Journal 7

Our readings this week were 3 separate papers all of which focused on British Columbia’s Cariboo gold rush and the Indigenous peoples roles during this time: “A Great Humbug” British Columbia’s Gold Rushes”, “Indian Participation in the Gold Discoveries” by T. A. Rickard, and “Into that Country to Work” Aboriginal Economic Activities During Barkerville’s Gold Rush” by Mica Jorgenson all write about the cooperation or lack of cooperation from the Indigenous peoples of the Barkerville, Thompson Rivers and Fraser Rivers areas during the time of the gold rush and the parts the Indigenous played as they partook in said event.

“A Great Humbug” speaks from 3 different views of fellow miners who made the venture westward to British Columbia from different parts of Canada and the U.S.A. to try their chances at striking rich after hearing claims of finding gold in the central interior of B.C. One view all these men had in common was their dislike towards the land of B.C. They all found it to be “A fog shrouded craggy coastline, riptides, impenetrable vegetation, impassable mountain ranges, treacherous river gorges, and sheer distance all conspired to thwart development” 1 and considered it to be an area that “…offered to few rewards for too much effort… Why bother settling?” 2. B.C. was also a considerable distance from Upper Canada so it had only been ventured enough to know these troublesome matters that would delay settlement and cause several problems while trying to do so. This paper talked largely about the land and bounty it could provide or the problems it may present while the other 2 papers we read focused more on the Indigenous peoples and their roles and attitudes about newcomers to the land they considered theirs.

Jorgensons paper “Into That Country to Work” and Rickards paper “Indian Participation in the Gold Discoveries” speak their views on the “Indians” involved in the gold rush. Jorginsons paper argues that the aboriginals were actively involved in the Cariboo gold rush. There are several official documents such as census reports and journals that document the type of contribution these aboriginal made to this time 3, and also, the tragic depopulation of these peoples due to disease such as smallpox 4.

Rickards paper “Indian Participation in the Gold Rush” spoke of similar issues to Jorginsons paper but also voiced a respectful view of the Indigenous peoples opinions on the overwhelming situation of newcomers to the land 5.

There are several reports in these 3 papers of Indigenous workers and slaves, assaults on and by the Indigenous, and how the Indigenous felt about all the sudden human activity in B.C.