

The Diaries of Thomas Russell

EXAMPLE — Coal Mining, Enterprise, and Daily Life in the Queen Charlotte Islands

Quentin Goodbody

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About This Book

The text of the diaries is presented without interruption, to allow the reader to follow the day to day commentaries in a continuous manner – and to avoid mixing modern commentary with Thomas Russell’s written words.

Maps showing the Thornton’s progress journeying up to Skidegate Inlet from Victoria, and of Thomas Russell’s canoe trips to Cumshewa and Masset have been created so the reader unfamiliar with the region can follow. Background information on the persons and places identified in the diaries can be accessed by clicking on ‘active words’ within Thomas Russell’s text.

This book includes chapters pertaining to technical aspects of the Cowgitz coal/anthracite.

Transcription Methodology

Transcription of the diaries from Thomas Russell’s handwritten notebooks to electronic format was aided by use of the dictation facility within Microsoft Word.

Thomas Russell’s original punctuation proved a little challenging and was somewhat edited, care being taken, however, to ensure retention of his original meaning and as much as possible his original sentence structure.

Generally Thomas’ handwriting is easily read. The few illegible words and sentences – most occurring in the fourth pencil-written volume, likely resulting from writing in difficult outdoor circumstances - have been identified as either ‘illegible’ or with a question mark before the ?word where a possible deciphering has been proposed.

Obvious spelling errors for common words were corrected. Mis-spellings of names were retained, several one of these causing impediment to researching them (Swanee for Suwanee).

Acknowledgements

Diary by
Tho: Russell

On leaving Victoria V.I
to Superintend the
Queen Charlotte Coal Mining
Co's works at
Queen Charlotte Isd

21st September 1870

Vol I

Part I

Diaries

Volume I

Introduction

There are few readier means of attacking the testimony of a traveller than to point out that he tells improbable stories; things not perhaps physically impossible, but unfamiliar to the critic's experience and therefore not set down by him in the catalog of likely incidents.

This kind of criticism, however, has the serious fault of going hand in hand with ignorance. The less the critic knows of the world, the more things of course seem unlikely to him and in the long run his assult [sic] is apt to strengthen the very evidence it was directed against.

I will not, however, trouble myself longer about such criticism or critics. This little diary is intended for the eye of one critic only, and that critic is my dear wife. For her amusement alone shall the following pages be written, and the interest she will take in perusing them will more than repay me for my small efforts.

As I now write, I feel rather gloomy, fearing that these pages will lack incident to make them interesting. When a man writes a book and takes certain character for the foundation of the tale he can crowd or lessen incidents at will, but in a diary where

“stern truth and not fiction”

must be embraced, the writer is entirely at the mercy of what the day may bring forth, but should one page lack incident and the other be too crowded make them a set off for the other.

Thomas Russell

Sloop Thornton

21st September 1870

Wednesday 21st September 1870

Whoever hath parted from a loving wife and children for a distant land isolated from the habitations of civilized men will fully understand my feelings this morning, but those who live in this world for themselves only and hath not such dear ties to leave behind them could not understand, no matter how much I might explain.

Left my wife and home at 3:00 o'clock AM. Went down to the Sloop Thornton, found all on board fast locked in the arms of Morpheus. Roused up the captain. Having completed his toilette, which did not occupy more than 5 minutes, he said he would go and call Mr. Warren who is the owner of the vessel. In the meantime he instructed the chief mate to get some coffee ready by the time he returned. I accompanied the captain to the house of the owner, which by the way is not a stately mansion, but what is vulgarly termed a shanty, with one room and a kitchen. We roused him up and then returned to the sloop, to find hot coffee awaiting us.

Now I dare say at any other time and under different circumstances the coffee would have been very acceptable, but this morning I had quite lost my appetite. At 4:00 o'clock the three white men came on board, the Chinamen having slept on board that might be ready for a start. There appeared to me to be a great deal of time wasted in looking at this and trying that, until 5:00 o'clock when we pushed off from the wharf with just sufficient wind to keep the sails spread. We were two hours in making Clover Point.

Mr. R. Fawcett came down to the point and waved an adieu. Quite a number of whales were sporting about. The wind was dead against us and very light so that as one might term it we were just crawling along; the breeze freshened towards noon but still in our teeth.

Saw nothing worthy of note, but had ample time to study the physiography of my companions. Before going further, I will say something about the men who are to be my companions on Queen Charlotte, their respective names are as follows; Laiken, Riely, Beauchamp and three Chinamen Ah Chee, Ah Hen and Ah Loy.

Laiken is an Englishman and a coal miner by trade. I should judge from his appearance that he is a quiet steady industrious simple unassuming man, but from his conversation he evidently considers himself number one at mining; perhaps he may, but that has yet to be proved. The only thing that I dislike about the man are his long winded yarns: he bores you to death with minutiae, he talks about things very well calculated to amuse and pass away the hours. He is a married man and has a family in Victoria. This fact I think makes me feel more kindly toward him than I otherwise would have been.

Riely is a son of the Emerald Isle; there is something more in his composition than in Laiken's. I find him continually watching me when he thinks I am not looking at him, but I believe he is getting paid back in his own coin. It would be impossible for me, under the circumstances of our meeting, to form a very good opinion of him. You must know that two days before we started, and after he had been engaged by the company, he was taken up and lodged in prison for selling whiskey to an Indian, for which crime Pemberton in all probability would have given him six months in the chain gang. Mr. Gaston, hearing of this, saw Pemberton and told him that he was under an engagement to go to Queen Charlotte Island and begged of him to let him go - to which he consented provided that a policeman should put him on board and see him fairly started; so that when he was brought down in charge of Sergeant McMillen I almost felt inclined to look upon him as a convict in my charge, to be safely deposited on the distant island of Queen Charlotte and there kept at work coal mining for the space of six months. Knowing that he will appear again in these pages, I will leave him for the present.

Beauchamp is an old French Canadian, and an old settler here. He is known to you in name if not in person. He is the same old stick and full of drollery, but sadly the worse for wear; time and whiskey has told a sad tale.

The three Flowery Kingdom gents are like all other Chinamen. Not easily understood - and I don't think I will try to understand them further than see that they do their duty properly.

To comment upon the crew of the sloop would perhaps be an unwarrantable license. Her regular crew consists of a captain, chief mate and an Indian, but this trip the owner ([Mr. Warren](#)) being with us they have dispensed with the services of the Siwash. As the chief mate, who is a little Frenchman, usually acts as a cook on other trips I thought I would let him have a holiday and therefore turned in our Chinaman cook to take his place, which appeared agreeable to all hands and particularly so to the little Frenchman. [Mr. Warren](#) is a Canadian, resembles Bill McDougal very much both in appearance and manners. The captain (Mr. Brown, better known on board as George), is to my mind the best of the three. He is an Englishman and evidently had a fair bringing up, but like all other seafaring men a little rough. I have some sort of fancy that I shall like the man; he appears to have no very great peculiarities about him.

It is now 4.30 o'clock PM the wind is dying away and the tide has changed that is to say begun to ebb and therefore against us. 5.15 o'clock PM finding we are not making any headway against the ebb we cast anchor off Sidney Spit, about 25 miles from Victoria.

8:00 o'clock I have been walking the deck for the past hour and have just come below for the evening. Our cabin is very small, about 8 feet square with two bunks on each side. The one allotted to me is not lettered P at the bottom of the stairs, but nevertheless it is at the bottom of the stairs. Goodnight; here goes for the bunk for a season.

Thursday 22nd September 1870

Got up at 6 this morning, not a breath of wind anywhere, the sea almost motionless;

To breakfast at 7, felt quite equal to a good meal and I did ample justice to the beef steak and potatoes. I don't remember to have eaten such a meal at any time before, in fact I ate so much that I feared they would put me down for a glutton. The ebb tide was still running, and here we must remain until it changes.

10:00 o'clock AM weighed anchor, tide with us and a light breeze blowing against us. It is very hot on board today; we are just crawling along. Oh dear, this is horrible tiresome work. I feel as if I could jump overboard and push her along. I have no heart for writing today; incidents none, dreary weary work, wind fast dying away and the tide will soon be against us.

2:30 PM entered Plumper Pass, dead calm, tried to pull into a bay in the Pass to anchor, but before we could manage it the ebb began and drove us back outside of the Pass where we cast anchor at 4:00 PM. This kind of work is enough to make one swear, but since that will not

help us along I will refrain. My dear Sol asked me not to become wicked and swear, therefore I will only say

“enough to make one swear”.

Salmon are jumping about in dozens, but neither hook nor line have we to catch any.

From this point we can see the farm and house which belonged to the poor little old tinker who was murdered some months past. You remember the poor old man who used to come round, mending pots and pans. The dog that belonged to him came around the bay and barked at us. My appetite still keeps strong; I feel as though I could take a meal every hour, but instead I eat a cracker and go to bed.

Friday 23rd September 1870

💡 Medical Explanation

See ?@sec-appendix-4-1-23-sept

About 4:00 o'clock this morning I was awoken by someone going up the ladder, saying as he went that he had put his shoulder out of joint, but I fancy it seemed rather queer that a man with his shoulder out of joint should be talking about the affair so unconcernedly. Thinking I must have been dreaming, I turned over and fell asleep.

6:00 o'clock got up, partially dressed myself and went on deck to wash when lo! and behold! there sat old Beauchamp with his shoulder out, sure enough. As a matter of course I asked him how he had met with such an accident, which happened as follows: it appears that between 3:00 and 4:00 o'clock he was getting out of bed to go on deck and in doing so struck his shoulder against a box which caused it to dislocate, but he said it was nothing - it could very easily be put in again provided anyone on board knew how. Not being skilled in such matters I handed him to the captain who tried for nearly an hour but only succeeded in giving him pain. Laiken tried next but with no better result. Warren tried next but all to no purpose. Seeing that there would be no chance for him to get his shoulder put in on board, I told the captain to run into Nanaimo. Accordingly, we weighed anchor at 8:30 and headed for that place.

It was not our intention to go to Nanaimo had everything gone right, but to have entered the Gulf of Georgia by Plumper Pass.

This has been a fearful day, dead calm, only drifting with the tide and a man on board in distress. Had we sighted a canoe I should have sent him on, but none made their appearance.

5:00 o'clock PM tide has changed, and we have to drop anchor off Long Island, only making about 12 miles today - enough to make one go mad. 6:00 o'clock I had a try at the shoulder,

but in it would not go so the only consolation I could give him was that he would have to await time and tide.

Saturday 24th September 1870

Everybody seems to have the “blues” this morning—no wind and old Beauchamp in pain. The old man has quite changed; tried to get a joke out of him, but no, not even a smile. 9:00 o’clock AM light breeze struck up, weighed anchor and prayed for more wind.

This is a charming day, the sun shining in all his glory and our little craft moving steadily forward. The breeze, however, is not strong enough to make her wash her prow. 3:00 o’clock PM wind dying away and we are yet some distance from the Rapids. 5:00 o’clock arrived at the mouth of the Narrows. Tide running very strong against us, consequently we had to anchor and await the turn of the tide to carry us thru. The captain thought to make a start about 12:00 o’clock.

8:00 o’clock went on deck, fancied by the appearance of the current the tide would change soon; suggested that we had better lower the boats and put into the Rapids to ascertain, which we did, and found that it would be safe to start about 10:00 o’clock, which we did. We had to pull her through the Narrows with the oars, after which we had just sufficient wind to make her steer. Very cold on deck tonight. Made some coffee at 12:30 o’clock which was very acceptable. Remained up until about 2:00 o’clock; I was anxious to wait until we had reached Nanaimo, but it was rather cold for me. Anchored in the mouth of Nanaimo Harbour at 3:00 o’clock AM.

Sunday 25th September 1870

Got up at 6:00 o’clock this morning, took breakfast and then went on shore with Beauchamp. Knocked up the doctor. He came to the door in his shirt and pants; he let us in and in 15 minutes Beauchamp’s shoulder was in its proper place. The moment the joint went in he laughed—the first time for two days. Whilst this was going on I was writing a letter to my sweetheart which the doctor promised to post for me on the morrow. Paid him \$5 and bade him good morning.

Took a fresh supply of water off with us, got up the anchor and stood across the Gulf of Georgia with a strong breeze in our favor. This is my first Sunday from home and the only day I may say that we have had any wind. The sloop thundered and flew over the sea. I knew and felt that she was conveying me away from all I love, and gazing over the side and astern I really did shed a silent tear. The morning was clear; white clouds chased by the morning wind flew across the deep. The waves beat foaming against the vessel; the autumnally beautiful forest extended to the left as far as the eye could see.

Such mornings as these bring out man's better feelings. 10:45 o'clock AM I am now thinking that my darlings are on their way to the House of God, and I shall allow myself to feel as though I am with them. Sunday on board here looks just like any other day except that the men don't play cards, but [Mr. Warren](#)—because he can't get the others to play—is playing by himself.

The sea is now quite rough; the men are all below seasick. One of the Chinamen has been up vomiting, and what an object of pity he looks. I don't feel the slightest symptoms of sickness and I don't think I shall be sick no matter how much she may toss and tumble.

Only the crew of the vessel and myself took dinner today. Laiken got up and took two potatoes and a small piece of meat on his plate. He went on deck with it, but could not get the first mouthful down; consequently he came below again and went to bed.

6:00 o'clock PM sighted Cape Lazo. We are now abreast of Hornby Island, the wind decreasing very fast. 7:00 PM sighted the place on Hornby Island where Dawson has taken up his whaling quarters, great volumes of smoke rising. I presume they are frying out the oil. 8:00 PM dead calm and the sea has quietened down; the men are coming out of their shells looking for food.

We have made more progress today than all the others put together. A few days of such wind as we had today would soon bring us to our destination. The whales appear to be very numerous in the gulf; wherever you gaze you can see them blowing, sometimes quite close to us.

Monday 26th September 1870

💡 Medical Explanation

See [?@sec-appendix-4-1-26-sept](#)

Came on deck at 5:30 o'clock AM. Light breeze in our favor. Comox on our port bow. 9:00 o'clock breeze gone and here we are tossing about; weary dreary work.

Riely has been complaining of earache since we left, but it appears to be turning to something worse than a simple earache. It is now very much swollen behind the ear, and the pain increasing. Advised him to poultice it, which he has done, but derived no benefit therefrom. He has got some Russian salve which he is applying to the interior of the ear. I think it must be gathering, and if so, he will get no relief until it breaks.

Afternoon, no wind and yet no appearance of any. Nothing worthy of note; plenty of whales but nothing else. Going early to bed tonight.

Tuesday 27th September 1870

Light breeze during the night. Sighted Cape Mudge at daybreak. This is a beautiful clear morning.

We are now approaching the most dangerous place in the whole voyage. The tides meet at this point causing a terrible Tide Rip, and in blowing weather very dangerous for small craft; but we are thankful that the wind is very moderate.

Perhaps you don't understand what I mean by the meeting of the tides. I will explain. Cape Mudge is at the entrance to Discovery Passage, which is in reality the entrance to Johnston Strait. Now this strait divides Vancouver from British Columbia and runs NW-SE, opening into the Pacific at the northwest point of Vancouver and at the east into the Gulf of Georgia at Cape Mudge; so that when the tide flows it turns northwest up Fuca Straits and SE through Johnston Strait, meeting together near Cape Mudge in the Gulf of Georgia, and acts just in the same way that two buckets of water would when poured into a trough from opposite ends, when it would meet in the middle and cause a great commotion.

7:30 o'clock AM entered Discovery Passage. There are dogfish by thousands here; the water is perfectly alive with them.

9:30 o'clock sighted the schooner *Carolina* lying at anchor in Duncan Bay (this bay is about midway between Cape Mudge and the Yokota Rapids). Ran into the bay and came to anchor to await a suitable period of the tide to go through the Rapids. These Rapids run so strong that it is dangerous to go through them except at the change of the tide, and not knowing the exact state of the tide the captain thought it better to anchor and see how the tide was and when it would suit.

Went on board the *Carolina*. She has been 12 days out from Victoria; she was becalmed 3 days in the Gulf. The captain of her is a hard-looking case. I believe him an Indian whiskey seller and that he has got a good supply on board. We learned from him that the tide would suit us to run the Rapids at 7:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Went ashore, took the Chinamen and got a fresh supply of water from a small stream at the head of the bay. The footprints of wolves are quite plentiful on the banks of this stream. Pulled round the bay this afternoon fishing for salmon, but didn't even get a nibble although hundreds of them are jumping about.

Wednesday 28th September 1870

Got up at 4:00 o'clock AM and weighed anchor at 5:00; the *Carolina* got the start of us by 20 minutes. The wind is very light, but we are moving on slowly. Entered Johnston Strait at 8:00 o'clock. The rapids were running very strong. One of the whirlpools caught the vessel and

carried her round three times. Strong breeze blowing from the N.W. Passed the *Carolina* at 8:30 o'clock; we are doing pretty well considering we have a head wind to contend with.

3:00 o'clock PM reached Ripple Point. The wind slackened and tide against us; ran back about a quarter of a mile and anchored behind a small island. 5:00 o'clock PM tide changed, got up anchor and stood into the strait. The wind is increasing, but very unsteady—in fact quite squally. Took the gaff topsail off her.

11:00 PM wind died away; strong tide rips here, making the vessel almost unmanageable. Midnight called the Chinamen up and put them on the oars, and after an hour and fifteen minutes pull reached the mouth of Salmon River where we anchored for the night—and glad I was when we had got the anchor down. I felt rather uneasy all the time she was running. The Strait is very narrow here and there are a great many drift logs about. Went to bed very tired.

Thursday 29th September 1870

This morning we got up a little late; very little wind. There are a number of the Yakulta Indians camped at the mouth of Salmon River fishing salmon. Two canoes came alongside; we bought some salmon from them, and I assure you they are quite a treat as we are now living on salt meat.

The mountains near this river are very high, but the height not marked on the chart. There is no snow on the summit of them, but their northern sides are quite white. 7:45 o'clock weighed anchor; delightful morning, not a cloud to be seen, but very cold.

Riely's ear is no better, in fact I believe much worse. It disturbs his rest and makes him feel quite miserable. 10:00 o'clock AM sighted the entrance to Adams River. Mount Palmerston is a beautiful sight on such a day as this, its snow-capped peak glistening in the sun is really something grand. This mountain is 5000 feet above the level of the sea and is on the southwest side of Adams River.

2:00 o'clock wind gone and tide against us; ran in shore on British Columbia side and tied up alongside the rocks. This is dreadful travelling; I am beginning to think it will take us a month in making the trip. From the want of something better to do, I made a draught board this afternoon and played a game with the captain and beat him.

5:00 o'clock weighed anchor, tide in our favor. 7:00 o'clock raining and the wind rising, but in our favour. It is very dark and thick tonight. [Mr. Warren](#) thinks it won't be very safe to run all night, so we have headed for Adams River.

Reached the river at 9:00 o'clock; very dark. I was heaving the lead while the others were guiding the vessel and keeping a lookout. Let go the anchor in 10 fathoms water, but it appeared the bank must be very steep, for when the vessel swung back on her anchor it slipped and before we could do anything ran out about 15 fathoms more chain. The captain would not

try to anchor there again, so we hoisted the anchor in and stood out again. 10:30 o'clock wind shifted to the S.W., very squally, and the rain pouring down. Did not go to bed until the wind moderated, which was about 1:00 AM.

Friday 30th September 1870

Got up this morning about 6:30 o'clock; no wind and raining very hard. We are drifting up with the tide. This cabin is a miserable den in raining weather. All the cooking having to be done, it parboils one if you remain an hour in it, and if you go on deck you get drenched. These are the days that make me sigh for home. I wish I was there with somebody's arms around me.

12:00 PM tide changed so we tied up on Vancouver shore near Blinkhorn Island. This island is in Latitude 50° 33" North and Longitude 126° 50' West. We are now 10 days out and only sailed about 220 miles—only halfway on our voyage.

4:00 o'clock PM rain cleared off, light breeze sprung up. Got underway, but the wind only lasted an hour when a thick fog set in. Tried to make Beaver Cove to lay up for the night, but couldn't for the tide. Ran across to B.C. shore and anchored in a narrow pass between two small islands to the northeast of Weynton Passage at 7:00 o'clock.

Saturday 1st October 1870

Got up this morning before the sun—and a lovely morning it is. Immediately opposite us is Mount Holdsworth, 3040 feet high. This mountain lies to the west of Beaver Cove. I watched the first rays of the rising sun on its peak; it shone as though it had been clothed in gold instead of timber.

Fair wind springing up. Weighed anchor at 7:00 o'clock, wind freshening from the N.E. All sails set; the vessel is going faster this morning than I have yet seen her. 9:15 o'clock AM abreast of Nimpkish River. A canoe with Indians came off and tried to reach us, but no use. This is the kind of weather; she is gliding through the water like a fairy.

1:30 o'clock abreast of Fort Rupert. We have made a good run this morning, but the wind is slackening. We have now entered Goletas Channel which opens into the Pacific at the N.W. corner of Vancouver, and should the breeze hold up we will say goodbye to its dear old shores tonight.

8:45 o'clock PM entered Chadwell [sic] Passage and passed the wreck of the *Swanee* [sic], part of her hull and paddle boxes still remain on the rock. Beautiful moonlit night; we are now in Queen Charlotte Sound.

[Mr. Warren](#) thinks it's safer to run across and make for the inside passage instead of steering straight for Queen Charlotte. We expect to sight Cape Caution about 1:00 o'clock AM. Remained on deck and kept a lookout forward until 12:00 o'clock when the Chief Mate and [Mr. Warren](#) came on deck and relieved us. The men don't seem to care a button how things go; all they care about is to be up in time for breakfast and go to bed after supper.

Sunday 2nd October 1870

This morning I expected to find the vessel safe in the inside passage, but no—we are still in Queen Charlotte Sound. [Mr. Warren](#) said that the Captain and I had passed the mouth of the channel during our watch and that we were now heading for Milbank Sound. Nearly a dead calm this morning with a heavy swell on. We have made a good run since yesterday morning—nearly 100 miles, the best sailing we have done yet. The men are rather squeamish. Barometer falling very fast and black clouds gathering up; it looks as though it might blow sometime during the day.

This is my second Sunday from home, and to tell the truth I am more homesick than ever. Sundays spent after this fashion do not suit me very well, and more especially when tumbling about in this heavy swell; but I hope, God willing, to be on dry land by next Sabbath.

3:00 o'clock PM we are now abreast of Milbank Sound and heading for Point Day, which point we have to round in order to get into Laredo Passage. Wind about the same, very light. This is a very rugged coast. Point Day is a fearful looking place, large rocks running about two miles out to sea.

7:00 PM raining and rather inclined to be squally. 8:00 o'clock blowing a gale and very dark; we are now heading for the passage. 10:30 o'clock pitch dark, rain falling in torrents and blowing great gusts. [Mr. Warren](#) ordered the vessel to be hove to for the night, as he could not well see the entrance.

Monday 3rd October 1870

I feel truly thankful for having been spared and protected through the perils of last night. I will begin to record where I left off last night. About fifteen minutes past eleven it seemed a little clearer and [Warren](#) ordered the jib to be hoisted and stand in for the land. He said he thought he could see the opening to the passage. After a half hour run we got into the place which he thought was the channel, but it proved to be no channel at all, but simply an opening between the rocks.

It is almost impossible for me to describe our perilous position; the sea was running mountains high and the breakers on every side of us; in fact we were in surf. The water was perfectly white and appeared in a blaze. The wind almost died away, or rather I presume the rocks

sheltered us. [Mr. Warren](#) tried the lead and found nine fathoms of water. He wanted to let go the anchor, but the Captain would not let him. He said from the way she was pitching in the heavy sea she would snap the chains like cords.

We tried to run out to sea again and shook the reefs out of the sails, but to no purpose. There we were driving about, not knowing but we might be dashed on the rocks any moment. In fact I gave up all hope of her getting out of it, and about 1:00 o'clock took off my coat and boots to be prepared for her striking. Whilst I was below doing this she nearly struck; it was a miracle she escaped. They were trying to put her round when she missed stays and I heard the Captain cry out,

“Wear her quick or she is gone,”

but God be thanked we escaped. A little wind struck up and blew her off.

The wind freshened a little and we got out of our perilous situation about a quarter to 2:00 o'clock. We ran out to sea about four miles and hove to, to await daylight.

During the whole of the time we were in amongst the rocks all the men were in bed except Riely, who appeared very anxious. I wanted him to come on deck and help us, but he was afraid of being washed overboard.

Daylight began to break about 5:30 AM and the wind and sea had moderated considerably. We could now see that the place we had tried to go through was dangerous beyond all description. [Mr. Warren](#) said he was completely at a loss to say where we were. He proposed therefore to run through a narrow pass to the southeast of us hoping to find the inside passage. Accordingly we stood in.

This has been a beautiful morning, very little wind, but we have been moving steadily on, and finally came into the proper channel above Bella Bella.

[Mr. Warren](#) made a great mistake on Sunday; it appears that the place we thought was Milbank Sound was a deep bay some thirty miles distant from Milbank, and the point he took for Point Day a reef of rocks extending about four miles into the sea. Such mistakes as these shake my confidence in him. We are now running up for Milbank Sound and not wishing such another night as we had last. He proposes to anchor before dark.

2:00 o'clock PM spoke to the steamer *Otter* bound for Victoria. 3:00 o'clock cast anchor in a bay near the entrance of Milbank Sound.

Tuesday 4th October 1870

Got under weigh [sic] this morning at 5:00 o'clock, good breeze blowing in our favor. Blowing a gale with a tremendous sea running. 9:00 o'clock shortened sail. This is the heaviest sea and wind we have had yet, coming on very thick.

Rounded Point Day at 10:45 o'clock. The breakers are running over this point about forty feet high; it is a beautiful sight, but not very pleasant to be very close to it. 11:00 o'clock shortened more sail. The little sloop is behaving like a well broke horse; she is perfectly flying, and the heavy seas washing her decks.

12:00 o'clock entered Laredo Channel; the water is a little smoother in here. 1:50 o'clock PM made more sail. We expect to make a good run today if all goes well.

3:30 o'clock very thick fog and rain pouring down in torrents; consequently we ran in to the mouth of a small creek and came to an anchor.

Wednesday 5th October 1870

Got up anchor at 6:30 AM. Strong breeze blowing from the S.E. and raining. Clapped on every stitch of canvas; we are sailing at about eight knots per hour. 8:30 shortened sail. It is now blowing quite a gale and we are near the head of the channel where it opens into the sea.

10:00 o'clock wind has increased to a perfect hurricane and raining bucketfuls. Men and Chinamen all in bed seasick. 11:30 we have at last crossed the opening between Laredo and Principe Channels and have entered the latter channel; this channel divides Banks Island from the Mainland.

We are under double-reefed sails and she is rolling about like a nutshell. We are keeping a sharp lookout for some snug bay that we may run in and anchor. The Captain thinks this is only the beginning of the storm.

12:00 PM a number of Indians camped on Banks Island fired guns to attract our attention, but the place where they were was so exposed that we dared not anchor in it. 12:30 a heavy fog has now set in, so thick that we cannot see land fifty yards ahead. Wind and rain increasing; we had now to drop the peak of the mainsail.

1:30 PM saw a small bay with a very rocky entrance; tried to beat into it, but no use. We came nearly going on the rocks; she missed stays and in wearing her she only cleared the rocks by her own length. Put her before the wind again and prayed for some safe haven to present itself.

2:15 PM some more Indians on shore, seeing that we were driving at the mercy of the wind and sea, fired guns and shouted. [Mr. Warren](#), who was standing forward keeping a lookout, turned his eyes to the place from whence the shouts came and saw a small opening in the land not much wider than enough to let us pass through. He said it would be very dangerous to run into it, but as we had only worse prospects before us we had better try it. Consequently we headed for it, and by the will of God we got safe in.

This little inlet led into a bay at the head of which was a river where we cast anchor at 2:45 PM. A canoe load of Indians came alongside and wanted to trade skins, but we were both wet and cold so the Captain told them to come back in the morning.

I may mention here that the sloop was short-handed for heavy weather, and the men being all sick, I was on deck all day assisting in reefing and working the vessel; so that had I been laid to soak in water for an hour I could not have been wetter and colder than I was. To make the matter still worse I found on going below that the deck over my bunk had been leaking and my blankets and bed were all wet. But I thanked God that we were safe for the present and promised that I would appreciate a comfortable home in the future more than I had done in the past. Men such as I am ought to get a dose like this once a month.

Thursday 6th October 1870

6:00 o'clock AM passed a miserable night. Had to lie on a box with blankets not very dry; these are privileges that I am not accustomed to.

The wind and waves are raging with greater fury than yesterday, rain pouring down in torrents, with a thick fog. The Captain said it would be useless to make a start, as he would not attempt to cross Queen Charlotte Sound in such weather.

We are about thirty-five miles from the head of this channel where it opens into the sound. Then we will have a run of about sixty miles before we reach Skidegate Harbour.

10:00 o'clock AM a number of Indians came off and traded deer skins with the Captain, for which he paid \$0.25 each in trade. This is a wretched day here and we are weather-bound, and our small cabin is something horrible. All the cooking having to be done in it makes it fearfully hot. In fact if we remain below we are in a vapour bath, and if we go on deck we are in a shower one, so between the two we are in a most pitiable condition.

3:00 PM more Indians came off but the Captain could not make a trade with them.

I feel quite depressed in spirits this morning; my box don't look very inviting.

Friday 7th October 1870

6:00 o'clock AM the rain has cleared off but there is still a heavy fog. 8:00 AM fog clearing off very rapidly; weighed anchor and stood out with a light breeze from the S.E. Our spirits are considerably raised this morning, the return of fine weather acting like a charm. We are going along very slowly.

The mainland here is very flat compared to what it has been. There are some beautiful scenery on Banks Island, and I learn from the Indians that there are great numbers of deer on it.

2:00 o'clock PM wind dies away. 3:00 PM wind shifted round to the westward. 6:00 PM we are now near the head of the channel and opposite a small inlet in Banks Island. The Captain

suggests that we run in here and await a favourable chance to run across the sound, which we did.

This is one of the loveliest nights we have had yet. The moon is shining so beautifully and the light ripple on the water makes it appear like a sheet of silver. This night carries me back to the time when I used to teach those dear little lips to repeat,

“M is the moon with her calm silver light,”

and how calm and still is that dear hallowed spot where he now rests.

How unconscionable are those to whom no hope is given, as if the finest flower on earth were early plucked for Heaven. But thanks be to God I have a hope that I shall one day meet him in the better land.

Should the wind prove favorable at midnight we will make a start.

Saturday 8th October 1870

Went on deck this morning at 2:00 o'clock. Oh! how beautiful the moon was shining. Sat down for a while to enjoy the beautiful scenery about. Light breeze blowing from the west. Woke the Captain up; he called the Chief Mate and we got the anchor up and stood out.

3:30 AM thick fog set in and winds died away, which lasted until 10:00 o'clock when it gradually lifted. We are drifting a little with the tide. Sent the boat on shore and took in a fresh supply of water. This has been a weary morning as we fully expected to have reached Skidegate tonight.

1:00 PM light breeze springing up from westward, which is against us just now, but when we get into the sound it will be on our beam and enable us to stand our course. 3:30 PM we are now standing across the head of Banks Island into Queen Charlotte Sound. It looks very showery to westward, but we are going to run across and hope to reach Skidegate tomorrow morning.

8:00 PM we are now standing our course, wind about 2 1/2 points free, going about 5 knots. 10:00 PM abreast of Bonilla Island; it is a glorious night. The moon's shining so bright, but wind very cold. 11:00 PM wind shifted a little to the south, which compels us to stand 1/2 point off our course; wind slackened a little; we are not making more than three knots.

Sunday 9th October 1870

5:00 o'clock AM came on deck. Could not make out Queen Charlotte Islands. Wind steady from same quarter. 7:00 AM by aid of the telescope could make out the entrance to Skidegate Harbour.

This is a lovely morning, not a cloud to be seen, sun shining very bright, wind intensely cold. Did not sleep much last night. Felt a little excited and anxious, but I feel very cheerful this morning. This has been a most tedious trip, but I trust it is near a close. It is very soothing to see the haven we are bound for, no matter how unseemly it may appear, and it certainly does not look at this distance very inviting.

This is our third Sabbath at sea, and I must admit they have not been well spent; the majority on board do not regard this day more than any other. There has been a coincidence with the Sundays during the trip: we have been as one might say on the open sea on each. The 1st Sunday we were crossing the Gulph of Georgia, the second in Queen Charlotte Sound the evening of which we were in such a perilous condition, and the third crossing Queen Charlotte Sound—but from all appearance with brighter prospects than last Sabbath.

9:00 o'clock AM wind dying away, going very slow.

1:00 o'clock PM nearly calm and we are only a few miles from the entrance. 2:30 dead calm and tide running against us. Hove the lead and found the bottom in 14 fathoms, threw out the kedge, so here we must remain until a breeze springs up to carry us in.

3:50 PM a canoe came off to us with Captain Skidegate and Lady and two attendants. Captain Skidegate and wife came on board and introduced themselves to me after their Indian fashion. He is chief of the Skidegate Tribe. I should say he is 30 years of age and his wife about 16. He is not by any means a bad-looking Indian. He is about 5 feet 7 inches and weighs I should judge about 140 lbs. His wife had rather good features, perhaps a little heavy; she is a big woman for an Indian and very fat.

Captain Skidegate shewed me his papers (of which he has a host); they give him a very fair character. Of course I told him they were very satisfactory and gave him a plug of tobacco. After a little conversation about next to nothing he took his departure, promising to call and see me at the mines.

Skidegate Village is about 14 miles east from the company buildings. 6:30 PM light breeze springing up, so we hauled in kedge and made sail. 7:00 PM blowing quite fresh but dead against us with a strong tide.

10:00 PM crossed the bar in 3 1/4 fathoms; I think we must have crossed to the east of Bar Rocks. 1:00 o'clock AM we are doing little more than holding our own against the tide, but we are trying to make Village Islands to anchor. 3:00 AM anchored in a small bay southeast of Village Islands.

Monday 10th October 1870

Did not get up until 7:00 this morning, felt very tired from having been up so late. Got up the anchor at 8:00 o'clock, very little wind, and against us at that. Quite a number of Indians came on board, and a filthy dirty lot they are, but they are in good keeping with the island, for a more dreary forsaken-looking place I never beheld.

So far I have seen there does not appear to be nourishment enough in the soil to keep the trees alive, and not a blade of grass to be seen. All along the northern side of Grahams Island is covered with dead trees and a horrible sight it looks. I think I shall have the blues all day and every day; there is not even a little bird to be seen hopping about, and I verily believe if one by chance did come, it would leave as fast as wing could carry it.

We are dragging along very slowly; it is very vexatious to be so near our future home and little or no wind to carry us thither.

3:00 o'clock PM came in sight of company buildings. Quite a number of Indians came off, and amongst them Captain George, a minor chief. He wanted to show me his papers, but I told him to wait until I had got settled on shore. I don't like the appearance of this Indian; he has small ferret eyes, speaks in a slow measured way, and has the appearance generally of a dirty old lawyer.

4:00 o'clock cast anchor in Cowgate Bay. Mr. Branch came off to us; he looks rather seedy: perhaps it is the nature of the beast or perhaps he is not very well. I enquired after the health of his men, whom he said were all well, took tea and went on shore.

Walked on to the wharf where 100 tons of coal was piled up, but did not appear very clean. Walked up the tramway as far as the flat, but it was getting rather dark so I came back and went into the house where the men are domiciled.

I was much pleased to find a man I had known for a long time: he was a customer of mine, but did not know his name. Had a talk with him about the place, but he did not give a very flattering account of it. This is the man that Mrs. Atwood is acquainted with; his name is John T. Beardsell. He is going to remain with me. Also a French Canadian, Paul Lamerie by name, commonly known as Joe.

Mr. Branch showed me my quarters, but the place was in such a dirty filthy state that I told him I would sleep on board until he was ready to go; then of course I should have the place cleaned out. It was anything but comfortable on board; still it was clean.

Tuesday 11th October 1870

Got up at 6:30 and went on shore to breakfast; pretty rough fare, but then I don't expect anything but roughing, so I did not take it amiss. Raining heavens hard this morning.

After breakfast examined all the company's books. There appears to me to have been a great deal of money uselessly spent. In fact in my opinion the only piece of work worth the money expended on it is the lower tramway, and that is not by any means a good workable road.

The storage shute is not worthy of the name applied to it; the coal has a drop of 18 feet after it passes over the screen. Now it stands to reason that coal falling from this height must get smashed to atoms. Mr. Branch says there are 300 tons in it, but it is in a fearful mess with dirt; in fact it appeared to me to be a moral impossibility to clean it.

The upper tramway is a shameful piece of work. I cannot think how a man like Mr. Trounce with his experience could have taken off Gibb's hands as a workable road. It has caved at the last curve where you come in sight of the mine. From this point nearly to the mouth of the tunnel it is built on the side of the mountain and about 80 feet above the level of the creek. It appears to be pretty well cribbed except at the curve where it has caved. It is not cribbed at all here, but simply several long trees thrown down held up at one end by the root of a tree and at the other by a stake driven in; this stake only measures 4 inches in diameter: a match stuck in would have suited about as well.

Sent the men up after dinner to repair this portion of the road as I intend to take a carload of coal over it tomorrow.

We next went into the mine where we are going to work. The tunnel is about 600 feet long. I did not much like going into such places, this being the first time I was ever in a coal mine. The width between the two walls of the mine is nearly 7 feet, but the seam of coal does not average more than 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet in thickness, the remainder being slate with small streaks of coal running through it. Now from the great quantity of slate that has to be mined in order to extract the coal, it is impossible to clean the coal in the mine as there is not sufficient room for the dirt to remain; consequently a great quantity has to be put into the shuttles along with the coal.

The coal varies in quality. That near the air shaft appears to be very hard; that about midway between the air shaft and the manway very soft, so soft that Mr. Branch said it had caved here and had to be kept securely timbered. From this to near the manway it is pretty good, but just by the manway it is very inferior: in fact in my opinion it will not pay the cost of extraction, and no doubt Robinson was aware of this fact hence the cause of his abandoning it.

We next examined the seam usually known as the 2 foot seam. This is beautiful coal and perfectly free from slate, but too narrow to work. From here we went to Robinson's tunnel or the 6 foot seam. The coal in this tunnel is quite soft; it might become hard, but it is very doubtful. These tunnels are all driven too near the surface to get good coal. There was a great deal of gas in this tunnel; we could only enter with safety lamps and then I did not feel quite at my ease.

We did not go down to Pool's or Hutchinson's tunnels; it was getting well on in the day, and I was quite wet with scrambling through the bush.

After dinner got the stuff on shore from the sloop. Every place is in a horrid filthy condition; the floor of the store is covered with mud and brine which has run from the salt meat casks. Came on board pretty early as I was very tired.

Wednesday 12th October 1870

This has been a very wet day; it has rained without the slightest interruption. Went up to the mine and took down a car load over the upper tramway and one over the lower.

The taking down of the coal on the upper tramway is attended with great danger: the front wheels of the car has [sic] to be placed on an iron sled, then the horse put in to hold it back. The man who is driving stands on the brake behind to stop the back wheels. Notwithstanding all this, the horse seems to have enough to do to keep it from running away.

On the lower tramway from the chute end of the first bridge is very dangerous. Over this part of the road the car runs at least at the rate of 30 miles an hour, then at the end of the bridge there is a sharp curve. Should a wheel or an axle break at this point, the man on the car would never know what had happened. I can assure you I did not feel very comfortable; it seemed to take my breath away, but then I wanted to know how to brake the car—and to know, I had to ride down on it of course.

Have been writing letters all afternoon. The sloop leaves tomorrow. I should like the place much better was it not so wet.

The Indians appear to be very friendly, but awful thieves I am told. Captain Gold, a chief of a portion of the Gold Harbour Tribe, presented himself today and nearly bored me to death. He is a big rascal or I am very much deceived. He is just the sort of man you might take and hang upon his looks. He says his wife is a queen: Mr. Trounce told him that he was a king and of course Mrs. Gold must be a queen. He does not take it amiss if you address her as Mrs. Gold, but is very indignant if you call her a Klootchman. But she is only a Klootchman nevertheless, and he is a Siwash to my mind in the true sense of the word.

Thursday 13th October 1870

This has been a beautiful day, quite warm and sunny. The sloop left at 1.00 o'clock PM, carrying with her Mr. Branch, 2 miners and six Indians as passengers. She had a fair wind.

Turned the hands to clean a small quantity of coal which lies on the upper wharf. Riely is still on the sick list; his ear does not appear to get any better, but I am in hopes that it will soon get well now that he is on shore.

Nothing has transpired today worthy of note. I have been cleaning my quarters up a little. There is a small stove in my room in which I burn coal; it makes it quite comfortable.

The timber is very indifferent. There does not appear to be any strength or last in it. Two Indians cutting wood all day.

Friday 14th October 1870

💡 Medical Explanation

See ?@sec-appendix-4-1-14-oct

This has been a warm day but showery.

Finished cleaning the coal on wharf about 10:00 o'clock AM. Sent Laiken and Beardsell up with the car to bring down coal from the chute. I gave Laiken charge of the car as he has been accustomed to such work, at the same time telling him where to brake it and to pull on the handle of the brake when he came to the curve at the end of the bridge so as to ease her round. He sneered at the idea of me telling him how to work a road of that sort. He said he had worked too many roads to require instruction as to how this one ought to be worked. I simply told him that I was very glad he was so competent. Consequently, they jumped into the car and drove up.

After a lapse of 30 minutes I began to fear that something had gone wrong and had just started to go up when an Indian came galloping down on the horse and said that Laiken had got killed by falling from the car. I cannot describe my feelings at that moment. My heart seemed to stand still at such sad tidings, but immediately ran back to the house, got some brandy, lint and tincture of Arnica; I did this in hopes that things were not so bad as represented.

When I arrived at the place where the accident occurred I was greatly relieved to find that he was not killed. Beardsell had been bathing his face with water and had got him round. I administered a little weak brandy and water, which revived him considerably. I next examined his wounds, and found his skull badly fractured on the left side. There were two cuts about two inches long running at right angles and crossing each other. His left shoulder was badly bruised. I was afraid that the arm was broken, but that I could not tell until we had him undressed. We got him home as quick as possible.

I cut the hair from the wounded parts of his head, washed the sand out of the cuts and then applied a piece of lint saturated with tincture of Arnica. I had great difficulty in stopping the bleeding; by 5:00 o'clock however the bleeding had ceased entirely and at 8:00 o'clock I saturated the lint again with Arnica, this I did from the outside without removing it. His shoulder I bathed well with painkiller which seemed to remove the pain. His arm was all right.

Unfortunate as this accident has been, I feel truly thankful that he was not killed. How he escaped is more than I can tell. Beardsell who was on the car with him did not see how it

occurred; he only saw that he was gone from the car. He immediately jumped onto the brake and brought the car up as soon as possible, but which he could not accomplish until he reached the flat, a distance of about 600 yards from where the accident happened. He immediately repaired to the spot and found Laiken lying insensible and to all appearance dead.

Laiken said he slipped from the footboard and fell, but I am inclined to think that he got frightened that the car was running away and jumped off. If this be the correct solution of the matter, it was next to lunacy to do such a thing.

There are now two men on the sick list and Beauchamp worth little or nothing; a bad beginning indeed, it makes me feel quite despondent.

Beardsell said he was not afraid to run the car provided I would go with him and keep a lookout as he could not see very well. I did not much like the idea, but of course I had to go: the coal had to be got down somehow. Consequently after dinner we went up and took down four cars; it is not by any means enviable work.

Saturday 15th October 1870

💡 Medical Explanation

See ?@sec-appendix-4-1-15-oct

This has been a charming day. Mount Seymour looked beautiful under the first rays of the rising sun. Laiken is rather feverish today; administered a light aperient.

I have been running the car along with Beardsell all day and although we only took down 7 cars yet we had no accident of any kind. The brakes however are very inefficient, having very little power in wet or frosty weather.

The coal as I anticipated is in a dreadful mess; it is so wet that it is hardly possible to tell coal from slate. There is also a great deal of small in it. Have ordered Beauchamp to make a screen. This cleaning will be a tedious and expensive job, and the coal when finished will not (to my mind) be marketable. Branch erred very much by not cleaning it during the summer when it was dry: it could have then been made perfectly clean at 1/4 the cost. The only man who understands cleaning the coal at present is Lamerie; the Chinamen are worse than the Indians at it, but I daresay they will improve.

The Indians are a great nuisance from being so near us: they are eternally prying about for something to steal. You cannot leave the smallest thing out of your hands for 5 minutes; some of them will be sure to pick it up.

Sunday 16th October 1870

This was a beautiful morning, but has been raining all afternoon.

Took a bath and a long walk but there is really nothing to be seen except trees and dirty squaws with their faces smeared with pitch and paint. They do this to preserve their complexion. Poor things, they are sadly in want of reformation, but I suppose they are happiest after their own fashion.

I have been very lonely today. These Sabbaths only tend to remind me of home and all I love. I believe that men under difficulties give way to despondency much more than women.

Monday 17th October 1870

💡 Medical Explanation

See ?@sec-appendix-4-1-17-oct

This has been a beautiful day, but threatening rain tonight.

Have been running the car all day. Beardsell says he has now confidence to run it alone and will begin tomorrow to do so. I am very glad as my presence is required on the wharf amongst the coal cleaners.

Laiken is doing very well; his shoulder is much better but complains of a giddiness in his head. Riely's ear is no better; he has been applying hot poultices which has brought a great deal of matter out of it.

I don't sleep well at nights; usually wake up three or four times and don't keep warm. My bunk is against the outer wall, and the foot of it alongside of a window. When I get a little spare time, I will make a new one against the partition.

Tuesday 18th October 1870

It has been showery today, keeping the tramway wet and making the rails very slippery.

In the afternoon the car ran away and smashed to pieces at end of wharf. Beardsell found that as the day wore on she was gradually becoming more unmanageable: the leather on the brakes had become perfectly soaked with the rain, consequently they had but little power over the wheels.

I was standing about halfway down the wharf when she came down. I could see as soon as she came on to the wharf that it was impossible to bring her up. I therefore called to Beardsell

to jump off and let her go, but he held onto the brake until he came to where the one track runs into the other; then he jumped off, but the cross rail caught his foot and threw him down bruising his right thigh and knee. I think he will be ready for work again in a couple of days, and it will take that time to repair the car. It was very amusing to see the Indians rushing down for the wharf; they expected to find the man killed.

I had a call from Captain Skaylus today; he is another minor chief. I read over his papers: they gave him an exceedingly good character, and he certainly has the best countenance of any Indian I have yet seen here. It appears he was the owner of the land now held by the Company. He expressed himself well satisfied with the treatment he had received at the hands of the Company.

I forgot to mention that on reading over Captain Gold's papers—which by the way don't speak very highly of him—I saw one he had received from N.C. Bailey when he was at Gold Harbour. In one portion of it Bailey thanked God that the Captain was about to leave them as he had been the plague of their life.

Wednesday 19th October 1870

Raining heavens hard all day. Have been assisting Beauchamp to repair the car; I think we will have her ready by noon tomorrow.

I intend to make a new car with brakes on a different principle from those in the present one. This is the first runaway, but I can very plainly see it won't be the last. I have however ordered a pile of small coal to be kept on the track so that should she run away she will run into that and prevent her from being smashed.

Beardsell's leg is very stiff today, but not very painful. Laiken is progressing very favorably. The weather is much milder than I expected to find it.

Thursday 20th October 1870

Fair all morning but wet in the afternoon.

Started the car in the afternoon, but fearing another smash or something worse I put a sprag in one of the back wheels. It is certainly a very safe way of bringing her down the first incline, but stops her on the bridge. She has then to be pushed to next incline and then hauled along the flat by the horse. This entails a great deal of labour with very slow progress, so I fear we will have to leave out the sprag and trust to Providence.

Had a wild goose for dinner today, quite a treat; the cook stuffed and roasted it in good style.

A month of our time has expired today. It looks like six since I left home, but I suppose the tedious voyage made it appear longer. The time passes much more quickly on shore.

Friday 21st October 1870

This has been a beautiful day, clear and sunny. There is no difficulty in running the car in fine weather. Made a beginning on the new car. Laiken is up and feels pretty well; he says he will be able to superintend the coal cleaning whilst I am making the car.

Saturday 22nd October 1870

Fine day with a sharp frost.

Was very cold in bed last night and very wakeful. Lanced Riely behind the ear; a quantity of black blood came from it, which relieved the pain very much. Laiken turned out to overlook the Indian. He feels very well, but says his head swims when he stoops.

Sunday 23rd October 1870

The weather has been delightful today, a little frosty.

Took a bath after breakfast and went out for a stroll with the rifle, but saw nothing to shoot. Wild animals are very scarce, not even a squirrel to be seen. Went up some of the mountains; found it very bad travelling. The mountains here are chiefly decomposed slate, so much decayed that you can pull off a piece anywhere and crumble it to powder with the hand.

Had a call from Captain Gold in the afternoon. He said his wife had a sore throat and begged a little sugar: gave him about half a pound. He then wanted tobacco for himself which I refused to give him.

Monday 24th October 1870

The weather still keeping fine and genial.

The car runs well when the track is dry. We cannot run her first thing in the morning until the frost is off the rails, which is about 10:00 o'clock, but can get sufficient down to keep them cleaning.

I am getting on capitally with the new car, shall have her finished in a day or two. Beauchamp is making the ironwork for her, but the coal he has for smithy purposes is very bad: he is

continually swearing about it, as though that would make it better. He is an ill-natured old wretch. The Indians and he don't get on at all; he is eternally swearing at them, and that above everything they don't like. I have to find him a fresh hammer man every day.

Tuesday 25th October 1870

The weather has been fine all day, but rained a little tonight so I expect we will have a soaker tomorrow.

Riely turned out to work today for the first time since we landed; his ear is not quite well yet. Laiken has also turned to also [sic]. He still complains of giddiness when he stoops much.

I find that the coal on the lower wharf is not cleaned; Branch had simply picked the slate from the surface of it. Consequently I have sent a party to turn it over and clean it. Some of the Indians are good at cleaning, but they are lazy rascals; one has to be continually watching them.

Went up to the shute to open the second door, and when coming down on the car the large brake came off just before we came to the curve on the bridge. It fell on to the axle of the wheel and nearly threw Beardsell off the car. I told him to steady it as well as he could until we got to the flat and if we found we could not bring her up with a small brake we would jump off and let her go, but we were fortunate enough to stop her. Had the rails been wet, she would have gone, and in all probability would have jumped over the wharf into the water. The cause of it coming off was through the spau ?? coming out that keeps it on the centre bolt.

Wednesday 26th October 1870

This has been a very wet day, rain coming down by bucketfuls at times.

We make very slow progress with the coal; in such weather men cannot work to any advantage. Made a movable shed on the wharf where we now dump the coal so that the men can be out of the rain whilst working.

The car ran away four times today and buried herself in the coal. It is fearful unpleasant work for Beardsell who is running her, but he does not grumble further than he says he is perfectly exhausted with putting so much strength on the brake.

Thursday 27th October 1870

Raining heavens hard all day.

Did not run the car today. The men knocked off at noon; it is not fit to be out in such weather. My hair is coming out very much, so by way of a preventative I had the top of my head shaved this afternoon. It feels rather queer, but not to any means uncomfortable. I fancy a bald head rather becomes me, but be that as it may I would rather have my hair.

Friday 28th October 1870

Showery today.

Took down 10 cars of coal. Finished the new car, but cannot get the slides of the brakes to work properly. Beauchamp is so bad tempered and stupid that I cannot get him to do anything right, and when he does a thing wrong he swears I told him to do it in that way. I try not to lose my temper with him, but it is very difficult.

Laiken and he had quite a quarrel today; they called each other anything but gentlemen—no, I mistake: when Laiken called Beauchamp liar, Beauchamp told him he was a gentleman. The quarrel arose out of nothing, but old sores were brought up. Laiken is the foulest mouthed man I ever heard. The oaths that he uses are something fearful. May God keep me from ever having such a foul tongue as that man.

Upon the whole I have got a pretty crowd of men. In fact the only respectable man amongst them is Beardsell, and I think the others see the preference I have for him for they are continually trying to lead him a dog's life. I won't be sorry when the time comes to part company with them.

Saturday 29th October 1870

It has been very frosty all day, but is thawing a little tonight.

Only got down four cars today: the rails were like glass all morning, rendering it quite impossible to run the cars over them with anything like command.

I know this will be very dry reading, but there is really nothing to record; Siwashes and trees and trees and Siwashes are all we see day after day and my own feelings are too gloomy to put on paper.

Sunday 30th October 1870

It began to rain about 11:00 o'clock last night, and has kept it up all day, pouring down heavens hard. These wet Sabbaths are miserable days; they give me the blues. In the civilized world one can go to church and pass the day happily, but here one can only sit indoors with spirits depressed from morning till night. These are the days that call me back to my dear wife and little ones, and I know they are thinking of me whilst I write.

My God my Father while I stay
Far from thee in life's rough way
Teach me from the heart to say
Thy will be done thy will be done

Monday 31st October 1870

Raining all day. So wet that we cannot run the car. Turned all hands to cut firewood, and that is anything but a pleasant job, but they must be kept employed in some way. They swear enough about, but then I have got used to their swearing now so I take no heed. I only wish I was in Victoria and them here.

Tuesday 1st November 1870

Rain pouring down again today. Cutting wood, but did not send them out in the afternoon. Poor wretches, they were very wet and cold when they came in to dinner. It is better to lose half a day than perhaps have some of them laid up sick for several days.

Wednesday 2nd November 1870

Raining, sleetin, snowing and a repetition all day. Got down four cars of coal today. A ship may be here any day and we won't have over half a cargo for her. Branch was a long way out of his calculation when he said there were 300 tons in the shute; we haven't taken out 200 tons yet and I don't think there is much more than 50 tons left in it. I don't believe it will yield more than 200 tons of clean coal. Should a ship come we will be in a pretty mess, but I sincerely hope she will not come for some time yet.

Both Gibbs and Trounce must have given a false report as to the quantity of coal mined.

Thursday 3rd November 1870

Snowing all last night; very frosty this morning. Cleared the track and got down seven cars, but in such weather as this we are only making about half time. Branch must have been an idiot not to have cleaned the coal in summer. Here are we poor devils, wet to the skin every day, and not making enough progress to pay for our grub. This is in good keeping with all the works of the Company ever since its organization. Everything has been a failure, and I can plainly see this shipment of coal will be one. I wish I had never seen the place or been in possession of the true state of affairs before starting.

Friday 4th November 1870

Snowing all last night and all day, with a high wind. The outer wall of the coal on wharf does not look very secure, and as we could not run the car today I had a fence put up against it to keep it secure. Should it have taken a slide as it was, the half of it would have fallen into the water. A preventative is better than a cure, so there is no danger now.

Laiken has been in a fearful bad temper all day; I am quite disgusted with him. The only thing I regret is that I am not in a position to get rid of him, because when one man in a small band growls some of the others are sure to growl with him. And I believe Riely is a great blackguard; he is well known amongst the Indians here as a whiskey seller; which in their estimation, as far as I can learn, is a most disreputable calling. He is very rough with the Indians, so much so they are all down on him. They say they are better off than he is, that they don't require to go round amongst the Indians saying

Mika tikkie whiskey

to make a living.

Saturday 5th November 1870

Six inches of snow fell last night; it has been sleetting all day.

Cleared the track twice today, but the car would not run. Only got down 1 1/2 loads. Tried the new car today; the brakes seem to work very well, but of course the track being in this condition she did not get a fair trial.

Whilst we were clearing the snow off the track this morning I was quite horrified to see the Indian men driving the little boys into the water. Some appeared willing enough, but the majority were crying most piteously. They drive them in up to the chest and then compel them to remain for half an hour. The poor little imps keep whistling into their hands making a noise like so many seagulls.

I went down to the beach and inquired the reason of such treatment: they said it made them strong and hardy men. I tried to remonstrate with them, that were they to go in and take a dip and come out immediately and keep it up every morning they would obtain their desire, but to keep them in half an hour would only tend to impair their health by giving them colds. They only laughed at me, and said they know best.

Sunday 6th November 1870

Very frosty this morning, snowing a little during the forenoon. Cleared up after dinner and continued beautiful all day.

Took a walk through the Indian camp in the evening and was well received in every hut. I should say there are 100 Indians here at present; this is men, women and children. They take it as an honor for the Keeysly (officer in charge) to go amongst them occasionally. The old women are great beggars and the young ones are very immodest.

In one of the huts there was a pretty girl for an Indian; her name is Kindawash. Her features are so regular that she is quite an exception amongst them. From her appearance I should have taken her to be about 11 years of age. I asked her if she knew how old she was. She replied no, but she had been three years a woman; but the manner in which she described her arrival at womanhood made me blush. She detected this and inquired what was the matter. Seeing the other Indians taking it all as a matter of course, I answered nothing. After that I thought it was about time to make my exit.

Monday 7th November 1870

Very frosty this morning, but set in raining in the afternoon.

Cleared the track of snow and ice, and got down a few cars of coal. One of the cars ran away and smashed the screen where Laiken and Riely were working. I saw she was coming at too great a speed to be brought up; called to them to stand clear and hold the screen out of the way, but they rushed off the wharf leaving the screen on the track.

Beardsell spoke to Laiken about leaving the screen in that way as it might have upset the car and hurt him, but of all the abusive language and oaths he used toward Beardsell caps anything I ever heard or hope to hear again.

We are making such slow progress in this bad weather that I intend to send Laiken and Riely into the mine tomorrow.

Tuesday 8th November 1870

Raining all last night and all day.

Beardsell is laid up today with lumbago. He has been more exposed to the weather than any of the other men; some days he has been wet from morning till night. He is about the best dispositioned man I ever met. I feel very sorry that he is laid up, because I shall miss him more than any of the others.

Laiken and Riely began mining today. They cannot extract coal for some time yet. Laiken says he will have to timber the mine up in several places and make a new manway and turn the old one into a shute. Did not get down any coal today, being too wet.

Had a call from Captain Scotchguy today; he arrived from Gold Harbour last night. He is chief of the Gold Harbour Tribe. His papers give him a very good character, and I should say he is deserving of it from his looks. He appears to be a good-natured happy soul, always laughing; it is quite refreshing to meet an Indian of this description. He speaks Chinook very indifferently. When speaking of himself, he always uses the first person pronoun both in English and Chinook (Nika, me): I presume he thinks he cannot express it too clearly so he gives both.

I think he is about 35 years of age and his present wife about 15 years. He has a grown up family by his first wife but no issue as yet by the second. She has a baby nevertheless about 3 months old, a little half breed. It looks a very weakly child. Some of the men named it Annie. I gave her a few fine biscuit and a little sugar and told her how to cook it. She said it was always hungry and she had very little milk for it.

Wednesday 9th November 1870

Fine morning; shower of hail in the forenoon; snowing a little all afternoon. Took down 9 cars today. Got Beauchamp to brake the car but went with him for two loads.

Met with a loss today; mule got killed about 20 yards above Trounce's cottage. It appears she was standing all right alongside of the track to keep out of the way of the car when an Indian woman who was in the bush tried to drive her away, but instead of doing so she drove her onto the track. Beauchamp tried to bring the car up, but no use. The front part of the car struck her on the shoulder, threw her off the track and broke the far hind leg below the knee. I loaded one of the rifles and told an Indian to shoot her. Poor brute, I had not the heart to do it myself, but I knew it would end her misery.

There is no one to blame for this accident; the Indian woman's intentions were good enough and Beauchamp did his best to stop the car.

Thursday 10th November 1870

Showery all day. Got down 10 cars, which was all that remained in shute. There will be as near as possible 200 tons of clean coal, and 100 tons on lower wharf, and a small quantity at the mine. This is a long way short of a cargo, and when a cargo will be got out is more than I can say.

From the way in which Laiken spoke when we were coming up I thought there would be no difficulty in getting out a lot of coal, but he sings a very different song now. He says a great deal of work has to be done in the mine before they can begin to extract coal; he also says that the mine is partly ruined from the manner in which it has hitherto been managed.

One month today since we landed, and very little work to show for the time. The month has slipped past much quicker than I thought it would; still this is a weary dreary hole.

Friday 11th November 1870

Raining all day. Cleaning coal; terrible work in such weather but it has to be done. The men don't work with any spirit, and I don't wonder at it. These days give me the blues and makes me long for home.

Saturday 12th November 1870

Raining all day. Beauchamp laid up with a bad cold; two of my men now on the sick list. Beardsell is very much better and thinks he will be ready for work on Monday. Nothing worthy of note today; the rain is pouring down tonight by bucketfuls.

Sunday 13th November 1870

This has been a beautiful day, only one shower.

Took a walk round Shallow Bay and visited the grave of the poor fellow who was drowned whilst bathing in '66. He is buried quite close to the beach, with a small fence round the grave. The top of the grave is quite bare, not even a blade of grass on it. It looked so desolate that I quite shuddered at the thought of being left in such a place, but I trust that God will spare me to return from here. I have heard some men say they did not care where they were laid after they were dead, but I think if such men saw the loneliness of this poor man's grave they would think very differently.

Had a call from Captain Scotchguy today. He said he was going to give a dance and feast to his friends in the evening, and kindly invited me to come which I accepted—not to join in the dance of course, but simply to look on.

You will say not proper kind of amusement for a Sabbath evening, but to my mind there is no more harm in it than sitting in the house. These poor Indians have no more regard for the Sabbath than any other day, and they are better amusing themselves in this way than going about stealing.

When I entered I was shown to a seat next to mine host, which was near to the door on the left hand side going in. Next to him were seated, in a row, all the other chiefs and old men. On the opposite side sat the band in a square. The only instruments of music they possessed were a large and small drum (these drums having only one end) several rattles and crackers. An elderly man sat outside of the square with a stick in his hand; he was the conductor, and he beat time for them.

The music to my fancy only makes a din, but the singing is very beautiful: the men and women kept such good time that it was really worth hearing. The females were placed at the far end of the hut opposite the door and hidden from view by a sheet being hung up in front of them.

Shortly after I entered, the dancers arrived at the door and gave a whoop; the band and singing began and the dancers entered headed by a naked man and boy. These two crawled round and round the fire and twisted their features into all kinds of shapes. The others were dressed in all sorts of costumes, but all had feathers in their hair. This was kept up for 10 minutes when the two nude gentlemen made their exit behind the sheet amongst the females.

In about 5 minutes they reappeared, dressed, the man wearing a mask which stands about 6 inches above the head; there is a cavity on top which is filled with small feathers so that every time he shakes his head, a quantity fly out and all over the hut. As soon as he appeared, the singing and band struck up again. He took his place in the centre of the square and danced away until the perspiration rolled off him.

There was another intermission of about 5 minutes, when dancing was resumed by another Indian and kept up for an hour. After this the boys formed themselves into a square and danced for half an hour. This completed the ball part of the entertainment.

Next came the feast. One peculiarity I observed in this was that neither the chief (who was giving the fête) the members of his family, the women nor the young people partook of the Muckmuck. Only the chiefs, old men, band and dancers.

The first course was boiled potatoes straight. Captain Gold, being the greatest chief present, was served first and with the greater quantity; his dish was a wash hand basin. Then the other chiefs, old men etc.; the vessels chiefly used at this feast were wash hand basins and chambers.

After they had eaten a quantity of these potatoes, a bucket of water was handed round, and each took a drink. The potatoes remaining in the several vessels were removed to the respective

huts of the guests, emptied out and brought back and placed again ready for the second course which consisted of biscuit and molasses. The biscuit were put in first, then a man came round with a tin and poured the molasses over them (I declined the molasses preferring the biscuit straight—the tin looking rather suspicious). The fragments of this course were treated the same as the first.

A piece of tobacco (about two ounces) was handed to each. They all filled their pipes, took a smoke and then their departure without saying goodnight, but like so many beasts that had turned out feed and were now returning to their lair.

Monday 14th November 1870

Showery all morning, raining very hard all afternoon. The men who were cleaning the coal could not stand out this afternoon. Beardsell is all right again and turned out this morning. The bad place on the upper tramway has caved again. I fear this road will be a great trouble to me, and in all probability I will have to make a cut through the face of the hill and curry it back.

Tuesday 15th November 1870

It has been heavy and showery today, but dry. Cleaning coal all day. The last coal that came out of the shute is fearful dirty stuff: it is 1/2 slate and dust, and it screens very badly from being so wet.

Wednesday 16th November 1870

Raining all day. Cleaning coal all day, the men occasionally taking shelter from the heaviest showers. Lamerie and the two Chinamen are drawing coal from the mine and cleaning it. This cleaning at the mouth of the tunnel entails an enormous amount of labour. The men who planned and constructed the upper road surely never had seen a coal mine, or knew the requirement of one.

As it is at present constructed, the car when run out from the tunnel is dumped into a small shed where it has to be cleaned, and being so mixed up with slate and dust it is not a matter of taking the dirt from the coal, but the coal from the dirt. Consequently, every piece of coal has to be picked up by hand and thrown onto the heap, then the dirt has to be shoveled over the bank. Crystallized carbon would hardly pay if worked after this fashion.

There ought to have been a small shute with a screen in it at the mouth of the tunnel. Had it been so constructed, one man could have cleaned as much coal as 10 can now; but this is like everything else about the place. I am disgusted with the whole affair.

Thursday 17th November 1870

It has been fine all day until 5:00 o'clock this evening when it began to rain and blew a perfect gale.

From the heavy rain of yesterday and last night Hoopers Creek washed away a portion of the embankment at the mouth of the tunnel. A little more and it would have swept all the coal down the creek. Took two Indians up and turned its course a little until I can get some timber cut to crib it so as to prevent a like occurrence.

Friday 18th November 1870

Raining today with occasional showers of hail. The weather is very mild for November. Was it not for the incessant rains, it would be very pleasant.

Saturday 19th November 1870

Raining heavens hard all day. Finished cleaning the coal on the wharf today; the men are very pleased as they have had a most uncomfortable job.

Made an estimate of what it has cost to take it down clean it which is as follows

Miners and laborers \$194

China man \$ 88

Indian labour \$ 97

Superintendent \$100

Rations (say) \$300

Horses \$ 50

\$829

Without taking into consideration the cost of taking down the 100 tons by Branch, the 300 tons has cost \$2.75 per ton, something outrageous. Had things been properly constructed it should not have cost more than \$1.00 per ton to clean it at the mine, run it over the tramways and lay it on the wharf, but I presume it cost \$2.75 to put it in the storage shute. The Company have been deluded and robbed at every hand.

Sunday 20th November 1870

It was fine all morning, but raining all afternoon and is blowing a gale tonight.

Had an Indian girl and her mother in sewing for me this afternoon. They are very slow and not very neat at this art, but they make strong work. One can get quite a quantity of sewing done for a small piece of tobacco, and I must say I detest sitting down to sew myself when I can get it done so cheaply.

The girl asked me when she went away if I would always employ her when I wanted any sewing done. I promised that I would provided she conducted herself properly, but I don't think they know the difference between proper and improper.

Slept very badly last night. I dreamed again, and again I thought I was at home with my dear wife and Chickeys, but very unhappy. I thought my dear wife did and said something which I know she never will, but I woke up in great trouble.

I am a terrible dreamer now; I'm always dreaming of my poor boy, and he always appears to me sitting on his mother's knee. How often in real life have I looked at him sitting there, but alas! I shall see him no more until we meet in the better land, then I will again hear him sing the little hymn I used to teach him,

Around the throne of God in heaven
Thousands of children stand.
Children whose sins are all forgiven
A holy happy band.
Singing glory etc.

Monday 21st November 1870

Was fine all day until 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon when the rain began to pour down in bucketfuls. I was getting timber out for the embankment today. It was late before we got through, consequently got drenched to the skin.

Two months yesterday since we left. Time is on the wing, and I care not how soon the 21st of March arrives, and then.

Oh! Happy Day, oh! Happy Day,
For that surely shall complete my stay.
Then I'll away then I'll away
To the heart I love so far away.

Tuesday 22nd November 1870

This has been quite a fine day. Have been cribbing the embankment today and made a good job of it. Hooper's Creek may pour its torrents down at will now—it cannot hurt us.

The cave on the tramway has now sunk 2 feet, so there is nothing for it but to secure the face and make a new cut through the hill. I don't much like tackling the job in this bad weather, but it will have to be done now or snow may come and then it cannot be done, and the coal will have to remain at the mine.

When the road was first cut through, they must have intended cutting off this point for they cut a little way into the hill, then made a curve round it. Several large boulders and a large tree root must have frightened them. Some of these boulders will weigh 10 tons, consequently they will require blasting.

Wednesday 23rd November 1870

Raining all day. Had to make several outlets for the water on the lower tramway.

The north side of the wharf near the weighbridge has sunk 4 inches. At this particular place the sleeper on the south side rests on the stump of a tree, and on the north side supported by a spike only 6 inches square; such a support as this is only fit for a wheelbarrow road.

Thursday 24th November 1870

The rain has been pouring down today in torrents.

The men in such weather as this get wet every morning on their way to the mine, and there they have to work all day in wet feet and clothes, enough to give them their death. But as the saying is

'use is second nature'

so I think it is in this case as they seem to stand it pretty well.

Friday 25th November 1870

Raining as yesterday, wind not quite so high. The caved part of the road looks as though it will soon tumble into the creek; I wish Trounce and Gibbs were here now to repair it. I feel quite exasperated when I think of Trounce being paid \$200 a month as Inspector of Contracts and accepting such a road as this, that has not stood more than nine months and is now impassable. He surely never could have inspected the work, because any man of common sense could have seen that a road built in this way would not stand.

Saturday 26th November 1870

It has been showering all day. Had a number of Indians at work lifting the caved piece of road and cutting thro' the hill. Should the weather be anything like passable, I think I will complete this undertaking by next Saturday. The Indians however are lazy hounds; they require to be watched and driven all the time. The miners are doing pretty good work now, but they consume a fearful lot of timber and powder.

Sunday 27th November 1870

Showery all day.

Had a call from Captain Gold and his Queen. He is a great boor; he is eternally begging for something or other and blowing his own trumpet. He maintains that he is the rightful owner of the lands held by the Company and that he was paid the least of all the chiefs. He therefore says he has still a claim upon the Company. I asked him to allow me to examine his papers again, which he did.

He has a paper from Mr. Robinson (who settled the Indians claim for the Company) which clearly shows that he had no claim upon the lands whatever. Robinson's assertion is based upon information received from the other chiefs, consequently it must be correct. I explained this to him and told him that the Company had given him 15 blankets and a cultaz potlatch, because he was a minor chief. He asked me if such was the tenure of the paper given him by Robinson. I told him it was, upon which information he became quite furious, and threatened to burn it. He said the other Indians were liars and no better than dogs, but that he was the same as a white man; he would not steal nor lie.

Now in my opinion Indians have no veracity and as to thieving, a red hot stove would not be too heavy for Captain Gold. I did not tell him this however, but simply that if there was any mistake, it did not rest with Mr. Robinson or the Company but with the Indians.

He has a very flattering paper from Mr. Trounce; had he been Lord of the Highlands he could not have said more of him than he has done. Quite a mistake as it is apt to mislead the unsuspecting stranger.

It appears from all I can learn from Captain Gold and the other Indians that Trounce told them that he was the owner of the mine, that he possessed a large stone house in Victoria, that his social standing was next to the Governor of the Colony, and that his father was a large ship owner, one of which was to be sent here for coal and that it would carry hither a cargo of Iktas (goods) to be distributed amongst the Indians as a Cultaz potlatch, Gold to receive the largest quantity, and that the said ship would have four masts.

I explained to him that Mister Trounce was merely a servant of the Company whilst he was here and that he was not quite such a "Big Bug" as he professed to be. Also that I had no doubt when his father's ship with the four masts arrived that they would get a big potlatch, but when she would come I could not tell. I assured him that the Company had no intentions of giving a potlatch and Trounce had no authority to insinuate that they would do so. He asked me to give him a paper which I did, a copy of which will appear at the beginning of the next volume as there is not sufficient room to contain it in this.

Monday 28th November 1870

Fine all day except a shower of snow, which did not last more than half an hour.

Getting on famously with the piece of new road. The Siwashes are working like good fellows. We are meeting with more boulders than I expected to find.

Struck the soft coal today at the north end of the mine; this fault runs at an angle of about 40° , which deteriorates the value of the mine very considerably. The miners secured this portion of the mine, or rather are securing it. They will then have to go forward to the air shaft and work back.

The working of the present mine has been a grand mistake. I will enter upon this very fully when I measure the work done by Robinson and Branch, which I intend to do when I have completed the road.

Volume II

Sunday 4th of December 1870

Sunday 29th of December 1870

Wednesday 4th January 1871

Sunday 8th January 1871

Friday 20th January 1871

Tuesday 24th January 1871

Volume III

Volume IV

Part II

Background

1 Introduction

1.1 Provenance of the diary

In September 2024 Michael Gould, a Ladysmith, Vancouver Island resident called in to the Ladysmith Archives with two hand bags full of family papers he wanted to find a home for.

Amongst the documents and family photographs were four notebooks bundled together with twine. On inspection, these were a daily diary written by Thomas Russell, great great grandfather of Michael Gould, chronicling his seven and a half month sojourn superintending a coal mine in Skidegate Inlet, Queen Charlotte islands (now called Haida Gwaii) in 1870/1.

The diary, consisting of four notebook volumes, had been handed down through the generations within the Michael family via Thomas' daughter Alice, who had moved to Cedar to teach school and who subsequently married Edward Duncan Michael, a settler farmer, in May 1884.

[Volume 1](#) to 3 of the diary are of identical type, notebooks with dark maroon soft covers. The text inside is written in ink and chronicles Thomas' journey up to the Queen Charlotte Islands from Victoria aboard the sloop 'Thornton' and the bulk of his stay in Skidegate Inlet.

Volume 4 is a notebook of different make and size with a light brown faux leather cover. The text inside is written in pencil. In addition to containing the daily work records of the mine employees, this volume chronicles a harrowing return canoe trip Thomas took from Skidegate Inlet to Masset in search of provisions toward the end of their stay. It appears that Thomas did not wish to risk getting the ink-written Volume 3 of his diary wet while making this trip – as numerous blank pages remain in that notebook.

1.2 Contents of the diary

As Thomas explains in his introduction, he wrote the diary for his wife Sarah, so that she would be able to understand what he had been experiencing during the six months he spent in the Queen Charlottes away from his family which remained in Victoria. It is obvious from his writing that the Russell family was very close, made closer perhaps by their grief over losing their son, Robert Henry, at age 4 in 1869. The diary is replete with references to his little boy and with Thomas' longing to be with his family.



Image 1.1: The notebooks which Thomas Russell used to keep his daily diary while superintending a coal mine in Skidegate Inlet Sept 1870 – May 1871. Volumes 1 to 3 with maroon colored soft covers are handwritten in ink. Volume 4, the light brown faux-leather covered notebook, is written in pencil.

Saturday 15:

This has been a charming day, Mount Seymour looked beautiful under the first rays of the rising sun; Laikew is rather feverish today, administered a light apertient; I have been running the car along with Beardell daily, and although we only took down seven cars, yet we had no accident of any kind; the brakes however are very inefficient, having very little power in wet or frosty weather.

The Coal as I anticipated is in a dreadful mess, it is so wet, that it is hardly possible to tell Coal from slate, there is also a great deal of small in it, have ordered Beauchamp to make a screen, this cleaning will be a tedious and expensive job, and the coal when finished will not (to my mind) be marketable. Branch erred very much by not cleaning it, during the summer

Image 1.2: Ink written sample page from Thomas Russell's diary

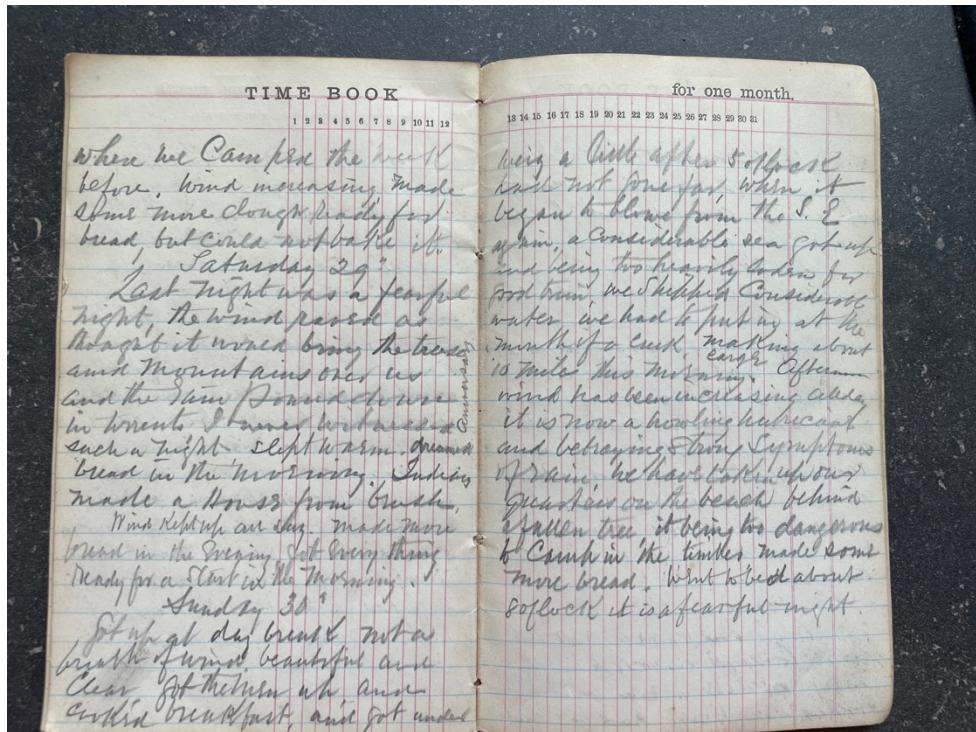


Image 1.3: Sample pages from the fourth notebook containing a record of a canoe trip from Skidegate Inlet to Masset and back. Written in pencil. Apparently Thomas did not wish to risk his ink-written 3rd volume of his diary on this trip.

The diary reads almost like an adventure novel with near shipwreck, horrendous accidents and injuries, bush medicine, interactions with the Haida First Nation, whites and orientals, scurrilous and honorable individuals, shoddy and dishonest work by previous company employees, a complex and thin coal deposit, running out of supplies, and perilous dugout canoe journeys.

References to the numerous whales, whaling activities, abundant salmon and dogfish populations seen on the trip up from Victoria to the Queen Charlottes on the sloop ‘Thornton’ provide insight into the natural abundance of the Gulf of Georgia (called the Salish Sea now) prior to late 19th century devastation through colonial overharvesting. Despite his perhaps inevitable colonial attitude toward First Nations, Thomas shows himself to be devout, respectful of honesty and very critical (almost to the point of despair) of dishonesty and immorality.

Thomas never states why he took the job of Superintendent of the coal mine in Skidegate Inlet. The work was not familiar to him and he may not have known that the mining company was in financial difficulties before he left Victoria. It is very likely that he was driven to take the work through desperation after his grocery store in Victoria burned down July 15th 1870 with total loss.

What Thomas encountered when he got to the mine appalled him. Previous workers had operated in a sloppy manner, not bothering to separate coal from slack, with the mine and tramway bringing the coal to the shipping wharf in poor and dangerous condition. The struggle to put together a load of 600 tons of coal before a ship arrived fills much of the narrative. Beset by accidents, horrendous injuries, a thin and complex coal seam, disgruntled employees and theft of key supplies, the ship arrived but had to be sent away with a short cargo. Thomas was glad to see it go, however, due to the scurrilous nature of the captain whose actions threatened his relationship with the Haida people.

As if troubles at the mine weren’t enough, the supply of ‘key’ comforts such as sugar and coffee ran out and caused much grumbling amongst the men. Exacerbating this, the ship coming to relieve them was a month late, causing the group to run out of supplies. This necessitated two largely unsuccessful canoe trips to seek out food – one to the Hudson’s Bay store near the village of Cumshewa, the other an epic journey up the east coast of Graham Island to the Hudson Bay Company depot at Masset.

Thomas’ diary ends with the note

“Monday 8th May. Left Queen Charlotte tonight at 6.00 o’clock P.M.”

As reported in an article on page 3 of the May 15th 1871 edition of the Victoria Daily Standard, Thomas and his party were picked up by the HBC steamship ‘Otter’ on its return leg during one of its regular trips up the BC coast.

What is not mentioned in the diary is that at the time of Thomas’ return to Victoria, the Queen Charlotte Coal Mining Company Ltd. was in liquidation. One final disaster upon Thomas was averted by the Supreme Court of British Columbia (which was ruling on the liquidation of the company) approving a special application made in June 1871 by a Mr. Johnson to ensure

that Thomas' wages be paid out of the first funds coming into the hands of the liquidators. A similar order was made for Laiken's wages. What happened to the others who worked at the mine during Thomas' stay is not recorded.

1.3 Importance of the Diary

Thomas Russell's diary is an important historical document worthy of provincial, if not national, recognition.

It is an important window into the social and commercial environment of a time in British Columbia's history when rapid colonial expansion was occurring against a backdrop of extensive First Nations depopulation and associated cultural erosion due to successive pandemics during the 1860s. Rampant whisky trading was aiding this destruction.

1.4 Where the diary is now

The diary volumes have been scanned and deposited in the Saanich Archives as an addition to significant Russell Family Finds already there.

1.5 Previous publications about the diary

The Michael family, to whom the diaries had been passed, must have loaned them to a reporter in early 1914 as a précis of them was published as a substantial article in the Victoria Daily Times Saturday July 25th 1914 page 11 under the heading >Mining Coal In the Queen Charlottes Forty Years Ago; An unusual Record: Interesting Reminiscences Gleaned from Diaries of late Thos. Russell, former City Assessor, Victoria.

This article was republished as a three part series August 8th (see Figure 1.5), 15th (see Figure 1.6) and 22nd (see Figure 1.7) on page 7 in The Queen Charlotte Islander which styled itself as '*A Weekly Newspaper Published in the interests of the Settlers, and to promote the development of the Queen Charlotte Islands'*'.



Image 1.4: Formal intake of Thomas Russell's diaries to the Saanich Archives, May 27th 2025.
Left to right: Kerry Parker (cousin to Michael Gould), Kaetlen Bursey (Saanich Archives Supervisor), Michael Gould (donor and great great grandson of Thomas Russell).



Image 1.5: Queen Charlotte Islander Saturday August 8th 1914 page 7

QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDER

Hotel Central
Peter Black, Prop.

Spacious Travelers' Sample Room.
Steam Heated Electric Bells

Corner First Avenue and Seventh Street
PRINCE RUPERT.

Mining Coal In The Queen Charlottes Forty Years Ago

Interesting Reminiscences Gleaned from Diaries of Late Thomas Russell, former City Assessor, Victoria.

From The Victoria Daily Times.

(Continued from last week's issue) can get it we have it for breakfast, dinner and supper. Salt beef is at a discount when halibut comes into the market. The crabs here are very fine, and a different kind from those got in the water near Victoria. Oysters there are none. Those delicious, pearl little creatures that we eat alive are dead to us here. Clams are in abundance but they savor too much of the Siwash to suit my taste."

A week after the ship had sailed away a canoe was in from Skidegate and brought news that it had crossed the bar the day before, having been held by adverse winds. The Indians opinion of it is recorded thus: "The ship has been a great disappointment to the Indians, Capt. Gold especially. They fully expected that she would bring in a great many ikatas to be given to them as a quid pro quo. Our friend Trounce has been the cause of this. He told old Gold that his father was going to send a ship for coal, a four-master, that she would be loaded with goods to be given away and that Gold would get the lion's share. Poor silly, credulous old Gold has been terribly gullied. I tried to console him by telling him that the ship that had come did not belong to Trounce's father, but that when Trounce's father's ship with the four masts did come he would then have a benefit. He did not say much, but I fancy he looks upon Trounce's big ship as a myth. I don't think he looks upon Trounce now as being a great nabob as he had represented himself to be; in fact, the majority speak of him with contempt.

There were supposed to be provisions for six months sent up at the time Mr. Russell went to the islands on the sloop Thornton, but the calculation must have been out, for long before they began to give out. The sugar was done on December 18, the coffee on January 13 and the tea five days later. Many weeks after that Mr. Russell had a cup of tea when he went on a fruitless hunt for provisions, and he writes: "By way of confession I own to a tenderness amounting almost to the illicit for this seductive extract. I suspect it was popular in the Garden of Eden before the fall." After the coffee was exhausted we read: "The cook is burning barley and nicknaming it coffee. It is a very fair substitute."

The men, upon whom the conditions had considerable effect in spite of the roughness of their nature, began to grumble loudly, and at last Mr. Russell undertook a canoe trip to Cumshewa in search of provisions. At the store he run by Capt. Hugh McKay there he was informed by the trader in charge, Mr. Hargreaves, that he could not spare anything, as he had only a week's supply for himself, so a journey of two days each way, not unaccompanied with much danger, was bootless. All Mr. Russell got out of it was a very bad cold and chill which struck to him until he left the island for good, and after.

"Some Indians have arrived from Gold Harbor," writes Mr. Russell one day, "with a supply of halibut. This look for sympathy. is a most delicious fish and when we To be concluded next week.

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For further particulars see Captain Ferguson.

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Or at Islander Office.

Image 1.6: Queen Charlotte Islander Saturday August 15th 1914 page 7

QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDER

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PRINCE RUPERT.

Mining Coal In The Queen Charlottes Forty Years Ago

Interesting Reminiscences Gleaned from Diaries of Late ~~Thomas~~ Russell, former City Assessor, Victoria.

From The Victoria Daily Times.

(Continued from last week's issue) leisure induced thoughts of home and family to a greater extent than on other days.

Not infrequently in the diary there is a note about the depths to which some white man had sunk under such circumstances. Of one case he writes: "He eats some of the Indian dish as if it was honey, whereas it sickens me with the sight and smell. He appears very much demoralized, dirty, ragged and slovenly, and very thin. He has not got even the time of day; I question very much if he knew the day of the week. It is truly wonderful how soon a man falls. He has only been six months stationed here and he has already fallen into the habits of the Indians. He may wash his face occasionally, but I doubt if he ever combs his hair. God grant that I may never fall as low as that."

Mr. Russell from time to time mentions the scenery, such as it was, but on one occasion writes that even if he were possessed of a poetic taste, worry and the constant succession of rainy days would prevent his mind being turned into the channel of the beautiful. All the same he betrays a keen love of nature and appreciation of the beautiful in animate and inanimate nature.

"This is a weary, dreary hole," he writes one evening, "no change but one continual round of coal and Siwash, Siwash and coal, and a growling, grumbling, ill-tempered set of men to deal with. I very often dream of being out of it and I sincerely wish I was."

The Indians in the nei hborhood were always treated fairly and kindly by Mr. Russell, and he endeavored to stand between them and white men who sought to injure them, but he else, and forgetting altogether what had no liking for them as neighbors I am reading about."

On one occasion Mr. Russell writes: "I have frequently questioned these Indians to see if they have any idea agreed with him when he returned of a Supreme Being. They all say here and supplemented his written records that they believe in a higher power with more detailed statements than mortal man, but they are very far from the true knowledge. They have been practically nothing done to develop the coal deposits of the Queen Charlottes. The last report of the miners department says that there is nothing to do. He could not spend it as the one which better than he did, yet hardly a Sunday day went by but he records a sort of four years ago. There has been some apology for having to put in the time prospecting going on for the past in what he considered a very poor fashion. Besides this the enforced workable measures are being reported.

Sundays Mr. Russell found the most on it during 1913, the coal not proving a satisfactory fuel. This mine is in the same vicinity as the one which Mr. Russell tried to make pay forty-four years ago. There has been some apology for having to put in the time prospecting going on for the past in what he considered a very poor fashion. Besides this the enforced workable measures are being reported.

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Image 1.7: Queen Charlotte Islander Saturday August 22nd 1914 page 7

2 Background to Thomas Russell (1836–1912) and Family

2.1 Early Life and Emigration (1836–1853)

Thomas Russell was born in [Haddington, Scotland](#) in 1836 to parents Robert Russell and Agnes Russell née Cameron. At age sixteen, travelling in steerage aboard the *Norman Morison* (a Hudson Bay Company supply ship that made annual journeys between England and Victoria between 1849 and 1853 under Captain David D. Wishart), Thomas set sail on August 14th, 1852 from [Gravesend, England](#). After travelling around [Cape Horn](#), he arrived in Royal Roads, Fort Victoria, on Sunday, January 16th, 1853.

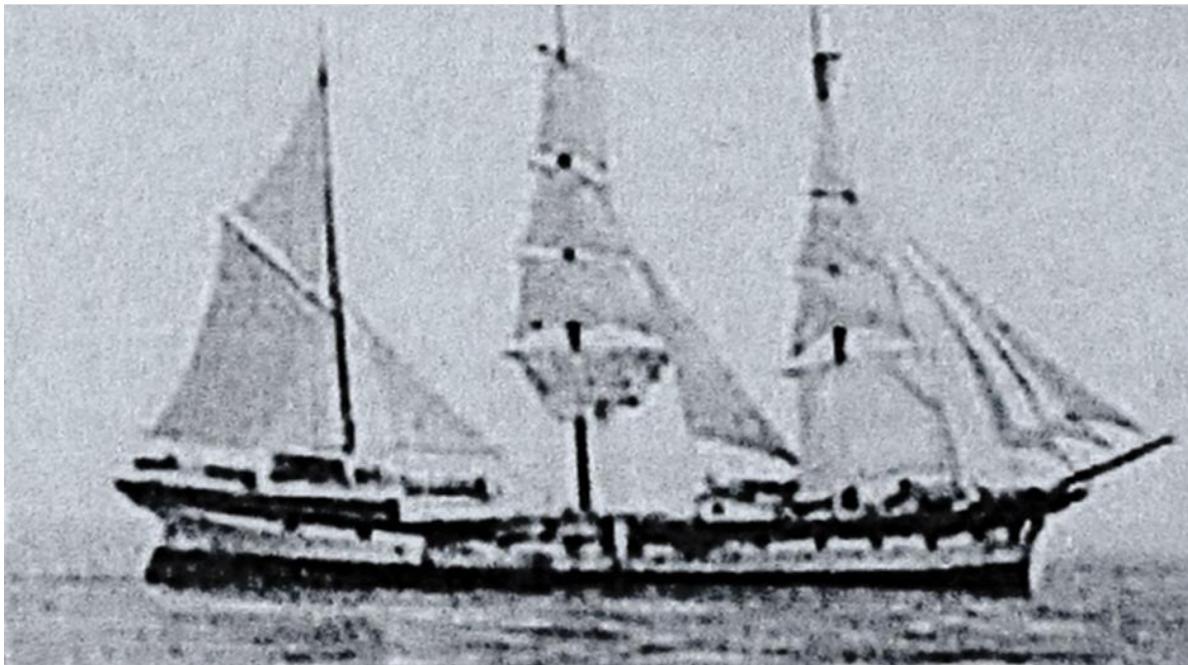


Image 2.1: Norman Morison HBC sailing ship circa 1852.

2.2 Craigflower and the Puget Sound Agricultural Company

Thomas was the brother-in-law of Kenneth McKenzie, who had been contracted by the Puget Sound Agricultural Company (PSAC)—a subsidiary of the Hudson’s Bay Company—to establish a farm, Craigflower, near Maple Point between [Esquimalt Harbour](#) and [The Gorge](#), north of [Victoria](#).

Thomas was listed as a labourer among McKenzie’s employees and was bound by a five-year contract with the PSAC. However, he was clearly not working class and appears to have been well educated. When Governor James Douglas seconded Robert Barr—originally intended to teach at Craigflower—to the Victoria School, McKenzie recommended Thomas as schoolmaster for Craigflower. Thomas declined the position, choosing instead to remain at Craigflower Farm assisting McKenzie with management of the bakery, butchery, and flour mill. The farm supplied British naval vessels at Esquimalt with much of their meat, bread, and vegetables.

Thomas continued working with McKenzie after his PSAC contract expired in 1857.

2.3 Marriage and Family Life

In March 1859 Thomas married an English woman, Sarah Collier (variably spelled Sarah or Sara), who had come to Vancouver Island in 1857 aboard the HBC ship *Princess Royal*.



Image 2.2: BC Archives Item G-04771 – Craigflower School (far right), Craigflower Manor, bridge, and farm outbuildings, Victoria, circa 1880.

Their first child, Alice Marion, was born April 22nd, 1860.

Indications are that Thomas did not intend to renew his PSAC contract in 1862. In 1861 he agreed to accept, in lieu of the twenty-five acres to which he became entitled in 1857 upon expiry of his contract, two parcels of land near Craigflower: a three-acre lot adjacent to the

school reserve, and a larger nineteen-acre section bounded by the [Colquitz River](#) to the north. A contributing factor was that his brother-in-law Kenneth McKenzie's contract as Craigflower bailiff was not renewed in 1861.

After 1861 Thomas appears to have continued assisting McKenzie with contracts supplying baked goods, beef, and vegetables to British naval vessels anchored at Esquimalt.

Their second child, Catherine, was born March 4th, 1862, followed on March 7th, 1865 by a son, Robert Henry.



Image 2.3: Russell family circa 1866. Left to right: Catherine (Kate), Robert Henry, Sarah (née Collier), Thomas, Alice Marion (Elsie).

2.4 Craigflower School and Educational Controversy (1865–1866)

In May 1865 Thomas Russell agreed to fill the vacant position of schoolmaster at Craigflower School following the resignation of the incumbent, Henry Claypole.

Thomas's tenure was brief—just over a year—but appears to have been an improvement over his predecessor. At the yearly examination on July 19th, 1865, parents remarked that:

"their children have learnt more in two months than in a year before with Mr. Claypole."

Despite this, in June 1866 the Superintendent of the Board of Education drew attention to the discrepancy between Thomas Russell's \$1,000 annual salary and the \$500 paid to teachers in other rural districts, while simultaneously questioning his efficiency. The Board resolved to transfer the assistant teacher from the Fort Street boys' school in Victoria to Craigflower at a salary of \$750 and to dispense with Russell's services.

In July 1866, despite favourable examination results, the Superintendent reported that Russell was to be discharged for being "by far the least efficient" and for lacking formal teacher training. Notice of one month was to be given.

Possibly having learned of his impending dismissal and having not been paid for September, Thomas resigned abruptly on October 3rd, 1866, writing to the Colonial Secretary, dismissing the children, and informing parents that the school was closed. The Superintendent advised the Board that Russell had left his position to open a grocery store in Victoria without prior notice.

The rancour continued; when Russell later claimed his September 1866 salary, the Board declined to recognize the claim.



Image 2.4: Craigflower School circa 1865. Thomas Russell stands left of the door; Henry Claypole is the tall figure by the second window to the right.

2.5 Business Ventures and Personal Tragedy

Russell's Victoria grocery store backed onto the yard of the Bank of British North America (demolished in 1949) on Yates Street. The two-storey building also housed *The Colonist* newspaper offices upstairs.

Tragedy struck on September 7th, 1869, when his four-year-old son Robert Henry died. The loss deeply affected Thomas, whose diary contains many sorrowful references to his son.

In 1870 Thomas relocated his store to the corner of Blanshard and Fort Streets. In the early hours of July 15th, 1870, the store burned to the ground with total loss, including his books.

2.6 Queen Charlotte Islands and Later Career

The destruction of his business may explain why Thomas accepted the position of Mine Superintendent with the **Queen Charlotte Coal Mining Company** a post he held between September 1870 and May 1871.

It is not recorded what employment Russell undertook immediately after returning to Victoria from the Queen Charlotte Islands in May 1871. He may have worked as a bookkeeper or accountant. From 1873 to 1902 he served as Assessor and Collector of Taxes for the City of Victoria, and from 1902 until 1912 he was bookkeeper for Thorpe & Co., soda water and soft-drink manufacturers.

2.7 Death and Burial

Thomas Russell died at the residence of his daughter Alice Michael in East Cedar, **Vancouver Island**, on August 14th, 1912, aged seventy-six. He was buried in **Ross Bay Cemetery**, Victoria, on August 17th beside his wife Sarah, who had died December 29th, 1905. The grave is located at H74W18.

Neither Thomas nor Sarah Russell have individual gravestones. A headstone commemorates their children Robert Henry and Catherine.

2.8 Solving a Grave Mystery

The headstone shows evidence of breakage, with a large crack across it. A later footstone bears the inscription:

Destructive Fire!
LOSS ABOUT SIX THOUSAND DOLLARS.

Yesterday morning the citizens were aroused from their slumbers at 3:20 o'clock, by the alarm of fire, which was sounded from the Deluge and U. H. & L. Co.'s bells. The firemen with their engines and apparatuses soon arrived at the fire, which was at the store of Mr. Thomas Russell, corner of Fort and Blanchard streets. Before water could be had the fire had made great progress. Fortunately a large well in the cattle yard of J. P. Davies & Co. was found to contain plenty of water, from which the hand-engine of the Tiger company drew the supply until the steamer Tiger got to work at the corner of Government and Fort streets, and forced the water a distance of 1,200 feet through the hose, which is in a very rotten state.

DAMAGES.

The property destroyed was Mr. Russell's store and contents—total loss. The stock was insured for \$1,000, and the building belonging to Mr. Phillips, for \$1,000. The fire spread rapidly until it caught Phillips' store and J. Goodacre's butcher shop, which were totally destroyed, along with all the clothing of the latter, also his watch and chain. A few articles were also saved from his shop. The two latter stores were not insured.

CAUSE OF THE FIRE.

The fire is supposed to have originated in the rear of Mr. Russell's store, in a little shed, as that is where the volumes of smoke were seen issuing from first. The loss will fall very heavy on Mr. Phillips, the owner of the three buildings, and also on Mr. Russell.

Great praise is due to the firemen for the manner in which they worked, during the fire. Steam was got up in the Tiger engine by Joseph Davies, and worked by Joshua Davies, nearly the whole time, with great care and presence of mind. An inquest will be held to-day. The total loss is about \$6,000.

Image 2.5: Victoria Daily Standard, Saturday July 16th, 1870, page 3.



Image 2.6: Thomas Russell and wife Sarah (née Collier) circa 1870.

"This grave was restored by the daughters of Thomas Michael son of Alice Michael the only child of Thomas and Sara Russell to live to adulthood. The Russells were pioneer settlers at Craigflower. The stone once stood in Pioneer Square."

The main stone reads:

IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE of ROBERT HENRY Only Son of T. & S. RUSSELL Died at Victoria Sept 7th 1869 Aged 4 Years and 5 months Also CATHERINE Their Younger Daughter Born March 4th 1862 Died December 7th 1880

There is a complex burial history. Robert Henry was originally interred in the Old Burying Ground (now Pioneer Square), where his "Lamb of God" headstone was erected. [Ross Bay Cemetery](#) records indicate he was later exhumed and reburied in Plot H72W12. Catherine was initially buried in Plot H72W18.

Possibly following Sarah's death in 1905 (Plot H73W18), the remains of both children were reinterred in Plot H74W18 beside their mother. Catherine's inscription may date from this reburial. When Thomas died in 1912 he appears to have been buried in the same plot, though no inscription marks his grave.

Thus, three members of the Russell family lie together in [Ross Bay Cemetery](#).



Image 2.7: Thomas Russell, September 1880.



Image 2.8: Thorpe & Co. Ltd. stoneware ginger beer bottle.

DIED.

RUSSELL—On the 14th inst., at the residence of his daughter, Mrs. E. D. Michael, of East Oyster District, B.C., Thomas Russell, late of Victoria, aged 76 years. Born at Haddington, Scotland.

The funeral will take place on Saturday at 1.50 p. m. from the chapel of the B. C. Funeral Company, 734 Broughton street, and 2 o'clock at St. Andrew's Presbyterian church.

Friends please accept this intimation.
Interment at Ross Bay cemetery.

Image 2.9: Victoria Daily Times, Friday August 16th, 1912, page 21.

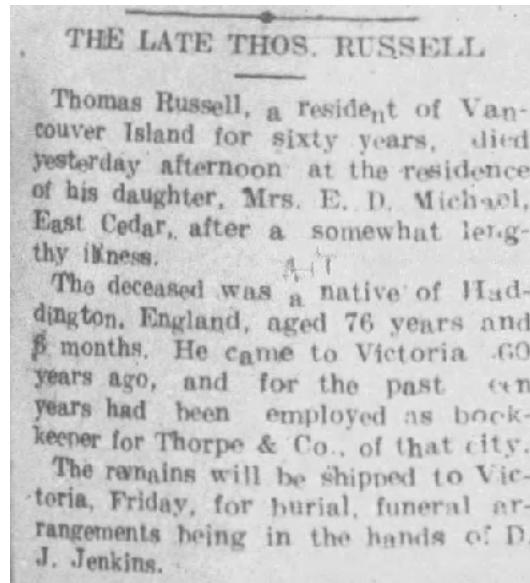


Image 2.10: Nanaimo Daily News, Thursday August 15th, 1912.

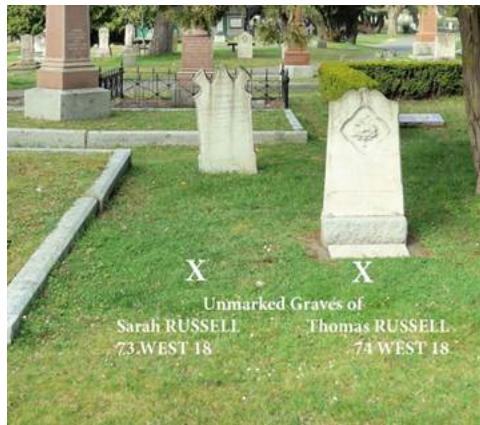
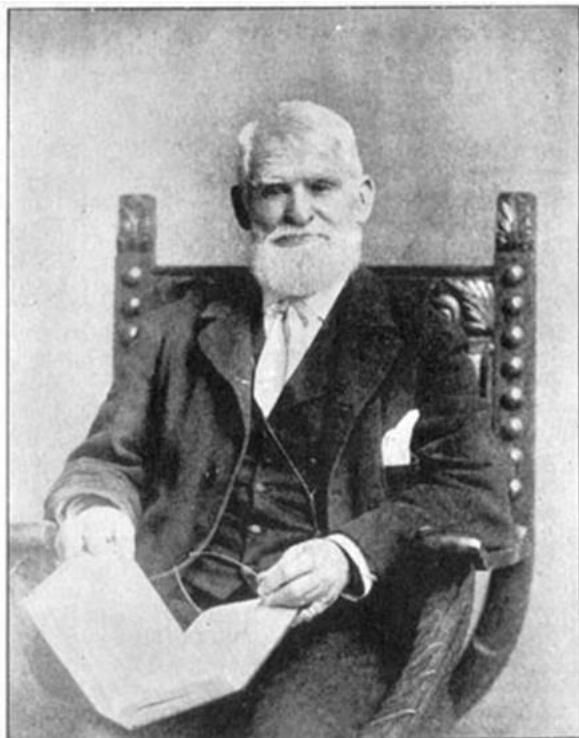


Image 2.11: Burial locations in Victoria.



Image 2.12: Robert Henry's "Lamb of God" gravestone with later inscription for Catherine, marking the resting place of the children and their father Thomas.

3 Discovery of the Cowgitz Coal Deposit



William Downie

Image 3.1: ‘Major’ William Downie – discoverer of coal at Skidegate in 1859.

3.1 Gold Prospecting Origins (1848–1853)

The discovery of coal at [Skidegate Inlet](#) in 1859 was a by-product of gold prospecting.

The California Gold Rush, which began in 1848, resulted in a significant influx of fortune seekers infected with “gold fever” to western North America. When two samples of gold from the [Queen Charlotte Islands \(now Haida Gwaii\)](#) were brought to [Fort Simpson](#) ([FIX LINK](#))

in 1850, the Hudson's Bay Company launched a series of expeditions to investigate. In late 1851, when news of the discovery at what became known as *Gold Harbour* (**NEED LINK**) leaked beyond the Hudson's Bay Company, a brief rush ensued.

A combination of the single gold-bearing vein being quickly mined out, unsuccessful further prospecting, and a difficult relationship between the miners and the Haida Nation resulted in the rush dissipating by 1853.

3.2 Renewal of Interest and the 1859 Expedition

Interest was rekindled in 1859 by the exhibition in [Victoria](#) of a 14-ounce gold nugget that had been purchased by Hudson's Bay Company agents from Haida people of the Queen Charlotte Islands. In response, James Douglas, Governor of the Colony of British Columbia, hired "Major" William Downie to renew prospecting for gold on the islands. Downie was well known for his prospecting and mining activities during the California Gold Rush.

Downie and a party of 27 miners arrived at Gold Harbour in July 1859. After a disappointing period prospecting in the vicinity of the original gold discovery, Downie turned his attention eastward toward Skidegate Channel, where he again saw little of interest.

3.3 Geological Observations and the Identification of Coal

Proceeding further eastward, Downie decided to turn back when the geology became unsuitable for primary gold occurrences. His report stated:

"We found black slate and quartz (illegible), further north granite appears and then sandstone and conglomerate and as we were now in a coal country, it was no use to look for gold. We saw coal here but I cannot speak as to its quality, not being a judge of it. The formation is similar to that of [Nanaimo](#)."

This observation marks the first recorded recognition of coal-bearing strata in the Skidegate area, later associated with the Cowgitz coal deposit.

3.4 Colonial Assessment of the Expedition

Interestingly, in his covering letter to the Duke of Newcastle—Henry Pelham-Clinton, 5th Duke of Newcastle, and Secretary of State for the Colonies—to whom he submitted Downie's report, Governor James Douglas was less than complimentary of the Downie party's prospecting efforts in the Queen Charlottes. Douglas wrote:

“The report now transmitted relates to the unsuccessful result of the attempt made in the month of July last, by a body of miners from this place [Victoria], to explore Queen Charlottes’ Island.

The adventurers, dismayed by the rugged aspect of the country, the humidity of the climate and the numbers and formidable appearance of the Native tribes, did not prosecute the enterprise with resolution or tenacity, and soon returned to this place [Victoria], with the exception of a few daring spirits, who accompanied Mr. Downie to Fort Simpson.”

4 Queen Charlotte Coal Company: Appraisal and Development of the Cowgitz Coal

4.1 Early Appraisal of the Cowgitz Coal Deposit

William Downie, in his 1859 report to Governor Douglas on results of prospecting in the Queen Charlotte's, commented about the similarity of the coal-bearing rock in [Skidegate](#) to that of the then rapidly developing coal mines at [Nanaimo](#). This may have been what piqued the interest of a group of Victoria investors who, in 1864, sent a party of coal miners to [Skidegate](#) from Victoria to assess the deposit.

This first expedition met with difficulties and delays en route—taking six weeks to make the trip, having left Victoria on August 1st, 1864, and arriving at [Skidegate](#) on September 15th. They found outcropping coal on September 17th, but due to their supplies being nearly exhausted, were forced to depart for Victoria on September 18th without having conducted a proper assessment. They did, however, obtain

“satisfactory proof that there was a seam of Anthracite some four feet six inches in thickness.”

Faced with this “imperfect,” but encouraging information, the *Queen Charlotte Coal Mining Company “Limited”* (QCCCo) was registered on June 5th, 1865. On July 6th, a call to shareholders was made for funds to underwrite a second expedition to [Skidegate](#), which George Robinson—formerly superintendent of coal mines at Nanaimo, and subsequently a well-known photographer—was hired to lead. Robinson was also a “significant” shareholder in the company.

4.1.1 Contemporary Newspaper Coverage

As reported in the 1865 *Prospectus and Report with Articles of Association of the Queen Charlotte Coal Mining Company “Limited”*:

“A party of miners were engaged, a small sloop was purchased and provisioned, and a party sailed, having clearance from New Westminster, on the 5th June 1865, for Queen Charlotte Island.”

Departure of the party from Victoria was noted in the newspaper:

Queen Charlotte Coal Mining Company.

(LIMITED.)

Registered June 5th, 1865.

NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT.—NOTICE IS hereby given that at a meeting of Directors held this day the following resolution was passed: That a call of one shilling sterling on each divided share in the above Company be made, payable at the office of said Company on or before July 16, 1865, either in cash or in notes, one half at 30 days and one half at 60 days, and if the said call is not paid or the notes given on or before the 21st day of this month the said shares will be liable to be forfeited.

J. S. WILLIS,

Government Street,
south of Fort, July 6th, 1865.

Acting Secretary.

Jy7-t

Image 4.1: *Victoria Daily Chronicle*, July 7th, 1865, page 2

EXPEDITION FOR ARTHRACITE COAL.—A party of seven prospectors left yesterday in the sloop Random for Queen Charlotte Island, where they will examine and preempt the anthracite coal veins recently discovered at Skides gate Bay and other points. Mr. Robinson, the photographer, will lead the expedition. He is provided with photographic apparatus and will take views of the surrounding country.

Image 4.2: *Victoria Daily Chronicle*, June 1st, 1865, page 3

4.2 Robinson's 1865 Field Report

Upon his return to Victoria on August 11th, 1865, Robinson provided, on August 14th, a detailed report of the expedition to shareholders—as follows:

“Arrived Skidegate Bay on the 22nd June. Early the following morning we proceeded to the vicinity of the Coal Mine, which we found to be 15 miles (W.S.W.) distant from the Skidegate village. We reached our destination about noon, and commenced our search for Coal the same day; but without success. We, however, resumed our search the following morning, and were rewarded by striking a seam of Anthracite Coal which was cropping out on the side of a high range of hills which afterward proved to be a branch of a mountain some two or three thousand feet in height and which, in compliment to His Excellency Governor Seymour, I named ‘Mount Seymour.’

I afterwards traced the out-crop of the seam for some two or three hundred yards, finding it varying in thickness from three to seven feet, and of excellent quality. To this point I therefore directed my most special attention, and in the course of the next month succeeded in finding a continuation of the seam in two adjoining ranges of hills, lying to the southward of the one in which we first found it, but each running into or being branches of Mount Seymour. The entire distance from the extreme points at which the out-crops were found would be from one to two miles—having in each case the same characteristics, and being of a similar quality to that first struck, and from which I had some seven or eight tons of Coal extracted and packed down to the beach by Indians, many of whom followed in our rear, being anxious to see what we were going to do.

Some five or six tons of this coal I have brought down with me by the sloop, the captain thinking it unsafe to bring more than that quantity by her; the remaining portion I left upon the beach. The outcrop of the Coal I found generally at an elevation of some five or six hundred feet above the level of the sea, and at a distance of about three-quarters of a mile from high water.

I think its average thickness will be about four feet, exclusive of a few inches of soft earth lying underneath the seam and which serves as a ‘peeling’ or ‘corfing’. The paving consists of a hard brittle slate strongly resembling some of the slate found in the carboniferous formation in Great Britain. The roof has the appearance of a semi-vitrified sandstone and is much shattered and broken, which will of course render it necessary that great care and caution should be exercised in the working of the seam, to ensure the safety of the workmen. The seam appears to lie at an angle of about 70 or 80 degrees with the horizon, and is situated on the ranges of hills adjoining Mount Seymour.”

4.3 Estimated Costs and Development Potential

Robinson's report then turns to estimated costs of development of the deposit:

"As far as I am at present able to judge, there appears to be no reason why the coal seam may not be worked as cheaply and at as little expense as any other coal mine in the country. The cost of opening the seam to such an extent as would be necessary to make it at least self-supporting will not, I think, exceed \$1500, and after the work is fully and thoroughly opened, the coal may be produced for about four dollars a ton, inclusive of all labor, &c., in the digging of the coal to its delivery upon the wharf, and should my views of the extent of the seam be realised (of which I have not the slightest doubt), I see no reason why any reasonable quantity of coal, say from one to four thousand tons per month, may not be obtained from the seam after it is once in fair working order."

4.4 Robinson's Proposed Development Plan

Robinson then described how he envisioned the development:

"For a distance of about 227 yards from the mine the ground has a fall of about one in five, the next 530 yards has a fall of about one in eight and three quarters. Over the whole of this distance, I propose to make a self-acting tramway, having a double line a portion of the way; so that the descending loaded wagons will draw up the ascending empty ones.

The remaining portion of the road has a fall towards the water of about one in thirty three on the average; but a great portion of it may be built upon a level if found desirable. There is no engineering difficulty whatsoever in the way of its construction, the only obstacles being from 150 to 200 trees and roots, half of which, or thereabouts, are standing and the others are fallen. I do not think that there will be a necessity for the removal of much earth in the construction, probably not over 500 tons in all.

The ground, however, is of a marshy character, which will probably render it necessary to elevate the road for the greater part of its length for a foot or two above the level of the ground, and if that part of it be built upon timber support and 'corduroyed' I am of the opinion that it can be built tolerably cheap, as timber suitable for the purpose can be found growing plentifully along the proposed route of the tramway.

The entire distance from the mine to the place where I propose to erect the wharf, following the line of the tramway, is about 2060 yards; the site proposed for the

wharf is very conveniently situated, having 18 feet depth of water at about fifty yards from high water.

Of the cost of erecting the wharf I am unable to offer any estimate, not having any work of that kind done in this Colony. I may, however, say that the beach upon which it is proposed to build the wharf has a sandy, gravelly bottom, and appears to be very good ground to put in piles.

The cost of building the tramway, including the removal of standing and fallen trees, will probably be about \$10,000; but this does not include the cost of a wire rope, which it will be found necessary to use upon the self-acting incline.

The harbour is very commodious and is easy of access from both sides of the island, and affords good shelter from all winds and also good anchorage. Capt. Hallett, at my request, has surveyed and sounded the inner harbour, and I have requested him to prepare a sketch of the same, with such other particulars as may be necessary for your information.

Vessels of any size can go in or out of [Skidegate Bay](#) at any time of the tide, the distance from the entrance of which to the proposed wharf being about 18 miles, in the navigation of which there appears no difficulty whatever."

4.4.1 Relations with Local Indigenous Peoples

With regard to the local inhabitants, Robinson reported:

"The Indian tribes generally who visited us did not show any ill-feeling, or anything of a hostile character; on the contrary they generally expressed themselves anxious for the white people to come and settle amongst them."

4.5 QCCCo Reaction to Robinson's Report

This very positive report prompted a doubling of the number of shares in the company to raise additional capital. The 7,500 original shares (Class A), paid up to £1 and which were liable to an additional call of £1, were augmented by issuance of 3,000 Class B shares at £2 a share and 4,500 Class C shares, which were held in reserve. Total capitalisation of the company was £13,500 (\$67,500).

Estimated expenses for the development of the mine were \$50,000, leaving the company a surplus balance of \$17,500.

4.5.1 Estimated Expenses

Item	Estimated Cost
Tunnel	\$ 2,000
Wharf	\$ 6,500
Purchase of land for town	\$ 1,000
Tramway	\$14,000
Rolling stock	\$ 6,500
Contingencies	\$20,000
Total	\$50,000

A 20,000-acre mining lease was secured from the government for a nominal rent of \$100 per annum, with the additional privilege of purchasing 1,000 acres at \$1 per acre for a townsite.

The cost of delivering the anthracite coal to [San Francisco](#) was estimated not to exceed \$10 per ton. This, compared to realised prices of \$16–25 per ton and more for anthracite originating from Pennsylvania or Europe, fuelled an expectation of considerable profitability. The market—foundries, steam ships, etc.—in [San Francisco](#), [Victoria](#), and other circum-Pacific ports was considered assured.

It was confidently hoped that the mine would be fully opened and the company prepared to supply coal at the wharf by April 1866.

4.6 Moves to Develop the Mine

After the August 14th, 1865 shareholders' meeting and receipt of Robinson's very positive report, the Company lost no time in having plans and specifications prepared for the works required to be done in opening the mine. Tenders for contracts were advertised.

However, the tenders received were considered unacceptable, and the Directors decided to manage the work themselves. Robinson was taken on as Superintendent; an experienced foreman, W. V. Brown, and a number of skilled workmen (carpenters, blacksmiths, axemen, labourers, and a surveyor) were hired.

The 31-man party, with six months' provisions and supplies, two yoke of oxen, lumber, tools, iron for the tramway, material, and all the requisites for carrying on the works, left Victoria on October 6th, 1865 via two schooners, the *Alpha* and *Goldstream*. Enough rail and material for a mile of tramway from the mine to the shore was included, as were plans and lumber for construction of a large wharf 180 feet wide and 120 feet long.

The workmen were contracted for five months, with an additional month if required, it being anticipated that by that time the mine would be opened and the works completed for the

Notice to Contractors.

Queen Charlotte Coal Mining Comp'y, LIMITED.

SEALED TENDERS WILL BE RECEIVED BY THE undersigned at his office on Broughton street, where the plans and specifications can be seen until Thursday, the 21st instant, for grading and building a Tramroad from the Company's Mine, and a Wharf at Skidegate Bay, Queen Charlotte Island. The Company do not bind themselves to accept the lowest, or any Tenders.

ALSO, TO PROVISION MERCHANTS:

Sealed Tenders will be received at my Office, where a list of the goods required may be seen until Tuesday, the 19th inst., for the supply of Six Months Provisions for 30 Men.

Samples of the goods, which are to be of the best quality, must be left with the Tenders.

THOMAS TROUNCE,
Chairman,
Victoria, V. I., Sept. 15th. 1865. se14 td

Image 4.3: *Victoria Daily Chronicle*, Friday, September 15th, 1865, page 2

Queen Charlotte Coal Mining Comp'y, Limited.

NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT—AT A MEETING OF Directors of the above Company held THIS DAY the following Resolution was passed:—That an Assessment of FOUR SHILLINGS PER SHARE be levied on all the assessable A Shares, payable at the Bank of British North America on or before SATURDAY the 9th of December, 1865.

J. S. WILLIS.
Secretary.

Corner Fort and Langley Sts; }
Nov. 22d, 1865. } no 22

Image 4.4: *Victoria Daily Chronicle*, Friday, September 15th, 1865, page 3

delivery of coal. In order to raise funds to cover expenses, a call was put out that Class A shareholders pay four shillings per share.

4.7 Contemporary Reporting on Early Mine Development

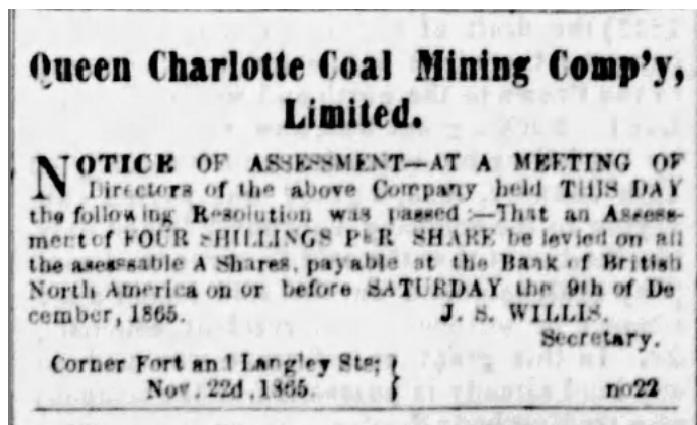


Image 4.5: *Victoria Daily Chronicle*, November 30th, 1865, page 1

An article in the *Victoria Daily Chronicle*, shown below, comprehensively describes the work commenced upon arrival of the schooners at [Skidegate](#) on October 26th, 1865.

4.7.1 Arrival and Initial Works at Skidegate

By December 1865 the work was progressing quickly, as testified by the following article:

4.7.2 Continued Optimism in Early 1866

As to the optimistic reports on progress at the mine, these were unchanged in the *Colonist* issue for February 2nd, 1866:

“FROM QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLAND. ARRIVAL OF THE OTTER.—The steamer *Otter*, Captain Swanson, arrived last evening from her trip to Queen Charlotte Island and stations on the Northwest Coast of British Columbia, having been absent 28 days. On board were Dr. Tolmie, M.L.A. of the H.B. Co., Messrs. Trounce and Gibbs, Directors of the Queen Charlotte Coal Co., Mr. Robinson, Overseer, Capt. Loudon and others. The tenor of news brought by these gentlemen from the mine is very satisfactory. ...”

The Queen Charlotte Island Coal Company's Mine.

[LETTER FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

EDITORS DAILY CHRONICLE:—The schooner Alpha arrived at Skidegate Bay with men and materials for commencing the coal mining operation of the Queen Charlotte coal mining company on Thursday the 26th of October, and the Goldstream with additional supplies arrived on the Saturday following. On Friday the Alpha's passengers were landed and they at once commenced preparations for erecting dwelling houses and stores, also blacksmith and carpenter shops; a party was also sent to assist Mr Ralph, Civil Engineer, in laying out a line of Railway from the mines to the place proposed for the erection of a wharf; the harbour is admirably situated and a vessel of 20 feet draught of water can lie within 30 feet of the beach at low water, and be securely sheltered in any part of the bay from all winds and weathers. Mr Robinson, the company's manager, thinks that the coal seam is much more extensive than is generally supposed, and this opinion is indulged in by the most experienced miners that he has with him. The seam at present appears to be about four or five feet in thickness; the entire length of railway is about one-fourth of a mile, for about half of which the line will be self-acting; the loading wagons descending the incline, taking up the return empty ones, and owing to the very even surface of the whole length of the line, and to the fact of there being plenty of timber upon the spot suitable for the work, it is believed that the whole of the work can be opened at a very moderate sum, much less, indeed, than the company have calculated upon.

The Indians seem very friendly disposed towards the whites. There are, however, very few of the former at present there, most of the tribe appearing to be away at Victoria and elsewhere.

The energetic manner in which the company have commenced and hitherto carried on their operations shows conclusively that they not only have confidence in their undertaking, but that they intend to set an example worthy of imitation by those who probably are better able to prosecute such operations.

ALPHA.

Image 4.6: *Victoria Daily Chronicle*, October 28th, 1865, page 2

FROM QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLAND.—The schooner Goldstream, Hewitt, 30 days from Skidegate Bay, Queen Charlotte Island, arrived yesterday afternoon, bringing a few passengers and very encouraging news for the members of the Coal Mining Company. Three distinct veins of anthracite have been found, all of which are believed to be of great width. The company have erected substantial houses, and work on the tramway has been commenced. Both tracks of the tramway will be only a mile and an eighth in length. All the party were well. Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Willis came down in the schooner. At Bella Coola, the trading schooner Nanaimo Packet was seen. H. M. S. Clio was sighted above Milbank Sound, apparently bound for Kitimat.

Image 4.7: *Victoria Daily Chronicle*, December 12th, 1865, page 3

4.8 Later Technical Assessments and Continued Activity

Annual activity reports for 1867, 1868, and 1869 by the civil and mining engineer John James Landale—who acted as Superintendent for various periods in 1868 and 1869—chronicled continued activity at the site.

4.8.1 Landale's 1867 Inspection and Critique

Landale's 1867 inspection report, accompanied by a map (see below), was very critical of attempts made to date by the company to map out the several anthracite seams or veins through digging of tunnels, adits, shafts, and pits.

Map of Company Workings

4.9 Principal Anthracite Deposits and Early Interpretation

The principal deposit appears to have been an outcropping of good hard anthracite west of Hoopers Creek (NEED LINK), variably referred to as the “6 foot seam” or King’s coal or vein.

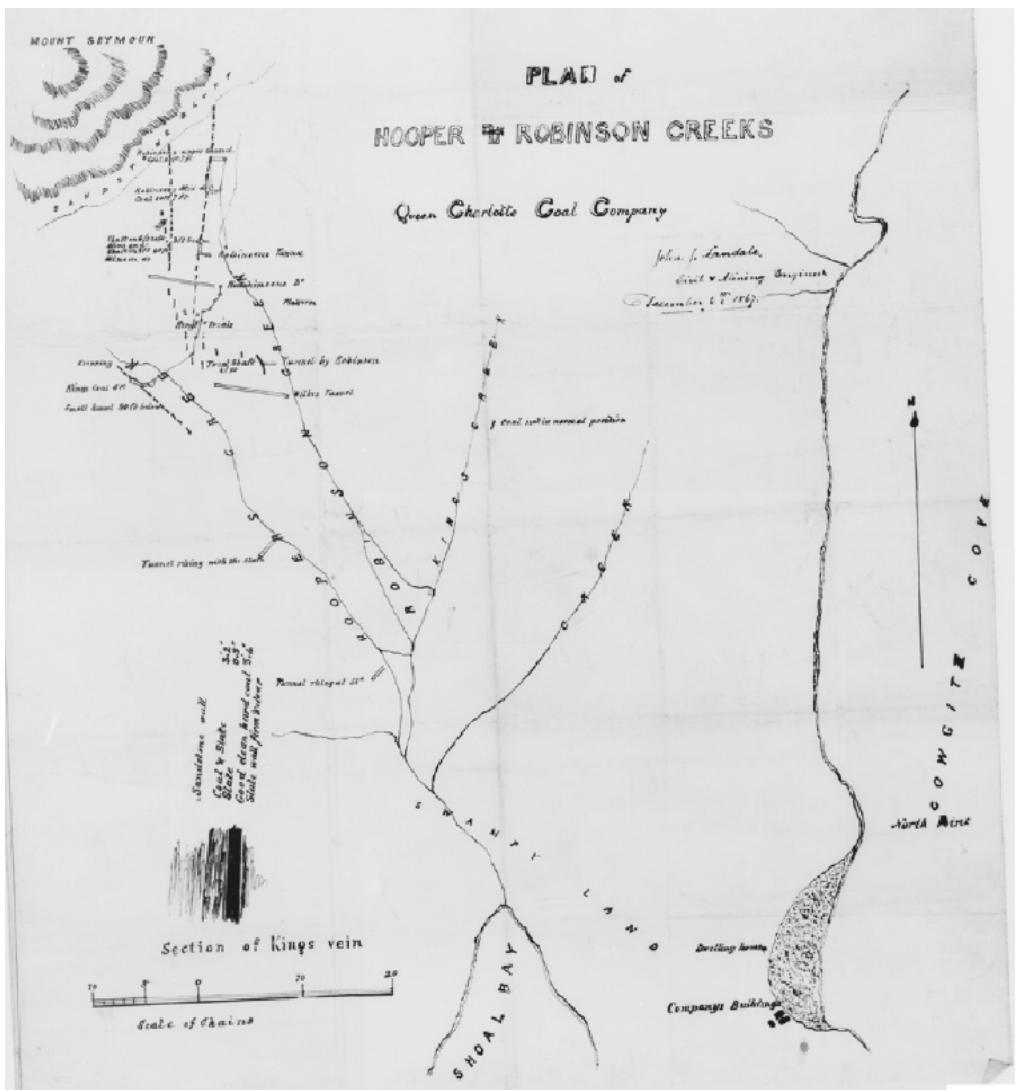


Image 4.8: BC Archives Series MS-0314 File CM/A218 - Map by John James Landale of the Queen Charlotte Coal Company workings at Hooper and Robinson Creeks, Cowgitz Bay, Queen Charlotte Islands, as of December 1867, to accompany his report to the company.

His report states:

“A great deal of very expensive prospecting has been done but generally in most injudicious places, and all the works for mere exploration are much too good.”

He indicates that the work done to date failed to define the anthracite deposit because the diggings had not been deep enough to get below the surface “creep” of the seams:

“Company’s purchase of 1000 acres is very well located and it is a most valuable property though it seems as if the parties who have prospected it in order to open work had all the time been working at random, everything has been done by tunneling, and nearly all of it amounts to mere surface scratching.

It may be taken as an axiom that wherever coal is found as a vein instead of a seam (especially in hilly districts) it will be broken and twisted, twisted towards the surface, parts of the vein lying off the true line of bearing below the side with the heaviest weight on it....”

4.9.1 Surface Creep of Coal Seams

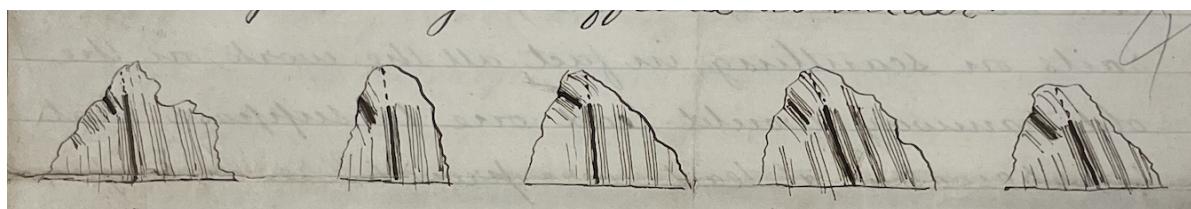


Image 4.9: Illustration by John James Landale in his 1867 report depicting surface creep of coal veins in hilly terrain—requiring excavation below the creep line to determine their true bearing.

4.9.2 Mapping of Coal Seams

4.10 Critique of Early Infrastructure Decisions

Landale was also critical of an original attempt at construction of the tramway, which had later been abandoned in favour of a better routing:

“The old tramway partially constructed is a job that should have been left till a sufficient working had been obtained, neither is it by any means the best route, being longer than the route adopted by Mr. Green which has the merit of common sense to recommend it.... It is much to be regretted that all the money spent on this tramway had not been applied to proper prospecting the field.”

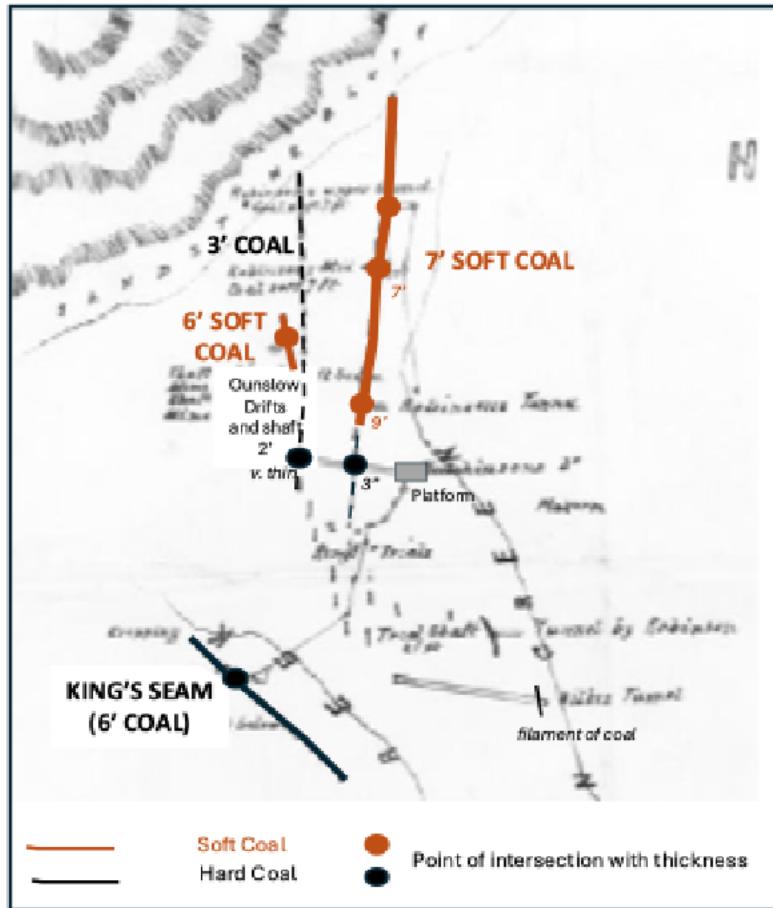


Image 4.10: Detail of Landale's 1867 map showing coals encountered through exploratory work. The 6-foot King's Seam became the target of the eventual mine.

Landale noted wastage and the unnecessary purchase of expensive equipment:

"Tons of wood are lying rotting in different parts of the bush..... and many things purchased not by any means requisite for a young coal work, to wit iron scuttles such as are used in Staffordshire for handline iron ore, and as Mr. King informs me a lot of smoothing irons."

4.10.1 Recommendations for Mine Cars

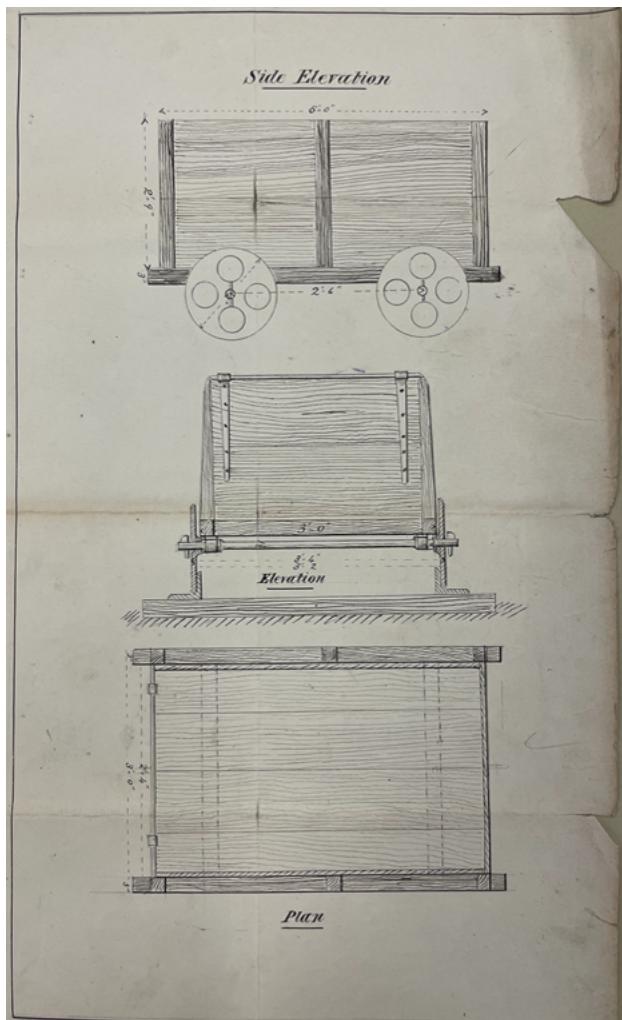


Image 4.11: Illustration in Landale's 1867 report showing the recommended type of coal car to be used.

4.11 Superintendent Landale's Tenure, 1868–1869

Upon arrival on site in 1868 (month not specified) to take up residence as Superintendent, Landale found that the company had about 40 tons of “prime quality” coal already mined. He instructed continuation of the mine, which by August 1st had advanced 178 feet and was encountering variable, gassy coal averaging three feet thick, with 182 tons taken.

At the time of writing his report in August 1868 he noted 250 tons of good, clean, merchantable coal lying at the mine:

“After the tunnel being driven 300 feet in coal 5 feet wide at the top and 6 wide at the bottom lined with 10 inch timbers and 12 inch caps.”

After that he reported that the coal thinned markedly, but was not overly concerned, recognising that such variations were to be expected. He noted production potential for ten thousand tons of coal for five years.

Landale was concerned that his November 1867 recommendation for exploratory work had not been pursued, with a different action having been followed which was less effective and involved unnecessary expenditure. Detailed plans for expansion of the tramway were provided with costings along with recommendations for future mining activity. Unfortunately, the maps and diagrams referred to in the available copy of his 1868 report are missing, which makes it difficult to follow his descriptions and recommendations.

4.11.1 Workforce and Provisioning Concerns

He was scathing about the workforce and voiced concern about the provisions:

“In all my experience in Coal Mining I have never met with a more turbulent, disobliging, grumbling set of men; from the day we left Nanaimo till the day we left the island it has been one intermitting growl. The Company must be at any expense of trouble to smooth their path and make them comfortable, but not one jot of allowance will they make for the situation, neither have they done anything like a sufficient quantity of work, but I fear from the state of the provisions latterly that we cannot say anything, in fact we are at their mercy, though I do not think the provisions were bad enough to cause them to cease work, which they did on 10th September,...”

He further states:

“Laiken has acted zealously and well, urging them by every means, but their constant song was ‘that was plenty for the grub,’ when the coal gave out ‘the place had no coal in it and never would have,’ and when it took on ‘I knew it, we have got it now.’ At present on what they call short allowance, the language is not fit for writing.”

4.12 Landale's 1869 Report and Assessment

Having left in August 1868, Landale returned to the mine in June 1869 and spent a further six months at the site. His 1869 report, written on his return to Victoria in November of that year, details the work done at the site to map out the deposit; the main tunnel (apparently on Hoopers Creek) having been driven 619 feet, with some 800 tons of coal extracted and a forecast of at least 4,000 tons to come.

His report expounds on the work done to date and builds up expectation of profit to be made.

4.12.1 Surface Works and Tramway Construction

In addition to the coal workings, the company had by then at various times erected:

“A Store, large and commodious, capable of holding provisions and goods for 100 men with three rooms above. Dwelling house for 40 men with kitchen attached. Superintendent’s house of 2 rooms. House for oxen, Smith and Carpenter’s shops. House capable of holding from 15 to 20 people. Smith at Hooper’s Creek Tunnel, and a lodge at Wilke’s Tunnel.”

A tramway had likewise been built from high water, 4,547 feet in length, of which 2,815 feet were straight and 1,732 feet were curved, consisting of:

“697 feet of trestle work—level—1500 feet grade 2.93 in 100—640 feet level including a bridge 210 feet long—260 feet 2.9 in 100—1000 feet level including 600 ft of a bridge. And terminating at the end next to shutes with 450 feet, having a grade of 8 in 100 and in this distance there are eight substantial culverts and a turn out 75 feet long exclusive of switches.”

He concluded:

“As far as the work on this tramway goes I do not believe it can be excelled in the Colony.”

He further reported:

“The piles for the wharf are all ready, and a pile driver erected on a scow 20 x 40. The shutes for conveying the coal to the waggons was near completion when the last party of men left, one small tramway from Robinson’s tunnel was graded and the other to Hooper’s Creek must now be finished, so that with any ordinary weather the work must be in a state fit for rolling stock, and as there are several waggons and wheels and axles on the ground little time need elapse before the shipment of anthracite coal from [Graham’s Island](#) to [San Francisco](#) takes place, which is all that is needed in my opinion to make this a permanent paying and profitable concern.”

4.12.2 Summary and Outlook

He forecast in excess of 100,000 tons of mineable coal in two of the three seams recognised and summed up his report by stating:

“The Queen Charlotte Coal Co possesses a property containing 6000 acres in which three veins of Anthracite are found, and it is now in a condition to make returns, various proofs costing large sums of money have been made, which proofs have turned out well for the slight depth on the vein at which they are made. A substantial Tramway has been built, with a large and strong shute, and a sufficient wharf is in progress of completion. A store and several houses, outhouses, Blacksmith and other shops are already on the ground, as well as waggons and mules.

The future operations for the consideration of the Company are the carrying on of Wilke’s Tunnel for the purpose of working the three feet and the Hooper Creek veins, and the opening out of the latter further down the range.”

4.13 Transition to the Russell Period

No activity report was found for 1870. The departing Superintendent, Mr. Branch, whom Thomas Russell replaced, may have produced one; if so, it has apparently been lost.

From September 1870 the continuing story of the development of the mine is taken up by Thomas Russell. As his diary attests, on his arrival he found the works in a poor state and came to question the integrity of those who preceded him. Some of the mined coal had been transported on the completed tramway to the newly constructed wharf, but it had not been properly sorted from slack, requiring time-consuming work to clean it, which resulted in slow progress and significant reduction in saleable tonnage. The tramway was poorly constructed and in need of partial rebuilding, the mining was problematic, and the workforce of doubtful quality.

5 Maps

Passage of the sloop Thornton from Victoria to the Queen Charlotte islands (now called Haida Gwaii).



Image 5.1: Southern portion: Victoria to the northern tip of Vancouver Island

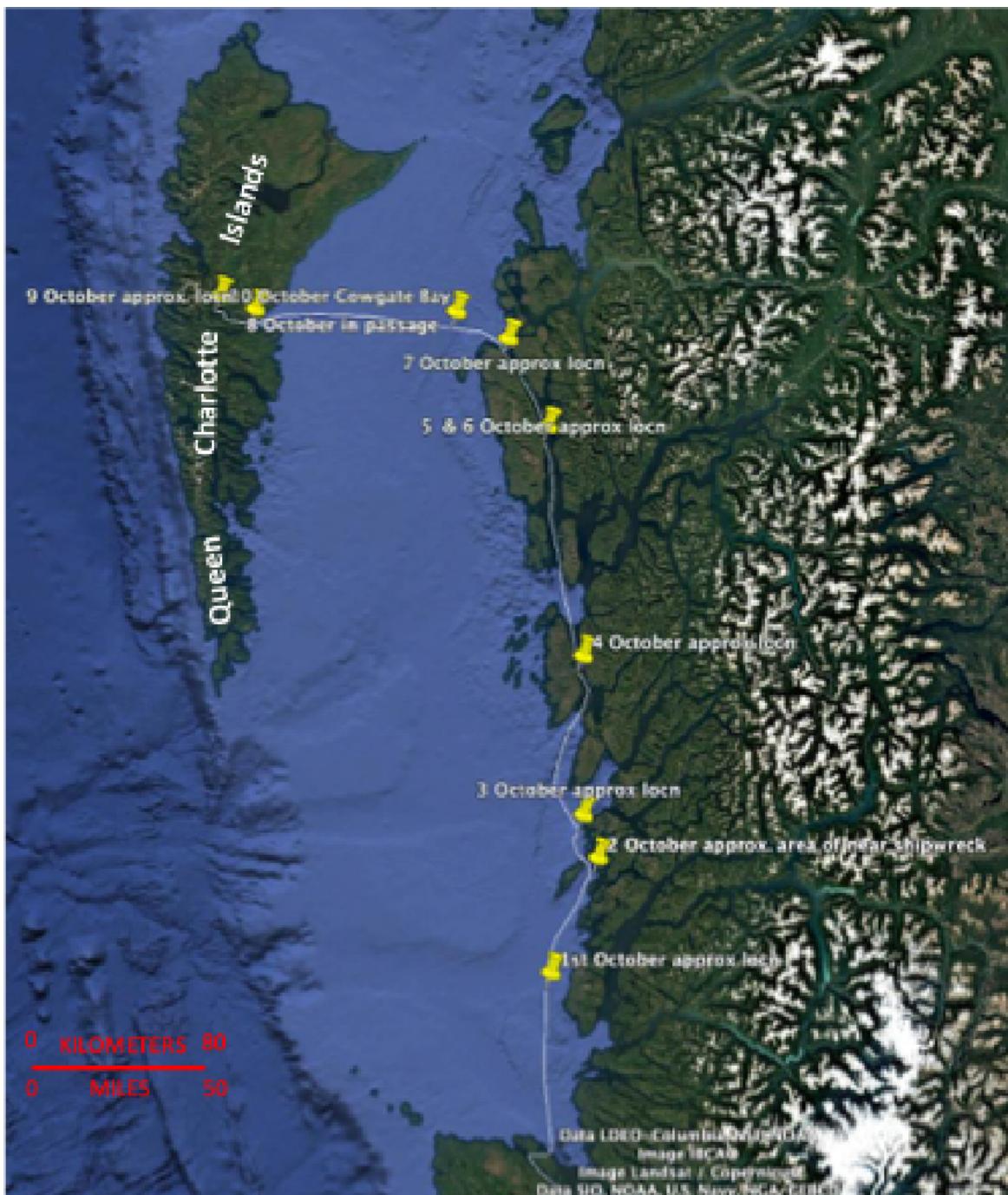


Image 5.2: Northern portion: North tip of Vancouver Island to Skidegate Inlet.

Part III

Geology

6 Geological Survey Appraisal of the Queen Charlotte Anthracite Deposits

6.1 Arrangements for Geological Survey Assessment

In February 1872 a group of 20 Victoria businessmen requested, through BC Government channels, that the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC) conduct an assessment of the coal potential of 'Queen Charlotte Island'. While recognising the importance of such a report, Alfred Selwyn (Director of the GSC) was concerned about the remoteness of the location and the physical safety of the survey party, stating:

"In reply, I beg to state that I have already had under consideration the possibility of taking steps to obtain some definite and reliable information respecting the probable extent and value of these anthracite deposits. There are, however, difficulties in the way, which, unless the local government is prepared to co-operate, would, I fear, render it impossible for the geological party to effect the desired examination at present. So far as I can ascertain, there are no white settlements on either of the Queen Charlotte Islands, and they are inhabited by a warlike and treacherous race of Indians, so that only a strong and well armed party could carry out the requisite exploration with safety.

The Islands are nearly five hundred miles from Victoria, and from eighty to one hundred miles from the mainland, and as there are no established means of communication with them, a special vessel would have to be chartered and equipped to convey the party to the islands, and to attend on them while there. Under these circumstances, and also considering that almost nothing has yet been done towards ascertaining the extent and value of much nearer, and probably for present purposes more available, coal basins of Vancouver Island, I think it would not at present be advisable to incur the large outlay which from the circumstances above stated would be required for the exploration of these remote islands. If, however, the local government, or the persons immediately interested, are prepared to furnish the requisite means of transport for the party, and likewise to secure them from molestation while conducting the examination, there would then perhaps be no serious objection to granting the request of the memorialists."

-Appendix IV of James Richardson's 1873 Report pp 85/86.

Selwyn instructed GSC veteran employee James Richardson in early May to proceed to British Columbia to continue surveys of the coal deposits on Vancouver Island that had been initiated in 1871. With regard to the Queen Charlotte survey, he left it to Richardson's discretion to 'take such action as circumstances might render expedient after his arrival in the country'.

In June 1872 Richardson met in Victoria with the Hon. J.N. Ash, M.D. and others interested in the Queen Charlotte's Anthracite and made the requisite arrangements with them for the support required to conduct a survey.

On July 2nd Richardson left Victoria for Comox

"Having procured provisions, camping material, a boat and men, and, through the kindness of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, a free passage on board the Dominion steamer Sir James Douglas, commanded by Captain Clarke,...."

Richardson remained in the Comox area until August 22nd conducting geological surveys of the coal basin there. Then, by prior arrangement with Ash and associates, he boarded the HBC steamer 'Otter' accompanied by Mr. Fawcet, one of the BC investor group interested in the Queen Charlotte Anthracite. They arrived at Cowgitz August 28th and remained there assessing the coal deposits until picked up by the 'Otter' on September 8th for return to Comox.

6.2 Geological Survey Published Reports on Cowgitz Coal

In 1876 the GSC published a regional map drawn by Richardson of the Skidegate Inlet area showing the location of the mine.

Richardson's being at Cowgitz only a year after abandonment of the mine works meant that he was able to conduct a detailed inspection of the mine workings as they had not yet been grown over.

Although he did not draw a detailed map of the Cowgitz area, he provided a sufficiently detailed description of these works that G.W. Dawson, a famous GSC geologist who visited the site in 1878, was able to map them despite their being fully overgrown and much deteriorated by the time of Dawson's later visit. A modified version of Dawson's map is provided below with locations identified A-G to tie in with Richardson's descriptions.

6.2.1 Area A

Richardson's Report

In this neighborhood, Hooper's Creek, which has its source on Seymour Mountain and meets the black shales at its foot, flows thence for nearly a mile south-eastward

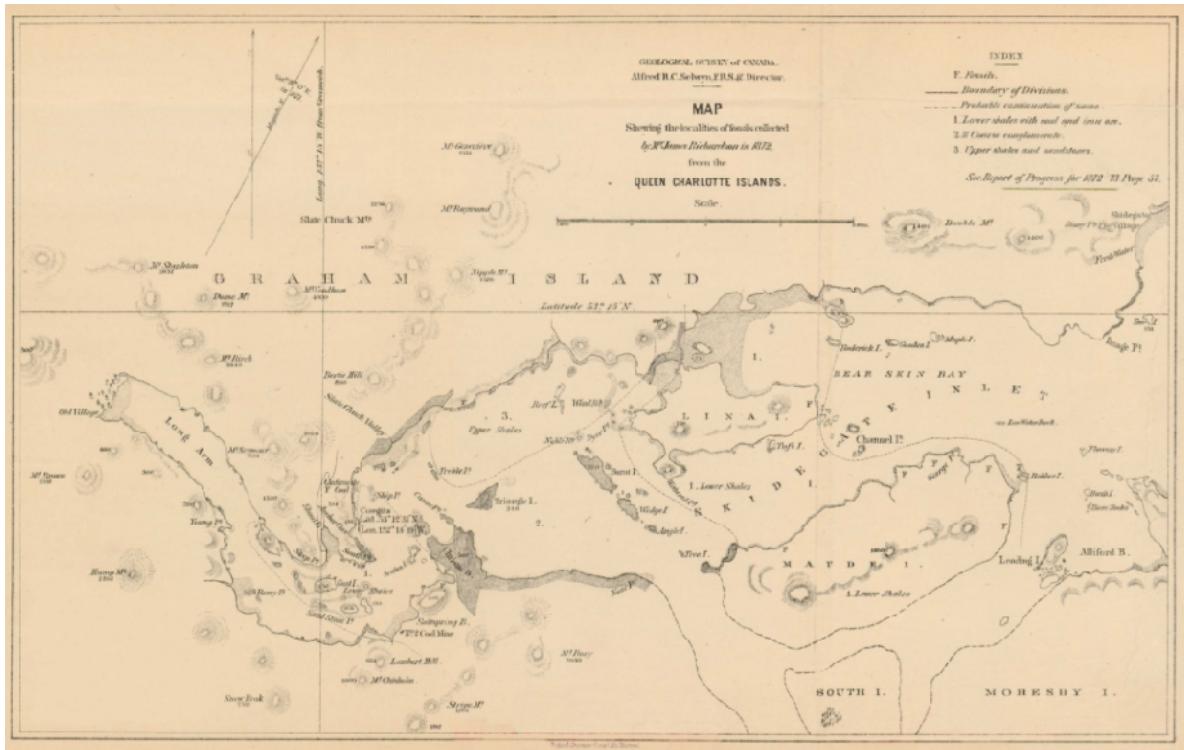


Image 6.1: Geological Survey of Canada (1876) map showing the location of the Cowgitz mine and fossil sites collected by James Richardson in 1872, from the Queen Charlotte Islands.

in the strike of the shales into Shallow Bay, about a third of a mile west of Anchor Cove. On the south-west side of the creek, the shales rise rapidly, leaning in a nearly vertical attitude against a spur of the volcanic rocks which have been mentioned as bounding the coal-trough. From the bed of the creek, at a point nearly a mile up its course, and 448 feet above the sea, an adit-level, called Hooper's Creek tunnel, has been driven in a bearing N. 69° W., for 190 feet, through vertical beds of black shale, studded with nodules of clay iron-stone, which constitute perhaps a quarter of the mass, to a seam of coal.

It then proceeds in the coal in a bearing N. 53° W., gradually turning to N. 29° E., in a distance of about 450 feet. Trap rock appears to form the western side nearly all the way. The coal is good anthracite, and where first struck in the tunnel its thickness was from two to three feet, but it soon increased to a little over six feet, and continued so for sixty or seventy feet. It then became mixed with black shale and iron-stone for seventy or eighty feet, and in this portion the coal had to be separated by hand picking. The tunnel continued for about fifty feet further, but I could not convince myself that any coal at all was present towards the extremity. This bed is called "the six feet seam."

Dawson's 1880 Report

"Towards the end of the tunnel the seam gradually narrowed, and where the work was stopped Mr. Richardson could not convince himself that any coal was present, though it is stated in a report made to the Directors in 1869 that the seam where abandoned had again expanded to a width of one foot six inches. Mr. Deans also informs me that by removing the surface covering he has traced the seam, though in a broken and weathered state, some distance beyond the position of the end of the tunnel, so that there is no reason to believe that the coal absolutely terminates at this point. This outcrop called King's vein was discovered by Mr. King in 1867, and after it had been opened by the tunnel above described, in 1869, about 800 tons of coal were extracted, and a portion of it shipped to Victoria.

... In working in this tunnel the quantity of inflammable gas exuding from the shales was so great as to necessitate the use of safety-lamps..."

💡 Geological Insight

Based on Figure 4 of Dawson, G.M. 1880 Report on the Queen Charlotte Islands in Geological Survey of Canada 1878-79 Report of Progress p. 72, identifying by letters A-G the works described in Richardson J. 1873 Report on the Coal Fields of Vancouver and Queen Charlotte Islands with a map of the distribution of the ormer addressed to Alfred R.C. Selwyn, Esq., F.G.S. Director of the Geological Survey of Canada pages 57-61.

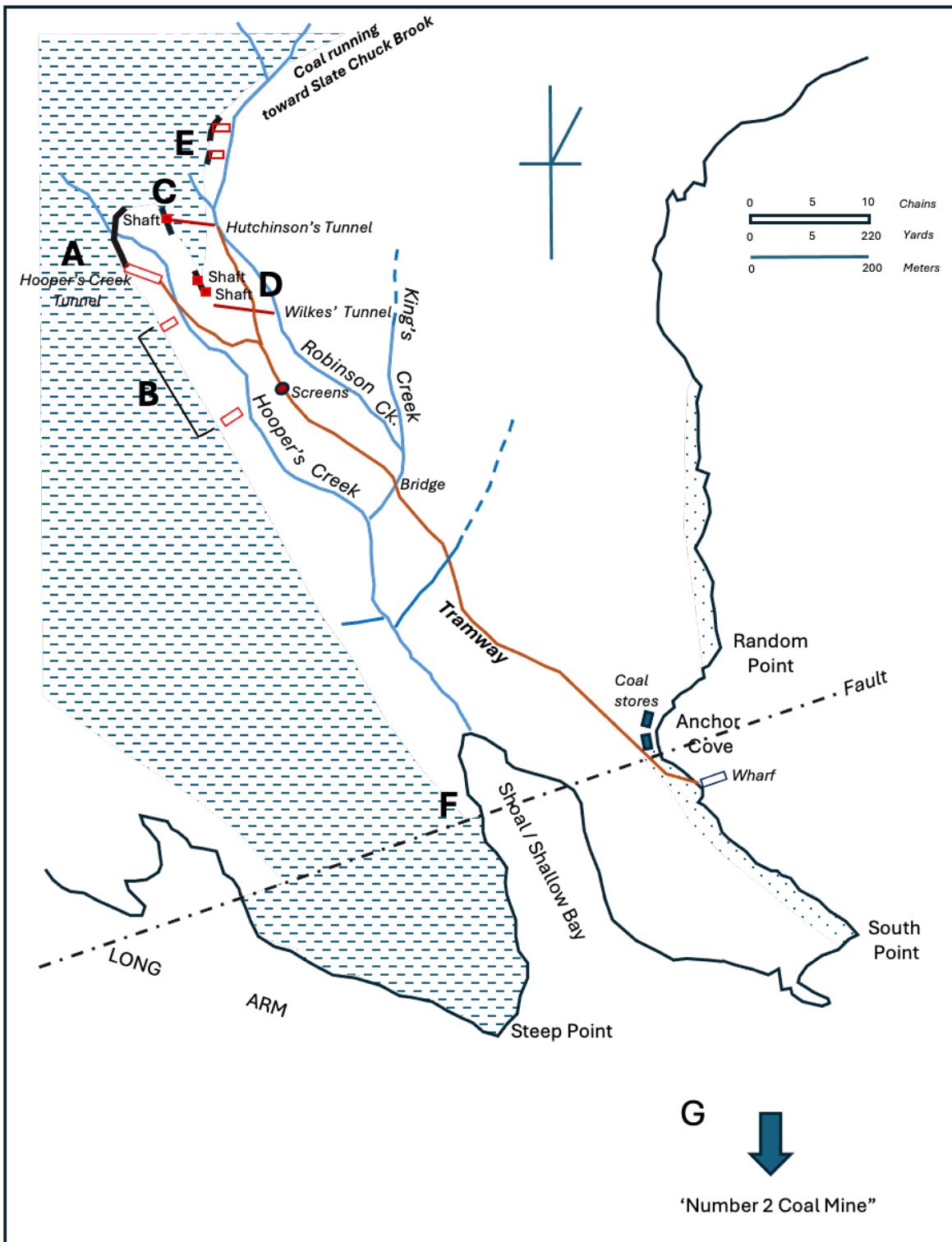


Image 6.2: Plan of Cowgitz Coal Mine and Vicinity Showing the Openings made on the Coal and the Probable Course of the Seam

The area shown in broken lines is that occupied by igneous rocks interpreted by Sutherland Brown, 1968 as a Masset Fm. dyke. The land area without shading is Dawson's Cretaceous Subdivision C (Sutherland Brown 1968 Haida Fm.) which is overlain by Dawson's Subdivision B (Sutherland Brown 1968 Honna Fm.) represented by the dotted shading.

6.2.2 Area B

Richardson's Report

"About nine chains on the strike of the measures from where Hooper's Creek tunnel struck the coal, another tunnel had been driven at a lower level by seventy or eighty feet, and a third one about five chains further on the strike, and seventy or eighty feet still lower. On the mounds of *cleb1* (**FIX**) is excavated from these I could not find a trace of coal, which could not have been the case had but a small quantity been brought out. The inference is that no coal was met with, or so little as not to be worth working."

Dawson's Report

"In other smaller openings, made lower down Hooper Creek on the same side, no coal appears to have been found, though it is to be presumed its horizon was reached."

6.2.3 Area C

Richardson's Report

"About nine chains across the measures in a bearing N. 35° E. from the coal-seam mentioned, and therefore above it stratigraphically, there occurs another seam. The following is an ascending section of the strata which are here vertical :

Lithology description	Feet	Inches
Coal, good anthracite	0	6
Black argillaceous shale	4	6
Coal, good anthracite, called "the three feet seam"	2	5
Black argillaceous shale, with nodules of clay iron-stone	11	0
Grey trap, or it may be altered sandstone	8	0
Total thickness	26	5

A vertical shaft had been sunk in the seam, and a good deal of good hard coal had been taken from it. The top of the shaft is 540 feet above the sea, but, at a lower level by 193 feet, an adit called Hutchinson's tunnel had been driven to intersect it. The seam on being struck is stated by Mr J. J. Landale, a civil engineer and coal viewer, to have been thin. How thin is not mentioned. It is presumed, however, that it was not workable, and the excavation in the shaft having been abandoned before it reached the tunnel, it is supposed that the seam had diminished to an unworkable thickness in descending."

Dawson's Report

"In Hutchinson's tunnel, situated about eleven chains north-eastward from the Hooper Creek tunnel, and 430 feet in length, no coal appears to have been obtained, with the exception of a three inch seam near its mouth."

6.2.4 Area D

Richardson's Report

"The strike of the measures immediately near the vertical shaft appears to be S. 18°E., and about eight chains in this bearing from it, there is an other, which is said to have been sunk in coal, but I could not observe any interstratified in the shale at the top of the pit, and there were but small indications that any had been landed on the surface. A third shaft is situated about three chains further on, and said to be forty feet deep. Here several tons of dull, earthy, impure coal lay on the surface, and I was informed that some bright, good coal had been carried away ; but I could perceive no fragments of it remaining intermixed with the other. Both of these shafts had been abandoned.

Towards the last mentioned shaft, and upwards of 300 feet lower in level, an adit called Wilkes' tunnel, has been driven from Robinson's Creek (a tributary of Hooper's Creek) sufficiently far, apparently, across the measures to have reached this coal, but the seam was not met with in it. At the extremity of the excavation, however, there occurred a black, tough, carbonaceous shale, with a black powder, a conchoidal fracture and an earthy aspect when freshly broken."

Dawson's Report

"About thirteen chains below Hutchinson's tunnel, also on the right bank of Robinson Creek, is Wilkes' Tunnel, said to be 450 feet long. It appears to have been driven sufficiently far to intersect the coal subsequently to be mentioned as occurring

between Hooper and Robinson Creeks, and at its end a black shale with *Unio Hubbardii*, like that seen in the Hooper Creek tunnel, was found by Mr. Richardson. On the hill between Hooper Creek tunnel and Hutchinson's, three small shafts have been sunk. In one of these good coal occurs,..... In one of the other shafts earthy impure coal was found ; in the third little or no anthracite was obtained."

6.2.5 Area E

Richardson's Report

"From a report by Mr. Landale to the Queen Charlotte Coal Mining Company, it appears that some exploratory work had been done on Robinson's Creek, above Hutchison's tunnel. Trials were made in three places of poor, soft, dirty coal, nine and seven feet thick, and in two where coal of a fair quality occurred in a seam of two feet. But, unfortunately, not having been made aware of this at the time I was on the ground, I can only avail myself of it to show that the strike of the measures immediately beyond the mouth of Hutchison's tunnel changes to north-east, and Mr. James Deans, my assistant during the summer, having been employed by the Queen Charlotte Company to undertake explorations on their behalf during the months of October and November, succeeded with much difficulty, owing to continued rains, in cutting trails through the heavily timbered lands, and in tracing these north-eastward seams as far as Slaty Creek, a distance of between three and four miles. The strata for the whole distance preserve their vertical attitude, and they are all along backed to the north-west by lofty escarpments of volcanic rock."

Dawson's Report

"In three small tunnels made by Mr. Robinson, at distances of three, nine and eleven chains above Hutchinson's, coal was found. In the first, according to a report prepared by Mr. Landale for the company, in November, 1869, the seam was three feet thick; in the second and third, seven feet, but 'soft, an expression which seems from the appearance of coal still to be seen on the dumps, to mean that though good anthracite it is completely crushed, probably by movement of the strata subsequent to its formation."

6.2.6 Area F

Richardson's Report

"On the west side of Shallow Bay, about twenty chains below the mouth of Hooper's Creek, the trap comes visibly in contact with the black shales, being apparently

thrown forward a little to the eastward on the south side of a fault running about N. 73° E."

Dawson's Report



Comment

Based on available reports, Dawson did not comment on Area F.

6.2.7 Area G

Richardson's Report

"In a bearing S 47 E. from this, there is on the south side of the northwest arm, about a mile S. 30 E., from the wharf in Anchor Cove, and about 200 paces inland, what is called "Number Two Coal Mine." It is an excavation of about twenty feet, bearing S. 67° E. on a seam between two and three feet thick of culm, holding lumps of anthracite. The black shale on each side of it is characterized by the presence of disseminated nodules of clay iron-stone similar to that at the Hooper's Creek seam.

My own examination did not extend further in this direction, but it is reported by the Indians that a well marked seam of coal occurs about fourteen miles hence in a south-easterly direction, apparently agreeing with the general strike, on the south side of Skidegate Channel. This would give an extent of at least twenty miles to the coal-bearing strata which have thus been partially examined, and the facts mentioned indicate a general presence of coal in it, however much what may be considered the same seams may vary in their distances from one another on the strike, in their thickness and their qualities."

Dawson's Report



Comment

Based on available reports, Dawson did not comment on Area G.

6.2.8 Overview Comments on the Coal Deposits

Richardson's Comments

"It is very probable that irregularities and interruptions may prevail here, similar to those which have been observed in the Vancouver Island deposits, and, according to the information you have given me, occur also in the Mesozoic coal-seams in Australia.

It would require a much more detailed exploration than I had time to give to pronounce with any chance of accuracy upon the extent of these irregularities in the Queen Charlotte Islands, but the possibility of their occurrence should always be kept in view by those endeavoring to turn the seams to practical account, and some cheap but careful system of trials along the outcrops ought to be instituted in the first instance to ascertain the probable quantity before any great outlay is made upon works intended to be permanent. This is usual even on the very regular seams of the Carboniferous era, and it is certainly much more required in coal deposits of a more recent age, which may have had their origin from drift instead of growth *in situ*.

Nothing can be better or more substantially constructed than the wharf, the houses, tramways, inclines, dumping-sheds and tunnels of the Queen Charlotte Coal Mining Company, and it is much to be regretted that their efforts have not been more successful."

Dawson's Comments

"It has been supposed that there are in the vicinity of the Cowgitz Mine two or three distinct seams of anthracite, that on Hooper Creek being the lowest, while those opened on to the eastward and northward are higher in the series. It appears to me probable, however, that with the possible exception of small irregular seams, there is but a single coal-bearing horizon, and that that lies immediately above the agglomerates and felspathic sandstones of Subdivision D. The coal in Hooper Creek tunnel is found turning east, and probably bends round eventually to a south-easterly strike, running to the trial shafts above described, and then again doubling abruptly on itself, continues up the south-west side of Robinson Creek.

This structure may be, and probably is, complicated by small faults, which destroy to some extent its regularity; but by supposing its existence we account readily for the presence of the peculiar dark argillites with *Unio Hubbardi* near the seam on both Hooper and Robinson Creeks, the absence of the so-called three-feet seam in the Wilkes tunnel, the appearance of the trap-like rock on the north-east of the coal in the above quoted section (this rock seeming to represent that found

on the south-east side of the coal on Hooper Creek), the similarity of appearance and structure in the coal seam in the section and that of Hooper Creek, and other points....

From the descriptions above given, it will be evident that the coal seam is in itself irregular in quality and thickness. This has arisen partly no doubt from the inequality of the surface on which it has been laid down, but there seems also to have been a considerable amount of movement between the top of the already hard volcanic rocks of D., and unconsolidated sediments of E., during the flexure of the strata; which, while it may cause the seam to be very thin or altogether wanting in some places, may have rendered it extremely thick in others. Such irregularity, though to a smaller degree, has been met with in the now well known measures of Nanaimo, and if it can once be shown by more extended exploration that the average thickness of the seam is sufficiently great, this will be of comparatively little consequence.

...

The locality about the Cowgitz Mine is exceptionally disturbed, and this by the duplication of the outcrops has no doubt caused an appearance of a great quantity of coal, and supplied fragments in abundance to the gravels of the various brooks. It has added, however, to the difficulty of tracing the seam, and greatly hindered its satisfactory exploration by workings. The great degree of flexure and disturbance has also probably caused the more complete alteration of the coaly matter forming the seam, but the character of the beds on the Long Arm, while more regular, is such as to show that any coal, even if originally bituminous, would probably there also be converted to anthracite.

On reviewing the appearance presented by the seams, it would appear that too great dependence has been placed on their continuity and uniformity, without the necessary amount of preliminary exploration to determine these points. The indications were not such as to justify a heavy expenditure in preparing for the shipment of coal, but quite sufficiently promising to render a very careful and systematic examination of the locality desirable. This yet remains to be accomplished, not necessarily by expensive underground work, but preferably by the tracing and examination by costeening pits or otherwise of the whole length of the outcrop of the coal-bearing horizon. It is, however, evident that the knowledge of this region so far obtained affords no ground for the belief that it is equally important as a coal-bearing district with Nanaimo or Comox, on Vancouver Island, where the conditions suitable to the formation of coal have occurred not only over wide areas, but at several distinct horizons in the Cretaceous rocks."

7 Geological Setting of the Cowgitz Coal Deposit

7.1 Regional Setting

The Earth's crust is composed of a number of 'plates' that move against each other through time. Haida Gwaii (previously called The Queen Charlotte islands) is situated at the boundary between the North America Continental Plate and the Pacific Oceanic Plate.

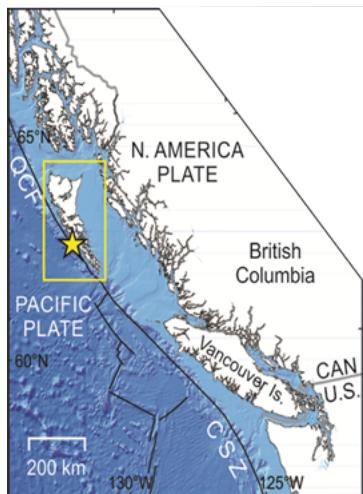


Image 7.1: Tectonic setting of Haida Gwaii showing its location at the boundary between the Pacific and North America plates marked by the Queen Charlotte fault (QCF) and Cascadia subduction zone (CSZ). Modified from Leonard and Bednarski 2015 Figure 1.

Underthrusting (subduction) of the Pacific Plate beneath the North America Plate and strike slip (ie sideways movement) between these plates has resulted in repeated periods of volcanic activity, igneous intrusion, and sedimentation of conglomerates, sandstones, siltstones, shales with occasional coals over the past several hundred million years.

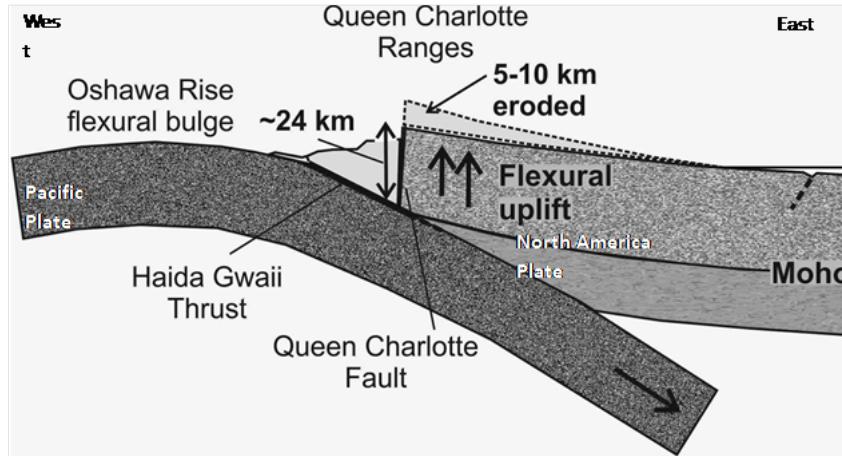


Image 7.2: Diagrammatic cross section across plate boundary, Haida Gwaii Modified from Hyndman, 2015 Figure 11.

7.2 Stratigraphy

The Cowgitz anthracite occurs within a succession of Cretaceous sedimentary rocks. Intermittent uplift and erosion during deposition of this sedimentary succession resulted in a complex stratigraphy characterised by internal unconformities and discontinuity of depositional environments.

The exact position of the Cowgitz anthracite within the Cretaceous stratigraphy is uncertain: determination of this has been hampered by the complexity of the geology and the density of the vegetation covering the rocks precluding detailed investigation of it.

An increased understanding of geological processes since the start of scientific investigations in the 1870s coupled with the development of a regional geological understanding of the area through the mapping efforts of various workers has resulted in differing interpretations of the Cowgitz area's geology by different scientists through time. For the purpose of this overview, the most significant reports are by Richardson (1872) and Dawson (1878) of the Geological Survey of Canada and Sutherland-Brown (1968) of the British Columbia Geological Survey.

The stratigraphy of the immediate Cowgitz area according to Sutherland Brown (1968) is shown below: The colors assigned to the stratigraphic units are those used in the succeeding geological map and cross section

Exactly where in the Cretaceous succession the Cowgitz coal occurs is uncertain. It is thought to belong within the Haida Formation, though Sutherland Brown's map shows the mine situated within the Skidegate Formation. Sutherland Brown comments:

“...the writer also has no confidence that the coal of Slatechuck and Cowgitz is within the Haida Formation, and although it is within the Queen Charlotte Group, the

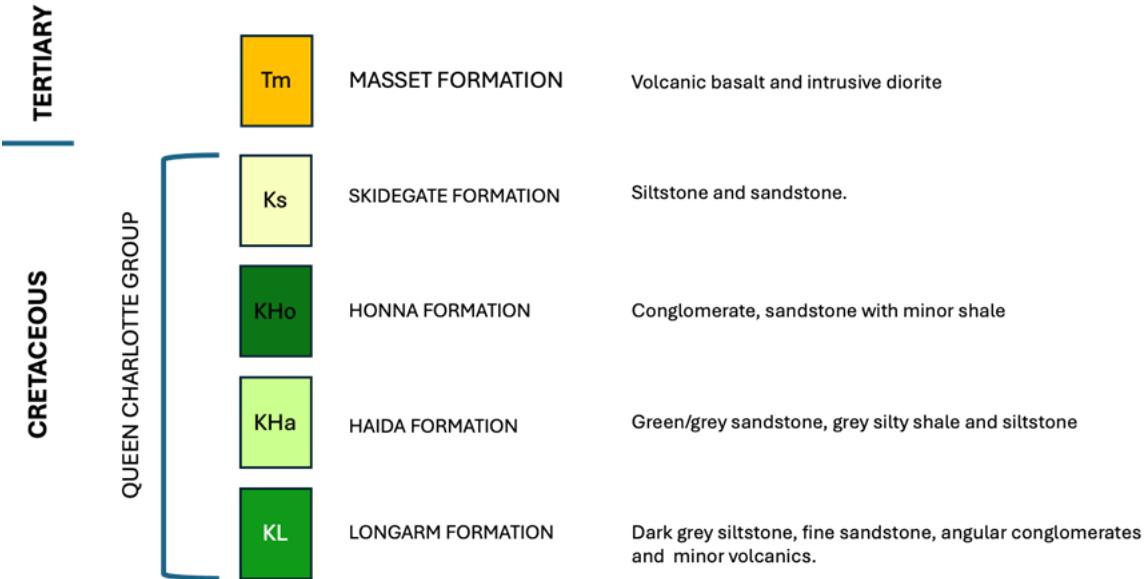


Image 7.3: Stratigraphy of the Cowgitz Mine area of Skidegate Inlet: after Sutherland Brown 1968.

structural complexity of this area precludes certainty as to the formation. Whatever the unit, it is apparently non-marine, and this may be explained by being adjacent to the active fault line from which detritus was shed into the basin.”

With regard to the nearby Slatechuck Creek argillite used by the Haida for carving, Sutherland Brown notes:

“Some doubt remains regarding the precise stratigraphic location within the Queen Charlotte Group. It has always been said to be in the Haida Formation and could be in the upper shale member, but the interpretation shown on the map (Fig. 34) places it in the Skidegate Formation. Only detailed work in this region of abundant faults, complex folding, and relatively poor exposure in tangled logging slash could resolve the problem.

💡 Explanation

In the cross section note the disconformities between the Cretaceous formations, and the vertical Masset dykes which cut through the Cretaceous succession and feed the overlying surface volcanics. On the map note the faulting in the Cowgitz Mine area between the north/south running Masset Formation dyke which makes up the spine of the peninsula and the Cretaceous sedimentary rocks to the east which contain the Cowgitz coal. The scale of the map is such that the detailed structural complexity of the area around the

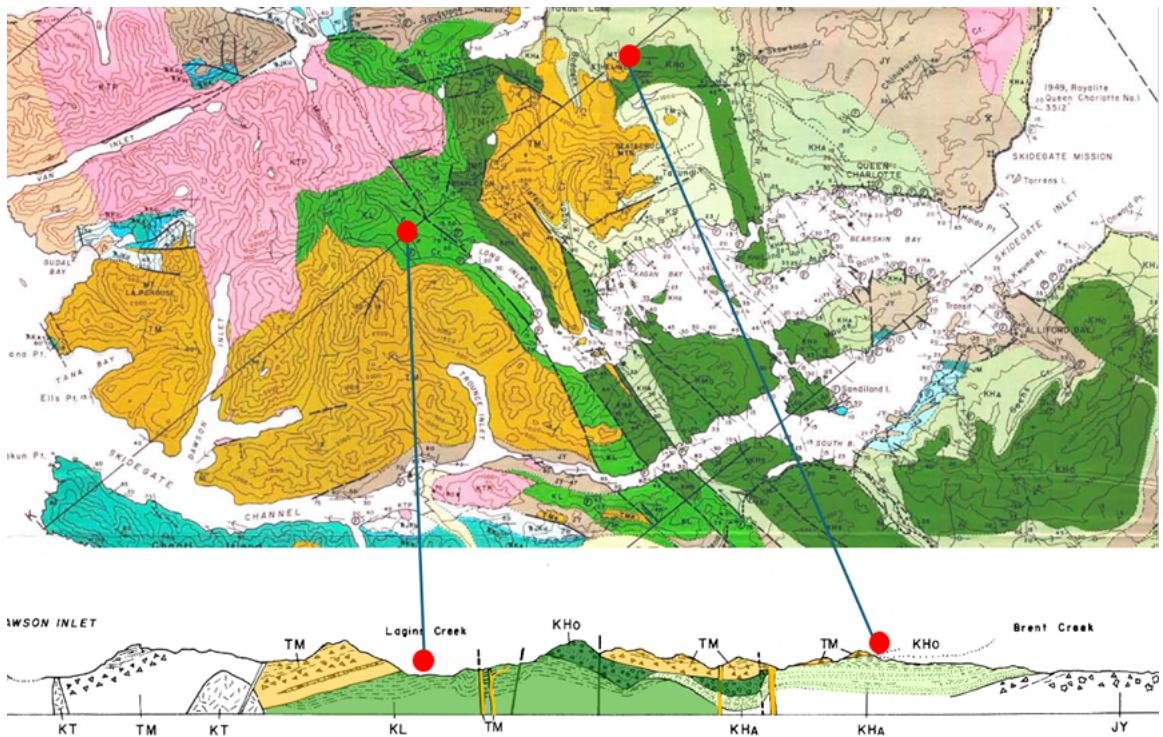


Image 7.4: Geological map of the Skidegate Inlet area with SW/NE cross section: after Sutherland Brown 1968.

Cowgitz Mine is not shown.

7.3 Structural Geology of the Cowgitz Mine Area

The Cowgitz Coal seam(s) were deposited horizontally, but subsequent folding and faulting have resulted in the current almost vertical dips. A Tertiary diorite dyke (Masset Formation-Sutherland Brown interpretation) immediately to the west of the coal was injected possibly along pre-existing basement faults which propagated through the Cretaceous beds. The contact between the dyke and the Cretaceous sedimentary rocks has been modified by subsequent faulting which appears to have affected the overlying Masset volcanics.

The original depositional continuity of the coals is not known: assessment of this has been hampered by the complexity of subsequent small scale folding and faulting as well as by the occluding effect of the dense vegetation cover.

7.4 Why Anthracite?

The fact that the Cowgitz coal is anthracitic significantly increased its perceived value. For a coal to become anthracite it must be subjected to pressure and heating. This heat was apparently provided during intrusion of Masset Formation dykes and associated volcanism. The spine of the peninsula immediately to the west of the Cowgitz mine is made up of a dyke of diorite which intruded through the Cretaceous succession and fed the surface volcanics of the Masset Formation which overlie it.

Sutherland Brown (1968) states > “The Cowgitz coal is apparently adjacent to the very large dyke of Masset Formation in the centre of the peninsula, and the contact has been the locus of later faulting.”

Dawson (1880) and Ells (1906) interpreted the igneous rocks to the west of the coal as being stratigraphically older than the coals – whereas Sutherland Brown (1968) interpreted them to be a large intrusive dyke of Tertiary age belonging to the Masset Formation.

Ells (1906 p. 29) attributed the anthracite to heat and pressure resulting from earth movement/faulting, stating:

“The coal is in close proximity to the underlying igneous rocks which extend thence westward to the west side of the island. The rocks at the mine containing the coal are much broken up and crushed, and the original lignite of the formation has been converted to the variety of anthracite there found. This is due to heat induced by pressure of the shales and sandstones against the pre-Cretaceous igneous mass at the back. In fact, so great has been the crushing strain at this place that much

of the coal, when mined, is found in the form of powder, and is quite useless for economic purposes, while, as in other outcrops on the island, the coal and black shale are so closely mixed that separation is almost impossible."

According to Sutherland Brown the heat of the Tertiary intrusion would have contributed to the anthracitisation of the Cretaceous coal.

Part IV

Appendices

The *Thornton*

The Vessel



Image 7.5: Maritime Museum of British Columbia Catalogue # P2134 Sealing Schooner *Thornton* at anchor in Victoria Harbour

⚠️ Explanation

We don't know exactly where the *Thornton* was built. We do however suspect that she was likely built in the U.S. as a single masted sloop in the 1850s.

By 1864 Capt. James Douglas Warren was using the *Thornton* for trading in the waters of northern British Columbia, calling frequently at the major Indian villages on the Nass River and the Queen Charlotte islands.

In addition to freighting cargo, trading furs and dogfish oil, running whiskey and occasionally shipping passengers, Warren used the *Thornton* for sealing.

After taking Thomas Russell to the Queen Charlottes in September 1870, Warren had the vessel enlarged and refitted in 1871 as a two masted schooner – this is how it is depicted in Figure 7.5.

The *Thornton* was battered to pieces at Unalaska on Unalaska Island in the eastern Aleutian Islands some time after 1886 (Shipwrecks of the Alaskan Shelf and Shore (1992)).

The Owner: James Douglas Warren



Image 7.6: Portrait of Captain Warren.

The following obituary published in the *Victoria Daily Times* on Monday September 10th, 1917 Page 10 perhaps provides the best description of Captain Warren. See Figure 7.7 for newsprint image.

HERO OF THORNTON EPISODE PASSES

Captain James D. Warren, Pioneer Sealer, Terminates Romantic Career

WAS MASTER OF MANY COASTWISE STEAMERS

One of the last survivors of the pioneer sealers of Victoria, whose industry has become extinct, has passed in death yesterday at the advanced age of 80. Captain James Douglas Warren died at St. Joseph's Hospital falling to a severe illness after an operation.

Captain Warren is survived by his wife, a son, resident in Seattle, and a married daughter here, Mrs. Goddard. The funeral arrangements are pending; the arrival of the son, but will probably take place on Wednesday at 2:30 o'clock from Mount Funeral Chapel.

A Remarkable Career

Capt. Warren was born at North Sydney, Prince Edward Island, in 1837, and came to the Pacific Coast in the days of the Argonauts, but did not spend long gold digging. He came to Victoria in 1858, when the northbound movement began, and has been a resident ever since.

Captain James D. Warren, whose career as pioneer sealer is contemporaneous with that of Captains Spring and McKay, of Vancouver Island, took part in one of the very lively Indian skirmishes on Sunee's, now known as the shore of the mainland near the head of Saanich Inlet, and was taking some coasting trade when he came alongside, one of whom asked Captain to go in and anchor, as they had a great many furs and desired to trade. Captain Warren did not care to enter and told them so, but while they were talking, two more boats arrived, and he saw there was nothing for him to do but leave them. He immediately pulled in for the shore, and Captain Warren went forward and saw that they had about a dozen muskets concealed under some blankets in one canoe.

He at once ordered the men on the sloop to show the natives that were armed, and, when he exhibited his rifle, the chief asked him what he intended doing with it. Warren replied that he intended to do in the canoe, and told him that the first man to touch a gun would be killed and that they had better go away. The natives made no answer, and Capt. Warren informed the crew that he believed that they would get out of the scrape. The chief understood him, and at a signal the canoe was closed in, and the fight began.

The blankets were thrown off, and every Indian seized a musket, but before they had an opportunity to make use of their firearms, the crew of the Thornton began shooting, and two of their assailants lay dead in the canoes. Capt. Warren was aided by a giant sailor, known as Bill, and a man called Steve before the natives could recover from the effect of the first shots, Big Bill was on deck with a rifle in one hand and a revolver in the other, and was laying about with the two rifles in the hands of Steve and Warren, dropped four Indians at the next volley. Steve was severely wounded in the engagement, and dragged himself to the cabin, leaving the others to fight it out. The Indian pilot of the sloop was taken in hand in the battle, and killed two of his countrymen. Capt. Warren had a repeating rifle, was a puzzle to the attacking party, who apparently could not understand why it would keep going. They forced him through the body. The volley dodged instead by Warren and his big assistant prevented them from taking effective aim, and when the last man in the front canoe went down by bullets from the repeater, they withdrew. The loss of fourteen killed and six wounded, one of whom died the next day. Warren received a charge of buckshot, which laid him up for a long time, but man recovered seriously injured, but both recovered, and it was many years after this occurrence before another trader was attacked.

Pioneer in Enterprise

The captain was the first man in the sealing business to send out steam schooners, and at one time operated a fleet of eight steam and sailing vessels. The seizures of 1886 and 1887 were particularly hard on Captain Warren and crippled him financially, so that he lost most of the accumulated profits of his many years of pioneer work as a trader. In addition to being prominent in sealing, Captain Warren had at different times been connected with a great many other steamships in the freight and passenger service, and in the early nineties operated the steamer Barbara Brockville on the northern route from Victoria.

He retired some eight years ago from the sea, but continued to show his interest in the subject till his death, and his friends called at the hospital showed that he had not forgotten the early days.

He was a member of the A.O.U.W. here.

**HERO OF THORNTON
EPISODE PASSES**

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Pioneer Sealer, Terminates
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A Remarkable Career.

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Captain James D. Warren, whose career as a pioneer sealer is contemporaneous with that of Captains Spring and McKay, commenced trading along the coast of Vancouver and Queen Charlotte Islands in 1854, with the Thornton, and participated in some very lively Indian skirmishes.

On June 13, 1858, he was cruising along the shore of the mainland near the head of the Juan de Fuca strait, when he was taking near Storm Island, when a small canoe containing two Indians came alongside, one of whom asked the Captain to go in and anchor, as they had a great many furs and desired to trade. Capt. Warren did not care to enter and told them no, but, while they were taking, two muskets suddenly came up, and he gave them at towline, but the visitors did not offer to make fast and seemed to be waiting for others. They finally pulled in near the bow of the sloop. Capt. Warren went forward and said that they had about a dozen muskets concealed under some blankets in one of the canoes.

Fight Began.

He at once ordered the men on the sloop to show the natives that they were armed, and, when he exhibited his rifle, the chief asked him what he intended to do with it. Warren replied that the first man to touch a gun would be killed and that they had better go away. The wily savage made no answer, and Capt. Warren informed the crew that he would not let them get out of the scrape. The chief understood him, and at a signal all of them closed in, and the fight began.

The blankets were thrown off, and every Indian seized a musket; but before they had an opportunity to make use of them, most of them of the Thornton began shooting, and two of their assailants lay dead in the canoes. Capt. Warren was aided by a giant sailor, known as Big Bill, and a man named Steve. Both of these could recover from the effect of the first shots. Big Bill was on deck with a rifle in one hand and a revolver in the other, and his artillery, together with the two rifles in the hands of Steve and Warren, kept the Indians at bay. Steve was severely wounded in the onslaught, and dragged himself to the cabin, leaving the others to fight it out. The Indians were off the sloop, too far land in the meantime, and killed two of his countrymen. Capt. Warren had a repeating rifle, which was a puzzle to the attacking party, who apparently could not understand why it could seem to shoot forever without reloading. The lively dodging indulged in by Warren and his big assistant prevented them from taking effective aim, and, when the last man in the first canoe went down, he was buried from the rest, who then withdrew with a loss of fourteen killed and six wounded, one of whom died the next day. Warren received a charge of buckshot, which laid him up for a long time, and the man Steve was seriously

injured, but both recovered, and it was many years after this occurrence before another trader was attacked.

Pioneer in Enterprise.

The captain was the first man in the sealing business to send out his schooner, and at one time operated a fleet of eight steam and sailing vessels. The seizures of 1886 and 1887 were particularly hard on Captain Warren and crippled him financially, so that he was compelled to abandon the profits of his many years of perilous work as a trader. In addition to being prominent in sealing circles, Captain Warren had at different times been connected with a great many other steamers plying the freight and passenger services, and in the early nineties operated the steamer Barbara Boscowitz on the northern route from Victoria.

He retired some eight years ago from the sea, but continued to show his interest in the subject till his death, and old friends calling at the hospital showed that he had not forgotten the early days.

He was a member of the A. O. U. W. here.

**SEEKING TO SALVE
BOILERS OF BEAR**

Difficult Feat is to Be Attempted Soon, on Wrecked Steamship

Wreckers are preparing to make an attempt to recover the boilers from the wrecked steamship Bear at Blunt's Rock off the California coast. Whether or not the attempt will succeed remains a matter of speculation in shipping circles. The recovery of the boilers is worth while at this time, as all machinery for steamships is at the highest mark in history. Practically everything that has been taken from the Bear, with the boilers and engines still in the vessel.

The work of removal has been going on almost steadily since the sale of the wreck by the San Francisco-Portland Steamship Company to the wrecking company. The two boilers weigh forty-two tons each, and the recovery will be the hardest task the owners have set for themselves. It is supposed a contrivance will have to be rigged to receive the two big containers after the water has been pumped out of them and they have been hoisted up. The boys would find the task would be comparatively simple, as they could be rolled into the sea by cutting out the side of the ship. But experts expressed the opinion yesterday that the boilers would not float.

MARINE NOTES

The Governor on her northbound trip will be 24 hours long and will not arrive until about 5 o'clock to-morrow afternoon. She will leave again, however, in scheduled time from Victoria when she goes south on Friday. The Admiral Line is enjoying a busy time now, the Pacific Steamship Company having full passenger lists each sailing.

No definite word is available yet as to the arrival of the inbound Osaka liner, the Empress of Mars, which is expected about Wednesday afternoon from the Orient.

A. F. Read, foreign freight agent of the Grand Trunk Railway, has been visiting the city over the week end, with Mrs. Read and daughters.

No word has yet been received of the Thelma, which was expected to reach the British Columbia port a week ago. A pilot from Vancouver has anticipated her arrival for some days, and has been waiting her at this port.

Word has been received at the local Grand Trunk Pacific offices that W. R. Davidson has been appointed General Superintendent of Western Lines and T. King Superintendent of the Detroit Division.

**MINASQUEEN HAS
BEEN DESTROYED**

Parrsboro, N. S., Sept. 10.—News has been received here of the destruction by a German submarine of the Nova Scotia schooner Minasqueen with the loss of all but one of her crew.

Image 7.7: Captain Warren's obituary published in the *Victoria Daily Times* on Monday September 10th, 1917 Page 10

Pemberton – Augustus Frederick: 1808(circa) -1891



JUDGE PEMBERTON.

Image 7.8: FIX CAPTION

Emigrated to Victoria 1855 from Ireland - intending to farm. He was well educated, and of a privileged Irish family (his father had been Lord Mayor (1806) and then Chief Magistrate of Police in Dublin).

He gained prominence in the colony of Vancouver Island and was appointed magistrate in 1858 by the Governor, Sir James Douglas. Pemberton, at age 50, was the right man at the right place when the massive influx of mainland-bound gold-seekers hit Victoria in 1858: he was commissioned to organize a body of police, and in his two-fold capacity of commissioner and magistrate he was for several years the prefect of the city.

Rowland W. Fawcett (1840 – 1912)

Rowland Wignall Fawcett was a member of a well known pioneering family in Victoria. He arrived in Victoria from San Francisco with his family (parents Thomas and Jane, sisters Louise and Amy, brothers Edgar, Arthur and Thomas) in February 1859. Rowland followed his father into trade as an upholsterer and paper hanger with an address on Government Street. His brother Edgar worked for a time as a clerk in Thomas Russell's grocery store. See Section 2.5 for more details on Thomas Russell's grocery business.

Rowland's relationship to Thomas Russell is unknown – probably they were friends. Rowland died in Victoria of influenza on March 30th 1912 and is buried in Ross Bay Cemetery. Rowland's brother Edgar is better known for authoring '*Some Reminiscences of Old Victoria*' published in 1912.

Medical Explanations

These medical explanations were provided by Dr. Jan Boxall.

Friday 23rd of September 1870

Dislocated shoulders are pretty common, and people, even today, put them back in by putting their foot on the shoulder, push with the foot, and pull the arm. Some people can put them back on their own, by lying on their stomach and hanging arm over an edge. But if muscle spasm sets in, or if the dislocation is posterior (less common), the maneuver won't work.

Monday 26rd of September 1870

The location behind the ear could be the mastoid, the bone behind the ear. Abscessing starts in the sinuses or ear, spreads, and can spread to the brain. Generally not seen these days because we use antibiotics early. Abscesses are treated by drainage, so the idea for it to "gather" is logical, and then wait for it to burst/break. Today, we would take a knife and incise it once it has "gathered". Then you don't need antibiotics.

Russian Salve: This is olive oil, turpentine and beeswax. There is a tin in the Smithsonian. Of course, there is also a tin on ebay. It originally was oil from the Russian Olive Tree. Olive oil helps in wound healing, bacteria can't grow in oil very well. It also helps with inflammation. There have been studies done that have isolated the bioactive compounds in the olive oil that help with fibroblasts (healing cells).

Turpentine oil, easily available from pine trees, has been used since 2100 BC. The warmth is a counterirritant, so helps with decreasing pain. It also disinfects. We don't use it on skin anymore.

Beeswax is still used (as is honey), as it has antibacterial properties, cuts down on inflammation and so helps healing.

Friday 14th of October 1870

Brandy, or any alcohol, was used both for cleaning (alcohol still used today), and was used to drink to numb the pain, calm the nerves (like today). Brandy lint would be cloth soaked in brandy.

Arnica, also still used. Arnica is a plant of the sunflower family. People buy it today to apply to their joints that hurt from sports injuries or arthritis. It has been used since the 1500s. It decreases pain and inflammation, and helps wound healing.

Not sure what Russell means by “painkiller”. This could be Arnica. You can use opium topically, but don’t think they were doing this in the 1800s.

Friday 15th of October 1870

An aperient is a bowel stimulant. Back in the early 1800s the thought was that fever was something to be expelled from the body, so purgative (laxative treatments, aperients) were used as well as bloodletting. The Victorians believed this expelled the fever, and reduced inflammation, contamination, and restored balance. By 1842 Dr. James Manby Gully realized bloodletting and aperients were making people worse, not better, and argued fever should run its course.

Friday 17th of October 1870

Poultices are still used, ie application of warm cloths to help an abscess localize, and then drain. Black blood is just old, clotted blood; doesn’t signify anything else. It is no wonder his head “swims”, the infection was in his inner ear, which is important for balance.

Sunday 4th of December 1870

Mrs Skidegate’s leg was probably gangrenous, or had venous ulcers. I have seen this, only in people who won’t go to hospital, often with diabetes, usually with poor blood supply. This would have been unbelievably painful (and have a very unpleasant smell).

Castille Soap, an olive oil based soap (or at least a vegetable oil). Used still today, anti-infective properties.

Friars Balsam, a tincture of benzoin. It is put on the skin under bandages to protect the skin, prevent itching and help the bandage adhere for a longer time. Interestingly, benzoin comes from the Styrax tree, which is found in Indonesia. It was developed in Jerusalem in 1719, but

English doctor and MP Joshua Ward has got the credit for developing it around 1760. As with many of these old medicines, it had multiple uses. It was also used for sinus congestion; put in a bowl of hot water, then you put your head over it under a towel.

Sunday 29th of December 1870

Chlorodyne painkiller was invented by Dr. John Collis Browne of the British Indian Army. It was a combination of laudanum, which is opium, cannabis, and chloroform (which James Simpson, a Scot, first used for anaesthetic).

It was used to relieve pain and sedate. I am sure it worked (can't imagine it getting through any drug trials today!).

Copal Varnish is also a tree resin; trees grow in Mexico. It is supposed to have anti-inflammatory powers. It seems a lot of the old medicines were from trees, but not native trees, so not sure how they could produce these products in quantity. Linseed oil, like other oils does have anti inflammatory and healing potential.

Wednesday 4th January 1871

Again, I have to guess that the painkiller might have been a solution of opium. There would be some absorption with an open wound. Not sure why he didn't give him opium by mouth as well.

Sunday 8th January 1871

Have to be impressed with Beauchamp, who seemed near death, and then is moving his leg and scratching it.

Friday 20th January 1871

James' Powders. This was used since 1746, antimony oxide and lime, and used for fever. It was a patent medicine, and was considered quackery. It was commonly used, but probably had no effect, and caused harm. Would do nothing for fever.

Laudanum, ie opium, can been shown to both increase or decrease inflammation, depending on the site (not at wound level, but at brain level), but more likely just helped the pain of the inflammation.

Camfor, or camphor, again is from trees in Asia, and in the 1800s the Chinese had a monopoly on camphor. In 1868, the British invaded Anping Harbor to try to end the monopoly. (It can nowadays be made synthetically). It works by making the skin feel cool, or warm if rubbed vigorously, which is a well accepted way to stimulate the nerve endings, causing a counterirritation, decreasing pain sensation at the brain level, and local numbing.

Spirit of Nitre, a derivative of nitric acid, can cause diuresis (more urine). Gravel would refer to kidney stones, and the way to pass kidney stones is to fluid load, and to urinate them out. Painful, so these days we would give morphine as well. Of course, nitric acid is highly toxic, so needed to be diluted.

Tuesday 24th January 1871

Blue pill (NOT the blue pill of this generation - Viagra) was mercury. Totally toxic, lots of famous people had mercury poisoning – Newton, President Andrew Jackson, Lincoln, Edgar Allan Poe, Victoria Beckham (fish diet), Was used topically until banned in 1998.

The blue pill was called blue mass, and used from 17th to 19th century. Was blue coloured, had licorice root, rose water, honey, sugar and mercury. Not helpful.

Black draught- a laxative. Senna and magnesium, both which are laxatives. Goes back to the theory that need to purge body of “fever” and that constipation was the cause of many ailments.

Haida Villages and Chiefs

Background mentioned in Thomas Russell's diary

Thomas Russell's arrival at Skidegate Inlet in 1870 occurred at the tail end of a time of significant and rapid change for the local Haida population. The Queen Charlotte Island Gold Rush of 1851-53 had prompted relocation of at least some of the villagers of Chaatl to the discovery site at what became known as Gold Harbour as they wished to take advantage of the activities there. Successive pandemics during the 1860s inflicted a severe reduction in the native population. This, coupled with a decline in fur trading activity, prompted consolidation and relocation of traditional villages on the west side of the islands to the Skidegate Inlet area during the late 1860s to be closer to their remaining relatives there.

In consequence, it appears that Thomas Russell met with a larger number of chiefs than could normally have been expected. He also encountered a changing cultural landscape with holdovers from the fur trading era and pressures from whiskey bootlegging by unscrupulous ship owners.

The inhabitants of the various Haida villages were inter-related. The village of Chaatl on the northern shore of Buck Channel on west side of Moresby Island was founded by families of the Raven and Eagle moieties from a long-abandoned village known as "Pebble Town", at Second Beach near Skidegate. In the 1850s Chaatl had a prominent chief with the personal name Wadatstaia: the chieftainship was accompanied by the traditional name 'Nankilstas' ("he whose voice must be obeyed").

The Haida settlement of Sqai'-tao was developed adjacent to Gold Harbour in response to the short gold rush which the Haida wanted to benefit from. It is possible that Wadastaia relocated at least temporarily from Chaatl to Sqai'-tao during the rush.

Wadatstaia became known to outsiders as "Captain Gold" because he and his wife were reputed to be the first to find the gold -which prompted the 1851-3 gold rush - although others have also been credited with this.

Wadatstaia was the brother of "Chief Skotsgai" of Kaisun, the nearest major Haida village about 12 nautical miles to the south of Chaatl.

Thomas Russell encountered both these chiefs during his stay in Skidegate Inlet.



Image 7.9: Haida villages in the vicinity of Skidegate Inlet of relevance to and/or mentioned in the diaries.



Image 7.10: Totem poles in the abandoned village of Kaisun (Qaysun). Photographed by C.F. Newcombe in 1901. Source: A Story As Sharp As A Knife: The classical Haida Mythtellers and their world. Robin Bringhurst 2nd Edition. p.32

Haina village (New Gold Harbour)

In the 1860s epidemic survivors in Chaatl moved to the eastern end of Skidegate Inlet, mostly to a new village on Maude island (Haida: Xaayna Gwaay), there joining with refugees from village of Kaisun. The new village, built on an old site known as Xayna or Haina, was named Haina (also spelled Xayna), and was sometimes referred to as “New Gold Harbour”. It was apparently from this village that both captains Gold and Scotchguy came when visiting Russell at the Cowgitz mine.



Image 7.11: Haina/New Gold Harbour on the east shore of Maude Island.BC Archives Item D-08824. Photograph by Richard Maynard.

In the 1890s, some 20 years after Thomas Russell’s departure, having suffered further epidemics of smallpox, measles, and other diseases, the survivors in Haina moved to the new mission town of Skidegate which had displaced the old Haida village of Ilgaagilda. Today the abandoned Haina village site is in the Khrana 4 Reserve.

Cumshewa village

Cumshewa is a former Haida village located on the north shore of Cumshewa Inlet. It is named for Cumshewa, an important chief during the maritime fur trade era.

The last few inhabitants of Cumshewa were encouraged to relocate to Skidegate in 1926. The location of the village is now within the KunXalas Heritage Site/Conservancy.

Thomas Russell paddled from Skidegate Inlet to the Hudson Bay store (McKay’s House) at Cumshewa in search of provisions in early 1871.



Image 7.12: Gold Harbour chief: Haida House, Haina Photograph by Richard Maynard in 1888.



Image 7.13: New Gold Harbour circa 1910. United Church of Canada image UCCA, 1993.049P/8a [Source](#)



Image 7.14: Cumshewa village Photographed by George Mercer Dawson in July 16th 1878.

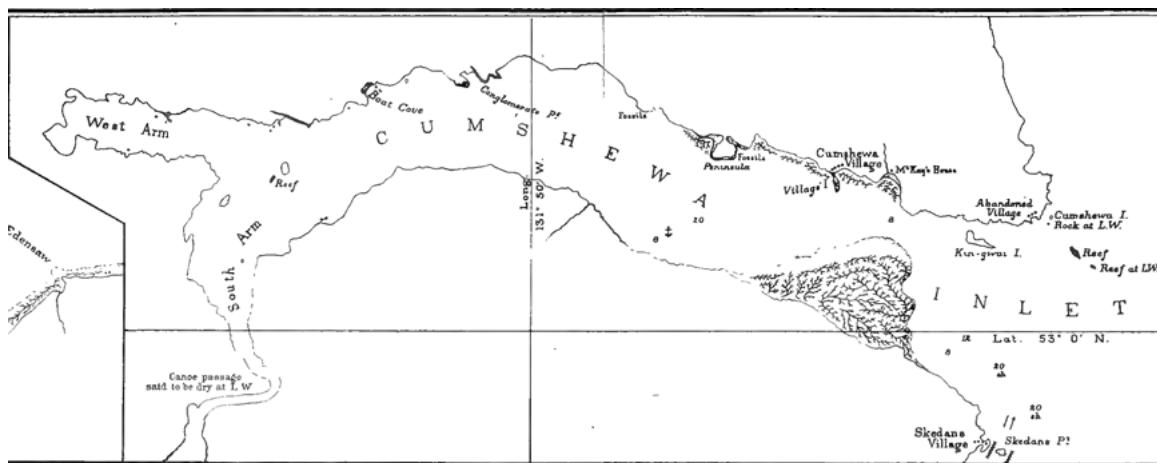


Image 7.15: 1878 map of Cumshewa Inlet showing the location of McKay's House to where Thomas Russell canoed from Skidegate Inlet in search of provisions in early 1871. McKay was an officer of the Hudson Bay Company. Source: Geological Survey of Canada Report on the Queen Charlotte Islands 1878 by George M. Dawson in Geological Survey of Canada Report of Progress 1878-1879 p. 14B

Skidegate village

According to tradition, the village was named after a village chief, *Sgiida-gidga Iihllngas*, ‘Son of the Chiton’ whose name late 18th-century fur traders (sea otter pelts) recorded as Skitekat and Skittegate.



Image 7.16: Skidegate village. Photographed by George Mercer Dawson July 26th 1878. Library and Archives Canada PA-037756 Sources: British Columbia Coast names. Their Origin and History 1592-1906 by Capt. J.T. Walbrun. p.459.

Two Haida Chiefs

The chief at the left wears a sailor’s cap of the type commonly worn by marines of the British Royal Navy since the nineteenth century, identifiable by the brass badge consisting of a globe surrounded by laurel branches and surmounted by a crown and lion. He also wears a close-fitting military topcoat with two rows of nine metal buttons spanning his torso from collar to waist; this too was a style of jacket commonly worn by the Royal Marines. Behind them, a raven’s beak projects from a monumental carved and painted totem pole, identifying the house as that of Paul Nanadjingwas, possibly the man at the left in the photograph.

Image 42263, American Museum of Natural History Library [Source](#) Image 42263, American Museum of Natural History Library

Masset village

Name derived from the Haida name of the large island, Maast, situated in the inlet about three miles above the village. The Haida name for the village is “Ut-te-was” meaning “white slope



Image 7.17: Two Haida chiefs in Skidegate photographed by Edward Dosetter in 1881

town”, possibly after the banks of white broken shells from middens in the vicinity. Dawson states that in 1878 the village consisted of about 20 houses, with about 40 totem poles.

The Hudson Bay Company operated a post at Masset from 1869 -1898 and it is that post to which Russell paddled from Skidegate Inlet in search of provisions in early 1871.

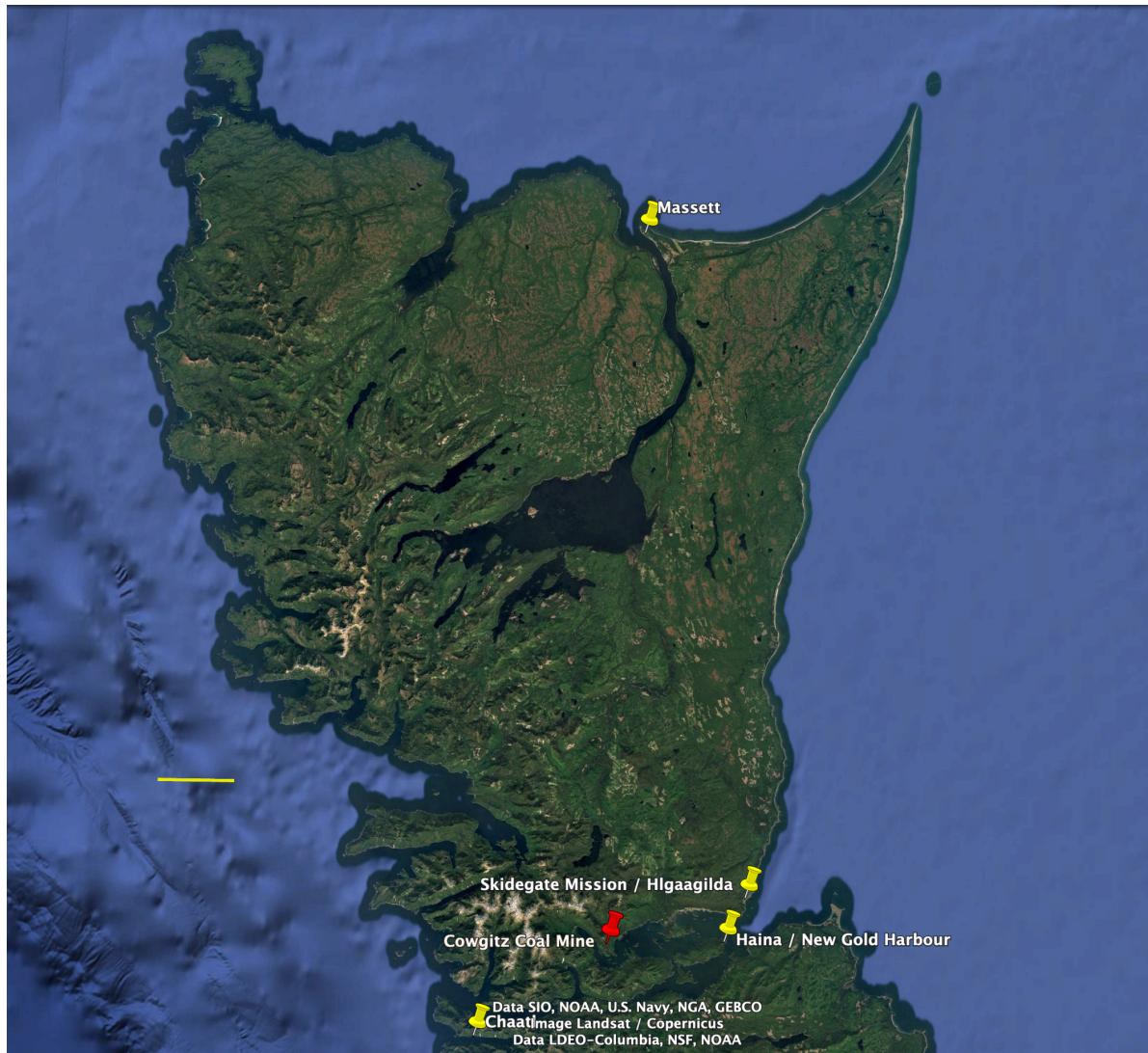


Image 7.18: Location of Masset village in 1870 (now called ‘Old Masset’)



Image 7.19: Masset village, August 10th 1878. Photographed by George Mercer Dawson. National Archives of Canada Box INT 004 Item 3368510

Dawson's Whaling Operations in the Gulf of Georgia

Thomas Russell's account of his trip north from Victoria to the Queen Charlotte Islands makes a number of references to whales, which were abundant at the time. His **?@sec-volume-1-25-sept** comment relates to the whaling activities of the Dawson Douglass Whaling Co. Ltd. at Whaling Station Bay, Hornby Island. This company was one of a group of whaling companies active in the Salish Sea between 1865–1873.

“We are now abreast of Hornby Island, the wind decreasing very fast. 7:00 PM sighted the place on Hornby Island where Dawson has taken up his whaling quarters, great volumes of smoke rising. I presume they are frying out the oil.”

James Dawson (1818 -1875) and his nephew Alexander Donaldson (1838 –1909), both Scots, had immigrated with family to the United States in 1842. Lured west by the Cariboo Gold Rush, they left Wisconsin in 1861, traversed North America via the Oregon Trail, and arrived in Victoria in March 1862. Initially they worked for E.T. Dodge & Co. freighting miners and their supplies with horse team and wagon on the Cariboo Wagon Road. By late 1863 the duo were running a successful turpentine business, refining that product at Rock Bay (Victoria) from resin tapped from Douglas Fir trees growing in the Saanich area. They sold this business in April 1866.

In 1865 the two, seeing potential profit in supplying the international demand for whale oil, requested pre-emption approval for land at Verdier Point just south of Mill Bay, Vancouver Island, with the aim of setting up a whaling station there. Approval was received on December 15 1865 for 100 acres

“on the west side of Saanich Inlet with a south boundary line to run due west from Tanner Rock for the purpose of establishing a whaling station that would foster home industry in our local waters.”

Two Kanaka (Hawaiian) men and a Danish man were hired to help construct a whaling station along the shore; small boats, fishing line, kettles, stoves and strainers were purchased and put to immediate use in catching dogfish. The healthy profits realized from dogfish oil rendered at their Saanich plant capitalised expansion of the tryworks, acquisition of larger boats, and a focus on whaling.

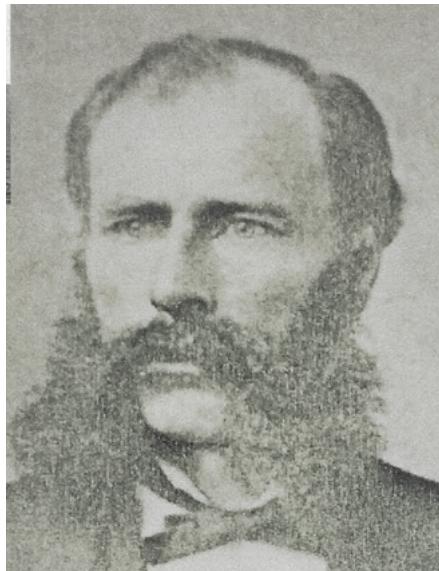


Image 7.20: Alexander Dawson Donaldson (from Seeking a Fortune by Elaine V. Clay)

Though Dawson and Donaldson were moderately successful in their whaling enterprise, they were hampered by inexperience and unsuitable boats. Income from dogfish oil sustained the company over the next two years.

Nowadays, dogfish oil might sound rather exotic, but the then massive dogfish population in the Salish Sea was a ready source of oil for miners' lamps in the Nanaimo coal mines and as a lubricant for logging skid roads and hand saws.

In 1868, in a move to expand their whaling activities, Dawson and Donaldson purchased the forty six ton, 49' long and 18' beam schooner '*Kate*' and fitted her with whaling equipment. They also hired Captain Abel Douglass (an experienced U.S. eastern seaboard whaler who they had met in San Francisco), with the latter to skipper the *Kate* and direct her whaling activity.

This increased their catch substantially. Dawson & Co. in 1868 processed in excess of 20 whales, delivering 10,000 gallons of oil (286 barrels at 35 gallons per barrel).

By the spring of 1869 the once plentiful population of whales in the Saanich Inlet area and southern Salish Sea had been depleted. That prompted the company to move and establish a new whaling station at Whaletown Bay (now Whaletown) on Cortes Island.

1869 proved a bumper-year: the partnership harvested 20,000 gallons of whale-oil. It has been estimated that during the year and a half of operation on Cortes Island the company rendered 300 whales, mostly humpbacks. However, by the end of 1869 the price of whale oil had collapsed from a high of \$1.20 to 40 cents a gallon.



Image 7.21: Captain Abel Douglass (1841-1908)



Image 7.22: Schooner "*Kate*" purchased at auction by Dawson in 1868 for \$15,000 and used by the Dawson et al. 1868-1873. BC Archives Item B-02698 -

Possibly due to financial pressures, Dawson & Co. in late 1869 joined with the Lipsett Whaling Company to form the Union Whaling Company. Joint activities in late 1869 and earliest 1870 using the Lipsett's Howe Sound shore base and tryworks were moderately successful.

Dawson & Co. commenced separate operations again in early 1870 and by May of that year the company had killed 19 whales while operating out of Whaleton.

However, all was not well on Cortes Island. In May 1870 significant damage and loss were incurred at the Whaleton station when it was looted by the local population. Fearing the likelihood of further raids, the company in June announced its decision to relocate to Hornby Island.

In July 1870 Dawson pre-empted 100 acres on what is now known as Whaling Station Bay on Hornby Island and brought materials for a whaling station over from Nanaimo and Victoria, there being little of use remaining on Cortes. In addition to a try works (wood fired boiling vats for rendering oil from the blubber), a wharf, storage sheds, a coopers shed, blacksmith's forge, a bunkhouse and cook house were erected.



In July 1870 Dawson & Co. changed name and format from a partnership between James Douglas and his nephew Alexander Donaldson to 'Dawson Douglass Whaling Co. Ltd.' Captain Abel Douglass became an active shareholder rather than just an employee and a number of prominent Victoria businessmen became shareholders and effectively took control of the company. The \$20,000 share capitalisation was used to purchase additional equipment.

The activities that Thomas Russell noted while sailing past Hornby in September 1870 were those of the Dawson Douglass Whaling Co. Ltd.

The 1870 whaling season was very successful: in January 1871 the steamer ‘Grappler’ delivered, from Hornby, a cargo of 21,000 gallons of oil for shipping to England.

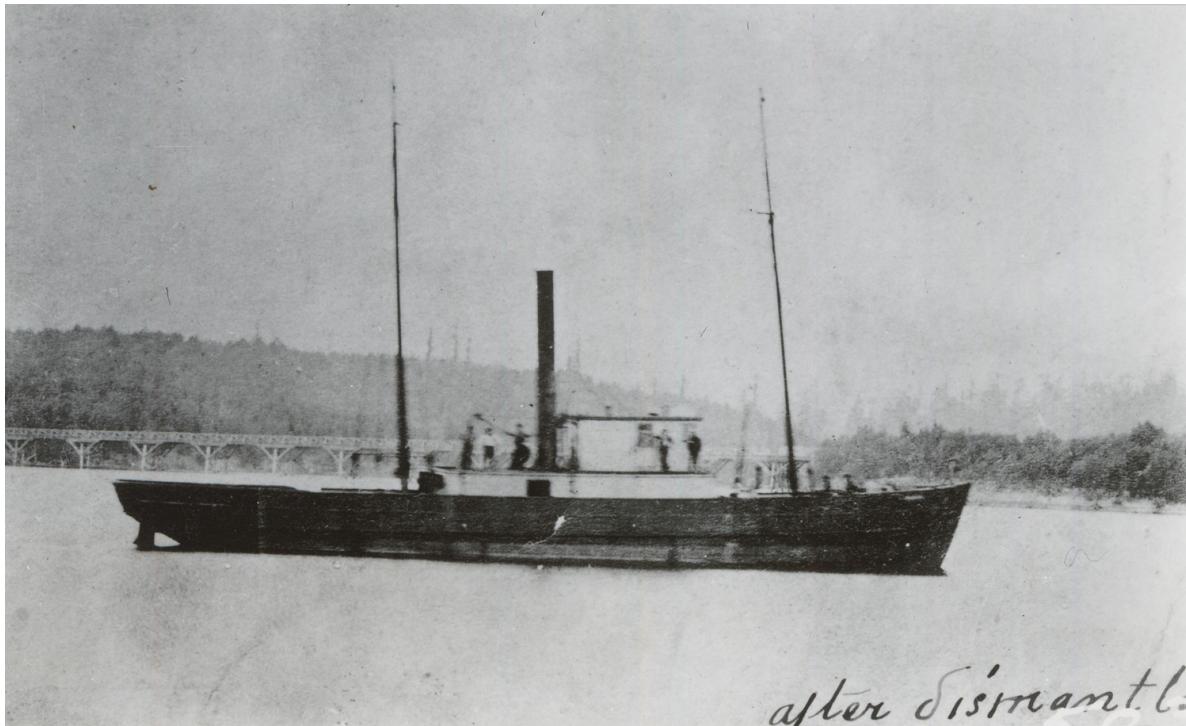


Image 7.23: The Grappler. Photo Credit: BC Provincial Archives g-06346_141.

The Grappler

The Grappler was an Albacore Class Screw Gunboat built in 1856 for the service in the Crimean War. In 1859 after being transferred to the Pacific Station she arrived in Esquimalt in July 1860 . Famous (or infamous) for her part in the Lamalchi incident in 1863 during which HMS Forward bombarded a Lamalchi village on Penelakut (formerly Kuper) Island, she was sold in 1868 into commercial service and from then on plied B.C .coastal waters freighting goods and passengers. She sank near Seymour Narrows in April 1883 after an onboard fire with great loss of life.

From this point on, things started to go against the company.

After a significant refit, the schooner *Kate*, renamed “New Dominion” in recognisance of British Columbia being due to join the Dominion of Canada later that year, was launched April 25th 1871. The schooner set off to hunt May 13th, but within weeks ran aground and was seriously damaged. At considerable expense, she was repaired and re-launched – and renamed *Kate* in an apparent effort to avoid the bad luck associated by mariners with renaming a vessel.

In May 1871 the name of Dawson and Douglass Whaling Company Limited was changed to "British Columbia Whaling Company Limited. Notably, neither James Dawson nor Abel Douglass remained as shareholders. Alexander Donaldson remained as a minority shareholder.

The 1871 whaling season was less successful than the record breaking 1870 season. Total catch for the company was 12 whales yielding 300 barrels or 7,800 gallons.

A combination of scarcity of whales, low prices and the company being sued resulted in notification in January 1872 of the decision to liquidate The British Columbia Whaling Company. The assets of the company, including the whaling station on Hornby Island and the schooner Kate were put up for public auction and purchased cheaply by its principal shareholders who continued to run a declining and unsuccessful whaling venture - which closed down in 1873.

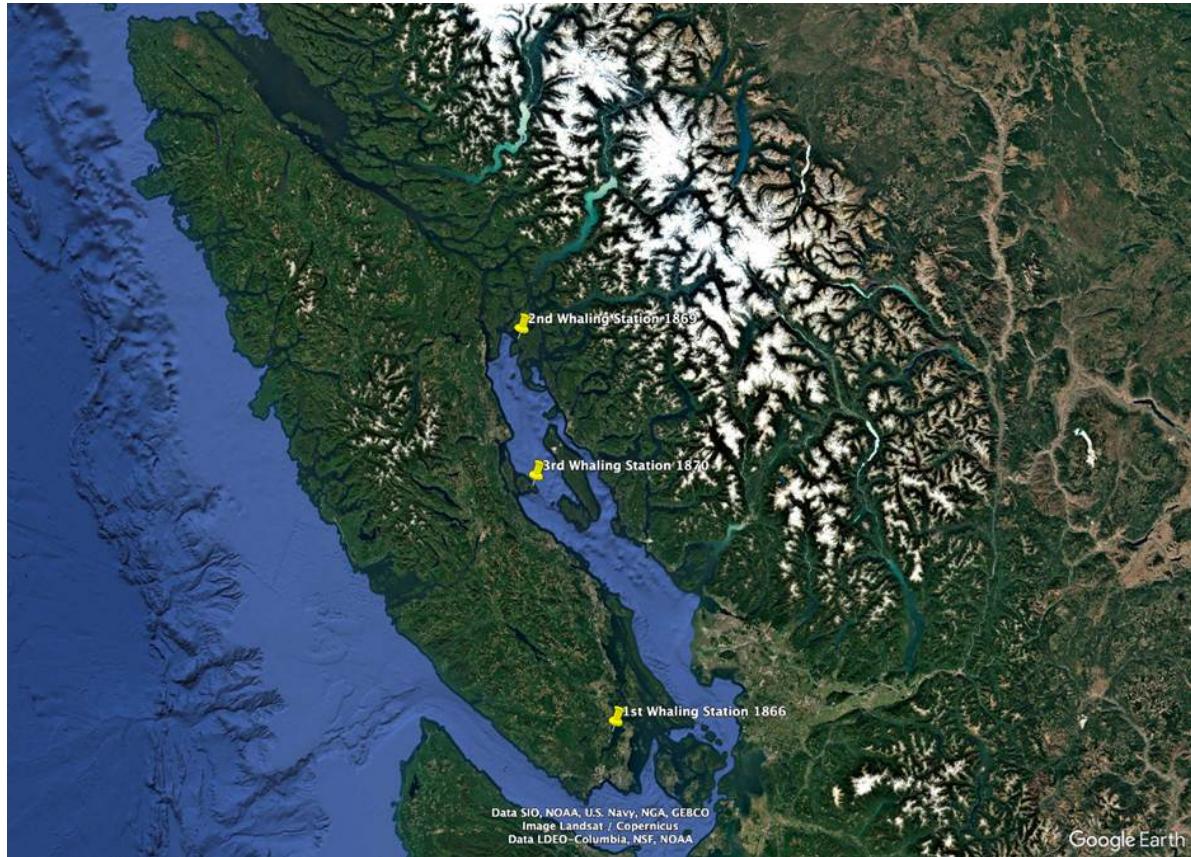


Image 7.24: Successive locations of Dawson's whaling stations

Wreck of the *Sewanee*

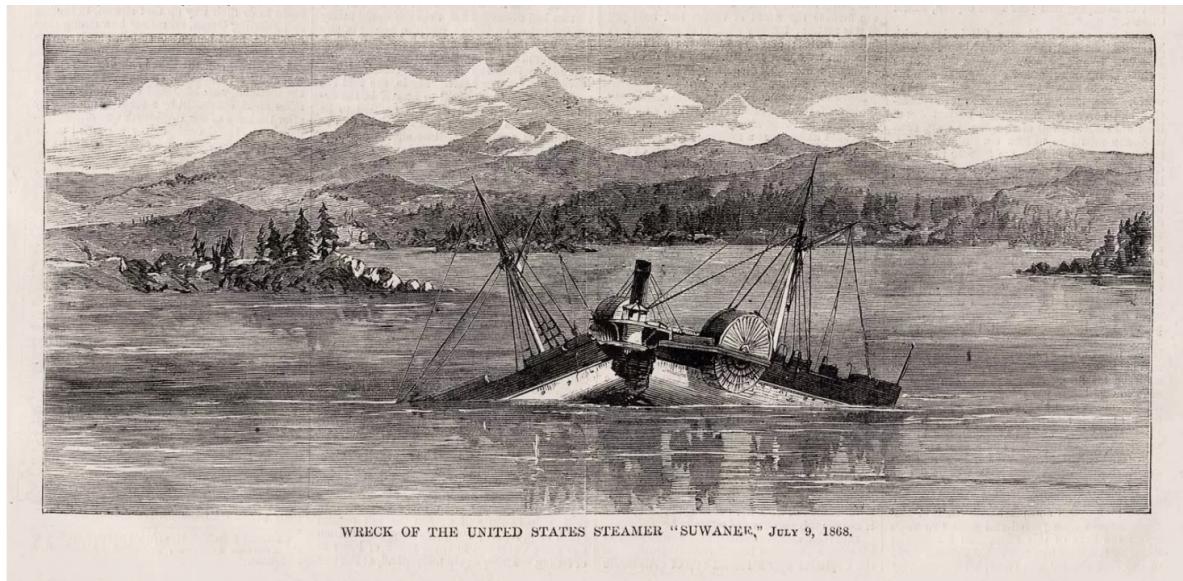


Image 7.25: Drawing of the shipwreck of the *Sewanee*

The following is an account of the shipwreck of the *Sewanee* as reported by *Harper's Weekly* September 26th 1868, Volume 12 Page 6.

The loss of the above-named steamer occurred on the morning of the 9th July, 1868, at 6 o'clock, in Shadwell Passage, Queen Charlotte Sound, British Columbia, while on her passage to Sitka. At the time of the accident she was steaming at the rate of about seven knots, and when nearly abreast of Centre and Galiano islands struck a sunken rock with such force as to knock a hole in her bottom, forward of the wheel. The tide was falling rapidly at the time, and although every exertion was made to save her it was found impossible. The ship began to strain heavily as the tide left her, forcing the stanchions up through her decks, and at about 7 o'clock A.M. she broke in two just forward of the hurricane deck.

Finding it impossible to save her, orders were given to save all provisions, stores, etc., necessary or that could be taken in the boats, and all were safely landed on Hope Island, where a camp was established, tents erected, and all attention bestowed to the comforts of officers and crew. The Indians at that place were found to be very

friendly, and aided much in taking light stores on shore in their canoes. At about 1 P.M., having secured all the property then available, the Captain ordered her to be abandoned, and at 2 o'clock P.M. the crew took up their abode on Hope Island, where they continued to "wreck her" as opportunity offered.

The *Sewanee* was a side-wheel double-ender of 1030 tons register, built in 1864 in Chester, Pennsylvania; her hull was made of -inch iron. She was intended for river service during the war, but was shortly ordered to the Pacific, where she remained until the present time. Her armament consisted of two 100-pounder Parrott rifles on pivots, four 9-inch broadside guns, two 24-pounder and two 20-pounder Dahlgren howitzers. The whole length "over all" 254 feet. During the invasion of Mexico by the French she performed some service in favor of American shipping at Mazatlan. The accompanying sketch was made by an officer attached to the *Sewanee*.

The remains of the wreck lie in three to twenty meters of water on the south side of *Sewanee* rock. The rock, which dries are 2.4 meters above chart datum, is located [here](#).

WRECK OF THE "SUWANEE."

THE loss of the above-named steamer occurred on the morning of the 9th July, 1868, at 6 o'clock, in Shadwell Passage, Queen Charlotte Sound, British Columbia, while on her passage to Sitka. At the time of the accident she was steaming at the rate of about seven knots, and when nearly abreast of Centre and Galiano islands struck a sunken rock with such force as to knock a hole in her bottom, forward of the wheel. The tide was falling rapidly at the time, and although every exertion was made to save her it was found impossible. The ship began to strain heavily as the tide left her, forcing the stanchions up through her decks, and at about 7 o'clock A.M. she broke in two just forward of the hurricane deck. Finding it impossible to save her, orders were given to save all provisions, stores, etc., necessary, or that could be taken in the boats, and all were safely landed on Hope Island, where a camp was established, tents erected, and all attention bestowed to the comforts of officers and crew. The Indians at that place were found to be very friendly, and aided much in taking light stores on shore in their canoes. At about 1 P.M., having secured all the property then available, the Captain ordered her to be abandoned, and at 2 o'clock P.M. the crew took up their abode on Hope Island, where they continued to "wreck her" as opportunity offered.

The *Suwancee* was a side-wheel double-endner of 1030 tons register, built in 1864 in Chester, Pennsylvania; her hull was made of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch iron. She was intended for river service during the war, but was shortly ordered to the Pacific, where she remained until the present time. Her armament consisted of two 100-pounder Parrott rifles on pivots, four 9-inch broadside guns, two 24-pounder and two 20-pounder Dahlgren howitzers. The whole length "over all" 254 feet. During the invasion of Mexico by the French she performed some service in favor of American shipping at Mazatlan. The accompanying sketch was made by an officer attached to the *Suwancee*.

Image 7.26: Excerpt from *Harper's Weekly* September 26th 1868, Volume 12 Page 6.



Image 7.27: Satellite image of Goletas Channel, Bate and Shadwell Passages. Location of Suwanee wreck pinpointed. Route of the sloop Thornton shown in white



Image 7.28: 1868 British Hydrographic Survey chart 'Goletas Channel' showing location of Suwanee Rock at the southern entrance to Shadwell Passage between Hope and Van Sittart islands.