

A PLACE CALLED PENNASK:

*Fly-fishing and Colonialism at a British Columbia Lake*¹

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INTRODUCTION

THE REALLOCATION of the coastal marine and anadromous fisheries of BC Aboriginal nations to non-Aboriginal owners of capital is studied in an important, multidisciplinary literature;² sport fishers' strategies to expropriate Aboriginal freshwater fisheries have not been studied.³ Sport fishing is often seen as a benign form of resource use, with a limited historical impact on the fishery and on existing fishers. The evidence, however, suggests a much more disruptive colonial encounter. A fishing club's strategy to expropriate the Aboriginal fishery at Pennask Lake, and the club's legal, social, and physical transformation of the lake into an exclusive non-Aboriginal fly-fishing dreamscape, is the subject of this study. It is intended to encourage greater historical research on the effects of sport fishing bodies on Aboriginal fishing and freshwater ecosystems across the province.

Pennask is a large lake (1,041 hectares) located eighty kilometres southwest of Kamloops and is today reported to have the largest run of wild rainbow trout in the world.⁴ In 1929 James Drummond Dole,

¹ Special thanks to Cole Harris, Wes Pue, and Nicholas Blomley, who inspired me to explore the link between law and the production of space in relation to my studies in fishing history. Thank you also to Dianne Newell, Douglas Harris, Robert A.J. McDonald, and Vinay Gidwani, who commented on earlier drafts and ideas for this article. As well, thanks to the anonymous reviewers who provided incisive comments. I would also like to thank the Harry Hawthorne Foundation for assembling at UBC one of the finest collections of fly-fishing literature.

² Dianne Newell, *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Douglas C. Harris, *Fish, Law, and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

³ Except, see Harris, *Fish, Law, and Colonialism*, chap. 3, for an analysis of sport fishers' tactics with regard to expropriating the Cowichan River salmon fishery.

the founder of the Hawaiian pineapple industry, turned the lake into a private fishing preserve for an elite fly-fishing club composed of wealthy American industrialists, a US navy commander, University of British Columbia (UBC) professors, a chair of the International Fisheries Commission, and a BC game commissioner. Guests at the lake have included Queen Elizabeth the Second and the famous fishing writer and judge Roderick Haig-Brown. In 1977 Stanley Read, professor emeritus in the UBC Department of English, wrote a history of the club entitled *A Place Called Pennask*. As part of this history, Read read a map of the lake, with its numerous place names honouring its pioneer White anglers, as a text that told the lake's history. For Read, the history of the lake is one of "honest anglers who richly enjoyed – or still enjoy – the pleasures of angling with rod and delicate fly, and who were also dedicated to the maintenance of the untouched beauty of a truly beautiful lake."⁵ Pennask, however, was never an "untouched" lake; rather, it was a traditional fishery for twelve Aboriginal communities (Nicola Valley, Similkameen, Okanagan, Thompson, Upper and Lower Nicola, Douglas Lake, North Bend, Lillooet, Shacken, and Shuswap) that intensively fished its inlet and outlet, as well as adjacent Nevue Lake, for rainbow trout. In the spring of 1928, a year before Dole expropriated the fisheries, over 430 Aboriginal fishers visited the lakes and caught 45,000 trout.

Aboriginal fishers had long organized the lake into a series of defined and controlled fishing places. In his study of the pre- and post-contact struggle for control of the Columbia River salmon fishery, Richard White emphasizes that the struggle was a contest for control over a very few precise locations – spaces socially produced at the intersection of ecology, technology, and culture. Fish like salmon and trout are not caught anywhere in a river or lake at any time; rather, they occupy specific waters at specific times, where specific technologies will allow them to be caught. On the Columbia River, points of land and boulders were prized fishing spaces that were controlled by Aboriginal families and fishers according to their status and gender. Throughout the Pacific west coast, lakes and rivers were not open "commons" but, rather, were differentiated commons full of known and controlled spaces. White cautions: "failure to

⁴ Mussio Ventures Ltd., *Fishing BC: Thompson-Nicola* (West Vancouver: Gordon Soules, 2000), 71.

⁵ Stanley E. Read, *A Place Called Pennask: A Capsule History of the Pennask Lake Company, Limited, and the Pennask Lake Fishing and Game Club* (Vancouver: Mitchell, 1977), foreword, n.p.

recognize how the [Columbia] river was socially marked and controlled can lead to basic mistakes.”⁶

From a brief inquiry following Dole’s purchase of Pennask Lake, it is possible to glimpse the lake’s differentiated Aboriginal fishing places. The inlet (Pennask Creek) and outlet (Spahomin Creek), where the trout spawned in the shallows each spring and where dipnets could be efficiently used, became prized fishing places. For the North Bend, Lillooet, Shuswap, and Okanagan communities, the space between the southern inlet and Nevue Lake “has always been a camping ground,” explained George Bent, a councillor for the Nicola-Mameet community.⁷ Other communities fished at the northern outlet of the lake at Spahomin Creek (Figure 1).⁸ These were ancestral sites, and some bands travelled for several days to reach them: “It is not only at this present time the Indians have used the fishing but before ever the whites, and before that too,” explained Chief Chillihitzia of the Douglas Lake community. Aboriginal fishers do not appear to have spatially differentiated the rest of the lake, nor does fishing appear to have occurred after the spring, when the trout returned to deeper waters. The Pennask Lake fishery produced a significant catch: 50,000 rainbow trout in 1926, 45,000 in 1928. A system for the allocation of these fish can be glimpsed from the records. Each family could catch “fish enough to last to the next season,” and additional fish were caught to be “distributed among the old and destitute people” in the home communities.⁹ Because abundant rainbow trout were only available for a short time each year, but were a year-round family food, the fishers dried portions of their catch. At Pennask and Spahomin Creeks, they erected semi-permanent drying racks.¹⁰ To its Aboriginal fishers, Pennask Lake was not an unregulated “commons”; rather, it was a differentiated commons that was divided into two places, regulated by a system of resource allocation, and structured by seasonal rhythms geared towards the cycles of fish spawn. Place was important to this fishery. On the Columbia River,

⁶ Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 39.

⁷ National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), RG 10, vol. 11002, file 976/30, part E., George Bent, councillor, Nicola-Mameet Nation, sworn testimony, minutes of hearing held by M.E. Fisher, Government Land Agent, Kamloops, at the Merritt Courthouse, 14 November 1929, re: Pennask Lake land dispute, 14.

⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 11002 file 976/30, part E., Alfred H. Barber, Indian Agent, sworn testimony, 12.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Chief Chillihitzia, Douglas Band of Indians, sworn testimony, 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

as on Pennask Lake, the colonial encounter would turn these Aboriginal fishing places into non-Aboriginal property.¹¹

In 1876 the governments of Canada and British Columbia formed a joint Indian reserve commission to address the question of reserving land for Aboriginal peoples. The instructions from each government to the commissioners reveal that Canada and British Columbia differed over the recognition of Aboriginal title and the size of the reserves. Canada sought to continue its Prairie policy of reserving sufficient tracts of land to induce Aboriginal communities to take up farming and to promote their assimilation. Conversely, the BC government did not want the commission to apportion “unnecessarily large Reserves such as would interfere with the progress of white settlement.”¹² On the fundamental issue of land title, the province refused to acknowledge Aboriginal title, while Canada agreed to leave it in abeyance.¹³ However, on the issue of the number of reserves, both governments agreed that there was no need to limit the number of small reserves intended to protect Aboriginal fishing places. Canada instructed its commissioner not “to do any needless violence to existing tribal arrangements, and especially not to disturb the Indians in the possession of any villages, fishing stations, fur-trading posts, settlements or clearings, which they might occupy and to which they may be specially attached, and which may be to their interest to maintain.”¹⁴ Similarly, British Columbia instructed its commissioner to “avoid disturbing them in their proper and legitimate avocations whether of the chase or of fishing,” and it recommended that he reserve “any small isolated or particular spots” that reflected the “habits, wants, and pursuits of each nation.”¹⁵ As a result of this agreement, the joint commission allocated a great many postage-stamp-size reserves.

¹¹ White, *The Organic Machine*, 43.

¹² RG 10, vol. 3633, file 6425-1, Memorandum of Instruction to Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, Esq., the Joint Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada and the Province of British Columbia on the Indian Reserve Question, from Charles Good, Deputy Provincial Secretary, 26 October 1876.

¹³ For a complete history of the Indian Reserve Commission and its correspondence regarding the recognition of Aboriginal fishing rights and the reservation of Aboriginal fishing places, see Douglas C. Harris, “Indian Reserves, Aboriginal Fisheries and Anglo-Canadian Law, 1876-1882” in John McLaren, ed., *Property Right in the Colonial Imagination and Experience*. (in progress).

¹⁴ NAC RG 10, vol. 3633, file 6425-1, D.D. Laird, Minister for the Department of the Interior, to A.C. Anderson, Dominion Commissioner to the Joint Indian Reserve Commission, Memorandum of Instructions to the Dominion Commissioner, 25 August 1876.

¹⁵ NAC RG 10, vol. 3633, file 6425-1, Elwyn, Asct., Deputy Secretary, Memorandum of Instructions to Archibald McKinlay, Esq., The British Columbia Commissioner on the Indian Reserve Question, 23 October 1876.

The commission reserved salmon fishing stations along major rivers, but it also recognized Aboriginal "rights" to other fisheries in the freshwater streams and lakes of the province, "where these small fish are part of their accustomed food and are a commodity in intertribal traffic."¹⁶ The commission reported that rainbow trout formed part of the spring rounds of interior Aboriginal peoples at a time when salmon were not running and that these people travelled by horse to reach these important places.¹⁷

In its survey of fishing reserves and affirmation of Aboriginal fishing rights, the commissioners followed English common law. In most cases where the Aboriginal fishery was on unalienated Crown land, the commissioners reserved the location and recognized the Aboriginal "exclusive right to fish" based on their customary (or "hereditary") use. Where the land in question was privately owned, the commission generally severed the right of fishing from the ownership of the soil (a several fishery) and recognized Aboriginal customary fishing rights but not rights to the soil. In the case of Aboriginal fisheries located on small creeks, distant from the main communities, the commission recognized that Aboriginal fishers would travel by horse to reach these fisheries and that they would likely cross private agricultural lands in the process. In order to reduce conflict with settlers, the commissioners generally reserved camping and haying stations for Aboriginal use. Nevertheless, private lands would be crossed, and it was acknowledged that, under English common law, private property owners would have to suffer Aboriginal passage across their lands. Damage to crops and property, and passage at all times of the year, was prohibited. In effect, the Aboriginal right to have access to their fisheries in accordance with their ancient ways was "confirmed but in such manner as to be least inconvenient to owners of the lands ... and the Indians are not to occupy these places except for capturing and drying fish in their accustomed way, and only in their fishing season."¹⁸

On 13 July 1878, G.M. Sproat, by then the sole Indian reserve commissioner, met the Upper Nicola, Lower Nicola, Lytton, Nicomin, and Cook Ferry communities. He affirmed their right of "access to and ... liberty to carry on their fisheries for the various kinds of fish at their accustomed places," and he reserved the Lower Nicola's

¹⁶ RG 10 C-10115, vol. 3657, file 9361, G.M. Sproat, Dominion, Joint Commissioner of the Indian Reserve Commission, extract from the Report to Province (BC), entitled, "Fishing Places," received 26 February 1878.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See Douglas C. Harris (forthcoming) for more examples of this arrangement.

camping location on their route to Pennask Lake.¹⁹ However, he put off the reservation of Aboriginal fishing places at Pennask Lake on the understanding that the affirmation of their Aboriginal fishing right was sufficient for the time being. Chief Chillihitzia later recalled Sproat's assurances: "I spoke of it to a Mr. Sproat. The one that gave the Indians their reserves. My father spoke to Mr. Sproat, and he says nobody is going to interfere with these lakes now, but later on there will be help for you to get a place on these lakes for your fishing camps."²⁰ In 1920 the Lower Nicola Mameet community petitioned the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) for a reserve at Pennask Lake.²¹ The DIA denied the request on the ground that the community was under-utilizing existing reserve land and had failed to improve its horses – a signal that the federal government was implementing its agricultural policy (although it had not secured large reserves and was breaking its promise to protect Aboriginal fisheries, the assumption upon which small reserves had been based).²² In 1929 an Indian agent informed the Indian commissioner of British Columbia that the Pennask fishers had "on several occasions" made appeals to former Indian agents for the creation of a reserve at the lake.²³ Despite these persistent efforts, by 1929 no reserve had been allotted there.

The fishery regulations issued by the government of Canada in 1878 for the Province of British Columbia ignored Aboriginal fishers. Sproat, recognizing the conflict between this legislation and his efforts to protect Aboriginal fisheries, admonished the Dominion commissioner of fisheries. In response, the federal government accepted an informal policy of exempting BC Aboriginal fishers from the regulations.²⁴ In 1888 another potential legal impediment to Aboriginal fishing rights emerged when the province prohibited the use of nets in freshwater lakes.²⁵ In 1895 the province clarified the legislation to prohibit fishing for trout by any method other than angling,²⁶ but in 1897 it added a proviso exempting Aboriginal peoples resident in the

¹⁹ The camping reserve is identified as "Logan's," Lower Nicola I.R. no. 6.

²⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 11002, file 976/30, Chief Chillihitzia sworn testimony, 13.

²¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 11002, file 976/30, part E., J.D McLean, Assistant Deputy and Secretary, DIA, to W.E. Ditchburn, Chief Inspector of Indian Agencies, Victoria, BC, 23 November 1920.

²² Ibid.

²³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 11002, file 976/30, part E., Alfred H. Barber, Indian Agent, to W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, Victoria, BC, 17 July 1929.

²⁴ NAC RG 10, vol. 3662, file 9756, pt. 1, W.F. Whitcher, Commissioner of Fisheries, to E.A. Meredith, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 15 June 1878.

²⁵ *An Act for the Protection of Certain Animals, Birds and Fishes*, 51, Vict. ch. 52, sec. 13.

²⁶ *Game Protection Act*, 59, Vict. ch. 23, sec. 12.

unorganized districts of the province (regions so defined by the lieutenant-governor in council) from the provisions of its fish and game acts.²⁷ In 1914 and 1924 further amendments to the provincial game and fish acts exempted all BC Aboriginal peoples from the effects of the legislation.²⁸

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORT FISHING IN BC

In its promotional literature the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) boasted that, with the completion of the railway, the hunting and fishing grounds in the BC Interior, previously used only by Aboriginal peoples, had opened to sportsmen.²⁹ Aboriginal fishing places, "hitherto almost inaccessible" to non-Aboriginals, were now open to anglers.³⁰ In 1907 T.W. Lambert, a CPR surgeon, wrote *Fishing in British Columbia*, a book in which he celebrated the fact that British Columbia's lakes and streams were now "within two weeks' journey from London."³¹ Lambert blended personal tales of BC angling adventures with fantastic lore about a newly "discovered" species of trout (rainbow trout) in order to draw English anglers to British Columbia's inland waters. He pointed out that "there is plenty of what may be styled 'virgin water' in British Columbia" and that many lakes in British Columbia were "hitherto little fished except by the Indians."³² He invited anglers to displace Aboriginal peoples from the lakes and rivers of the BC interior and to transform the region into a sport fishing paradise.

Lambert situated angling within a succession of colonial events that characterized the "re-settlement" of British Columbia.³³ Although, he

²⁷ *An Act to Amend and Consolidate the Acts for the Protection of Certain Animals, Birds and Fishes*, 61, Vict. ch. 88 sec. 17.

²⁸ *An Act for the Protection of Certain Animals and Birds* (1914) ch. 33, sec. 6; *An Act for the Protection of certain Animals and Birds* (1924) ch. 98, sec. 6.

²⁹ *Fishing and Shooting along the Line of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and the Prairies and Mountains of Western Canada* (Montreal: General Passenger Department, Canadian Pacific Railway, 1890), 4; *Fishing and Shooting along the Line of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and the Prairies and Mountains of Western Canada* (Montreal: General Passenger Department, Canadian Pacific Railway, 1893), 3-4.

³⁰ CPR, *Fishing and Shooting*, 3 (1893).

³¹ T.W. Lambert, *Fishing in British Columbia* (London: Horace Cox, 1907). This book was published posthumously.

³² Lambert, *Fishing in British Columbia*, 24.

³³ Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographic Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

explained, the angler “only follows slowly in the footsteps of the pioneer and big-game hunter,” he assured his readers that “there is pioneer work for him to do. There are many problems for him to solve and discoveries for him to make.”³⁴ One problem for anglers was how to rid a recently discovered lake of its seasonal Aboriginal fishers. Lambert held that the state was reluctant to prosecute Aboriginal peoples for violations of the federal and provincial fishery acts, claiming that “the Federal Government is the worst offender, because it erroneously believes that if the Indians were in any way curtailed in their food supply, the Government might have to supplement the want by rations, and thus be put to great trouble and expense.”³⁵ In this, he was largely correct; the DIA was more concerned with expenses than with rights.³⁶ Without state enforcement of the fishery legislation against Aboriginal peoples, sport fishers required other means to stop Aboriginal fishing in the prize trout-fishing lakes they were “discovering.”

At the heart of the Pennask Lake Fishing and Game Club’s ability to remove the Aboriginal fishers was a grid land survey that turned Aboriginal fishing places into spaces that could be possessed under BC property law (see Figure 2).³⁷ Once possessed by non-Aboriginals, these serialized spaces were remade into “a place called Pennask” through other instruments of colonial power, such as naming and the transplantation of English landscape traditions and ideals (see Figure 3).³⁸ Moreover, the ecology of the lake itself was remade to suit the colonizer’s fly-fishing technology. Aboriginal culture, fishing technologies, and the ecology of Pennask had interacted to shape the ways Aboriginal peoples had used the lake.³⁹ Members of a sport fishing culture based on a European technology (fly fishing) sought to modify the ecology of the lakes, not their way of fishing, in order to maximize their fisheries. Indeed, a body of biological research, much of it funded by the state, helped remake the waters of the BC Interior to suit the social, cultural, and technological interests of non-

³⁴ Lambert, *Fishing in British Columbia*, 6-7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 112.

³⁶ See J. Michael Thoms, “Illegal Conservation: Two Case Studies of Conflict between Indigenous and State Natural Resource Management Paradigms” (MA thesis, Trent University, 1996).

³⁷ Rodney James Giblett, *Postmodern Wetlands: Culture, History, Ecology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996); Nicholas K. Blomley, *Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power* (New York: Guilford, 1994).

³⁸ Blomley, *Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power*.

³⁹ Bruce Cox argues that technology is the link between culture and ecology. See Bruce Cox “Introduction” in Bruce Cox, ed., *Cultural Ecology: Readings on the Canadian Indians and Eskimos* (The Carleton Library Series, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 12.

Aboriginal anglers. The papers of the Biological Research Board of Canada, the records of the DIA, and the records of the Lake Pennask Fishing and Game Club survive to tell about this colonial remaking of Pennask Lake. Manuals of the day, such as *Making a Fishery* (1902) and *Trout Fisheries: Their Care and Preservation* (1928), which instructed elite fly-fishers on how to identify, purchase, control, construct, and completely remake a trout fishery, also facilitated the process.

This is a story of the colonial processes involved in the remaking of a single lake in the BC Interior. In understanding it, it is critical to pay careful attention to the technology used by each group, the fishing places shaped by these technologies, and the colonial processes attached to the inlet and outlet of the lake where rainbow trout return each spring to spawn.

*Beginning of the Lake Pennask
Fishing and Game Club*

In the early 1920s, at the height of his wealth in the Hawaiian pineapple industry, James Drummond Dole travelled to British Columbia to fish in “new streams,” “new lakes,” and “new retreats.” In 1927 he concluded that “to possess was better than to wander,” and he sought “one spot of perfect beauty – one lake of protected fishing – one region teeming with attractions – which he and his friends and their friends – could call their own.”⁴⁰ Dole commissioned a search for the perfect fly-fishing lake, and Pennask was identified. In late September 1927 Dole and his wife examined the lake, and Dole wrote a full report. He concluded that Pennask Lake is “nearest to being the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, of any lake seen or heard of.”⁴¹ He set out to own it and to exclude Aboriginal peoples and the public.

Manuals such as *Making a Fishery* (1902) and *Trout Fisheries: Their Care and Preservation* (1928), the latter taken from the *Fly-Fisher's Club Journal* and *Salmon and Trout Magazine*, were written to provide information and advice to wealthy trout fishers about how to purchase and manage a private trout fishery. According to the manuals, before purchasing a trout fishery prospective buyers should carefully inspect the extent of the water, determine its potential food supply, assess its potential to nurture large trout, ascertain its present fishing pressures, and determine questions of ownership. It is impossible to know

⁴⁰ James Drummond Dole, pamphlet promoting Pennask Lake club and fishery (1929) in Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 1.

⁴¹ Dole memoranda, 4 October 1927, in Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 2.

whether Dole used the advice of such manuals, but when inspecting Pennask Lake, he did follow the conventional advice of the time.⁴² He chose to fish at a location 3.2 kilometres from the Aboriginal fishing place at Spahomin Creek (not occupied in late September), and he tested the size, sportiness, and readiness of the rainbow trout to take the fly. He then compared these results against those from other lakes. The manuals instructed readers that “mud indicates” the water’s ability to support trout and “weeds likewise tell a tale.”⁴³ Dole investigated these elements and noted in his report: “Bottom most apparently hard. Apparently considerable weeds growing on the bottom in places and every evidence of ample food for fish. (saw no shrimps). Water in lake is cold now and reported ... as cold in late June.”⁴⁴ He made the following spatial observations:

Shore line of the lake about.....	15 miles
Shore of the island about	10 miles
Shore line of total about	25 miles
Depth of the lake a few soundings in general	35 feet
Deepest sounding we took	42 feet
One sounding well out in the lake	12 feet ⁴⁵

Dole was particularly interested in current fishing pressures on the lake. Through making inquiries, he learned that the “lake [is] reported to be fished annually by visiting Indians who net near creek” and that it is “reported that they took 26 pack loads of smoked trout this summer.”⁴⁶ Stanley Read refers to a second memorandum that reiterated Dole’s concerns about “the tremendous number of fish taken from the Lake by the Indians.”⁴⁷ Most important, Dole’s report notes the exact location of the Aboriginal fishery (“near creek”). As on the Columbia River, the contest would be to convert these Aboriginal places into property. Dole reported that “the land question is, I think, an important one, if anything is to be done.”⁴⁸

Dole’s plan was to develop a fish and game club to buy up every inch of the shores and islands of Pennask Lake and so form a perfect seal of private property around this body of water, thereby excluding Aboriginal and public access. The trout fishing manuals of the day

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ J.C. Mottram, *Trout Fisheries: Their Care and Preservation* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1928), 19.

⁴⁴ Dole memoranda, 1 October 1927, in Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 3.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 4.

⁴⁸ Dole memoranda, 1 October 1927, in Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 3.

advocated acquiring complete control over “unauthorized” fishing.⁴⁹ Under English common law, a perfect seal of private property around a body of non-navigable, non-tidal water gave a club or individual owner the exclusive right and property over the fish.⁵⁰ Throughout England, eastern Canada, and the eastern United States, non-Aboriginals often used the tactic of exclusive ownership of waters to privatize valuable sport fisheries and to exclude “unauthorized use.”⁵¹ On Pennask Lake, the tactic was specifically designed to convert the Aboriginal fishing places at the lake’s inlet and outlet into spaces that could be privately owned and from which Aboriginals could be excluded. Indeed, the Indian agent was “informed by a party interested, and having a share in this proposed resort, that they intend, if possible, to keep the Indians away from this Lake.”⁵²

Dole discovered that a rancher was the only owner of any section of shoreline and that he owned the key Aboriginal fishing place at Spahomin Creek but had not interfered with Aboriginal fishing. After some negotiation, Dole reported that the rancher is “only interested in cattle raising, and he seems to be disposed to allow us to make some satisfactory deal to give us control of the long beach at the head of the lake.”⁵³ This Aboriginal fishing place was now coming under Dole’s control. The rest of the lake’s shoreline was not owned: “so far as we know now there is nothing to prevent the entire lakefront, including the islands, from being acquired, and I figure roughly that about 2100 acres in broken fractions of quarter sections along the lake front would do it. Understand that one individual can buy 640

⁴⁹ Mottram, *Trout Fisheries*, 18.

⁵⁰ Under English law, fish are considered wild animals (*ferae naturae*) and, thus, there can be “no property in fish until they are caught.” But under English game law, “the exclusive right to fish may be the subject of property and as such generally runs with the title to the land containing the waters in which the activity is conducted.” See Roland Wright, “The Public Right of Fishing, Government Fishing Policy, and Indian Fishing Rights in Upper Canada,” *Ontario History* 86, 4 (1994): 337.

⁵¹ For an example of the privatization of trout streams in England and the perception of this injustice by the lower classes, see Roderick Haig-Brown, *A River Never Sleeps* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1946), 92. Despite his resentments towards private fisheries in England, Haig-Brown was a guest at Pennask. For a review of private fishing preserves in the eastern United States, see Nick Karas, *Brook Trout: A Thorough Look at North America’s Great Native Trout: Its History, Biology, and Angling Possibilities* (New York: Lyon, 1997). For a history of private sport fishing preserves in Quebec, see Paul-Louis Martin, *Histoire de la chasse au Québec* (Montréal: Les Éditions du Boréal Express, 1980). After a century of privately leasing streams and rivers to sportsmen, generally American and English Canadian elites, the Quebec government banned the practice in 1977 and rendered all waters publicly accessible.

⁵² NAC, RG 10, vol. 11002, file 976/30, Alfred H. Barber, Indian Agent, to W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner, Victoria, BC, 1 June 1929.

⁵³ Dole memoranda, 1 October 1927, in Read, *A Lake Called Pennask*, 3-4.

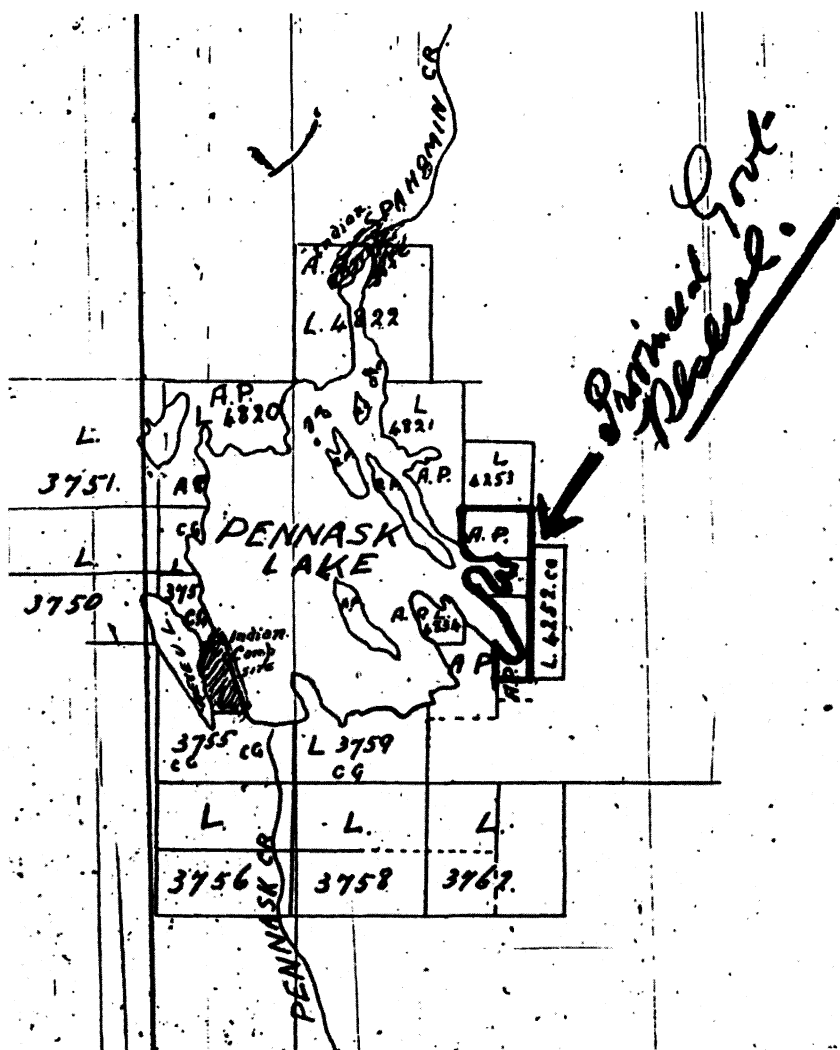


Figure 2: Grid survey of Pennask Lake, 1929, source: NAC, RG10, volume 11002 file 97630, part E.

acres, at \$2.50 an acre.⁵⁴ By June 1928 Dole began filing claims and making land purchases through a Kamloops lawyer and noted fly-fisher.⁵⁵ The impact of the map shown in Figure 2 was profound. As many theorists have argued, modern maps such as this one changed

⁵⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁵ Dole's lawyer, Mr. F.J. Fulton, of Kamloops, was a veteran fly-fisher. Twenty years earlier, in *Fishing in British Columbia*, Lambert described Fulton as a knowledgeable man "who has fished this river [Thompson] more than anyone else" (31). In 1931 Fulton was appointed an honorary member of the Pennask Lake Company.

conceptions of land, reconfiguring land as possessable.⁵⁶ Mapping is “far from ideologically neutral,” argues David Harvey, and, historically, “the mapping of the world opened up a way to look upon space as open to appropriation for private uses.”⁵⁷ Rod Giblett has conducted a major study on the colonization of the world’s wetlands by the grid survey, and he stresses the role of the land survey and grid in “erasing these ecological zones and making every place a space, and every time, eternal.” For Giblett, “writing as inscription on the surface of the body and the (wet)land is the instrument of colonization.” He stresses the argument that the grid transforms wetlands into something that can be possessed.⁵⁸ In effect, “the grid was a machine for producing private property and so private wealth.”⁵⁹ Figure 2 shows Pennask Lake undergoing just such a process. The two shaded areas that fit unevenly into the square spaces, marked by an Indian agent, are the Aboriginal camping places located at the conjunction of their culture, their technology, and the lake’s ecology. The grid, drawn regardless of ecology, erased these ecological zones and opened up a view of the lake as a set of possessable spaces. In the conflict that ensued, the grid, not ecology, determined the nature and location of spaces available for conversion into private property.

In 1928, during the land purchases, Dole began to solicit members for his exclusive fishing club. The plan was to create a non-profit club composed of fifty selected members, each paying \$1,000.⁶⁰ The membership was selective. Club records indicate that the members had to be “right fellows”⁶¹ who were “like minded on fly fishing.”⁶² Indeed, the club was “most suitable for the man of some leisure” and was intended to be “a gentleman’s private affair.”⁶³ Aboriginal people were none of the above. In the summer of 1929, with the completion of a large three-story lodge, the club began operations. Neither Aboriginal peoples nor the DIA were consulted about the transformation of the lake.

⁵⁶ Blomley, *Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power*.

⁵⁷ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990), 228.

⁵⁸ Giblett, *Postmodern Wetlands*, 71.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁶⁰ Dole, pamphlet promoting the Pennask Lake club and fishery (1929), in Read, *A Lake Called Pennask*, 8.

⁶¹ Dole Memoranda, 26 October 1928, in Read, *A Lake Called Pennask*, 6.

⁶² Ross to Dole, 1 April 1940, draft for a proposed advertisement to be placed in *Time and Field and Stream* magazines, in Read, *A Lake Called Pennask*, 31.

⁶³ Ross to Dole, 1 April 1940.

The Conflict

In the spring of 1929, as the rainbow trout moved towards the inlet and outlet of Pennask Lake, the Upper and Lower Nicola bands arrived at their spring fishery at Spahomin Creek, as they had for centuries; however, this time they encountered the new prohibitions drawn across the lake. The manager of the Pennask Lake Fishing and Game Club, Ms. Cowan, intercepted the Aboriginal fishers as they arrived at their campground, informed them that it was now private property, and asked them to leave. By coincidence, the Indian agent, Alfred H. Barber, was at hand, and he was called upon to enforce the club's private property rights.⁶⁴

Indian agents were appointed under the Indian Act to enforce the assimilationist edicts of the act, to monitor Aboriginal movement, and, especially, to regulate space – in effect, to police peoples' movements between Indian reserve spaces and settler spaces. This man, enmeshed in the colonizing process and charged with policing space, was the local authority who oversaw the dispute. Indian Agent Barber appreciated the importance of the place to the Aboriginal fishers but was compelled by BC property law to protect settler space from Aboriginal encroachment. "Having no option, as I know this particular spot to be private property," the agent later reported, "I interviewed the Indians and they moved to the nearest place available, not being property claimed by Mrs. Cowan; this was approximately a quarter of a mile away."⁶⁵ However, this "place" away from the spawning grounds was useless for the prosecution of the Aboriginal fishery. Upon his return to Kamloops, the Indian agent received a phone call from Ms. Cowan, informing him that "a further number of Indians had arrived at the Lake, and all had returned to camping in her field, and put their horses in her pasture, and that she wishes them removed at once." Again, the agent recognized Cowan's private property claim and informed her that he would "warn" the fishers against trespassing.⁶⁶

While the Indian agent was compelled to protect settler property from Aboriginal access, he also recognized that this Aboriginal fishery was "quite an item in their livelihood" and "the only remaining fishing

⁶⁴ Indian Agent Barber was investigating the Douglas Lake Aboriginal community's complaint that the Department of Fisheries had erected an obstruction at Spahomin Creek. The nature and intent of the obstruction is not clear. See NAC, RG 10, vol. 11002, file 976/30, Alfred H. Barber, Indian Agent, to W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner, Victoria, BC, 1 June 1929.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Lake where any quantity [of fish] is taken.”⁶⁷ In an effort to balance Aboriginal and settler interests, he proposed to his superior, the Indian commissioner in Victoria, that the DIA create the two long-promised reserves at the lake’s inlet and outlet. By the time the commissioner made his investigation, he learned that every lot on the lake, particularly the lots containing Aboriginal fishing places, had been converted into private property. He also learned that two conflicting non-Aboriginal applications for land at Pennask had triggered a public hearing that the Indian agent and Aboriginals could attend in order to make their case. The commissioner, however, was unable to locate any records supporting a prior Aboriginal request for a reserve at Pennask;⁶⁸ consequently, he instructed the Indian agent to attend the hearing and merely to put forth a “plea.”⁶⁹

The Appeal

In November 1929 the Indian agent and Aboriginal people attended the public hearing and argued for the return of the traditional fishing places. Many Aboriginal people attended, but only two, Chief Chillihitzia of the Douglas band, and George Bent, councillor of the Nicola-Mameet band, were allowed to speak. Others, reported the Indian agent, would “have liked to have given evidence, the Indians of the whole district being much concerned and agitated over the matter of losing the fishing and hunting camp at Penask [sic] Lake.”⁷⁰ The testimonies of Chief Chillihitzia and George Bent survive, and they offer unique insight into the competing views over place and space at the lake.

The issue of Aboriginal fishing places came at the end of the hearing. The Indian agent opened with the statement, “the Indians have always enjoyed the privilege or right to fish for food purposes at Penask [sic] Lake,” and then he described its subsistence value. Then Chief Chillihitzia, followed by Councilor Bent, was called to

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Ditchburn’s inability to locate any record of Aboriginals requesting a reserve at Pennask is peculiar. Outside of the Indian Reserve Commission papers cited above, in 1920 Ditchburn personally received a letter from the assistant deputy and secretary of Indian affairs regarding an Aboriginal application for a reserve at Pennask Lake. See NAC, RG 10, vol. 11002, file 976/30, J.D. McLean, Assistant Deputy and Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, to W.E. Ditchburn, Chief Inspector of Indian Agencies, Victoria, BC, 23 November 1920.

⁶⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 11002, file 976/30, W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for BC, to Alfred H. Barber, Indian Agent, 12 July 1929.

⁷⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 11002, file 976/30, Alfred H. Barber, Indian Agent, to W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for BC, 5 December 1929.

testify. The BC government land agent, M.E. Fisher, asked the Aboriginal leaders the following questions:

Q: "How many Indians go to Pennask Lake?"

Q: "How do they catch the fish?"

Q: "How often do you go there?"

Q: "What quantity of fish do they take from Pennask each year?"

Q: "Is there any special place for a fishing camp in your mind?"⁷¹

The answers to these questions display significant cross-cultural differences with regard to the understanding and organization of the spaces on Pennask Lake. To each question, Chillihitzia and Bent gave qualitative answers, as consistent with their cultural method of expressing knowledge.⁷² To the fourth question, for example, Chief Chillihitzia answered, "As much as they want to for their use" and "fish enough to last to the next season." Not satisfied, the BC land agent rephrased his question a few times and finally turned to the Indian agent to obtain the quantitative answer he wanted: "About 45,000 fish taken last year, and I know that three years ago, 1926, they had over 50,000 fish at Pennask Lake." Thus, the Indian agent was called upon to provide the answers desired by the land agent in order to quantify the Aboriginal fishery within the grid.

The last question – about a "special place for a fishing camp" – struck at the heart of Aboriginal concerns. The chief answered: "The end of the Lake. I want to have a reserve at the south of Spahomin Creek, and also at the other end." The chief was persistent: "the grounds where the Indians have been camping is where I want the reserve." He declined to accept a reserve at just one site: "But there are many Indians, and there is not enough. I want it at both places." The fact that the grid had transformed the perspective of the lake into a set of possessable spaces on a map is apparent in the records. In the hearing and DIA records, non-Aboriginals used the words "lot no. 3755" and "lot no. 4822" to describe the Aboriginal fishing places. When Councilor George Bent was asked to describe the location of a camping site, he answered, "where Penask [sic] Creek comes into the lake": after this description of the place, the transcriber inserted a parenthetical "(at lot no. 3755)." The lake was reduced to numerical codes and commodified. Pennask Lake was no longer a traditional

⁷¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 11002, file 976/30, questions posed by Government Agent M. E. Fisher (Kamloops) at the land dispute meeting held at Merritt, BC, 14 November 1929.

⁷² See the extensive research on Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge by Milton Freeman, University of Alberta.

place, a place where the gravel bars had names, and where generations of families returned each year to fish according to cycles of abundance and a rhythm of harvesting geared to seasonal availabilities. Once the lake had been mapped, its spaces catalogued, and the abundance and distribution of its fish and Aboriginal harvesters quantified, its places were made into possessable spaces that could be considered and reallocated from afar.

It took four months for the provincial superintendent of lands to reach a decision. In February 1930 he declined to designate Indian reserves at the two traditional fishing places, but he did disallow two other land applications on the lakeshore and declared them a provincial reserve “not constituted an Indian Reserve.”⁷³ The grid survey determined the spaces the superintendent could consider, and he reallocated spaces that were not ecologically and technologically relevant to Aboriginal fishers. The useful places, the inlets and outlets of the lake, remained private property, where any Aboriginal use would constitute trespass and where the Indian agent had already stopped Aboriginal access. The Lake Pennask Fishing and Game Club records fall silent on Aboriginal fishing after this time.

*A New Place, New Spaces:
The Remaking of Pennask Lake*

Giblett and others have argued that the “grid had a profound and devastating effect” on nature.⁷⁴ It transformed land and water into private property, facilitating new land uses and ecological change. Although the grid land survey left no physical impressions on Pennask, and although its lines are never mentioned in Read’s history, it produced tight units of privatized property that gave its owners the ability to control and change the lake’s use and ecology. The grid and private property were not the only actors; other processes also worked to convert the newly acquired spaces into White angling places. As will be shown, the club members turned the spaces possessed by private property into “a place called Pennask” as their culture and technology intersected with the lake’s ecology. Hence, the seasonal locations of fish, especially in summer and fall, were important to the creation of new non-Aboriginal fishing places on Pennask Lake. Where club members found the ecology of the lake to be imperfect,

⁷³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 11002, file 976/30, W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for BC, Victoria, B.C., to Alfred H. Barber, Indian Agent, 13 February 1930.

⁷⁴ Giblett, *Postmodern Wetlands*, 71.

they modified it to suit their culture and created the places they required for fly-fishing.

MAKING NEW FISHING PLACES

Trout move into different parts of a lake as seasonal water temperatures change. Non-Aboriginal technologies and laws for fishing rainbow trout were adapted to the summer and fall, when the trout are in deep waters. This was not the time when, or the place where, Aboriginal peoples harvested fish. As non-Aboriginals took over Pennask Lake, they learned, labelled, and publicized new fishing places on the lake.

Anglers brought a particular cultural knowledge about how to “search” a lake for its fishing places. Roderick Haig-Brown, world-renowned BC fishing writer and guest at Pennask, wrote one such guide to “searching a lake.” He points out that “it is important for him [the angler] to understand that not all of it [the lake] is likely to be productive.” Depth and water temperature are “critical factors,” and Haig-Brown instructed anglers “to test different depths and methods of working the fly.”⁷⁵ Starting in 1929 the anglers of the Lake Pennask Fishing and Game Club searched out and mapped the fishing spaces suitable for their technology and fishing season. They avoided the littoral zone: “I have been getting lots of sport going after trout 100 yards from shore. I got the limit in one hour and a quarter fishing 150 yards from the first Club point” testified one early angler.⁷⁶ Much was made about water temperature in the limnetic (surface) zone versus the profundal (deeper) zone of the lake: “put on a 2[-inch] fly that Williams gave me. This put my line deep where I wanted it ... when a big one grabbed the hook, then he was out of the water like a flash and the fun started ... This fish was bright and clean and would weigh about 6 or 6 1/2 pounds.”⁷⁷ Meanwhile his partner, Peck, only caught one fish all day fishing the surface of the lake.⁷⁸ Yet surface-rising fish were the most desirable. Over time, most fishing places at points of land that marked submerged gravel in the lake were given names honouring members of the club or their American homes: “Milwaukee Point,” “Hancock Point,” “Dole Bay.” Anglers also found and mapped deep waters, called fish “holes,” where temperatures stayed below fifteen degrees Centigrade.

⁷⁵ Roderick Haig-Brown, *A River Never Sleeps*, 141, 144.

⁷⁶ R.R. Flint to James Dole, 16 August 1930, in Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 18.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

In sum, after erasing the Aboriginal fishing places on the lake, non-Aboriginals busily created and marked new places based on their technology, culture, and fishing season. These spaces were mapped and named by the new anglers of the Lake Pennask Fishing and Game Club to form “a place called Pennask.”

Improving the Ecological Spaces in a Fishery

One manual on managing a private trout fishery comments as follows: “Having acquired a fishery, the owner will be sure to ask himself how can it be improved?”⁷⁹ Indeed, as Read remarks from the records of the Lake Pennask Fishing and Game Club, the “trouble” with Pennask Lake was that “there were too many fish and not of a large size.” Increasing the size of trout became the obsession of a new manager, Fortescue Pridham.⁸⁰ He was “a man of action: not only did he wish to preserve the quality of the fishing in Pennask; he wanted to improve it,” wrote Read.⁸¹ Pridham may have turned to manuals about “making” better trout lakes.

Manuals such as Mottram’s *Trout Fisheries: Their Care and Preservation* (1928) and Olfords’ *Making a Fishery* (1902) informed managers that their challenge was to use “farming” techniques and other artificial means to nurture large, aggressive trout that rise to the surface spaces of a lake and take the fly. Nurturing a stock that rose to the surface to eat flies was the ideal. Managers sought to avoid creating a stock of timid trout. “Management of a trout fishery is entirely a question of providing sport,” informed Mottram. The trout should not be over-farmed as there is “no sport whatever in fishing for trout in a trout farm or in catching farmed trout ... every endeavor must be made to provide wild trout” through farming techniques.⁸² Mottram often gendered his goal of improving a trout fishery: “fisheries are like pretty girls, men fall in love with them.” And in the making of a trout fishery, it was critical that “water must be good to look upon.”⁸³ In British Columbia as in other colonial areas, lakes without fish were constructed as “barren,” while those that had not yet been fly-fished were “styled ‘virgin water.’”⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Mottram, *Trout Fisheries*, 26.

⁸⁰ Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 19.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁸² Mottram, *Trout Fisheries*, viii, vii.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸⁴ Lambert, *Fishing in British Columbia*, 24; See also the advertising of the Canadian National Railways and the Canadian Pacific Railway in *Rod & Gun Magazine* (Woodstock, Ontario) for the years between 1890 and 1930.

In his efforts to “improve” the fishery of Pennask Lake, Pridham was assisted by the Canadian state, which, in the late 1920s, began to conduct biological research into the management of rainbow trout. In 1920 Knouff, a “barren” lake thirty-two kilometres north of Kamloops, was stocked with rainbows. Three years later, possibly because there were large mats of floating insects, the lake began to produce record trout. As the historian of the Kamloops sport fishery explains, “the fame of Knouff Lake spread quickly, and it became known as one of the world’s greatest dry-fly waters” (meaning it had excellent surface fishing with artificial flies).⁸⁵ In large part, it was the fame of Knouff Lake that had drawn outsiders like Dole into the Kamloops region in the 1920s.

With the sport fishing boom in the Kamloops region, the state awakened to the large financial benefits of the sport fishery. In 1926 Canadian fishery biologist J.R. Dymond began researching the life history of the Kamloops trout, knowledge of which was critical to the state’s rainbow trout management.⁸⁶ In 1932 Dymond’s studies appeared in a technical book designed for a public audience, *The Trout and Other Game Fishes of British Columbia*. Dymond wove angling excitement into his pages, telling readers where to fish and reporting that “as a game fish the Kamloops trout stands pre-eminent.”⁸⁷ It was his informed opinion that rainbow trout were “gamier” than other trout.⁸⁸

In 1931 Dr. Charles McC. Mottley, a scientific assistant with the Pacific Biological Station at Nanaimo, British Columbia, and later a professor of biology at Cornell University, joined Dymond at the Paul Lake field station near Kamloops. As was typical for his day, Mottley based his research on a farming analogy, stating that the objective of managing the sport fishery was to find ways to “farm it [a lake] to its fullest extent” (by stocking it with artificially raised trout) without “overtaxing its nutritive capacity.”⁸⁹ Mottley also embraced the economic opportunities of the sport fishery, noting that “expenditures for boats, gear, guides, and living accommodations

⁸⁵ Steve Raymond, *Kamloops: An Angler’s Study of the Kamloops Trout*, rev. ed. (Portland: Frank Amato, 1980), 19.

⁸⁶ J.R. Dymond, *The Trout and Other Game Fishes of British Columbia* (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, King’s Printer, 1932): 19.

⁸⁷ Dymond, *Trout and Other Game Fishes*, 24.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Charles McC. Mottley, “The Propagation of Trout in the Kamloops District, British Columbia,” *Transaction of the American Fisheries Society* (published annually by the society: Sixty-First Annual Meeting, 1931), 144.

provide a considerable income to the district.”⁹⁰ His research was geared to answering two principal issues confounding anglers: (1) how to improve the size and number of trout that may be caught in a lake, and (2) how to avoid yearly fluctuations in the quantity of fish.⁹¹ “To people immediately employed at any one lake cyclical fluctuations in the fishery are exceedingly unprofitable,” he reported.⁹² In effect, “natural readjustment because of the time element is not desirable in some lakes where important economic interests have been developed to cater to the angling trade.”⁹³

Through experimentation Mottley found that, if artificially reared trout fry were planted directly in the lake rather than in their natural spawning grounds at the lake’s inlet or outlet, they grew more quickly. He concluded that naturally reared trout stayed in their spawning grounds too long and that a “bottle-neck” effect stunted their growth and abundance. Mottley recommended that the state artificially raise trout and place them directly in lakes, bypassing the old function of the lakes’ natural spawning grounds, which, he thought, were the cause of small fish:

The rationale, then, behind fry plantings in the lake merely consists in avoiding this “bottle-neck” with two definite results: (1) an increased growth rate; (2) an increased survival value. With increase growth rate a greater number of the young trout reach the legal limit of eight inches in the second summer, a year sooner than under natural conditions.

While depletion tends to increase the proportion of the younger age groups in the catch, intensive propagation thus speeds up production to meet the situation. The increased survival value, on the other hand, does not deal necessarily with proportions, but actually makes a greater number of “fishable” trout available.⁹⁴

Although private, Pennask Lake was one of five lakes stocked in this manner by the Department of Fisheries.⁹⁵ The lake’s inlet and

⁹⁰ Ibid. 145.

⁹¹ See Tim D. Smith, *Scaling Fisheries: The Science of Measuring the Effects of Fishing, 1855-1955* (Cambridge University Press, 1994) chapter 1, for a discussion of the early 20th century scientific efforts to understand and reduce fish fluctuations between year classes, including such efforts for the Fraser River.

⁹² Charles McC. Mottley, “The Propagation of Trout in the Kamloops District, British Columbia” *Transaction of the American Fisheries Society* (1931): 145.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 149.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 146.

outlet, once seen as a problem for “unauthorized” Aboriginal fishing, were now seen as the lake’s ecological problem. The goal was to nullify the natural role of these places. Anglers wanted neither people nor trout to return to the inlets and outlets of Pennask Lake – the sites of the Aboriginal fishery. Science and the precepts of angling determined that fish and fishers belonged in the lake’s deeper, larger spaces.

Anglers assisted Dymond and Mottley in collecting data at Paul Lake. These state-funded studies helped transform British Columbia’s inland lakes into fly-fishing preserves by justifying and promoting the economic benefits of the sport fishery, and by naturalizing sport fishing conditions. In his book, Dymond explicitly called for the transformation of the inland fishery from one controlled by people who used non-sporting methods (i.e., those of the lower classes, pseudo-sportsmen, and Aboriginals) to a fishery dominated by the ideals and methods of elite sportsmen. He foresaw that “the time will come ... when the sentiment of the higher types of sportsmen will prevail, and there will be more angling with the fly, and trolling from row boats.”⁹⁶ Science supported such angling and reflected the ecological and social imperatives of sportsmen.

More Spatial Improvements to the Pennask Fishery

The Lake Pennask Fishing and Game Club faced another fishery problem. Three smaller and popular outlying lakes within the club’s property (Nevue, Petersen, and Cowan) produced large trout, but not enough of them. Pridham’s plan was to build new artificial spaces to form “a comfortable place” for trout to spawn and, hence, to “control our fishing perfectly in the outlying lakes where we have had big trout.”⁹⁷

In 1939 Pridham decided that, by installing gasoline-powered propellers in the three outlying lakes and generating an artificial current, he could create conditions resembling a mountainous trout stream and stimulate the trout to spawn. Perhaps this idea came from a 1933 paper by Mottley on the importance of currents in salmon and trout spawning.⁹⁸ Through discussion with club members, Pridham devised the following plan:

⁹⁶ Dymond, *Trout and Other Game Fishes*, 25.

⁹⁷ Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 27-29.

⁹⁸ C. McC. Mottley, “The Spawning Migration of Rainbow Trout,” *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* (published Annually by the Society: Sixty-Third Annual Meeting, 1933): 80.

To dig a small channel starting at the lake-shore at one end and going back a little distance, then circling back to the lake at another point and then the outboard motor might be set along this channel so as to start a flow in the stream. If material along this bank were gravel, that might make a further inducement to the fish to go into the stream and spawn.⁹⁹

After setting up the motor, Pridham reported his success on Peterson Lake:

It did not take the trout many minutes to find this artificial stream. It really was very amusing to watch them; I can only describe it in this way: they evidently found the suction from the water quite a way out in the lake, and in a very short time I noticed fish coming from all directions. Immediately, they hit the artificial stream they dashed in and out again, they swam up as far as they could within four feet of the propeller where the wash was too strong for them to come any nearer.¹⁰⁰

When he returned the next day, he found two dead trout. "This I expected, for the simple reason that the water is very much oxydised, and if they were greedy enough to stay in it too long they might die."¹⁰¹ Despite these fatalities, Pridham reported that he had made a "comfortable place" for trout to spawn.

The main body of trout lay four or five feet at right angles from the propeller; this means that they had found a comfortable place from the suction of the propeller and were getting the right amount of oxygen, also that they were starting to mate. Near the end of the stream there was another body of trout doing the same thing.¹⁰²

In all, Pridham concluded "I am very pleased with this outfit in every way and I have great hopes that by the middle of July we will see a marked improvement in the fish."¹⁰³ In 1940 engines were added to two other lakes, and the success was gauged as follows: "Last year we had very great success in Peterson Lake and 60% of the trout that we caught were clean [free of eggs] in August. This has never been done before, and I hope this year we will get at least 95% clean fish."¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Hancock to Kieckhefer, 27 April 1939, in Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 27.

¹⁰⁰ Kieckhefer to Hancock, 22 June 1939, in Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 28.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 29.

Pennask was being developed by the book – the manuals of the time. As Mottram noted, “it is often possible to greatly improve a fishery by counteracting its natural drawbacks, by artificially improving upon what nature has provided.” An ecosystem was being colonized, its processes reordered to meet the imperatives of the designing culture. At Pennask Lake, this colonial process was assisted by state-funded science, couched in gendered language, and facilitated by private property made possible by the grid. The anglers’ culture itself, and the quest for large trout, emerged from an English literary imagination.

A Fishery Literally Transformed

It is important, therefore, to consider “writing about fishing.”¹⁰⁵ In particular, texts about sport fishing contain many discourses on gender, class, and race. In the case of Pennask Lake, two publications about fishing on the lake require particular attention: an eighteen-page pamphlet written by Dole in 1929, and a history written by Read in 1977. Both texts helped to translate Aboriginal fishing places into a non-Aboriginal space. After forty-eight years of non-Aboriginal occupation, Read’s *A Place Called Pennask* eulogizes the lake’s angling history and place names, arguing that the latter reveal a story about a “dream” realized by visionaries committed to recreation and conservation. There are no dispossessed Aboriginals at this “place called Pennask,” and the few traces of the former Aboriginal fishery are manipulated and controlled by the colonizer, the writer, and the maps of the lake.

In 1929 James Dole released an eighteen-page pamphlet promoting his “vision” for the lake, the club, and its members.¹⁰⁶ The pamphlet, with twenty-three pictures and two maps, purported to be “some slight account and some pictures of an idea and its realization – all rendered with fidelity to the truth – for the penetrating eye of the sportsman.”¹⁰⁷ In particular, the images present Dole’s vision of the ideal gender, class, and race relationships to be imposed on Pennask Lake. In two photos, Dole poses with a shotgun in hand and his wife at his side. In others, White men repose or fish in luxury. Much of this landscape was realized.

Like many other writers on angling, Read opens his history with a quotation from Izaak Walton (author of the *Compleat Angler*, 1653), as he positions himself within this cultural tradition. The book emphasizes the lives of club members, providing a history of how

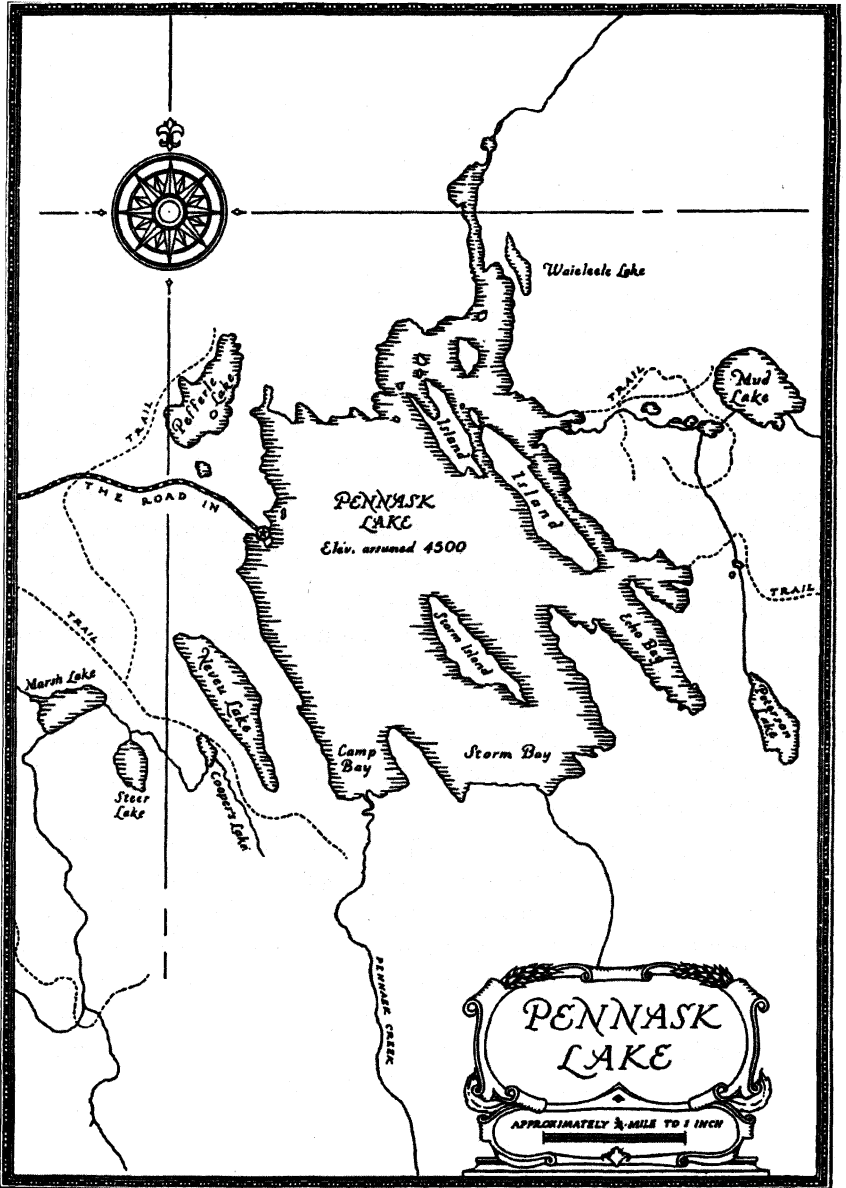


Figure 1: Map from Dole's 1929 pamphlet.

such powerful men came together around the lake to form “a place called Pennask.” Toponymy is a central focus, as Read reads a map of the lake as a history text: “Today, the modern angler should remember at least four of them [first club members] for the names they left behind them on the Lake – the Colonel’s Kitchen after Flint; Milwaukee Point, after a very great man, indeed; and then of course, Dole Bay – after the original dreamer and founder of the Pennask Lake Club.”¹⁰⁸

The most interesting aspect of Read’s history is his effort to create an intellectual and physical trinity between specific club members, spaces on the lake, and trout. About club member John Hancock, Read writes: “by those who still fish Pennask his name is mentioned daily, for the waters that circle Hancock Point can still produce sturdy, fine fighting rainbow trout.”¹⁰⁹ When writing about Colonel Flint, he grounds the biographical note with the statement that “the ‘Colonel’s Kitchen’ still produces some of the finest sport that Pennask has to offer.”¹¹⁰ About Pridham, the manager from 1933 to 1949, he writes: “today he is still remembered by all anglers who seek trout in lovely Pridham Bay.”¹¹¹ Repeatedly, Read naturalizes a link between man, space, and fish. This is the unity underlying Read’s literary landscape, his *Place Called Pennask*. To be sure, he underplays his interest in place names, referring to toponymy as a “diversion on names.”¹¹² However, toponymy is more than a “diversion” and cannot be trivialized. It maintains the metaphorical and discursive relations of power between ecology, men, and space at Pennask Lake.¹¹³

As significant as what Read includes in his history is what he excludes. The expropriation of the Aboriginal fishery is missing. There is no mention of the club’s strategy to keep out the Aboriginal fishers

¹⁰⁵Richard C. Hoffmann studies medieval fishing in *Fishers’ Craft and Lettered Art: Tracts on Fishing from the End of the Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). I take his point that scholars need to study the “writing about fishing” in a different direction.

¹⁰⁶Dole pamphlet promoting the Pennask Lake club and fishery (1929), in Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 7.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰⁸Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 8.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 19.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 24.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, 68.

¹¹³Foucault tells us that “endeavouring to decipher discourse through the use of spatial, strategic metaphors enables one to grasp precisely the points at which discourses are transformed in, through and on the basis of the relations of power.” See Michel Foucault, “Questions on Geography,” in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 70.

or of the fact that the lake's spaces were contested. For Read, it was an "untouched" lake, and the ritual of possession was the casting of the first fly on its waters.¹¹⁴ There is no private property tactic of dispossession, just the natural advance of Waltonian fishing traditions, graces, and civility. Nevertheless, traces of the Aboriginal past surface in Read's review of the place names of Pennask Lake. Most Aboriginal place names were erased and replaced by the names of non-Aboriginal club members. In one case, Waielele Lake was renamed Cowan Lake after the woman and manager who first ejected the Aboriginal fishers in the spring of 1929. However, after she feuded with the Department of Fisheries staff in 1933, she was fired and the lake's name was changed to "Little Pennask."¹¹⁵

The process of renaming the Aboriginal fishing place at Spahomin Creek is striking. In the hearings of 1929, the place was referred to strategically as "lot 4822." In the five decades that followed, the ancestral Aboriginal fishing place became a popular picnic site for club members. In 1977, almost fifty years after the Aboriginal presence was erased, a club member decided to adopt an "Indian word" for the place. She chose "Skapkneetwa," meaning "little Beach," and reported that "this information was received from some Indians at Douglas Lake ... It was hard to get two Indians to agree on spelling, so we picked what sounded best to us."¹¹⁶ Almost fifty years after an Aboriginal fishing place was expropriated, an Aboriginal word, of no experiential connection to the place, was inscribed there. Having been added to the lake's place names, it deceptively suggests the presence of an Aboriginal past existing alongside or before the angler history, while hiding the time when, and the means by which, that presence was denied. Once the lake became firmly possessed and its place names were read as a text that told a White version of its history, the spelling and semantics of a sanitized Aboriginal name was all that mattered.

¹¹⁴Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, foreword, n.p.

¹¹⁵Dole wrote that, later, "the chief of the Dominion fisheries in Vancouver conveyed to me his thanks for the change [firing], and his appreciation of the changed spirit shown at the Club." See Dole to Hancock, 26 July 1933, in Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 25.

¹¹⁶Mrs. Price to Mr. Harry Boyce, in Read, *A Place Called Pennask*, 66-68.

POSTSCRIPT

Was the loss of an age-old Aboriginal fishery at Pennask Lake an isolated case? or was the transformation of Aboriginal fisheries into non-Aboriginal angling preserves common in British Columbia? The evidence suggests the latter.

In 1899, an exclusive fishery lease was issued to the Field and Stream Club on the Coquitlam River. Chief Johnnie wrote to the Department of Marine and Fisheries, stating, "I heard that the Vancouver people were going to buy coquitlam [sic] creek," and expressing his concern that

it will be hard for the Indians here to live if they stop our fishing. since we were born at coquitlam we have been living on salmon. if our fishing is stopped we can't live because we live by fishing for a good many years fish have been breeding here and if they spoil it they take our food from us.

He added, "Not only me but all the chief in these little creek don't want this thing to happen."¹¹⁷ The chief's protest was dismissed by the department on the grounds that the province had the right to privatize the river and to exclude Aboriginal use.¹¹⁸

As noted above, fishing writer Lambert was perturbed that Aboriginal peoples were not subject to the fish laws. In his 1907 book he cautioned that, unless the *Fish and Game* laws that privilege non-Aboriginal sporting uses were uniformly imposed upon Aboriginals, then the "time [would] soon come when the wealthier people [would] form clubs for both shooting and fishing, and private game preservation [would] close gradually the free waters of the province."¹¹⁹ In effect, Lambert believed that the future of British Columbia's angling industry would involve one of two courses: (1) enforcing the fish and game laws of general application on all Aboriginal fishers for the common good of settler society, or (2) allowing clubs to form and privatize the lakes to exclude the Aboriginal and lower-class presence. Lambert promoted the first course on the grounds that it would cause the least disturbance to lower-class access to the sport fisheries. Either course entailed the suppression of Aboriginal fisheries. The extent

¹¹⁷NAC, RG 23 (Department of Fisheries), reel C-2661, file 2780, pt. 1, letter by Chief Johnnie, Coquitlam Band, 19 March 1899.

¹¹⁸The section of river in question was deemed non-navigable and non-tidal, therefore it could be privatized under English law.

¹¹⁹Lambert, *Fishing in British Columbia*, 114.

to which private fishing clubs closed off Aboriginal and public fishing in BC waters requires further investigation. The existing evidence suggests that the BC government and the sports lobby gradually adopted strict game law enforcement in order to open the province's lakes to non-Aboriginal anglers. As early as 1910, the chiefs of the Shuswap, Okanagan, and Couteau nations informed Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier that the game laws were being used to transform their protected resource into non-Aboriginal hunting and fishing preserves: "In many places we are debarred from camping, traveling, gathering roots and obtaining wood and water as heretofore. Our people are fined and imprisoned for breaking the game and fish laws and using the same game and fish which we were told would always be ours for food." In the chiefs' potent words, "Gradually we are becoming regarded as trespassers over a large portion of this country."¹²⁰

The full extent of the impact of sport fishers on the Aboriginal right and ability to fish in the inland waters of British Columbia for species other than salmon needs further study. The evidence in this article shows that anglers constituted a late and destructive phase of settler colonialism. This colonial encounter involved private property rights (facilitated by a spatial grid), the transformation of aquatic ecosystems, the gendering of nature, and the use of naming as a source of power. It drew upon English literary tradition, upon contemporary Western science, and upon a legacy of laws designed to privilege upper-class control over fish.

¹²⁰"Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Premier of the Dominion of Canada, from the Chiefs of the Shuswap, Okanagan, and Couteau Tribes of British Columbia," presented at Kamloops, BC, 25 August 1910. The full text is posted at <<http://www.secwepemc.org/memorial.htm>>.