

Donald Fraser, The London Times, and the Gold Rushes of British Columbia

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14288/bcs.v0i193.186403>

Keywords: gold rush, Fraser, Donald, Donald Fraser, newspapers, immigration

Abstract

This article investigates Donald Fraser's efforts to popularise the gold rushes of British Columbia in *The Times* across 1858-66. Fraser was a veteran journalist who covered the California gold rush from 1849 and then shifted to Victoria, Vancouver Island when the Fraser River gold rush occurred in 1858. Fraser's correspondence is believed to have attracted several thousand goldrushers to British Columbia in 1862, but also elicited considerable controversy. The article examines Fraser's journalism, the accusations of his critics, and how the structure of nineteenth century communications networks may have facilitated the misinformation.

BC *The British Columbian Quarterly* STUDIES



NUMBER 193 *Spring 2017*

Issue

No. 193: Spring 2017

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The Fraser Canyon Gold Rush, (also Fraser Gold Rush and Fraser River Gold Rush) began in 1857 after gold was discovered on the Thompson River in British Columbia at its confluence with the Nicoamen River a few miles upstream from the Thompson's confluence with the Fraser River at present-day Lytton. The rush overtook the region around the discovery, and was centered on the Fraser Canyon from around Hope and Yale to Pavilion and Fountain, just north of Lillooet.[1]. The rush is credited with instigating European-Canadian settlement on the mainland of British Columbia. It was the catalyst for the founding of the Colony of British Columbia, the building of early road infrastructure, and the founding of many towns. YouTube Encyclopedic. 1/3. The California Gold Rush was sparked by the discovery of gold nuggets in the Sacramento Valley in early 1848 and was arguably one of the most significant events to shape American history during the first half of the 19th century. As news spread of the discovery, thousands of prospective gold miners traveled by sea or over land to San Francisco and the surrounding area; by the end of 1849, the non-native population of the California territory was some 100,000 (compared with the pre-1848 figure of less than 1,000). A total of \$2 billion worth of precious metal was extracted from the area during the 19, 1858, the Crown Colony of British Columbia was created. Ten days before he became the first governor of the

new colony, Governor Douglas spared the Home Office in London any of the details of roving foreign militias that had, throughout the summer, vastly outnumbered the British in their newest colony. Donald Hauka, an author and historian who is trying to bring those years of early contact with B.C. natives to life through the New Pathways to Gold Society, said the documents are a great resource. By the time his mail reached London, and the response had come back, he'd have The Fraser gold rush in the spring of 1858 improved communications further, as steamships bringing miners to Victoria from San Francisco also brought mail directly to Victoria for the first time. A short essay on the explosive British Columbia, Canada gold rush, and the implications it had for the future of that province. This essay was written for a 2000-level Pre-Confederation History course available at Acadia University. Copyright (C) 2006 David Trenholm All Rights Reserved. And reprinted by Robie L. Reid in 'Two Narratives of the Fraser River Gold-Rush', British Columbia Historical Quarterly 5 (1941): pp. 279. 5 Friesach, 280. 6 Friesach, 281.