the Edwardian historians gathered to hear lectures and confer on historical topics. In 1908, the year of the founding of the provincial archives, Gosnell, Scholefield, and Howay each gave seminal addresses on the province's past.<sup>52</sup> By meeting in these societies, the Edwardian historians appeared as credible scholars concerning British Columbia's history. McBride further reinforced this idea. In his introduction for the Pacific volume of *Canada and Its Provinces* he wrote:

Trained specialists have been chosen for the preparation of the various articles – men who have made a close study of [the province's] general and political history ... The names of the writers ... are a guarantee that British Columbia has been dealt with in an accurate and exhaustive manner.<sup>53</sup>

Gosnell and Howay were two of the authors with articles in the volume.<sup>54</sup> Thus, with their involvement in the province's most esteemed academic societies and the support of the provincial government, these historians were presented as the authoritative scholars on the subject of the young province's past. This support forced academics outside of the province to recognize the Edwardian historians as credible scholars regarding British Columbia's history. As Chad Reimer notes, "the writing of history was a crucial tool wielded by British Columbia's dominant society in its construction of social boundaries and its assertion of who belonged and who did not."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 – 1958*, 48.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>53</sup> Richard McBride, "British Columbia in the Dominion: Introduction," in *Canada and Its Provinces: A History of the Canadian People and Their Institutions By One Hundred Associates*, vol. 21, *The Pacific Province: Part One*, ed. Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty (Toronto: Publishers' Association of Canada, 1914), 3.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, ix. Scholefield most likely would have also been selected, but he struggled when placed under strain from publishers. See Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 – 1958*, 53.

<sup>55</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 - 1958*, 49, 63.

### The Production of a New Historical Rhetoric

With an active provincial archive in place and their authority on the subject determined, the Edwardians were able to produce their works of history. They quickly began presenting their version of the past in magazines such as *The British Columbia Magazine* and local newspapers such as the *Victoria Daily Times*.<sup>56</sup> They emphasized Britain's role in the Pacific Northwest and the role of the empire's citizens. For example, Gosnell published "A Plea for the Old Timer," which celebrated British Columbia's pioneer settlers.<sup>57</sup> Through these publication outlets, the Edwardian historians issued their British understanding of the province's past, supported by documents located in the archive.

The Edwardian historians acquired a broad readership that extended well beyond British Columbia. With the cooperation of major publishers - such as the Chicago-based S.J. Clarke - they distributed their books. Many were multiple volume works with both historical and biographical sections. These included, for example, Gosnell's *A History of British Columbia, Sixty Years of Progress: A History of British Columbia*, and Scholefield's *British Columbia, from the Earliest Times to the Present*. The titles asserted that British Columbia's British citizens were the most important part of the region's past. Through exclusion, their works defined peoples of different ethnic backgrounds as outside of the province's history. They portrayed 'Indian' lands as empty until the arrival of Europeans. The biographical sections highlighted British citizens. The historical and biographical sections combined attempted to provide an authoritative sense

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<sup>56</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 - 1958*, 163. Specifically note seventeen.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 163, 164. Specifically notes seventeen and twenty-eight.

of the region's history. With provincial archival authority and the backing of prominent publishers, the world accepted the Edwardian version of the province's past.<sup>58</sup>

Within their works, these three authors used various strategies to assert their position that Indigenous peoples were inferior members of British Columbia's community. When Gosnell described Alexander Mackenzie's encounter with a group of Indigenous peoples after he had reached the Pacific Ocean, for example, he stated that Mackenzie and his crew "again encountered the savages in greatly increased numbers and the little band of almost expended travellers seemed doomed to destruction."<sup>59</sup> In his article, "British Columbia: Some Odds and Ends of Early History," Scholefield stated:

The country was divided among savage tribes of Indians, who from time immemorial had held undisputed sway over the land. The ascendancy of the Indians, however, has long since waned and they are ... fast disappearing from our midst.<sup>60</sup>

In his *British Columbia: From the Earliest Times to the Present* Scholefield described the Nuu-chah-nulth as "trained thieves."<sup>61</sup> He described Mackenzie's encounters with Indigenous peoples of the interior in similar terms: "it seems little short of marvellous that a handful of men, by cajolery or threats, or by a diplomatic admixture of both, should be able to preserve their hold upon the lawless savages."<sup>62</sup> Howay issued a similar

<sup>58</sup> Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 – 1958*, 52 – 53.

<sup>59</sup> R.E. Gosnell, *A History of British Columbia*, 42 – 43. Another example is present on page fifty-two. Historians have interpreted the use of the word savage in describing Indigenous peoples of North America differently at times because in different periods the word has carried varying connotations. For the Edwardian historians, however, I believe that they intended for the word to mean barbarian and uncivilized in order to portray the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest as inferior to peoples of European descent, especially the British. For an example of how other historians have viewed the use of savage see Thomas G.M. Peace, "Deconstructing the Sauvage/ Savage in the Writing of Samuel de Champlain and Captain John Smith," *French Colonial History* 7, no.1 (2006): 1 – 20.

<sup>60</sup> E.O.S. Scholefield, "British Columbia Before Confederation: Some Odds and Ends of Early History (1776 to 1864)," *The B.C. Mining Record*, (1899): 1, in University of Victoria Microfilm collections, Mflm CIHM no. 14299.

<sup>61</sup> E.O.S. Scholefield, *British Columbia From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 91.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

message, when, after explaining the Nootka Crisis that occurred between the Spanish and the British, he concluded:

the result [of the Nootka Convention was] that the north-west coast ... was left without sovereignty in any civilized state: and thus it could become the territory of any nation that entered and occupied it.<sup>63</sup>

Clearly, the Edwardian historians viewed the Indigenous peoples of British Columbia as their 'savage' inferiors: in the eyes of the white settlers they were people that lacked sophistication and culture. This idea worked to the advantage of the Edwardian historians. Without culture, they could argue that the region lacked an identity as well as a history. By removing the Indigenous identities of the region, they claimed the Pacific Northwest as a region where the seeds of another culture could be planted: a space where a British identity had taken root. Secondly, they cast the Indigenous peoples of the region as the Other, thus enabling European nations, like Britain, to assume sovereignty over the region because, by constructing Indigenous peoples as the Other, the Edwardian historians established the Pacific Northwest as a region that was only defined and understood through the actions of European peoples.<sup>64</sup>

All three Edwardian historians turned Cook, Vancouver, Mackenzie, Fraser, and Thompson into heroes for their roles in 'discovering' the Pacific Northwest on behalf of Britain. They gave these explorers full sections in their histories and wrote in raptured

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<sup>63</sup> F.W. Howay, *British Columbia*, 33.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1990), 4; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives," *History and Theory* 24, no.3 (October 1985): 242. This is because by constructing the Indigenous peoples as the Other, the British defined themselves and other European nations as "sovereign subject[s]."

prose about their accomplishments.<sup>65</sup> Consider Gosnell's assessment of Alexander

Mackenzie: the explorer

lived to return to his native land and to receive from the King of England the honour of knighthood, an honour seldom won even in the brave days of old by a more gallant or a more blameless knight.<sup>66</sup>

Scholefield described Simon Fraser as the "spirit of the Anglo-Saxon race, one of the greatest propelling forces that the world has ever known."<sup>67</sup> Howay presented David Thompson as "the great geographer of western Canada."<sup>68</sup> The issue with these descriptions is not whether they are wholly true: these men indeed performed great feats. Rather, it is in what the Edwardian historians created with their praise of these men. With these images, the Edwardian historians created heroes of the British Empire as they traversed a foreign land and conquered it through their exploration.<sup>69</sup> For the Edwardian historians, the endeavours of these explorers formed the roots of the British identity in the Pacific Northwest.

Gosnell, Scholefield, and Howay employed history as a tool of empire. With their works, they attempted to eliminate the region's Indigenous identities and to replace it with a purely British identity. They claimed their narrative was definitive because it employed written documents from the past. For these historians, the existence of written

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<sup>65</sup> Gosnell, *A History of British Columbia*, v, 17, 28, 38, 58, 60; Scholefield, *British Columbia From the Earliest Times to the Present*, x; Howay, *British Columbia*, vii. Because of his emphasis on later periods in the history of British Columbia, Gosnell provided subheadings in his chapters for the explorers to save room for his intended focus. Also, David Thompson was the only explorer at times denied this attention.

<sup>66</sup> Gosnell, *A History of British Columbia*, 43.

<sup>67</sup> Scholefield, *British Columbia From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 235 – 236.

<sup>68</sup> Howay, *British Columbia*, 60.

<sup>69</sup> See Daniel Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 180. Clayton discusses how Europe appropriated lands on the Pacific Ocean through exploration, which enabled the collection of geographical co-ordinates. Thus, Cook, Vancouver, Mackenzie, Fraser, and Thompson conquered British Columbia for the British because they gathered the geographical co-ordinates required to incorporate the Pacific Northwest into the European sphere.

records was an essential element of history. Thus, with the cooperation of Conservative Premier Richard McBride, they established the Provincial Archives of British Columbia. They constructed this institution to confirm the British claim to the Pacific Northwest, and their own historical authority. The Edwardian historians were not alone in issuing a story of British Columbia's past. Anthropologists arrived in the region in the 1890s and fanned out across the province. By 1900, they began issuing books and articles that offered a very different representation of the region's past.

### Anthropologists Target British Columbia As a Test Site

The New York based German-American anthropologist Franz Boas was at the centre of the anthropological study of British Columbia. With his students and associates, he created a paradigm shift in thinking about the place of Indigenous peoples in the larger history of the region. This shift would be a direct challenge to the historical narrative of the Edwardian historians.

### Franz Boas

Born and educated in Germany, Franz Boas (1858-1943) made nineteen fieldtrips to and around British Columbia between 1886 and 1899.<sup>70</sup> He published his first article on the region in Germany in 1895. As a collection of oral narratives, *Indianische Sagen von der Nord-Pacifische Küste Amerikas* was drawn from his first four trips to British Columbia.<sup>71</sup> In 1911, while Scholefield was working on the Provincial Archive, Boas

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<sup>70</sup> Ralph Maud, *A Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend: A Short History of Myth-Collecting and a Survey of Published Texts* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1982), 202 – 203.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 48, 50. Examples of Boas's work include a paper on evolution and the environment in 1909, papers on race and culture, and lectures in 1896 on 'The Races of Man.' He also contributed extensive works on

published two theoretical pieces that challenged the foundation of the Victorian racist conception of culture: *Handbook of American Indian Languages* and *The Mind of Primitive Man*.<sup>72</sup> In Boas's view, culture was not a single, hierarchical entity, but rather a relative entity dependent on history and geography.<sup>73</sup> This thinking led Boas into a new frame work for thinking about British Columbia's Indigenous peoples and their place in the region's history. Through a series of prominent American Museum of Natural History publications (*Facial Paintings of the Indians of Northern British Columbia*, *The Mythology of the Bella Coola Indians*, with George Hunt two series of *Kwakiutl Texts*, *The Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island*, James Teit's *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, and John Swanton's *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* to name a few) Boas defended his position.<sup>74</sup> Boas seized on the idea of the Pacific Northwest as a testing ground for his new theory of racial equality and he drew in a number of students and colleagues to assist him. In his hands, Indigenous British Columbia became the foundational story of the province's past because his work no longer confined history to the study of Europeans and their descendants.

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British Columbia's Indigenous peoples that included such pieces as "On Certain Songs and Dances of the Kwakiutl of British Columbia," and "Myths and Legends of the Catloltq [Comox] of Vancouver Island." Franz Boas Professional Papers, <http://amphilsoc.org/mole/view?docId=ead/Mss.B.B61p-ead.xml#d10143063e3216930504704> (accessed 10 February 2014); Maud, *Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend*, 52.

<sup>72</sup> Regna Darnell, *Invisible Genealogies: A History of Americanist Anthropology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 37.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 49, 57.

<sup>74</sup> Maud, *Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend*, 81 – 83. This list is not exhaustive as Teit also produced *The Lillooet Indians* and Swanton contributed *Haida Texts – Masset Dialect* and other authors such as L. Farrand also produced works for this expedition. One of Farrand's works was *Traditions of the Chilcotin Indians*.



Boas was important for moving anthropology into the university.<sup>75</sup> In 1899, after two decades of fieldwork in British Columbia, he was appointed as a professor of anthropology at Columbia University in New York City.<sup>76</sup> He argued that the study of different cultures should not be confined to the physical world alone, but rather rooted in history, geography, and psychology.<sup>77</sup> By looking at similarities in linguistic structures, mythologies and material cultures across large geographical regions, he felt confident that he could trace the movement and development of individual cultures over time.<sup>78</sup> His goal was to debunk the entrenched racist concept of culture as following a single axis with Western Europe at its apex and the world's non-European peoples near or close to its base.

With this progressive mindset, Boas created a revolution in thinking about the racial foundation of culture: he was preoccupied with the connections between race, culture, and language throughout his career.<sup>79</sup> He understood that these elements led to different societal structures, but he argued against the idea that one society was superior based on these factors.<sup>80</sup> With his graduate students at Columbia University, Boas worked hard to discredit the Victorian concepts of race. The Pacific Northwest became his primary field reference for this work. Boas utilized his years of fieldwork among the

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<sup>75</sup> Steven Conn, *History's Shadow: Native Americans and Historical Consciousness in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 195.

<sup>76</sup> Maud, *A Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend*, 50, 86 – 87; Sol Tax, "Franz Boas," *Encyclopedia of Britannica*, 2014. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/70705/Franz-Boas> (accessed 10 February 2014).

<sup>77</sup> Darnell, *Invisible Genealogies*, 41.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 41, 48, 49 – 50.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

Kwakwak'wakw to build his case.<sup>81</sup> His analyses stood in contrast to those of the Edwardian historians. While the latter worked on documents culled from metropolitan centres (most notably Britain), Boas and his colleagues interviewed resident Indigenous peoples in remote rural regions of the province.<sup>82</sup>

These anthropologists fostered the growth of a new history that, instead of erasing Indigenous peoples, placed them in the foreground.<sup>83</sup> Using the Pacific Northwest region as a case study for this idea, Boas and his colleagues constructed a written narrative of British Columbia's past that was a direct challenge to the history promoted by the Edwardian historians. In their accounts, Indigenous peoples were the long-term sovereign peoples of the region with a vibrant historical consciousness.

#### James A. Teit

James Alexander Teit (1864 – 1922) was a major contributor to the new anthropological scholarship. Born on the island of Shetland (Scotland) in 1864, he settled at Spence's Bridge on the Thompson River in 1884 and married a Nlaka'pamux woman

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<sup>81</sup> Maud, *Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend*, 52 – 53, 86 – 96. Specifically referring to the number of sources listed citing Boas's involvement in research regarding the Kwakwak'wakw.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 81 – 83, 103, 105, 110, 112. The footnote three on page 103 and footnotes eleven and twelve on page 112 as these list the names of the Indigenous peoples John Swanton and Edward Sapir worked with.

<sup>83</sup> Steven Conn argues that Boas failed to connect history and anthropology in that Boas's method depended on the idea that "cultures did not change historically over time," which meant that Indigenous peoples were again placed outside of history. I disagree with this analysis of Boas's work. Boas understood that cultures changed because he relied on this change to map the various interactions between Indigenous groups in British Columbia. Rather, Boas realized that central ideals within narratives such as folktales or myths did not change, and this enabled the historical past to be reached. As a result, Boas tried to have Indigenous speakers present their past without alteration, so that their perspective and their history was placed in a form that the historical discipline could not discredit. Furthermore, Conn's argument contradicts Regna Darnell and her conclusion that Boas was aware of "the effects of culture change." See Conn, *History's Shadow*, 196; Darnell, *Invisible Genealogies*, 37 – 39, 41.

named Antko.<sup>84</sup> Through Antko, Teit learned the language of the local peoples and spent extensive time learning their fishing and hunting customs.<sup>85</sup> When Boas arrived in Spence's Bridge in September 1894, he needed help with his ethnographic work.<sup>86</sup> After meeting Teit, he hired him immediately and the two worked closely until Teit's death in 1922.<sup>87</sup> Under Boas's direction, Teit published multiple monographs: *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, *The Lillooet Indians*, *The Shuswap*, and *Mythology of the Thompson Indians*. Teit also worked with Boas's former student, Edward Sapir, on parallel research among British Columbia's northern peoples, the Tahtlan and Kaska peoples.<sup>88</sup> Teit was unusual among Boas's associates because he also spent much of the 1910s working with British Columbia's Indigenous leaders on their campaign for redress over the theft of their land-base. Teit played a major role in three organizations: the Interior Tribes of British Columbia, the Indian Rights Association, and the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia.<sup>89</sup> Much of this work was aimed directly at Premier Richard McBride's 1912 Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, which was concerned with solidifying the reserve system in the province.<sup>90</sup> In all of his work, Teit used history to

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<sup>84</sup> Wendy Wickwire, "Teit, James Alexander," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 2014.  
[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/teit\\_james\\_alexander\\_1884\\_15E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/teit_james_alexander_1884_15E.html) (accessed 10 February 2014).

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Maud, *Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend*, 64.

<sup>87</sup> Wickwire, "Teit, James Alexander".

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.; Maud, *Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend*, 76 – 77.

<sup>90</sup> Wickwire, "Teit, James Alexander"; Patricia E. Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride: Premier Richard McBride and the Indian Question in British Columbia," *B.C. Studies* 172, no. 2 (Winter 2011/12): 15 – 16, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/docview/936733952>.

help construct a different version of the province's past in cooperation with the province's Indigenous peoples.<sup>91</sup>

### John R. Swanton and Edward Sapir

John R. Swanton (1873 – 1958) was a key member of Boas's group of anthropologists. Born and raised in Maine, he attended Harvard University where he obtained his PhD in anthropology.<sup>92</sup> After studying with Boas, the latter invited him to be part of his Jesup research team.<sup>93</sup> He travelled to Haida Gwai where he worked with the local elders for almost two years.<sup>94</sup> Swanton, who subsequently spent much of his career as an anthropologist at the Bureau of American Ethnology, published *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida, Haida Texts – Masset Dialect* as well as *Haida Texts and Myths* and *Haida Songs*.<sup>95</sup> Like Teit and Boas, his work offered a strong counter narrative to the dominant historical discourses of the day.

Edward Sapir (1884 – 1939) was another important member of Boas's research team. Born in Germany in 1884, he was raised in New York City.<sup>96</sup> After an undergraduate and masters degree in German concerning German philology and Indo-European languages, he enrolled in the PhD programme at Columbia University under

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<sup>91</sup> In a later section of this paper, I will examine the efforts of the Indigenous peoples of British Columbia to assert their claims to their lands.

<sup>92</sup> "John Reed Swanton," Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/576328/John-Reed-Swanton> (accessed 10 February 2014).

<sup>93</sup> Maud, *Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend*, 103.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.; "John Reed Swanton," Encyclopedia of Britannica.

<sup>95</sup> Maud, *Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend*, 103, 105; "John Reed Swanton," Encyclopedia of Britannica.

<sup>96</sup> "Edward Sapir," Encyclopedia of Britannica, 2014.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/523671/Edward-Sapir> (accessed 10 February 2014); Maud, *Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend*, 110.

Boas.<sup>97</sup> With Boas's recommendation, Sapir became the head of the Anthropology Division in the Geological Survey of Canada in 1911, a position he held until the mid-1920s.<sup>98</sup> Based on his progressive perspective, Sapir most likely struggled to change the debates around Indigenous peoples and their cultures while in this position. His efforts to place the Indigenous peoples of Canada at the centre of the story of the country posed a direct challenge to the Edwardian historical project.

Through their publications, public talks, and general efforts to infiltrate the public discourse on indigeneity, Boas, Teit, Swanton, and Sapir posed a major threat to the Edwardian historians. As the anthropologists' monographs made their way into local libraries, it became impossible to deny that Indigenous peoples existed outside of history or that they had no history. Boas's anthropology placed the province's Indigenous peoples as the province's first inhabitants with a long historical consciousness.

### The Anthropological Narrative

Boas and the other anthropologists used different methods in their works to present the Indigenous identities of the Pacific Northwest. They employed geography as a tool to assert their case. James Teit, for example, included maps locating Indigenous

<sup>97</sup> Regna Darnell and Judith T. Irvine, "Edward Sapir: January 26, 1884 – February 4, 1939," National Academies Press, <http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/biomems/esapir.html> (accessed 10 February 2014).

<sup>98</sup> Maud, *Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend*, 109; Wickwire, "Teit, James Alexander"; "Edward Sapir," *Encyclopedia of Britannica*. Sapir was a professor at the University of Chicago and Yale University, where at the latter institution he helped establish the department of anthropology. Also, Sapir's main publications were *Language* in 1921, which explored the role of language in interpreting the world, and *Nootka Texts* in 1939, which contributed to the understanding of British Columbia's past. See "Edward Sapir," *Encyclopedia of Britannica*; Maud, *Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend*, 112.

peoples precisely on their territories (rather than on government reserves).<sup>99</sup> He excluded all mention of European settlements. Teit also included a long list of Indigenous place-names in his monographs. In describing the areas around Lytton, for example, he noted the Indigenous names “Utā’mqt” for the area below Lytton and “Nku’kûma” for the area above Lytton.<sup>100</sup> He described Anderson and Seaton Lakes as the Lîxalê’xamux or the Tcalê’lamux.<sup>101</sup> By using these names, he reclaimed the space called British Columbia as an Indigenous space, and challenged the British cartography that was present throughout the region because the space was once again understood through Indigenous terms.

In contrast to the Edwardian historians, the Boasian anthropologists presented the Indigenous peoples as peoples with established cultures. They described Indigenous subsistence cycles and religious world views that were intricately linked to the large land-base.<sup>102</sup> They avoided all references to the dominant racist terminology of the day such as the words ‘savage,’ ‘primitive,’ and descriptors such as ‘lazy’ and ‘indolent.’ They presented ‘Indians’ through collections of myths as peoples with a long history. The effect was to place Indigenous peoples in the foreground of the history of the region, thus substantiating the Indigenous identities of the region.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> James Alexander Teit, Franz Boas, ed. *The Shuswap* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1909), 450; James Alexander Teit, Franz Boas, ed. *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia* (Merritt: Nicola Valley Museum Archives Association, 1997), 166; James Alexander Teit, Franz Boas, ed. *The Lillooet Indians* (New York: AMS Press, 1975), 201.

<sup>100</sup> Teit, *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, 168.

<sup>101</sup> Teit, *The Lillooet Indians*, 197. This practice of applying Indigenous peoples’ names to place was also followed by the Shuswap. See Teit, *The Shuswap*, 453 regarding the Se’tlemux.

<sup>102</sup> Teit, *The Shuswap*, 443, 444; Teit, *The Lillooet Indians*, 193; Teit, *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, 163, 164; Franz Boas and George Hunt, *Kwakiutl Texts – Second Series* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906), 302.

<sup>103</sup> According to Robert J. Miller, Jacinta Ruru, Larissa Behrendt, and Tracey Lindberg when Europeans explored and settled lands outside of Europe they used a set of beliefs they term the Doctrine of Discovery,

The Boasians devoted extensive time to recording Indigenous stories that dealt with the pasts of the different Indigenous peoples. Boas recorded hundreds of stories of the the past of the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples; Teit collected hundreds from the Nlaka'pamux, Secwepemc, and St'at'imc peoples; Swanton collected hundreds from the Haida peoples; and Sapir collected from the Nuu-chah-nulth peoples.<sup>104</sup> By documenting these Indigenous interpretations of the past, the anthropologists created a written record of the past that challenged the narrative of the Edwardian historians. These historians could no longer exclude Indigenous peoples from the purview of history because no written records existed of their past. Additionally and most importantly, the anthropologists revealed that the region's identity was not inherently British, but instead rooted in the original inhabitants' worlds.

To summarize, through their publications, their public talks, and their general efforts to infiltrate the ruling public discourse on indigeneity, Franz Boas, James Teit, John Swanton, and Edward Sapir posed a major challenge to the Edwardian historical initiative. After the release of Boas's theoretical papers and his students' and associates' monographs on British Columbia's Indigenous peoples, it was impossible to argue that Indigenous peoples existed outside of history or that they had no history. Boas's

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and within this doctrine defined Indigenous peoples as less than human. See Robert J. Miller et al., *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 94.

<sup>104</sup> Boas and Hunt, *Kwakiutl Texts*, 123 (title is "Two Slave Girls") vi (title is "Bella Coola War"); Teit, *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, 167; Teit, *The Shuswap*, 641 – 642; Teit, *The Lillooet Indians*, 195; J.R. Swanton, *Haida Texts – Masset Dialect* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1908), 677 – 684; Edward Sapir and Morris Swadesh, *Nootka Texts: Tales and Ethnological Narratives, with Grammatical Notes and Lexical Materials* (Philadelphia: Linguistic Society of America, 1939), 77 – 81. This footnote cites particular stories and descriptions of Indigenous history that were recorded in the monographs that Boas and his colleagues produced. In some of these monographs there are other stories as well.

redesigned history of British Columbia placed the province's Indigenous peoples as the region's first inhabitants with an extensive historical past.

The Indigenous Leadership's Campaign to Assert Their Sovereignty over the Land-Base

British Columbia's Indigenous peoples were not passive participants in the struggle to create a narrative for the province's past. They actively produced their own counter narratives to the Edwardian historians, and they presented these in a rhetorical form that British Columbia's settler population could not discredit: the written word. While the Edwardian historians were constructing their histories, Premier Richard McBride and his Conservative government were strongly asserting their ownership and control of the province's land-base.<sup>105</sup> McBride was using any means necessary to acquire this land: he purchased Indigenous lands directly, violating the amended *Indian Acts* of 1906 and 1911; with Prime Minister Robert Borden, he created a federal-provincial Royal Commission (known locally as the McKenna-McBride Commission) to legitimate the acquisition of reserve lands; and he pushed through legislation aimed at asserting control over the lands.<sup>106</sup> As discussed earlier, McBride also drew on local historians to assist with his objective. He however, did everything in his power to avoid judicial action out of fear that having the issue brought before the courts would reveal that much of British Columbia stood on stolen lands.<sup>107</sup> McBride knew that taking this issue into the courts would force both his government and the federal government to acknowledge the legitimacy of Indigenous titles to the lands that formed British

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<sup>105</sup> Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 2, 3.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 3, 6; R.M. Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia, 1903 - 1916," *Native Studies Review* 8, no.2 (1992): 6.

<sup>107</sup> Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 2, 13.



Columbia.<sup>108</sup> The struggle for the recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights to their lands led to a major protest campaign.

With the help of translators, Indigenous peoples wrote petitions, memorials, and notices asserting their claim.<sup>109</sup> They also formed organizations to consolidate their protest efforts. In 1904 two interior chiefs, John Chilihiza and Louis, travelled to England with an Oblate missionary, Father LeJeune, to meet King Edward VII.<sup>110</sup> When they were denied access to the King, LeJeune took the chiefs to Italy where they discussed their land situation with the pope.<sup>111</sup> This would not be the last attempt to reach the monarch. In 1906 a second delegation led by Joe Capilano, a Squamish Chief, along with Charley Isipaymilt of the Cowichan tribe and Basil David of the Bonaparte tribe, travelled to London with a petition for King Edward VII.<sup>112</sup> Unlike the first delegation, they gained an audience with the king, but prior to the meeting they were informed that they would not be allowed to present their petition directly to him: it had to be submitted via the Canadian government.<sup>113</sup> The 1906 trip prompted twenty-three Fraser River Chiefs, twelve Squamish Chiefs, seven Vancouver Island Chiefs, seven Upper Country Chiefs, and fourteen Northern Chiefs to send another petition to King Edward VII.<sup>114</sup> In 1909 the Cowichan peoples on Vancouver Island contributed to the movement when they sent King Edward VII a petition arguing, on the basis of the 1763 Royal Proclamation,

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<sup>108</sup> Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 17.

<sup>109</sup> This included men such as Reverend C.M. Tate and Reverend A.E. O'Meara. Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 8.

<sup>110</sup> Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 6 - 7. Also see footnote twenty-five on page 27.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

that Indigenous peoples were the sovereign peoples of British Columbia.<sup>115</sup> They demanded that their claim be brought before the British Judicial Committee.<sup>116</sup> These initiatives were well covered in the local newspapers. The *Victoria Daily Colonist* was the most active source on the subject of Indigenous protest as it provided extensive coverage for the 1904 delegation and the 1906 delegation.<sup>117</sup> The *Vancouver News Advertiser* similarly discussed the protests of Indigenous peoples in the province covering both delegations.<sup>118</sup>

British Columbia's Indigenous leadership also petitioned the provincial and federal governments regarding their claims. In 1908 a delegation of twenty-five chiefs from northern and southern coastal peoples descended upon Ottawa to deliver a petition to Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier.<sup>119</sup> Two years later when Laurier passed through Kamloops, the Interior Chiefs presented him with a declaration asserting their rights and a special Memorial outlining a century-long list of grievances regarding the theft of their lands by white settlers.<sup>120</sup> Local newspapers covered the chiefs' appeal.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 11 – 12; Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity, and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 8 – 9.

<sup>116</sup> Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 11 – 12; Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity, and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 8 – 9.

<sup>117</sup> Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity, and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 26 – 27. See footnotes 25, 29, and 30. The *Victoria Daily Colonist* covered the 1904 delegation on 15 November 1904, and the 1906 delegation on 15 August 1906 and 15 December 1907.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. See footnotes 25, and 30. The *Vancouver News Advertiser* discussed the 1904 delegation in June 1908 and the 1906 delegation on 31 August 1906.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>120</sup> Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 12; Canada, *Memorial to Sir Wilfred Laurier, Premier of the Dominion of Canada*, written by the Chiefs of the Shuswap, Okanagan, and Couteau Tribes of British Columbia (hereafter 1910 Memorial), 25 August 1910, 1.

<sup>121</sup> Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity, and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 30. See footnote sixty.

Various Indigenous chiefs also held discussions with McBride and his government regarding their claims. After their discussions with Laurier, they met with McBride in 1911 to argue their case that the land-claim issue should be brought before the courts.<sup>122</sup> McBride however, argued against such action on the basis that no legitimate reason existed for the judiciary to be consulted.<sup>123</sup> Around the same time, a delegation of nearly one hundred Indigenous chiefs travelled to Victoria to present McBride with a memorial stating their claims and desires to be considered in the courts.<sup>124</sup> These actions conveyed to the settler Canadian population that the Indigenous peoples would not be removed from their lands without a fight.

By this time, the leadership was well represented by the Indian Rights Association (IRA) on the Coast, the Interior Tribes of British Columbia in the south central Interior, and the Nisga'a Land Committee in the north.<sup>125</sup> The IRA had started their struggle with McBride and his government by producing 'A Statement of Facts and Claims on Behalf of the Indians of British Columbia,' which they presented to McBride's Superintendent General in 1910.<sup>126</sup> The Nisga'a Land Committee was the most political of these organizations. In 1907 the Nisga'a were actively turning encroaching white settlers away from their lands, and creating a stir in the local media.<sup>127</sup> The Committee wasted no time challenging McBride: in 1908 they sent a petition to a Vancouver newspaper and the

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<sup>122</sup> Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 16.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 12.

<sup>125</sup> Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity, and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 8 - 9, 13 - 14.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 14; Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 11. See also footnotes fifty-eight, fifty-nine, and sixty for Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 22.

Department of Indian Affairs.<sup>128</sup> Rather than waiting for a response, the Nisga'a rejected white settlers on the grounds that they defied the terms of the Royal Proclamation of 1763.<sup>129</sup> In 1912 the situation became even more public when nine Interior Chiefs, accompanied by James Teit, travelled to Ottawa on behalf of the IRA to express their support for the Nisga'a and their anger over the situation of Indigenous peoples in British Columbia.<sup>130</sup> At the meeting, Prime Minister Borden promised a response, but the response was the complete opposite of what Teit and the chiefs wanted: a Royal Commission that was aimed at decreasing the size of reserves in the Pacific province.<sup>131</sup>

Under an agreement between McKenna, the federal representative involved in the commission, and McBride, the Royal Commission centred on the issue of Indigenous entitlement to reserve lands.<sup>132</sup> They denied all discussion of sovereignty or Indigenous title to so-called provincial lands.<sup>133</sup> Indigenous leaders responded in varying degrees, but all were angry with the proposed solution. Some, such as the Nisga'a, continued their calls for the land question to be brought before the courts.<sup>134</sup> Other leaders planned to protest the Commission when it arrived in their community: they refused to proceed until

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<sup>128</sup> Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity, and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 13.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 14. In 1912 the Nisga'a wrote another petition because the situation had not been rectified. See *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 19. Unfortunately, this response would be the McKenna-McBride Commission. Also see footnote sixty-five in *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>132</sup> Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 15.

<sup>133</sup> In fact, McBride would not agree to a commission unless all questions that were concerned with the issue of Indigenous title to the lands in the province were removed. See British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), British Columbia Premier's Papers, GR 441, Box 149 File 2, Correspondence Between Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier and Premier Richard McBride, 8 December 1910.

<sup>134</sup> Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity, and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 19 - 20.

the land-claim issue was resolved.<sup>135</sup> A third group of leaders simply refused to acknowledge the Commission. Within this group, certain chiefs now argued that the entire province had to be recognized as Indigenous lands and that they should be reimbursed for its theft.<sup>136</sup> The Nisga'a, in response, continued to produce multiple petitions and in 1915 travelled to Ottawa to confront Robert Borden's Conservative government.<sup>137</sup> As chiefs contested the Commission, it grew into one of the most public forums in British Columbia history.<sup>138</sup> Five commissioners representing the Department of Indian Affairs and both governments travelled from reserve to reserve holding public meetings with chiefs, Indian agents and various others.

Indigenous efforts to assert their claim to the lands of British Columbia and to challenge the claims of McBride's Conservative government were extremely public. These challenges were openly covered in newspapers such as the *Omineca Miner*, the *British Colonist*, the *Province*, and the *Vancouver Sun*. For example, a delegation of Indigenous leaders confronting McBride regarding Indigenous peoples' claims to the province was reported in the *Omineca Miner*, the *British Colonist*, and the *Vancouver Sun* in July 1912.<sup>139</sup> In one case, the *Omineca Miner* and the *British Colonist* printed an

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<sup>135</sup> Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 20.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.; Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 16.

<sup>137</sup> Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity, and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 21.

<sup>138</sup> One newspaper article describes how the Commission had to travel to each reserve separately to meet with local Indigenous peoples. See "Interview with Mr. R.F. Green," *Victoria Daily Colonist*, May 18, 1913, 21. Furthermore, newspapers reported certain destinations of the Commission, which most likely led to the gathering of local individuals of Indigenous and European descent. See "Commission in First Session: Regular Itinerary Commences on Monday – Formal Meeting in Executive Chamber Yesterday," *Victoria Daily Colonist*, May 20, 1913, 1.

<sup>139</sup> Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 10. See also footnote 58 in Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 22.

issue regarding an Indigenous chief discussing his concerns with McBride's deceptive nature.<sup>140</sup> Throughout these newspaper reports, the key message was that Indigenous people knew that the land was theirs because they were the first inhabitants with a history that preceded the arrival of Europeans.<sup>141</sup>

In fact, McBride made attempts to respond to the public challenges that Indigenous peoples presented in regards to the land title. For example, in 1906 Chief Joe Capilano travelled around the lower mainland and Vancouver Island to gather support for the second trip to Europe to discuss Indigenous title in British Columbia.<sup>142</sup> Then, in 1908 Gosnell and McBride sent the Fraser Centenary Exhibit around to New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria.<sup>143</sup> With the exhibit, McBride was not only trying to assert the British identity of British Columbia, but he was also attempting to subvert the efforts of the region's Indigenous peoples as they voiced their claim to the land. McBride employed other methods as well to undermine Indigenous protest efforts. Because only a few chiefs spoke English, the Indigenous peoples used a small handful of translators (primarily white settlers and missionaries who were sympathetic and fluent in their languages) to assist them. Such people were dismissed and designated as "white agitators."<sup>144</sup> With his

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<sup>140</sup> Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 11. See also footnote ninety-four in Roy, "McBride of McKenna-McBride," 22.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 10, 11, 12, 13 – 14, 15 – 16. See also footnotes fifty-eight, fifty-nine, sixty, sixty-eight, seventy-seven, eighty-seven, ninety-two, ninety-three, and ninety-four in *Ibid.*, 22, 23, 24, 25.

<sup>142</sup> Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity, and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 7.

<sup>143</sup> Chad Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History, 1784 – 1958*, 50.

<sup>144</sup> Galois, "The Indian Rights Association, Native Protest Activity, and the 'Land Question' in British Columbia," 24. McBride and his government claimed that Indigenous protests were only being caused by anarchist white agitators. This was simply one method McBride used to discredit the legitimate claims of British Columbia's Indigenous peoples.

argument that the agitators were instigating Indigenous calls to have the land issue brought before the courts, McBride ignored the Indigenous leadership and their claims.

Despite McBride's attempts to discredit the actions of the region's Indigenous peoples, the Indigenous petitions and memorials produced during this period did in fact create a counter narrative to the Edwardian historians' history by expressing the region's Indigenous perspectives on their pasts. In these documents Indigenous peoples attempted to use the constructed Canadian system to pursue their claim to the region. In the 1906 petition Chief Capilano and his colleagues argued that "if [they] had [the vote their situation] might be different," as in the provincial and federal governments might consider their views on the land claim issue.<sup>145</sup> With their Memorial to Prime Minister Laurier in 1910, the Shuswap, Okanagan, and Couteau peoples demanded "that [their] land question be settled, and [asked] that treaties be made between the government and each of [their] tribes."<sup>146</sup> In 1911 Peter Kelly read a petition to McBride in 1911 stating that "nearly all of the Indian Tribes throughout the Province of British Columbia ... ask that the [Indigenous land title issue] be submitted to the courts."<sup>147</sup> The Nisga'a chiefs quoted the Royal Proclamation of 1763 in their 1913 petition and noted that other "[s]tatutes from time to time passed [by] the Imperial Parliament... recognized ... British Columbia as being part of the 'Indian Territories.'"<sup>148</sup> All of these documents and actions

<sup>145</sup> "Indians' Petition to King Edward: Full Text of Appeal Which Will Be Laid at Foot of the Throne," *Victoria Daily Colonist*, July 6, 1906, 8.

<sup>146</sup> 1910 Memorial, 25, August, 1910, 6.

<sup>147</sup> BCA, British Columbia's Premier Papers, GR 441, Box 149 File 2, 1911 Memorial Read by Chief R.P. Kelly, 3 March 1911, 2.

<sup>148</sup> The Nisga'a Petition of 1913, 22 January 1913, in Hamar Foster, Heather Raven, and Jeremy Webber, eds., *Let Right Be Done: Aboriginal Title, the Calder Case, and the Future of Indigenous Rights* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 242 – 243.

asserted to the public in British Columbia and Canada that Indigenous peoples were well aware of the changes that had occurred in their world, and were now drawing on the Canadian legal system to enact justice. They realized they now had to use the tools of empire to assert their claims against the imperial regime. With this awareness, the region's Indigenous peoples asserted their historical consciousness.

With their petitions and memorials Indigenous peoples showed that they had a shared history with the white settlers. In both the 1906 Petition and the 1911 Memorial Indigenous peoples recalled Governor James Douglas's acknowledgement of Indigenous title.<sup>149</sup> The Shuswap, Okanagan, and Couteau chiefs in their 1910 Memorial referenced the creation of Victoria's capital: "at [that] time [the white settlers] did not deny [that] the Indian tribes owned the whole country and everything in it," and that they acknowledged the Indigenous title to the province.<sup>150</sup> These references suggest a tangible awareness of Great Britain promising rights to Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest, promises that needed to be recognized.

Most importantly, with their petitions and memorials, Indigenous peoples stressed their understanding of a history that existed long before the arrival of Europeans. The authors of the 1906 Petition referred to a time before the arrival of Christianity.<sup>151</sup> The 1910 Memorial to Laurier, described how before the arrival of Europeans each tribe of people had "boundaries known and recognized by all" others from which their customs

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<sup>149</sup> "Indians' Petition to King Edward: Full Text of Appeal Which Will be Laid at Foot of the Throne," 8; BCA, British Columbia's Premier Papers, 1911 Memorial Read by Chief R.P. Kelly, 3 March 1911, 1.

<sup>150</sup> 1910 Memorial, 25 August 1910, 3.

<sup>151</sup> "Indians' Petition to King Edward: Full Text of Appeal Which Will be Laid at Foot of the Throne," 8.



were maintained.<sup>152</sup> The 1911 Memorial and the Nisga'a Petition referenced the Indigenous ownership of the land dating back to a time immemorial. The authors of the 1911 Memorial stated that their "ancestors [had] occupied this country from time immemorial and [as their children they] claim that the Indian tribes still hold the aboriginal title to the un-surrendered lands of the Province," and the Nisga'a openly claimed that "from time immemorial [they] exclusively possessed, occupied, and used and exercised sovereignty over [their] portion of the territory now forming the province of British Columbia."<sup>153</sup> All this shows that the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest recognized that they had a history that was independent of the settling-newcomers. As a result, the lands in British Columbia could no longer be claimed to have a British identity; they had Indigenous roots that extended into a historical period that existed independently of Britain and Europe.<sup>154</sup>

In summation, the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest purposefully worked to construct a counter narrative to the Edwardian historians' claims that British Columbia was inherently British by creating petitions and memorials arguing for their claim to the region. They also organized public protests that ranged from local affairs to meetings with government leaders such as McBride and the King of England. In other words, Indigenous peoples did not passively stand by as McBride and his government attempted to undermine their rights. In their political documents, Indigenous peoples

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<sup>152</sup> 1910 Memorial, 25 August 1910, 2.

<sup>153</sup> BCA, British Columbia's Premier Papers, 1911 Memorial Read by Chief R.P. Kelly, 3 March 1911, 1; The Nisga'a Petition of 1913, 22 January 1913, in Foster, Raven, Webber, eds., *Let Right Be Done*, 241.

<sup>154</sup> This is possibly why McBride so fervently worked to challenge any idea that Indigenous title existed. Along with the efforts of the Edwardian historians, McBride consulted legal aid that used history to argue against such a claim. See BCA, British Columbia's Premier Papers, GR 441, Box 149 File 2, Correspondence Between Premier Richard McBride and Attorney General E.V. Bodwell, 25 March 1912.

stressed their desire to use the imperial tools that had been used to subject them in an attempt to earn their rights, and they showed that the region had a history before the arrival of Europeans. In so doing, Indigenous peoples expressed a strong historical consciousness because they revealed that they were aware of how their situation had changed due to events that had occurred over time. Accordingly, any notions that Indigenous peoples did not comprehend their historical past or should not be considered historical peoples were, and are, false. Their efforts confirmed that the region's history started with the Indigenous peoples, the original inhabitants of the Pacific Northwest.

### Conclusion

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, settler historians, anthropologists, and resident Indigenous peoples waged a heated debate over the sovereignty of the region's land-base. This paper has shown how the historians, supported by the State, controlled the debate and manipulated their position to their advantage. With the support of Premier Richard McBride, R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S. Scholefield, and F.W. Howay constructed an image of indigeneity that removed all questions of Indigenous title to the province. Through books, magazine articles, and public talks they propagated a distinctly British identity for the Pacific Northwest. They were able to argue for a British identity of the region because they based history within written sources; they failed to consider oral interpretations of the region's past. They cast Indigenous peoples as a part of a misty prehistorical age and the Indigenous land-base as 'terra nullius.' Through their work, they deliberately erased the Indigenous identity of the region. As a result, history was employed as a tool of empire.

In contrast to the Edwardian historians, Franz Boas and his anthropological colleagues presented Indigenous peoples as the rightful, sophisticated 'first' peoples of the region. James Teit went the furthest by arguing this position within the Indigenous political campaign. He held key roles in the Indian Rights Association, the Interior Tribes of BC, and the Allied Tribes of BC. His efforts to present a counter narrative of the region contradicted all notions that Indigenous peoples were 'savage' peoples subject to the demands of the colonizing European powers. As the writings of all the anthropologists show, there was no denying that Indigenous lands were not 'empty.' The effect of their writing then was to contradict all claims of British 'discovery.' The local historians, however, were not willing to listen.<sup>155</sup>

The Indigenous leadership also fought hard to overcome this situation by producing petitions that argued for their claim to their lands. Their efforts contradicted common perceptions that Indigenous peoples passively accepted the agendas of newcomers and their governments. Under the guidance of Indigenous leadership, they asserted their historical understanding, thus placing themselves in the purview of history and ensuring that in later years the Pacific Northwest would be remembered as an Indigenous space.

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<sup>155</sup> As Scholefield notes "the manners and customs of the Indians ... [were] of more interest to the ethnologist than to the historian." Scholefield, *British Columbia From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 125.

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