

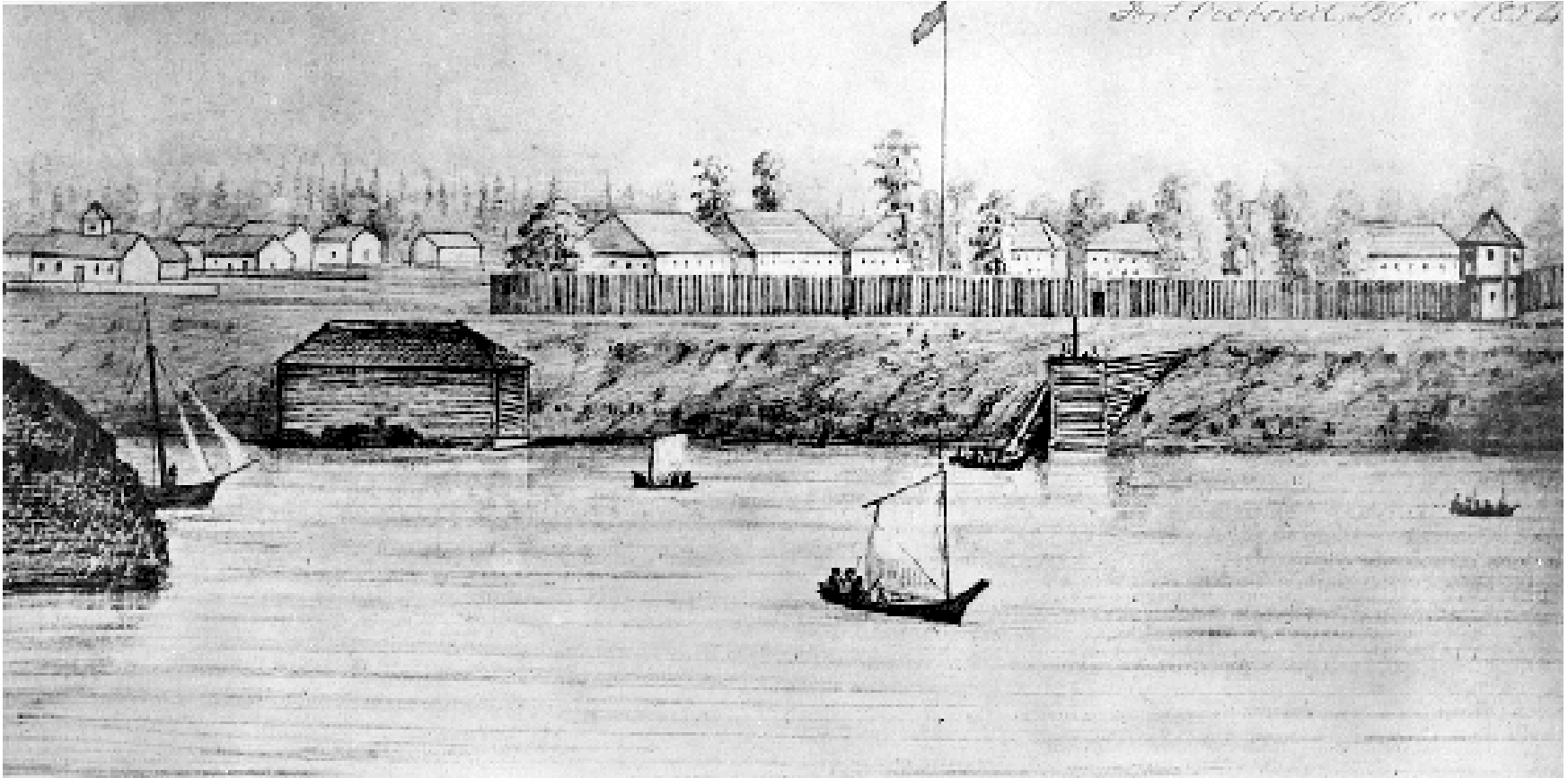
Pre-Gold Rush Sources

Pre-Gold Rush Document #1



"Return of a War Party." Artist: Paul Kane (1847)
Songhees Village and Fort Victoria
(Royal Ontario Museum, ROM2005_5161_1)

Pre-Gold Rush Document #2



“Sketch of Fort Victoria” (1854).
(BC Archives, Call No. A-04104)

Pre-Gold Rush Document #3

A Map of Victoria & Puget Sound Districts, Sheet No. 1 Victoria to Oak Bay.
Joseph D. Pemberton, (1851) (Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Map 312A, G1/133)
Pre-Gold Rush Document #4



"First house in Victoria; Kenneth McKenzie and family lived south of the Fort Victoria stockade." (1850s).
(BC Archives, Call No. A-01433)

Pre-Gold Rush Document #5

Agricultural land existed on the island, but.....a strictly agricultural economy was impossible on Vancouver Island; Fort Victoria never equalled Fort Vancouver's [Washington] level of agricultural production.....Self-sufficiency was impossible, and any surplus went to the colony's domestic market. The 1854 wheat crop from the Victoria area was sufficient to meet the entire colonial demand for flour, though this had not happened before and has not happened since.

Source: Richard Mackie, "The Colonization of Vancouver Island," *BC Studies* 96 Winter 1992-93, 37.

Pre-Gold Rush Document #6

Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken came to the colony of Vancouver Island in 1850 to work as a physician for the Hudson's Bay Company. He married James Douglas's daughter, Cecilia, in 1852, and was elected to the first legislative assembly in 1856.

The district of Victoria was at this time like a large park - patches of forest and open glades [openings in a forest]; these all had names - such as Minnie's [Minie's] Prairie and Punchbowl - the latter around Harris Pond and the former a little further, the grand prairie is now Tolmie's, & so forth. A large portion of what is now Victoria City was then cultivated fields and so was a portion of James Bay.....All around James Bay roses, red current, natalia mock orange and spirea grew in abundance - very little wind reached in from the sea because forests of pine between the harbour and sea intercepted it - in fact forest surrounded the whole space, even coming as close as Cormorant Street. Thus the climate was delicious, the cold sea breezes having no access. Mr. Douglas would not allow the forest sheltering to be cut down, as he thought if removed the harbour of Victoria would not be sufficiently sheltered. We often wish now that the protecting forests stood there still.

Wishart and I used to travel over these grounds and enjoyed it - he had a bump of locality. Sometimes we would meet an Indian or two, of whom I was timid, but they never bothered us in any way. Benson was too lazy to walk much. In these plains bands of horses, cayuses [(horses owned by Indigenous people) aboriginal raised horse], existed and so did cattle of the Spanish variety, with horns goodness knows how long and pointed - these were much more dangerous than the natives, but fortunately we were never molested [bothered], so soon we became accustomed and roamed about to

Cedar Hill [later called Mount Douglas], Mount Tolmie &c., without any fear whatever!

Source: John Sebastian Helmcken, *The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken*, edited by Dorothy Blakey Smith (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975), pp. 104-105.

Pre-Gold Rush Document #7

Robert Melrose and his wife were Scottish immigrants who worked at Craighflower Farm, operated by a subsidiary of the Hudson's Bay Company.

May 1856

- Th. 1 Mr. McKenzie removed into his new house. heavy showers.
 Fr. 2 Four sheep killed.
 S. 4 American Sloop of war "Decatur" sailed Puget Sound.
 Tu. 6 Very warm weather.
 We. 7 S.S. "Otter" sailed Bellvue [San Juan Island] with a cargo of horses.
 Fr. 9 Great discoveries of gold in different parts of the Island.
 Sa. 10 John Instant $\frac{3}{4}$ D. Brick-kiln burnt off.
 S. 11 Refreshing rain.
 Mo. 12 One sheep killed.
 Tu. 13 American S.S. "John Hancock" [naval ship] visited Esquimalt.
 Fr. 16 Brig "Recovery" arrived from San Francisco. Five sheep killed.
 Sa. 17 John Instant dropped work.
 S. 18 Mrs. Captain Cooper gave birth to a female child.
 Tu. 20 Duncan Lidgate, John Instant, & Robert Laing apprehended for shooting into Mr. McKenzie's house.
 Th. 22 Three sheep killed by dogs.
 Fr. 23 Five sheep killed.
 Sa. 24 Victoria Races celebrated on Beacon Hill. Duncan Lidgate, John Instant, and Robert Laing bailed out of prison.
 S. 25 Refreshing showers. Brig "Recovery" sailed Sandwich Islands.
 Mo. 26 John Instant removed to Esquimalt bay. One sheep killed by dogs. William Brown & wife removed to Craig Flower.
 We. 28 Showery weather.
 Fr. 30 Four Sheep killed.
 Sa. 31 Another examination held on D. Lidgate, J. Instant, and R. Laing.

August 1856

- Tu. 12 H.M.S. "Trincomalee" 22 guns arrived.... The Members for the House of Assembly sworn in.
 Th. 14 Cattle killed every day for the ships.
 Fr. 15 Four Sheep killed.
 Sa. 16 Barque "Agnes Garland" sailed China.
 Mo. 18 Mrs. Liddle gave birth to a female child.
 Tu. 19 House of Assembly met.
 We. 20 Thomas Williams shot through the arm by an Indian.
 S. 24 Attended divine [religious] service on board H.M.S. "Monarch."
 Tu. 26 Royal salute fired for Prince Albert's birth day.
 Th. 28 Robert Anderson's child died.
 Fr. 29 S.S. "Otter" taken H.M.S. "Trincomalee" in tow up to Coweigan.
 Sa. 30 Sheep killed.

Source: Diary of Robert Melrose, 1856, *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* vol.7, no.2, no. 3, and no. 4 (1943).

Pre-Gold Rush Document #8

Robert John Staines came to Fort Victoria from England in 1849 and worked as a teacher, clergyman, and farmer. In 1854, he left to deliver two petitions to England protesting against James Douglas having appointed his own brother-in-law as chief justice.

Observations on daily life

. . . if you could be present in my house for one month, or even one week, be a witness of the various kinds of occupation that I have within such a period to undertake. There is the school, the ministry, the Colony, my neighbours, strangers, English & American, the natives, helping Emma to make the bed, sending one of my pupils with an Indian servant to try to get meat for the day, trading venison, partridges, salmon, mats, baskets, berries &c., &c., &c., with Indians, cutting up a deer, a quarter of beef, or a sheep, teaching the Indians how to cook it, occasionally going into the kitchen to see that all is going on right, preparing & mixing ingredients for soup, gardening, including fen[c]ing, breaking up the ground, procuring from all quarters of the globe, or saving seeds, going to gather peas, cut cabbages, attending to their being properly boiled, for Emma cannot eat meat well without vegetables, & cannot eat them unless nicely cooked, making sauce if we have time a[nd] materials; considering, when a vessel is going to the Sandwich Islands, what articles of use in the Domestic economy, it may be proper to try to procure these, or at other times how to invent substitutes for them, attending to the poultry, gathering the eggs, setting the hens, registering the time of incubation of each, feeding the chickens, also the dogs; this brings me perhaps to dinner time . . .

For some months we have supplied ourselves with milk & butter, & very soon we shall have our own meat altogether, pork beef & mutton; also our own potatoes, so that instead of buying 200 bushels every season of Indians, in lots from 2 or 3 to 10 or 12 bushels at a time, from Oct. to Feb.y all of which I have to stand by to see weighted myself,—we shall have from the farm all we want & some hundreds or thousands of bushels to sell.

Perhaps you would like to have some idea of the stock on the land. Well then there are 10 cows with their calves, 3 yearlings of oxen, 31 head in all, 3 mares 1 horse and 2 other horses bought for me at Nisqually, but not yet arrived, about 20 pigs, including 11 or 12 sows, all the produce of 1 sow which I bought in 1850, & which is the finest in Vancouver's Island. . . .

There is a dairy built, a store-house, a fowl-house, a piggery, an enclosure for driving in the cattle, 2 dwelling houses, each with 2 windows & a chimney, but with only one room. . . . There is a portion of land of about 25 acres nearly enclosed with a strong fence, about 9 acres of which are ploughed & sown with wheat, oats, barley, pease, potatoes & turnips, though from the

fence not being completed in time this will nearly be all destroyed by the irruptions of cattle. However there will be at least all this under crop next year, if we live & prosper.

Source: Rev. R.J. Staines, Vancouver Island, to Reverend Thomas Boys, Hoxton [England] 6 July 1852. Boys sent a copy of the letter to the Earl of Desart, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, 11 October 1852. 9263, CO 305/3, p. 495.

Pre-Gold Rush Document #9

Martha Beeton Cheney came to Vancouver Island in 1851 from England with her aunt and uncle, who managed a farm in Metchosin for independent settler Captain James Cooper. In July 1855, Martha Cheney married ship captain Henry Ella.

1856**March**

. . .

26th, Wednesday evening came on to rain and Blow from the S.W. Thursday fine with a Breeze, S.W. I have been Sowing Flower seeds, and Nuts. The Otter returned from San Francisco, a quick passage of 19 days.

29th, My husband came down, also Mr Barr and Capt Cooper, with his two daughters, the younger to stay with us for a short time.

31st, My husband returned to Victoria on horseback.

April

. . . .

10th, Uncle and I rode over to Colwood, met with Miss Cameron Mr McDonald and Mr Mackay and Mr Margery there. Uncle went to Esquimalt Mill to see our Flour ground, he returned home the same evening. The Boat with the Flour next morning. . . .

May

. . .

19th, I went to Victoria with my husband in a canoe, a nice calm morning. I remain at Mrs Barr's untill Mr Ella Sails.

24th, The Queen's birthday, a very wet miserable day, had racing as usual in Victoria My husband sailed this morning, in the Brig Recovery, for the Sandwich Islands.

26th, I returned to Metchosen called at Mrs Coopers on my way to see her and the Baby. I got home about 9 oclock at night - canoe traveling

27th, Mr Ford, and Tom looking for Gold, washing out sand, they succeeded in getting the colour, they got some beautifull black sand with several specks of Gold in it. Weather rather unsettled this last week.

July

. . . .

8th, Aunt sprained her ancle very bad.

9th, ... Aunt is still laid up with her ancle. I have a great deal to do, 9 cows to milk night and morning, for a treat.

22d, The Recovery returned from the Islands to day she had a very good passage. My husband came down in the evening, returned to the Fort early next morning.

Source: James K. Nesbitt, ed., "The Diary of Martha Cheney Ella," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, April, July-October 1949, 91-112, 257-270.