

## Investigate How Did the Haida Respond to Gold Mining on Their Land?

What would happen when gold was discovered on Haida Gwaii?

Since time immemorial, the Xaayda (Haida) have lived on Xaayda Gwaay (Haida Gwaii), which means “Islands of the People.” The Haida hunted and traded sea otter along the coast. They had been trading with Europeans for about 70 years by the time James Douglas built Fort Victoria in 1843. The Haida would travel there in their massive ocean-going canoes. They traded food supplies as well as fur for European goods.

In 1849, Britain made Vancouver Island a colony. James Douglas was appointed governor in 1851. He was also in charge of the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC).

**New Caledonia** was the name that the HBC used for what is now mainland BC.

It was the only company allowed to trade on the coast or in **New Caledonia**. The fur trade, however, had reduced the number of fur-bearing animals.

▼ The Haida travelled by canoe to Fort Victoria, which is a distance of about 500 kilometres. They used large, ocean-going canoes like the ones shown in this image. Carved from giant red cedars, some of these canoes were 18 metres long. Sea-travel was a significant part of Haida culture and economy. The canoes enabled the Haida to travel long distances up and down the coast, where they could trade with other Nations and European newcomers, fish, and hunt sea mammals.



## A Trade That Told of Gold

During the fur trade era, there was little conflict. First Nations wanted a market for their furs, and newcomers wanted those furs. In 1851, something happened that would change that. A Haida man arrived in Fort Victoria with a nugget of gold weighing 27 ounces (almost a kilogram). Nothing is known about the Haida man except that he traded that nugget for 1500 blankets.

### The Search Begins

The news of gold spread. It caught the attention of John Work, an Englishman who worked for the HBC at Fort Simpson. Work asked Eda’nsa, a powerful Haida chief, to look for gold on Haida Gwaii.

On Haida Gwaii, an elderly woman guided Eda’nsa and his wife to a patch of rock with gold in it. All day, they chipped away at the gold and put it into their canoe. They left their young son, Cowhoe, in the canoe. When they were ready to leave, they saw that Cowhoe had thrown all the gold into the ocean! Eda’nsa was left with little gold to show John Work, but Work was still interested. He travelled to Haida Gwaii with a team. They searched for two weeks, but found little gold.

Trading is different from buying. People place value on what they want and need. Why might the Haida man have valued 1500 blankets more than a nugget of gold? Why would the trader value the nugget more?



◀ Chief Eda’nsa, also known as Albert Edward Edenshaw, stands at left with Chief Hoo-yâ. This photograph was taken in 1878 on Haida Gwaii. Why would Work and the HBC stay interested, even when Eda’nsa could not show much gold?

## Whose Gold Was It?

Later that same year, 1851, the HBC sent the ship *Una* with a crew of miners to search for gold. The miners used dynamite to expose the gold. The Haida did not approve of this, or that the HBC was taking the gold from their lands. After each dynamite blast, some Haida held the miners back while other Haida rushed in and took the gold away.

The strategy worked, and the HBC miners left. Later, American ships visited the island to look for gold. The Haida responded by capturing ships, burning

some of them, and holding their crews prisoner. It was clear that the Haida would resist mining on their lands, so the gold seekers gave up.

### VOICES

A regular scramble between them and our men would take place: the [Haida] would take our men by the legs and hold them away from the gold.

—HBC ship *Una* logbook, 1851

▼ Dynamite is still used in open-pit mining. Imagine the sight, the sound, and the smell of a dynamite blast. How might such a blast affect people living nearby?

When the newcomers wanted fur, they traded for that fur. When they wanted gold, most of them just went on the land and took it. How are these approaches different? If it were your land, what would you think?

### Check Your Learning

1. What reasons did the Haida have to stop the gold mining on their lands in 1851?

### Make Connections

2. Research one example of a mining issue from today. How have First Nations responded to that issue? Does this show a change in how First Nations view mining of resources? Is there continuity with the past?

### Examine

## How Can a Small Event Help Cause a Big Event?

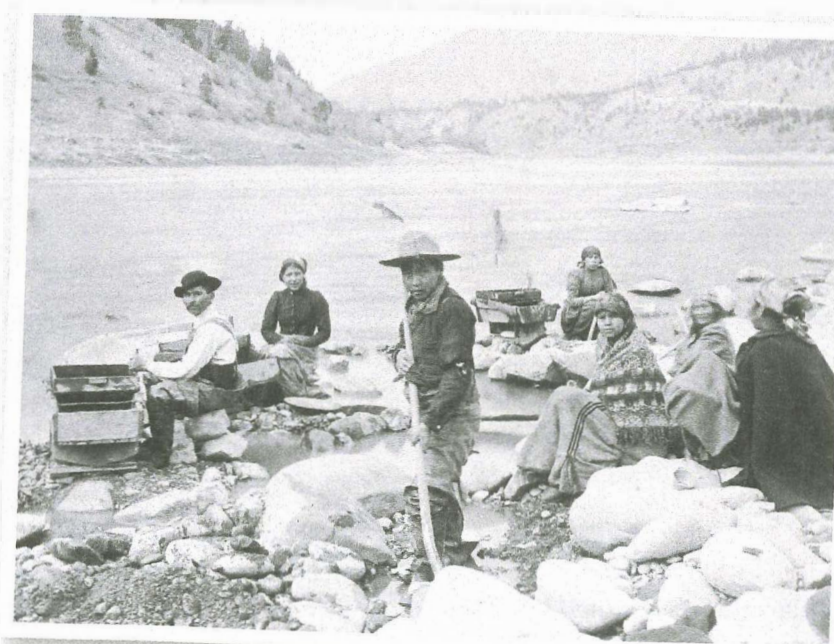
Sometimes major events get started because of a very little event. Take, for example, the trade of the gold nugget for the 1500 blankets in 1851. That small event led to a flurry of activity in Haida Gwaii.

The activity in Haida Gwaii died down quickly, but rumours of the gold spread to California. The **gold rush** in California had just ended. When American miners heard rumours about the gold finds in Haida Gwaii and New Caledonia (along the Thompson and Fraser Rivers), they started travelling north.

First Nations were already mining gold in New Caledonia. They would pan for gold on a riverbank and trade it for goods with the HBC. Governor Douglas provided them with picks, shovels, and pans for their work. He liked this arrangement because it was peaceful, which was good for the fur trade. All that was about to change.

What were the causes of the Fraser Gold Rush?

A **gold rush** happens when thousands of people rush to an area where gold has been discovered.



◀ This First Nations family is sifting for gold near Lytton, around 1900. They are using a sluice box, a technology that is still used today. We do not know the names of the people in this family. Why might that be so?



## The Fraser Gold Rush Begins

Early in 1858, thousands of American miners headed north from California to Victoria. At the time, the population in Victoria was about

What technological changes contributed to gold rushes in the 1800s?

### El Dorado

*El Dorado* is the name of an imaginary South American city that had streets paved in gold. The Spanish who travelled to South America hoped to find it but never did. British Columbia was being called "the new El Dorado." Why might this name add to the excitement of people dreaming of making their fortune?

1200 people. The town was soon overrun when the first three steamships arrived with more than 450 passengers. As many as 30 000 miners arrived in town that year.

From there they travelled across the Strait of Georgia to the Fraser River.

Around the world, people read newspaper stories about gold found in New Caledonia. Douglas might not have liked this flood of new arrivals, but there was nothing he could do to stop it.

### VOICES

Boats, canoes, and every species of small craft are continually employed in pouring their cargoes of human beings into Fraser's River, and it is supposed that not less than one thousand... are already at work, and on the way to the gold districts.

—Governor James Douglas,  
May 1858



▲ This drawing of Victoria was made in 1860. Ships crowded the harbour, loaded with newcomers hoping to make their fortune. Have you visited Victoria Harbour or seen a photograph of it? How is it different and the same as it was in 1860?

## THINKING LIKE AN... Historian

### Finding the Cause of an Event

Historians have learned more about the Fraser Gold Rush by studying what caused it. Every event in history can have more than one cause.

Read the fictional story below. Identify the long-term, short-term, and immediate causes of the accident.

### INVESTIGATING CAUSES

- A **cause** is a condition or action that results in an event.
- All events have long-term, short-term, and immediate causes.

Bai has been poor all his life. After failing to find gold in California, he travels to Victoria. Here he meets Angie, a Stó:lō woman who owns a donkey. They decide to go to the gold fields together.

One day, they are guiding the donkey along a narrow trail that runs beside the roaring Fraser River. The donkey carries all their gear, so it's overloaded.

Far above the trail, a mountain goat hears Bai whistling, and it bounds away, knocking over a rock. The rock hurtles down the cliff toward Bai and Angie. Acting fast, Angie pushes Bai out of the way, and the rock hits the donkey instead. The donkey slips and falls into the rapids below. Bai and Angie rush to the river's edge, hoping to save the donkey and their dreams.



- If you were an historian investigating the causes of Bai and Angie's misfortune, what would you identify as the long-term, short-term, and immediate causes?
- If you could change one thing to help them avoid misfortune, what would it be? Do others agree? Discuss as a class.
- Why might historians disagree on what were the most important causes of an event?

## What Causes the Rush for Gold?

### Who Were the Fortune Seekers?

At first, most of the fortune seekers were miners from the California Gold Rush. Others were people trying to find a way to make a living. They were mostly American but also British, Spanish, Hawaiian, Chinese, and Chilean.

In a gold rush, massive numbers of would-be miners race each other to a place where gold has been discovered. They travel thousands of kilometres by many different ways, including by ship, wagon, or even on foot. They make their way along forest trails and through mountain passes into places with no roads, buildings, or facilities. And all of them have one thought in mind: GOLD!

But why all the hurry? Here are four causes behind the rush for gold.

### Cause #1

#### Changes in Technology

Transportation was easier in the 1800s due to changes in technology. Railways and steamships allowed large numbers of people to travel to areas once seen as very remote. Metal tools needed to mine gold were being produced in large numbers, making them affordable and easy to buy. These changes allowed more people to chase their dreams of making a fortune in the gold fields.

How might people behave when they are competing to find the best site to claim? Whose land was being claimed?

### Cause #2

#### The Value of Gold

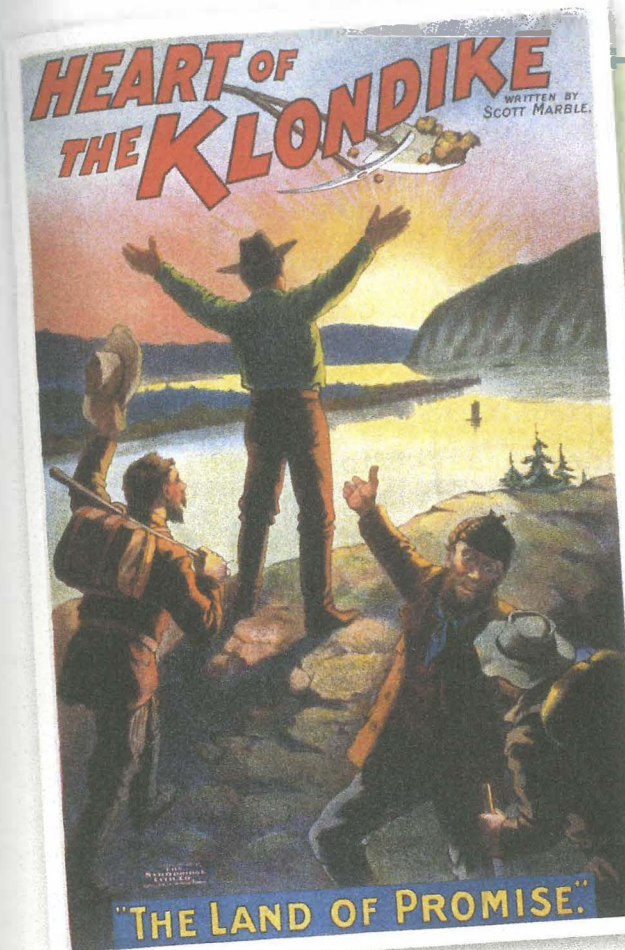
In societies around the world, people value gold above any other metal. Gold can be made into jewellery and keeps its shape. It has a lovely golden colour and a brilliant shine. In the 1800s, governments began to keep gold in reserve. This created a sharp increase in the value of gold.

First Nations also mined copper. Did gold have the same value to them?

#### Steps in Staking a Claim

Part of the excitement of a gold rush was the race to stake a claim.

1. Get a licence to mine.
2. Get to the gold fields quickly.
3. Check various locations for signs of gold.
4. **Stake your claim** by driving stakes into the ground before anyone else does.
5. Register your claim with officials.



### Cause #3

#### Gold Is a Good Story

If more people knew about gold discoveries, more would join the gold rush. News of a gold rush always sold a lot of newspapers, so reporters would write exciting stories about the discovery of gold. Advances in communication technology, such as the telegraph, quickly spread news of gold discoveries worldwide.

◀ This 1897 poster advertises a play about the Klondike Gold Rush in the Yukon. How might the play and this poster affect people thinking about joining a gold rush?

### Cause #4

#### The Herd Instinct

When animals are in herds, they tend to do what the other animals in their herd are doing. People can act that way too.

They might all rush to play the same new game, listen to the same music, or wear the same clothing style. In the 1800s, hundreds of thousands of people rushed off to "get rich quick" in the gold fields.

If everyone else is doing something, does that mean it's the right thing for you to do? Why or why not?

▶ Miners were willing to line up for hours to purchase mining licences. What does that tell you about them? For what reason would you willingly stand in a lineup like this?

### Check Your Learning

1. What were some of the long-term, short-term, and immediate causes of the Fraser Gold Rush?

#### Make Connections

2. In what ways was the Gold Rush in British Columbia linked to other events happening around the world in the 1800s?



**Examine**

## How Did First Nations Cope with Change During the Gold Rush?

What were the consequences of thousands of people arriving in Victoria and New Caledonia?

In 1858, thousands of gold miners eventually made their way from Victoria to the Fraser and Thompson Rivers. According to First Nations protocol, a person needs permission before entering a territory that is not their own. How would First Nations respond to the thousands of people entering their territories to mine for gold?



### INVESTIGATING CONSEQUENCES

- A **consequence** is a change that happens as the result of an event.
- The consequences of an event can be intended or unintended, great or small.

Every miner had to go to Victoria to get a licence to mine. Would that have met First Nations protocols? Why or why not?



◀ This map shows the First Nations territories within the Fraser River basin. Spot the Fraser River on the map. The Fraser River Gold Rush drew miners to the river banks between Hope and Lillooet. Which First Nations would have been most affected?

### What Are Some Oral Histories of the Gold Rush?

For almost a hundred years, the only newcomers First Nations people met along the Fraser River were fur traders. The gold rush was different. Tens of thousands of strangers arrived, most of whom were ill prepared.

Oral histories of the gold rush have been passed on from generation to generation. Read the examples on this page. Remember that some historical sources use terms such as "Indian." Today, the terms First Nations and First Peoples are used instead.

Those [newcomers] travelling to the gold rush, they were starving. Xwelitem, that means "starving." Well, the Indians began to feed them, feed them till they get alright. They say the Indians here in this valley, the Chilliwack, are about the kindest Indians that's living—that's what the [newcomers] said.

—Stó:lō Elder Dan Milo, 1963

- What does this oral history tell you about the values of the Stó:lō?
- Was the relationship between the Stó:lō and the newcomers good? Predict how this may have changed as more and more newcomers arrived.



[A] man asked one [Nlaka'pamux man] to pack something from Thompson Siding [Nicomen] to Lytton, and [the Nlaka'pamux man] wouldn't take money. He wouldn't take gold pieces. He just wanted a shirt, pants, buttons...

[First Nations people] would buy blankets, Hudson Bay blankets—that's the main thing they would buy. And goods—cloth—and make their own clothes out of that. Shirts, pants, everything—they made it. The women made those things. They would buy needles and thread, scissors and thimbles. They were the main things.

—Annie York, Nlaka'pamux Elder, telling an oral history in 1974

◀ Lucy Artko, a Nlaka'pamux woman, stands next to her Scottish husband, James Teit, around 1900. What short-term change did the gold rush bring to the Nlaka'pamux? What long-term change might result?

## Nlaka'pamux Lands Are Overrun

Most of the change that came with the newcomers was devastating to the First Nations involved. Consider what happened in Nlaka'pamux territory, where about 2000 Nlaka'pamux lived.

When there were few miners, the Nlaka'pamux sent some away. But when 30 000 miners arrived, there was very little they could do to stop them. The miners set up camps and worked their claims wherever they liked. Governor Douglas reported on increasing tension and violent incidents between First Nations and newcomers along the Fraser River. Nlaka'pamux sometimes found their food taken and their camps destroyed. Some newcomers even tried to stop Nlaka'pamux from mining gold in their own territory.

How would the Nlaka'pamux view newcomers decreasing their food supplies and causing trouble?

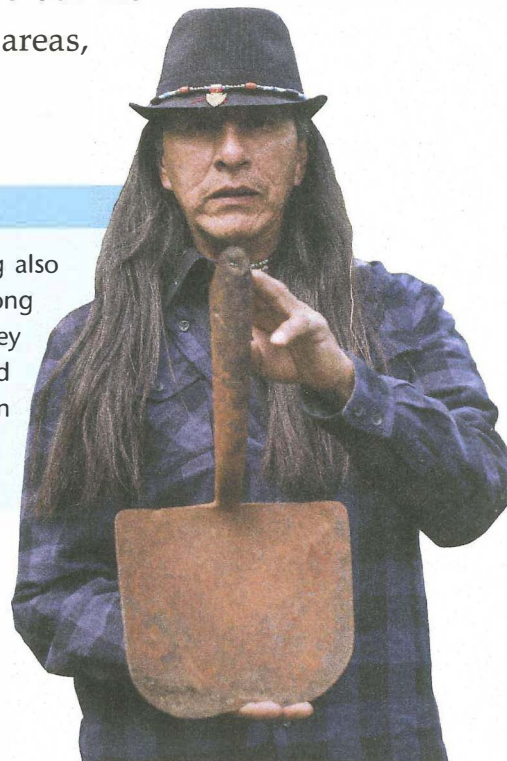
Mining activities on the riverbanks destroyed salmon habitats and polluted the water. Salmon numbers began to drop. This alarmed the Nlaka'pamux, who depended on salmon for food. When they attempted to drive out the miners, or block access to the mining areas, the miners fought back.



### A Little-Known Bond

Chinese men from San Francisco and Hong Kong also joined the gold rush. The Chinese miners got along very well with the First Nations communities. They treated each other with respect, sharing food and gifts. After the gold rush ended, some Chinese men stayed and married into First Nations communities. What led to this unique relationship?

► First Nations remember the Chinese miners through their oral histories. Bill Paul, of the Lytton First Nation, holds up the remains of a shovel that belonged to a Chinese man mining the banks of the Fraser River.



## The Fraser Canyon War: A Consequence of the Gold Rush

In 1858, tensions were high on the Fraser River. Then a series of events made everything worse.

Several French miners abused a Nlaka'pamux woman.

In retaliation, some Nlaka'pamux men attacked those miners.

Thousands of miners feared for their lives. They fled their claims and retreated to the towns.

The miners organized themselves into militias to retaliate against the Nlaka'pamux. Some of the militia members were determined to kill all Nlaka'pamux and other First Nations people.

▲ What would you identify as the most significant cause of the Fraser Canyon War? How do you know? Is there more than one cause?

One of the miners leading a **militia** was Captain Henry Snyder of San Francisco. He agreed that the miners should have guns, but only to protect themselves. Snyder's militia sent messengers north to Kumsheen (now Lytton) to negotiate peace with the Nlaka'pamux. At the same time, though, another militia travelled west and destroyed First Nations' property and food stores. Some reports indicate that entire Nlaka'pamux villages were destroyed. Another militia, the Whatcom Company, was wiped out when they panicked and shot at each other in the dark.

A **militia** is an armed force made up of ordinary people. Few militias are approved by government.

## The Nlaka'pamux Lead the Way to Peace

The Nlaka'pamux held a council meeting with their Secwepemc and Okanagan allies. One Nlaka'pamux leader advised using violence to push all miners from their territory. Another leader, Cxpentlum (also known as Chief David Spintlum), argued that they should try to negotiate peace. He said that talking things through was the best way to achieve their goals.

Oral history shows that, by the end of the meeting, Cxpentlum had convinced the council to make peace. Captain Snyder soon arrived to negotiate on behalf of the American militias. Cxpentlum and Snyder agreed on rules about mining claims and rights along the Fraser. These agreements were not recorded, so we do not know exactly what was said. The outcome, however, was a decrease in violence.

A few years later, by 1860, the gold had run out. Most of the American miners went home.

The Americans believed that their modern guns had convinced the Nlaka'pamux to make peace. What really happened?

▼ This bridge in Lytton was renamed the Chief David Spintlum Bridge to honour Cxpentlum (Chief Spintlum) and his wise leadership. Is this a good way to remember and honour him? How else could we honour the people who have helped make Canada what it is today?

## What Were the Long-Lasting Consequences of the Fraser Canyon War?

The violence along the Fraser Canyon worried Governor Douglas. Would the United States government send its army into New Caledonia to protect the American miners? Douglas convinced Britain to make New Caledonia into a British colony.

The British government sent in an armed force called the Royal Engineers. They were sent to

- bring British law to the colony
- build roads and towns
- create a strong British presence in the colony.

To further increase British control, Douglas appointed Judge Matthew Begbie to hold trials and settle disagreements according to British law. Over time, British laws and customs became standard in British Columbia.

How might the creation of a new colony affect Nlaka'pamux culture and authority in their own lands?

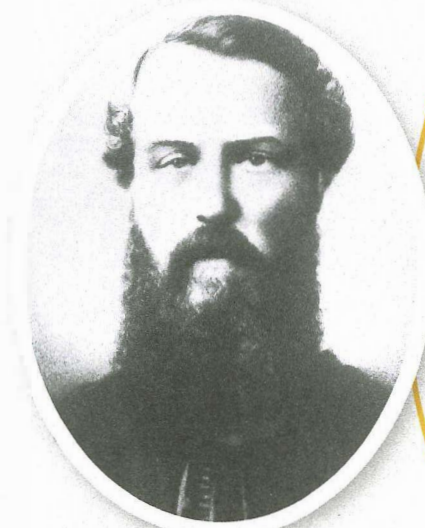
### Voices into Action

#### Kayleen and Alex Get Married



As British wedding ceremonies became more common, traditional Nlaka'pamux ceremonies became more rare. Kayleen Hanna and Alex Harry wanted to change that. Their traditional wedding ceremony was held on Nlaka'pamux lands in 2016. Harry's great-aunt, Dorothy Phillips, said, "This is a way of bringing back our own ways from a long time ago."

► Commander Richard Clement Moody led the Royal Engineers. Whose interest would the Royal Engineers serve?



### Check Your Learning

1. In what ways did the Gold Rush affect the Nlaka'pamux? Which of these outcomes were intentional, and which were unintentional? How did the Nlaka'pamux respond?

#### Make Connections

2. Compare and contrast the resolution of the Fraser Canyon War to a more recent conflict in the world today. Has there been progress in how we solve conflicts?