

Robert Budd

foreword by MARK FORSYTHE

VOICES

OF

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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BRITISH

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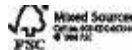
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*To my mother, Vivian,
and in memory of my father, Les Budd (1946–2008)*

A Note About the Sound Recordings

LISTEN to the sound recordings that correspond to each chapter by clicking on the hyperlinks at the beginning of each interview. If your reading device does not support hyperlinks, you will find the recordings on the following website: <http://voicesofbc.ca>



Imbert Orchard interviewed hundreds of BritisColumbians. This map shows the locales described in the twenty-four stories reproduced here.

FOREWORD

IT'S IN THE VOICE

MARK FORSYTHE

THE HUMAN voice soothes, nurtures, connects people. Recently a new mother was telling me how her baby had been fussing most evenings, so she sang a tune she'd crooned during her pregnancy.

As her daughter heard the first notes of Joni Mitchell's *Both Sides Now*, she calmed. Instantly. The human voice is a wondrous and powerful thing; we catch its rhythms, its nuance, its rise and fall even in the womb.

Imbert Orchard knew the power of the voice. He listened to a thousand voices as he and CBC Radio recording engineer Ian Stephen lugged tape recorders around British Columbia to interview the people who founded this province, including Aboriginal people whose stories reach back thousands of years. Today, those audio archives sound as fresh as the day they were recorded; they're crisp, warm and personal. We hear apprehension, humour, sadness, reflection, and realize that the things that make us human are all wrapped up in the sound of our voices. Even a pause during a conversation can be revealing as someone searches for the right words to give their story clarity and meaning (or avoids answering a question we've posed). We hear people think during such moments.

The fact that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation encouraged these two to travel across B.C. to gather so many stories is commendable, especially since many of these interviews were never aired. CBC recognized the value of building this first-person archive, which is exactly what a public broadcaster should be doing. These memories and stories are our social history and provide context for our times.

In this world of sound bites, long-form interviews like the ones conducted by Imbert Orchard are very rare indeed. Today we don't have the patience to listen, to attempt to understand the broader context of what's behind those sound clips, to sort through the fragments of information charging toward us via radio, TV, cell phones, the Internet. Tuning in to the radio for a one-hour conversation between Imbert Orchard and one of his pioneer subjects would be unheard of today. We're partial to the fragments, even if we don't know what they mean.

Imbert Orchard, though, knew he was on to something when he began talking with B.C. pioneers. He was also an excellent listener and guided conversation in a masterful way, much like another great CBC radio interviewer, Peter Gzowski. When he was interviewing, Peter thought of himself as sitting at the back of a canoe, steering, with his guest riding up front. Peter understood the overall direction of the interview and guided that journey by listening carefully then dipping his paddle in the water, asking a question or making a well-placed comment to keep the conversation on course. In Peter's interviews, his guests did almost all of the paddling: the stories propelled them toward their destination, often with an enlightening detour or two along the way. In his own way, Imbert Orchard did much the same thing. He sat away from the microphone. Listening carefully, and posing simple, direct questions, he encouraged his guests to tell the story. In their own words.

My CBC colleague Deborah Wilson has spent hours listening to many of Orchard's oral history interviews as she prepared profiles of B.C. characters and events for broadcast. She commented that listening to him interview people in his gentle, unhurried way was to be, "transported to another place and time...What I learned from Imbert Orchard: slow down and savour the details."

Orchard tapped memories like some people tap maple trees. The stories flowed, and the range of experience was remarkable. He asked about places like Port Essington on the Skeena River, a canning community that no longer exists yet is no less a part of the story of British Columbia. He met Joseph Coyle, who moved from New Jersey to Alaska then to Aldermere, near Smithers, where he launched the area's first newspaper and described how his newsprint was carried into the valley by the legendary packer Cataline. (Coyle went on to invent the egg carton.)

In his collection, we hear first- and second-generation memories of a vast province being

opened up by riverboats, railroads and cattle drives. Imbert listened to Annie York of Spuzzon tell him about her grandparents' recollections of Simon Fraser as he descended the river to Lytton during his search for the mouth of what he thought was the Columbia River. And he heard her sing the same Aboriginal songs that would have greeted Fraser. He drew out the stories of homesteaders on Read, Hornby and Theodosia Islands, tales of pioneers who followed Aboriginal grease trails and Alexander Mackenzie's route into the Bella Coola Valley. Orchard teased out details that would otherwise have been lost forever, and in retelling their experiences, the pioneers re-experienced these events like they happened yesterday.

In 1980, my friend Brad Daisley had a summer job cataloguing the Orchard Collection. Two things stood out for him from that experience. "The first was the misconception that oral history is nothing more than 'grandpa's stories.' Listening to Imbert's recordings was like crawling inside history and being part of it. These were living people who cried, laughed, who sighed as they recounted not just the extraordinary events that made British Columbia, but also the mundane occurrences, so often forgotten by historians, that were the foundation for those more important events. Conventional history tells you about building the early roads from Vancouver to New Westminster; Imbert's people make you feel every single wheel rut along the way. And unless you know how much those ruts hurt, you will never know why a new road was built."

The second lesson was the realization that Orchard's work was unique in this relatively young province. "Starting his recording in the 1960s allowed Imbert to capture the voices (the actual sounds) of some of B.C.'s earliest European immigrants and of the Aboriginal people who knew of the first contacts... Add to that the incredible quality of Imbert's recordings and you have one of the best oral history collections in the world." Jean Barman, one of the province's most important historians, has called Orchard's work one of the "two principal sources for getting the everyday attitudes and actions of everyday people in British Columbia, historically, from their own perspectives." (James Matthews is the other.) The recordings have been a fundamental component of her ongoing research on British Columbian history.

Although I never met Orchard (he was hired by the CBC the year I was born), we do share a few things in common. We're both refugees from Ontario who have been smitten by our adopted province—its landscape, its people and a history you can still reach out and touch. We both became public radio broadcasters because we were drawn to this most personal of electronic media, where connections are made solely through the sound of the human voice. And we have both travelled much of the province to record interviews. I've been fortunate to meet with people like the late Nisga'a leader James Gosnell, who with arms outstretched boomed that his people had lived in the Nass Valley for thousands of years. I've met farmers in the Peace River Valley who worry their land will be swallowed up by the next dam project, and I've met scientists who are tracking orca whale families in Johnstone Strait.

Things have changed at CBC since Orchard's time. We don't interview the pioneers any longer. We don't honour stories from our elders as he did. And we don't send people off to gather interviews that won't necessarily make it to air. To be sure, some of our longer-form documentary work does capture our times in a compelling way, and more CBC Radio and TV archive material is available through our Web services. Thankfully, we also employ people like archivist Colleen Preston who sees great value in the treasure that Imbert Orchard left us, but worries it may be the last such archive.

"Those of us who ply the craft of Sound & Moving Image archiving these days are unlikely

have the challenge and pleasure of preserving and creating access to a contemporary collection ~~rich and complete as Imbert Orchard's~~. It's a vexing paradox: there is more 'content' in the digital world, yet collections of ideas and memories are more fragmented than ever. The operative term in the production world is 'paralysis by analysis.' We have more 'bits' of information than we can possibly deal with, but all too often we lack the 'frame' to place the content within a coherent whole. We can 'aggregate' material from all sorts of sources, but what of its provenance and its context?

"That this seminal Orchard Collection was preserved and catalogued so well is a wonderful confluence of happy accident, Orchard's own diligence and the professionalism of the B.C. Provincial Archives."

It's easy to ignore the past. In a province where many people come from elsewhere, it's no wonder we're missing that sense of where we've come from, and how it informs where we may be going. In this sense, Rob "Lucky" Budd's efforts to re-ignite interest in these stories is encouraging and exciting. Just like a field that grows vigorously after lying fallow, the stories in Orchard's collection may generate new interest in the province's history and its pioneers. Listen to the sound recordings of Orchard's interviews and resist the urge to regard these voices as quaint and distant. Try to imagine yourself in their time—inside their dreams and struggles. They're not so different from our own, and they may have lessons for us yet.



Imbert Orchard, CBC radio producer and oral historian, on a field-recording trip in northern B.C., 1971. Photo: I-67699

INTRODUCTION

IMBERT ORCHARD AND THE STORY OF THE PROVINCE

“I’m surprised how few people know about our

*great characters and the people who are semi-historical,
semi-legendary that are in B.C. We've got just
as rich a background as any part of this continent
in that way, but we don't know it yet."*

IMBERT ORCHARD, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH J.J. MCCOLL, JUNE 1973

WHEN THE Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) hired Imbert Orchard in its Vancouver office in 1955, little did the broadcasting company realize what a legacy he would leave. As a regional editor he was responsible for receiving and reading television scripts, but it was a chance encounter with Constance Cox, an elderly Native woman from Hazelton, that changed his future. The day she walked into his office and declared, "The other day I saw a program about the [Klondike] Trail of '98; I was there!" then proceeded to tell Orchard how the CBC had got the story all wrong, he had no idea that his decision to write her biography would be the genesis of one of the largest oral history collections in the world. Still, he borrowed a tape recorder from his secretary and began to record Cox's story.

The interview tapes sat around for a few months until Orchard and CBC producer John Edwards got talking one day, and the two men came up with the idea to do a fifteen-minute radio series about the Skeena River based on Cox's experiences and the accounts of a few other people Orchard knew in Vancouver. As he became fascinated with the idea of recording more stories from the Skeena River area, he and sound technician Ian Stephen travelled from Prince George to Prince Rupert by boat, "picking out the people who were worthwhile as far as broadcasting was concerned."

As Orchard explained to interviewer J.J. McColl in 1973: "Once you get into a community it's very easy to get from one person to another. Most people who have lived there a number of years will know who the old-timers are, who are the characters who can tell the story from way back. Well, you go and visit these people and you find that one's memory isn't half as good as other people think it is... but then you find the really good people who have marvellous recall and are still quite bright, and they feel like talking to you... I'm very interested in the fact that the way of doing things, going through the country in that way, you find the story of the country; you get them to tell you the story of the country and the story of their experiences in the country. So I'm not looking for any particular subject, as a rule."

Born Robert Henslow Graham Orchard in Brockville, Ontario, in 1909, Orchard had first come to British Columbia as a member of the Canadian Armed Forces during the Second World War. He fell in love with the province right away and set about learning as much about the history of the place as he could. He went to a local library and was surprised that he could find very little information about his new home, and that what he did find was somewhat anecdotal. Years later, in February 1978, he told Derek Reimer at the Provincial Archives of British Columbia: "And they fired me, you know; with a little bit of the background of B.C., immediately I got interested. I could see this was another story altogether, and a richer one than what I was used to in Ontario."

"I feel that Ontario is very rich... the development that took [place at] that time in Ontario—from 1790 to 1970, if you like—that period is 'squeezed up' in B.C. In about a hundred years less of time, it's come from the bush to the big cities. This is a fantastic development. This country interests me because of that.

"It also interests me because of the stories, as I got to see them, were rather large scale; the

were kind of 'epic'... the Indian presence was much stronger here. It was a much more challenging life, therefore it produced a different kind of person. And also, I realized that there was a tremendous variety in this country. There is more variety in climate and terrain between Long Beach and the Rockies than there is in all the rest of Canada... I began to see that this was a story all by itself and almost a country all by itself."

To uncover this "story," and inspired by his experience on the Skeena River, Orchard travelled over 24,000 miles by boat, horse, car, train and foot and interviewed nearly a thousand people between 1959 and 1966. He used a fraction of the material in three series, *Living Memory, From the Mountains to the Sea and People in Landscape*, which he produced and broadcast on CBC Radio in the 1960s and '70s. In 1974, when the Provincial Archives of British Columbia established an aural history program, Orchard donated approximately twelve hundred tape recordings (all of the original master tapes of the interviews, as well as the original master tapes from the completed episodes from each of the three radio series) to the Archives, where they are still housed today. In all, the Orchard Oral History Collection (not including the finished radio programs) amounts to 99 interviews (in excess of 2,700 hours) with miners, ranchers, fur traders, ship captains, missionaries, farmers, totem carvers, road builders and some of the First Nations people of British Columbia.

Orchard was already fifty years old when he began to collect his interviews, and as he was not doing the job to make a name for himself, the interviews remained largely unknown. He, himself, was struck by how little British Columbians knew about their own heritage:

• TRACK 1 •

ORCHARD: Yes I'm surprised how few people know about our great characters and the people that are semi-historical, semi-legendary that there are in B.C. We've got just as rich a background as any part of this continent, in that way. But we don't know it yet.

You see, I realized early on that it was no good waiting for a special occasion or a special budget, that I was going to have to go out and get a lot of these people before they died. Luckily again, the CBC cooperated with this idea, and Ian [sound technician] and I travelled all over the country just to get the people, before they died or before they faded out. And this was what I did. And then it's there to be used, but I haven't had the opportunity to use a great deal of it.

Of course this gave me a sense, too, that what I was collecting was not just for the CBC. I was collecting it for the province, for the story of the province, for an understanding of the life of those days. And to me that was ample justification for getting all this stuff that wouldn't get on the air for some time.

And of course the important thing now is to gather this up and have a means of preserving it because we don't know how long tape will last. I know some tape disintegrates after twelve or fifteen years, very rapidly. Now we've got to have a means of preserving this tape so that fifty or a hundred years from now these voices can still be heard. They're part of our story, the story of our country. And it's very, very important to do that. I discovered this early, early on, I knew that the tapes I was doing were going to, if I could preserve them, would play a part, a certain historical part, a certain part in preserving the history.

We need facilities for research. Not just simply research for the historian, the academic person who's only concerned really with writing—but for people who want to go back to the original and listen, and hear how it sounded and how this person's meanings come through in sound, which

they don't come through on the written page. You've got to go back to the original thing if you're going to get the meaning of it.

And telling a story, and this is very, very ancient and it's way beyond before print was even invented. And it's coming back into its own now. And this is to me very important.

...

ONE of the intentions of this book, then, is to expose British Columbians to the valuable resource Orchard has left us and, by including the original audio recordings, to realize his vision.

Although the B.C. Archives have been instrumental in preserving Orchard's work, his contribution to oral history and the Orchard Collection itself remain largely unknown by scholars and the general public. In the 1970s to early 1980s, the B.C. Archives published a series of books entitled *Sound Heritage* that used excerpts from the Orchard Collection along with material from other collections. In the 1980s, the Sound and Moving Images Division (SMID) at the Archives created a catalogue system for the Orchard Collection. However, it was not until the summer of 2000, when the CBC embarked on a project to digitize all of the audio material scattered across the country in the various provincial archives, that his material came to light again. Under the supervision of Allen Specht, the long-time director of SMID, Charlene Gregg and I were hired to begin cataloguing and copying to compact disc all of the reel-to-reel tape and other recordings that belonged to the CBC and were housed at the B.C. Archives in Victoria. In 2001, we began our work on the Orchard Collection.

In the course of digitizing and cataloguing this enormous and extensive collection, I sat with headphones on for hours, listening to the interviewees tell their tales. Often I was taken back another time through the tremendous sense of atmosphere conveyed in the voices and stories of the collection. Less than a week into listening, I came across a couple of tapes titled *Patenaude Horsefly*, which were recordings made of my very good friend Pharis's great-grandfather and great-grand-uncle. The Patenaudes were one of the first non-Native families to settle in the Cariboo region (Pharis is the fifth generation to come from Horsefly), and it struck me then that the tapes I was accessing contained stories about people's great-great-grandparents discussing family places and speaking in English. (My own relatives would have been speaking Central European languages!) It became clear to me that each of these accounts was a window into the history of this province that no one else had ever heard in its entirety.

The more I listened, the more I felt that I had to help get this material out so the general public could have access to this rich resource. As a result, the Orchard Collection became the focus of my master's degree in history at the University of Victoria. Contained in this book, several years later, are the "greatest hits" from the collection, a broad survey featuring fun, poignant stories from a variety of regions and covering an array of vocations and experiences that paint a picture of life in pre-war B.C.

Since the contents of this book are a sample of the entire collection, there are many omissions. For example, I have not selected any of the stories from northern Vancouver Island or from the Arrow Lakes district. And the collection itself contains many interviews from the Skeena River but very few from the Stikine River. These omissions are not meant to take away from the rich histories in each of these areas, but I could not represent everything in this one volume.

It is also worth noting an obvious oversight in Orchard's collection: Asians—particularly Japanese and Chinese people—are discussed in many interviews, yet among all the recordings in the collection there is only one interview with a Chinese person. Perhaps Orchard did not deem

the level of their English or the quality of Asian immigrants' voices to be "broadcast worthy." Perhaps they refused his requests to be interviewed or perhaps he didn't think to ask them. Regardless, much information can be gathered from Orchard's collection about how the Chinese and Japanese people of British Columbia were perceived by non-Asians in the pre-war period. Workers of Chinese origin were segregated in British Columbia's labour markets: mostly they competed with Euro-Canadians for low-wage manual-labour jobs, though some Chinese and Japanese people were also independent proprietors—mainly farmers and fishermen. Orchard's informants, some of whom worked alongside Asian labourers, were acutely aware of the Asian presence in the workforce and their attitudes toward Asians were both positive and negative, reflecting many racial assumptions and some tension in society at large.

Similarly, Orchard had tremendous respect for Aboriginal oral tradition and believed that cultural stories passed down from generation to generation were the property of the nations from which they came. As a result, he did not focus on these stories. Most of Orchard's interviews with Native peoples fall within the realm of oral history, which is to say their personal recollections about what everyday life was actually like as British Columbia went from a settlement with a hundred or so non-Native people in January 1858, before two gold rushes and Confederation, to almost 400,000 by 1911. As conveyed in the Orchard Collection and in this book, the province's past is the story of newcomers settling the frontier in western Canada; it is a story of people accommodating to and building infrastructure in B.C.'s vast landscape in the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth century.



An audiotape copying setup used by the B.C. Archives' aural history program, 1975. Photo: I-67663/Janet Cauthers

Voices of British Columbia, the book and the accompanying audio recordings, are intended to immerse you in the history of British Columbia: read the introduction to each story, listen to the speakers narrate their own experiences while you follow along in the text and look at the various photos and map. Discover a sense of place and meet the personalities who shaped the province, including Orchard himself who speaks with and prompts his interviewees. Through these audio recordings, Orchard has provided a window into the remembered past, allowing British Columbia's pioneers to speak for themselves. As he said to Derek Reimer in 1978: "My contribution was to get people to see that... the sound of a person's voice is an historical thing in itself. And the feeling that's in that voice, as voice, not what comes on the page afterwards, is historically important." I am hopeful that these samples from the collection, both audio and visual, will encourage you to look for details about B.C. history in general or even about your own specific family histories amid the material at the B.C. Archives or your local archives.



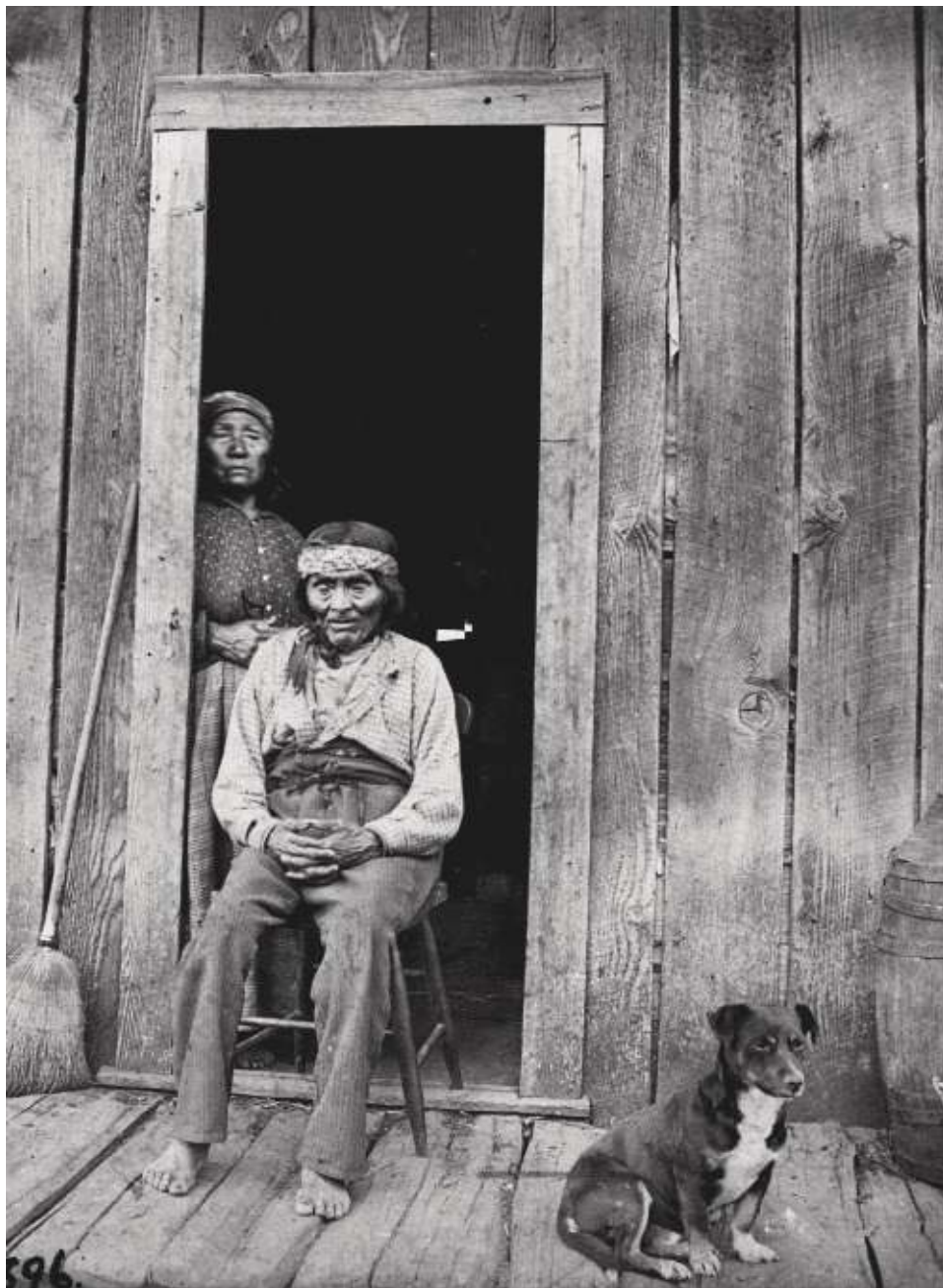
Aboriginal people near Lytton, ca. 1870. Photo: HP000676/Frederick Dally

(1) Original Voices

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S First Nations are steeped in a rich oral tradition that communicates much about their diverse cultures and about the history they created before Europeans came to this land.

Although these stories—the legends and traditional narratives—are the property of the individual nations from which they come, they are a fascinating and invaluable part of the province's historical record. However, to respect the sacred nature of these stories when talking to Aboriginals, Imbert Orchard focussed on people's individual memories rather than on the broader cultural reminiscences.

In the following two stories, Native speakers discuss the interaction between Native and non-Native people at and before the first gold rush of 1858, which brought the largest wave of immigration to British Columbia.



When this photo was taken in 1896, Bob, a Yu-Ka-guse medicine man, was 104 years old. He was one of the few elders who remembered seeing Simon Fraser in 1808. Photo by W.H. Barraclough.

HP016181/W.H. Barraclough

Put Your Knife Down

LIZETTE HALL

on the Meeting of James Douglas and Chief Kwah

(RECORDED SEPTEMBER 19, 1966)

LIZETTE THERESE HALL was a member of the Dakelh (Carrier) First Nation, an indigenous people who are part of the Athapaskan language group that occupies a huge area from the upper Fraser River up to Anahim Lake in the Chilcoten region and that also has a strong presence in the Nechako River area. Hall's father was Chief Louis Billy Prince, born in 1864. Hall's great grandfather was Chief Kwah, born in 1755, who was chief of what is now the Nak'azdli Indian Band.

Hall's story begins with a discussion of first contact between the first Europeans and the Native people in her area, in 1806. Chief Kwah lived near Fort St. James and was instrumental in preventing Simon Fraser's men from starving when they were camped at Stuart Lake. A natural leader, Chief Kwah saw to it that the thirty to forty thousand salmon needed to feed Fraser's men annually were secured. As one of the traders commented in Jean Barman's book *The West beyond the West*, Kwah "is the only Indian who can and will give fish, and on whom we must depend in great measure. It behooves us to endeavour to keep friends with him." Chief Kwah was greatly respected by both the Native and non-Native communities at the time of the following anecdote about

Sir James Douglas in 1828.

Often credited as "The Father of British Columbia," Sir James Douglas (1803–1877) was a British colonial governor at the time and was of central importance during this phase of the province's history. Schooled in Britain, he had come to Canada at the age of sixteen to enter the fur trade for the North West Company, an outfit that eventually merged with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). In 1828 he married Amelia Connelly, daughter of William Connelly, the Chief Factor of the fur-trading district of New Caledonia, and a Cree woman (Hall mentions that Douglas's wife is "a half-breed"). In 1840, Douglas became Chief Factor of the HBC, the highest possible rank for field service in the company, then in 1851 he became the second Governor of Vancouver Island. The following anecdote involves Douglas while he was a clerk at Fort St. James on Stuart Lake, working for the Hudson's Bay Company.

• TRACK 2 •

HALL: Well, my father was, he was the chief, until his retirement in the '40s, I think, he retired. They had hereditary chiefs, you know, in the old days and he was born in 1864, according to the register.

ORCHARD: Are there any memories handed down of the first white men coming, and what was the impression of them?

HALL: Yes, the people were living up here at Sowchea. They had, there was a reserve still there yet. But that's where they were living in the summertime when these saw these canoes around the

point and they were singing, the canoeists were singing. And they saw these canoes and they a
~~went on the shore to see who it was. They were singing in a strange language, something the~~
hadn't heard before. So they were all there when they landed, and they were white men. I gue
that would be Simon Fraser—when they first came.

And they all crowded on the shore to see. They were very curious, of course. They hadn't see
any white men before and they started, I suppose, they talked in sign language. They couldn
understand one another, you know.

And they showed them different things that they had, you know, like a knife and soap. The
didn't start to eat, according to all these stories that you hear, that they started to eat the soap. M
father said they didn't start to eat the soap. He said they didn't know—they didn't give them a
soap in the first place to begin with, but they showed them a knife and then they showed them a
they showed them a gun and they fired the gun. When they fired the gun, well, they all took f
the bush, you know. They got scared. They had never heard anything like it. They did all the
hunting by these homemade things like spears, and, well, they did their hunting by spears and
snare and traps, these wooden traps.

The first two came from McLeod's Lake. They arrived where the Hudson Bay is. Yes, the
were two white men. Yes, two years before he [Simon Fraser] came. No, a year before he cam
They arrived where the Hudson Bay is. Not exactly where the store is—that's the fourth store, th
Hudson Bay, you know. Anyway, they arrived. It was just overgrown with great big spruce, and s
they came out there and one of them made a blaze on the tree and said, "This is where the po
will be." And he promised the people that in a year's time they would come back and build a pos
where they could buy knives and guns, you know, and various things.

There was a trail from McLeod's Lake, yes, ninety miles [145 kilometres] because there was
post above McLeod's Lake before Fort
St. James. They didn't call it Fort St. James in those days. It was called Stuart Lake, Stuart La
Post.



Sir James Douglas, 1860s. Photo: HP002653

ORCHARD: Any incidents from those earlier years?

HALL: THERE WAS A, I GUESS EVERYBODY KNOWS ABOUT HOW JAMES DOUGLAS'S LIFE WA
THREATENED.

ORCHARD: THAT WAS HERE, WAS IT?

HALL: YES, THAT WAS HERE.

ORCHARD: WHAT WAS THE STORY ABOUT THAT?

HALL: Well, apparently this Native [named Zulth-Nolly] gave a beating to some Hudson Bay servant down in Fort George and, according to the story, he killed him and then he sneaked back up here. It was during the summertime, during the salmon season, and all the people were camped at the mouth, close to the mouth of the Stuart River.

And this man came up and, of course, he was hiding, and as soon as they heard about it across the lake there at the post, a couple of the men, the Hudson Bay men, came over and started searching for him. Didn't know, they saw them coming, you know, but there was a woman who had a baby and she was in bed, of course that would be in the smokehouse. And he didn't know where to hide, so finally they hid him. He crawled in with this woman. He didn't know at the last moment, he didn't know where to go, so he just jumped there and, well, these two men, they came searching. And, of course, they threw the blankets off this woman like they did in the old days like the Hudson Bay used to do, you know. They bossed these Natives, and so they threw the blankets off her, and there the poor fellow was crouching. And they got him out and they just tore him, literally tore him to pieces, and killed him.



In the 1890s, an aboriginal smokehouse was a gathering place as well as a location where fish, including halibut, were hung to dry. Photo: PN00366

Kwah was away then. He was down the river at that time. And they tore this poor fellow, just tore him to pieces without any fair trial, without even asking any questions. They just yanked him outside the door and they just literally tore him to pieces outside.

And when Kwah came back he was furious, of course. He was down the river at that time, and when he returned and found out what happened, well, he, Kwah, had a terrible temper and he took his men across. He said, "We will go and avenge this man's death. They had no business to come over when I wasn't here to do such a thing to one of my people."

So he went across with some men. He picked these men, and they went across to the fort and they were let in. The fort was inside a barricade, a stockade, they call it. So when they got there he demanded to see James Douglas who was a clerk then. And, or was he a clerk?

Anyway, he was there, and he, so they all got in the fort, right inside the trading post and demanded to see. One of the men had a knife and he went and grabbed James Douglas. Well, James Douglas started to order them out, you know, and no, they weren't going to budge.

They said, "We're staying right here. You had no business to come to our camp and do what you did to this fellow, and upsetting the whole village," because all the children got scared and the women were just, the children were all screaming, you know, running around there while the

were searching for this man.

Well, I guess James Douglas was, he really started to tell them off. And one of the fellow grabbed him by the throat, and he said he held him like that with a knife upraised in his right hand, and he said to Kwah, "Shall I strike?"

And Kwah didn't say anything. So, "No," he said. "Don't strike, yet," he said. And this fellow at the throat of James Douglas was just, you know, he really wanted to kill him right there, and finally Kwah said, "No!" He said, "Let him go."

So this woman, I guess it would be James Douglas's wife who was upstairs. She was a half-breed and she came down, and according to my father she didn't throw anything down. According to the stories, is that she threw blankets and clothes down there and to pacify the men, but she didn't. I asked my father, you know. It was just between my father and I, and I know my father wouldn't lie to me.

I said, "Is it true?" I said, "that this woman threw down blankets and dresses and stuff like that to pacify?"

He said, "No, she just came down and said—she was crying, of course, and she said, 'Please don't kill my husband. Please, I'm one of you, too, and he's my husband and I love him. Please don't kill him.'"

So he said, "Put your knife down," he said to the fellow, "and let him go." So the fellow let him go and didn't kill him.



He once had in his hands the life of (future Sir) James Douglas, but was great enough to refrain from taking it," reads Chief Kwah's gravestone. Photo: hp071315

There's a lot of things that are written that are not true about the Native people and their way of life like they say. Like, my tribe, they're the Carrier, and they say that they used to carry the bones of their husbands on their backs. According to my father, that isn't true. They didn't carry them, they carried the bones, on their back at all. He said he had never heard of this. I told him what was written, and he said "I never heard of such a thing." He said they used to bury them in the trees, sort of cache them, I guess. And they would bury them later, I guess. After the white man came, they showed them how to bury their dead.

But the story about James Douglas, well, it's been retold so many times, and a thing added here and a thing added there. Well, this is the true story of what, just what did happen.

ORCHARD: How did they resolve that problem?

HALL: Well, they talked about it after he told the fellow to—this man—he let him go. And he didn't want to let him go, but Kwah said to let him go, so he had to take his hands off James Douglas. And then they talked about it, you know, and so they left quite peaceably after that. Well, remember that there was no law, no policemen or anything, and these Natives were used to protecting one another and protecting their wives and their families.



The townsite of Lytton, 1875. Photo: hp037815

Won't Do Anyone Any Good to Fight

DANNY MILO

*on Natives and White Men during
the First Gold Rush*

(RECORDED IN APRIL 1963)

DANIEL MILO (1864–1966) was 98 years old at the time of this interview. Born in Sardis, B.C., in the Fraser Valley as a member of the Chilliwack First Nation, Milo outlived all eleven of his brothers and sisters. His parents lived in a home on the banks of the Old Chilliwack River, and when he was a child, the current swelled and the family home was washed away. He offered many flood stories to Orchard. Milo also illustrates a lot of history and some oral tradition about the Chilliwack people, including details about geography, particularly that of Cultus and Sumas lakes.

Here, Milo discusses details about what is now known as the Fraser Canyon War, which took place in the fall of 1858. The combatants of the war were six impromptu regiments of immigrant gold workers from around Yale, and the Nlaka'pamux (known in English as the Thompson or Hakamaugh). The centre of Nlaka'pamux territory was called Camchin, the modern-day townsite of Lytton. Gold panning in the area greatly disrupted the riverbeds and, consequently, the livelihoods of many First Nation communities. The tensions escalated when the Nlaka'pamux retaliated for the rape of one of their young women by French miners and sent decapitated bodies downriver. Many miners panicked when bodies began to circle in the eddies by Yale, the centre of commerce.

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