

TRAVELS FROM POINT ELLICE: *Peter O'Reilly and the Indian Reserve System in British Columbia*¹

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INTRODUCTION: POINT ELLICE HOUSE

According to the British Columbia Heritage Trust, Point Ellice House at 2616 Pleasant Street was Victoria's third most visited historical site in 1996, placing after Craigdarroch Castle and Helmcken House but before Emily Carr's residence. But if visitors to these latter three sites happen to learn something about the lives of Dunsmuir, Helmcken, and Carr, and their impact on the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the province, Point Ellice House is remembered mostly for its picturesque gardens, fine collection of Victorian bric-à-brac, and English tea and crumpets served daily on the very spot where Peter O'Reilly posed for his photograph (Plate 1). Heritage Trust brochures do inform visitors that he served as magistrate, judge, and gold commissioner under

¹ I would like to thank Cole Harris, Anne Seymour, two anonymous reviewers, and a receptive audience at the 1997 BC Studies Conference, Malaspina College, Nanaimo, for their insightful comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this paper. My thanks also to Eric Leinberger for the cartography in Maps 1, 9a, and 10a. I am especially indebted to Anne Seymour and Doug Johnson at the Legal Surveys Division, Natural Resources Canada, for directing me to the Department of Indian Affairs Federal Collection, Minutes of Decision, Correspondence, and Sketches, which became available in March 1997. Comprised, in part, of letterbooks, workbooks, field-books and sketches, and federal government files, the collection is the culmination of a fifteen-month project involving the reconstruction of excised and damaged correspondence and sketches dealing with the establishment of Indian reserves in British Columbia between 1876 and 1908. The reconstruction was meticulously verified, copied, annotated, and indexed by both reserve and/or band/tribe so that information can be more readily accessed and easily cross-referenced to Department of Indian Affairs *Annual Reports* and National Archives of Canada Record Group 10 files. Much of the empirical content and virtually all of the illustrative material in this essay would have been difficult to compile without access to this collection. Indeed, researchers interested in the post-Confederation evolution and implementation of the reserve system in the province should consider the collection indispensable.

² O'Reilly to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 4 October 1888, cited in Daniel Raunet's *Without Surrender, Without Consent* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1984), 100.

Governor James Douglas; that he was an avid gardener and investor; and that he and his descendants occupied the house until its conversion into a heritage site in 1975, but not of much else. Indeed, visitors leave Point Ellice House with almost no sense of the man himself. Of course, this is not what the reconstruction at Point Ellice is intended to do. Like most historical sites, the place works on one's imagination by exploiting the act of "seeing." It is a museum, designed to capture and selectively reconstitute a fragment of colonial space and exhibit that space for public consumption.³ We do not need O'Reilly, the man, to achieve this objective.

What interests me about Point Ellice House, however, is that it is also the touchstone for another, more tangible, colonial space, but one that can only be exhibited when we bring Peter O'Reilly back, so to speak, onto the lawn at 2616 Pleasant Street. O'Reilly played many parts during his four decades in the colonial, provincial, and federal civil services (and mostly while living at Point Ellice), and while each informs the others, I am interested here primarily in his work as the Indian Reserve Commissioner between 1880 and 1898. In this capacity he allocated most of the Indian reserves in British Columbia, a fundamental division of provincial space. I shall invoke Simon Ryan's thesis about the "cartographic eye/I" to argue that O'Reilly's legacy is not so much architectural, legal, or even cultural (although it is partly all of these) as it is *territorial*, and in so doing I shall "make visible" the geographical matrix within which all British Columbians and their places, past or present, remain intimately (if unconsciously) immersed.

IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM, AND THE CARTOGRAPHIC EYE/I

Ryan is an Australian cultural historian who argues that the exploration, surveying, and mapping of Australia during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was mobilized primarily through the "power of seeing."⁴ His thesis is intricate and best teased out as I go along, but I begin with his basic premise that the space of empire and colonization is a universal, classificatory, and abstract geometric

³ There is an extensive literature on "exhibiting colonialism," but I recommend Timothy Mitchell's *Colonizing Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995); or Jane Jacobs's *Edge of Empire* (London: Routledge, 1996).

⁴ The complete reference is Simon Ryan's *The Cartographic Eye* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

space because it is the only space that can be organized, surveyed, mapped, and administered from a distance by a fixed and central observer. This fixed and central observer (person, institution, or, more broadly, "Europe") is simultaneously "privileged" (being able to view or scan this space from "above" and "outside" of it) and "non-existent" (functioning as a passive and transparent translator of that which is being viewed or scanned "within" it). The split implied in the term "cartographic eye/I" is, then, deliberate: the "eye" referring to that particular nexus of power, knowledge, and sight that constitutes (and is constituted by) a detached, panoramic gaze; the "I" referring to that mobile explorer, surveyor, cartographer, or landscape painter who is responsible for negotiating the objects of this gaze on the ground. Within imperial and colonial perspectives, then, indigenous peoples do not occupy a "different space" but, rather, are seen to underutilize the abstract universal space that imperialism and colonialism have presupposed. Indeed, if this were not so, then any incorporation of, and mastery over, alternative cultural spaces by an imperial or colonial power would be compromised.

Ryan's argument has considerable purchase in relation to the surveying and mapping of Indian reserves in British Columbia. Imperialism and colonialism, writ large, are about the systematic material and conceptual accumulation and control of non-European peoples and territories,⁵ but in late nineteenth-century British Columbia it was only with the formation of the Indian Reserve Commission that this accumulation was made relatively complete. The cartographic eye organizes space like a panorama, but it also presupposes a particular "visual logic" in which space is stratified, layered, and then fragmented and compartmentalized so that there is a place for everything and everything is in its proper place. This is Cartesian space, the space simultaneously of positive laws and private property, and of statistics and scientific practice. British Columbia is a composite of such spaces. But what distinguishes the spaces delineated by the Indian Reserve Commission from all the rest is that they circumscribe Native peoples, separate most of the territory that is "British Columbia" from its original inhabitants, and clear that territory for occupancy by an immigrant society. The reserve system can thus be seen as a kind of "thematic underlay," that stratum of abstract geometric space that contains the physical and conceptual boundaries between Europe and

⁵ This point has been made most forcefully in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978), 123.

its “other” on the Northwest Coast and makes those boundaries visible and, therefore, manageable by a fixed and central observer. On this view, then, the Indian Reserve Commission was the institution through which an absolute, abstract, and trans-historical Cartesian gaze, the cartographic “eye,” was imposed on British Columbia, but Peter O’Reilly was the historical subject, the cartographic “I,” who formatted that gaze to accommodate the topographies and demographics of the late nineteenth-century provincial landscape on the ground.

This article is not, then, a biography, even though it must in part (through the travels of the cartographic I) read in this way. Peter O’Reilly’s own “lifeway” cannot be easily detached (as, for example, is his house) from the “lifeworld” in which he moves and of which he yet remains a principal architect. Nor is it an institutional history of the Indian Reserve Commission in British Columbia, as much as such an account needs to be written.⁶ My purpose is to show that the commission was as much, if not more, O’Reilly than anyone or anything else and, in so doing, to make visible the stratum of provincial space that he constructs. I also want to show that O’Reilly’s space, the compartmentalized space of the reserve system, is very much “our space” and that to understand the dynamic space of the Indian Reserve Commissioner is to understand the historical genesis (and possible future evolution) of our own. It is towards an appreciation of the space that O’Reilly defines, and the signatured but fragmented and contingent places it enframes, that our own eyes may now be directed.

FOCUSSING ON BRITISH COLUMBIA: FORMATION OF THE INDIAN RESERVE COMMISSION

Formed in 1875 “to visit with all convenient speed, in such order as may be found desirable, each Indian nation ... in British Columbia and after full inquiry on the spot ... to fix and determine for each ... the number, extent, and locality of the Reserve or Reserves to be allowed to it,”⁷ the Joint Indian Reserve Commission was supposed

⁶ An empirically informed, if somewhat dated, summary is found in Robert Cail’s *Land, Man, and the Law* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1974), Chapter 13; a more contextual account is found in Anne Seymour’s “Natives and Reserve Establishment in Nineteenth Century British Columbia,” (MA thesis, Department of History, University of British Columbia, 1995).

⁷ Memorandum from Minister of the Interior R.W. Scott, 5 November 1875, in *Papers Connected With the Indian Land Question 1850-1875* (hereafter referred to as *Papers*) (Victoria: Government Printer, 1875), 163.

to resolve “the very serious controversy that [had] arisen” between the provincial and federal governments in respect of the “support and accommodation of the Indian communities.”⁸ Article 13 of the Terms of Union had specified that in the allotment of Indian reserves, the Dominion government was to “pursue a policy as liberal as that hitherto pursued by the British Columbia Government,” but it had soon become clear to the former that colonial allotment policy had been neither “liberal” nor as rigorous as the word “policy” suggests.

While Douglas’s land policies remain a matter of some debate,⁹ it is fairly clear that he preferred to allot reserve lands as generously as he could. Under his direction, stipendiary magistrates and the Royal Engineers defined a number of reserves on Vancouver Island and throughout the southwestern portion of the mainland colony between 1860 and 1864, but the governor was less diligent in monitoring the implementation of his system than he was with its theoretical development. Many of these reserves were left unrecorded in the official schedules, and settlers regularly encroached on reserve boundaries. When Douglas retired in 1864, responsibility for Indian reserves passed to the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, Joseph Trutch. He was more rigorous with their implementation, but he was an engineer and a developmentalist, and he shared none of Douglas’s sensitivities towards Native peoples. His own allotments (no more than a handful between 1864 and 1871) were much smaller, he reduced many of the Douglas reserves, and he ignored others outright. In almost every instance when Native peoples ran into jurisdictional disputes with settlers (and especially so over reserve lands that had not been properly recorded) Trutch sided with the latter. At Confederation only 80 reserves aggregating 28,437 acres had been surveyed and scheduled, and only 23 of those had been gazetted.

Article 13 had been added to the Terms of Union on Canada’s insistence, but it was written by Trutch. Not only was Ottawa completely unaware of Trutch’s “ten acre per family” formula, but Dr Israel W. Powell, the new Indian Superintendent, found that many of the colonial reserves did not contain half that much land.¹⁰ By

⁸ Governor-General the Earl of Dufferin to Lord Carnarvon, 4 December 1874, Great Britain, Colonial Office, National Archives of Canada microfilm CO.42.

⁹ These matters are discussed in some detail in Cail, *Land, Man, and the Law*, Chapter 11; Robin Fisher’s *Contact and Conflict* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1977), Chapter 7; and Paul Tennant’s *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), Chapters 2 and 3.

¹⁰ The dispute between the two governments over the acreage formula is summarized by Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, Chapter 7.

1874, moreover, Native peoples had become “aware that the Government of Canada [had] always taken good care of the Indians [east of the Rockies] and treated them liberally, allowing more than one hundred acres per family,”¹¹ and Powell was receiving reports that a joint Secwepemc, Okanagan, and Sce’exmx insurgency was imminent unless complaints over the quality and extent of reserves were immediately addressed.¹² When the Joint Commission finally took to the field in the spring of 1876, not a single existing colonial reserve had been “satisfactorily adjusted” and no new reserves had been allotted after 1871.

Initially, the Commission consisted of three men: Archibald McKinley (for the province), Alexander Anderson (for the Dominion), and Gilbert Sproat (a joint selection of both governments). While they were to be guided “generally by the spirit of the terms of Union,” the needs of “each Nation ... of the same language [were to] be dealt with separately,” and no fixed acreage formula was to be applied.¹³ An Indian agent was to be assigned to each nation and reserves allotted thereto were to be held in trust by the Dominion, with the proviso that they could be subsequently enlarged, reduced, or cancelled as changing indigenous demographics suggested. The commission began its operations on Burrard Inlet, and over the next year travelled up Howe Sound, Jervis Inlet, down the east coast of Vancouver Island from Comox to Victoria, and thence to the Okanagan. Altogether, the Joint Commission allotted 152 reserves totalling 216,087 acres, with 23 of them confirmations (if subject to some minor modifications at survey) of scheduled colonial reserves, and with eleven of these delimiting areas prescribed by the Douglas treaties.¹⁴

By late 1877 the provincial government was complaining about the expense of a tripartite commission and suggested that, because reserves were not yet a pressing concern outside the railway belt or where settlers and Natives were already living in close proximity to one another, a single commissioner would suffice.¹⁵ The federal

¹¹ Hope Chief Peter Ayessik to Powell, 14 July 1874, *Papers*, 137.

¹² See Powell to Attorney-General George Walkem, 12 January 1874, *Papers*, 125-26; and Indian Commissioner James Lenihan to Provincial Secretary John Ash, 8 October 1874, *Papers*, 144-45.

¹³ Walkem to Lieutenant-Governor Joseph Trutch, 17 August 1875, *Papers*, 179.

¹⁴ The text of the fourteen treaties is found in *Papers*, 5-12. The Commissioners’ language is suggestive; in the case of the Esquimalt reserve, they referred to it as the “private property of the tribe.” (DIA[RO], FC, Joint Indian Reserve Commission’s Minutes of Decision, Correspondence, and Sketches, ILR B-64656, vol. 5, pp. 54-55).

¹⁵ Cail, *Land, Man, and the Law*, 215-16.

government reluctantly acceded to this request, and in March 1878 the Joint Commission was dissolved by Order in Council. Sproat carried on alone after that. In 1878 he allotted reserves in the Fraser and Thompson River Canyons between Yale and Kamloops, through the Nicola District between the Okanagan and Spences Bridge, and along the Similkameen between Osoyoos and Princeton, and in early 1879 he worked his way along the lower Fraser between Burrard Inlet and Yale.¹⁶ Like most of his contemporaries, Sproat saw “colonization [as that] wonderful agent, which ... has changed and is changing the whole surface of the earth,” but he knew that “any extreme act ... or systematic ... ill-treatment of the dispossessed people”¹⁷ would lead to the same trouble that had already surfaced in the Interior in 1874, and he allotted lands as extensively as he could. Almost everywhere he went, however, settlers complained vociferously about what they perceived to be his overly generous allotments. It did not help matters that Sproat wrote voluminously, and often quite antagonistically, about the provincial government’s delays in approving his allotments. When it ignored his enthusiastic reports about the Nlha7káp̓mx plans for self-government developed at a meeting at Lytton in July 1879,¹⁸ he transferred his operations to the Johnstone and Malaspina Straits, irritating the provincial government even more. By early 1880 he had allotted 325 reserves over and above those of the Joint Commission, totalling something on the order of 250,000 to 300,000 acres.¹⁹ At least fifty-three of them were confirmations or enlargements of scheduled colonial reserves, and several more were confirmations of old reserves staked, but not scheduled, by Douglas’s magistrates. But by now effectively ostracized by the provincial government, and under increasing pressure from the recently re-elected Conservative government in Ottawa, Sproat tendered his resignation. Peter O’Reilly was appointed his successor in March 1880.

¹⁶ A map of Sproat’s journeys in 1877 and 1878 is found in National Archives of Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, Record Group 10 (hereafter abbreviated as NAC, DIA, RG10), reel C-13900, vol. 3612, file 3756-18.

¹⁷ In Sproat’s *The Nootka: Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, Charles Lillard, ed. (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1987), 9

¹⁸ See Douglas Harris’s “The Nlha7káp̓mx meeting at Lytton, 1879, and the rule of law,” *BC Studies* 108 (1995-96): 5-28.

¹⁹ Exactly how many acres were contained in Sproat’s original allocations is unknown. This figure is a “best guess,” the reasons for which I will address below.

PETER O'REILLY: MAGISTRATE, JUDGE,
AND GOLD COMMISSIONER

Born to Roman Catholic parents, and educated in England, O'Reilly had arrived in British Columbia in 1858 after a seven-year tour in the Irish Revenue Police. The Fraser River gold rush was just getting under way, and James Douglas and Chief Justice Matthew Begbie were struggling with the problem of how to extend the Queen's law over a vast, little known, and thinly populated territory. Their solution, a refinement of tactics used elsewhere in the British Empire, was a cohort of stipendiary magistrates, ideally men of English or Anglo-Irish extraction and preferably "upwards of thirty years old, with such common sense and good temper as possible and a little capital, and with country tastes."²⁰ Responsible to both Begbie and the Colonial Secretary, they were expected to serve as justices of the peace, land recorders, coroners, postmasters, assistant gold commissioners, revenue collectors, and de facto Indian agents.²¹ Formal legal training was not a prerequisite and, with his long service in the constabulary, O'Reilly came highly recommended. He was appointed as magistrate responsible to Fort Langley in January 1859 and, later that year, was dispatched to Fort Hope. It was physically demanding work, but O'Reilly seems to have been up to it, and Douglas reported sometime in 1862 that he had distinguished himself as "a gentleman of excellent character, high moral worth, an able, active resolute Magistrate."²²

O'Reilly rose quickly in the colonial hierarchy, doubtless in part because of such credentials but also because, shortly after being appointed full Gold Commissioner at Williams Creek in 1863, he married Joseph Trutch's sister, Caroline. Not only was O'Reilly the most widely travelled of all colonial field officials — serving variously along the lower Fraser (1859–61), in the Cariboo (1862–64), the Kootenays (1865–67), the Okanagan (1868–70), and the Omineca and Chilcotin (1871–72) — but he seems to have been the magistrate-of-choice for the most taxing colonial assignments. As Judge Henry Crease later testified, "whenever gold ha[d] broken out in new places remote from all regular communications ... the government ... ha[d] invariably selected [O'Reilly] for the task of reducing wild districts

²⁰ Matthew Begbie, 3 February 1859, cited in Tina Loo's *Making Law and Order in British Columbia 1821–1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 58.

²¹ These arrangements are discussed in more detail in Cail, *Land, Man, and the Law*, 54–72; and in Hamar Foster's "Law Enforcement in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia: A Brief and Comparative Overview," *BC Studies* 63 (1984): 3–28.

²² Cited in Valerie Green's *Above Stairs* (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1995), 72.

to order and of organizing, amongst savages, out of the most heterogenous and discordant elements, the civilizing machinery and appliances of more settled communities.”²³

Judging from some of the personal and editorial commentary of the day, O’Reilly’s strict interpretation of the Queen’s law did not always sit well with local communities. Some of the Fraser River steamboat captains and trail bosses resented his intrusion into what had hitherto been their almost anarchical existence, and miners in the Cariboo had become accustomed to a more parochial application of the law than the magistrate was prepared to allow.²⁴ It was Native peoples, however, who bore the full legal weight of the early colonial enterprise in British Columbia. O’Reilly was the first magistrate to convict a settler of murder solely on the basis of indigenous evidence,²⁵ and he was prepared to intervene on the Natives’ behalf when it was clear that settlers or miners had encroached, as they often did, on reserve lands. These, however, were exceptions that proved the rule. Of his 125 non-capital convictions at Fort Hope in 1861, over half were levied against the Stó:lō,²⁶ and it was strictly business when it came to carrying out executions. Reporting after the hanging at Quesnellemouth in 1864 of the five Tsilhqot’in chiefs convicted by Begbie as protagonists of the Chilcotin War,²⁷ he wrote that “there were about 250 persons present, all of whom were well conducted, and the whole proceeding was marked by a proper sense of order and decorum.”²⁸

Because he spent so much of his time at the most isolated colonial outposts, O’Reilly initially was little involved in colonial reserve policy. His first experience with the logistics of reserve allocation had actually come in late 1859 during the survey of the Hope townsite. Aware that Douglas had “directed that several hundred acres of land around each village ... be reserved for the Indians,”²⁹ O’Reilly suggested instead that “the Indians [should be] removed to some more suitable locality,”³⁰ a request which Douglas promptly rejected.

²³ Crease to O’Reilly, 6 October 1872, BCA, OC, file AE OR3 OR3.27.

²⁴ See Loo, *Making Law*, Chapters 5 and 6.

²⁵ See David Williams’s *Sir Matthew Baillie Begbie ... The Man For a New Country* (Sidney: Gray’s, 1977), 98.

²⁶ Foster, *Law Enforcement*, 14.

²⁷ See, in this connection, Judith Williams’s *High Slack: Waddington’s Gold Road and the Bute Inlet Massacre of 1864* (Vancouver: New Star, 1996).

²⁸ O’Reilly to the Administrator of the Government, William A.G. Young, 28 October 1864, BCA, Colonial Correspondence (hereafter abbreviated as CC), reel B-1352, file 1284.

²⁹ O’Reilly to Royal Engineer Colonel Richard C. Moody, 8 December 1859, BCA, CC, reel B-1350, file 1277.

³⁰ O’Reilly to Colonial Secretary William A.G. Young, 24 December 1859, BCA, CC, reel B-1350, file 1277.

But in 1868, one year after moving into Point Ellice, O'Reilly began to put his own personal stamp on the "Indian land policy" then being worked out by his brother-in-law, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works Joseph Trutch. While surveying pre-emptions in the Nicola District that year, O'Reilly advised Trutch that he expected many more applications for arable land and that "the Indian Reserves [should be] clearly defined, in order to avoid [future] trouble."³¹ In August, Trutch instructed O'Reilly to "undertake the adjustment of [the] reserves [and told him that] the extent of land to be included in each ... must be determined by [him] on the spot ... [B]ut [that] as a general rule ... an allotment of about 10 acres of good land should be made to each family."³² At Deadman's Creek, where some Secwepemc had moved when the western portion of their reserve at Kamloops had been pre-empted by settlers, O'Reilly took a census and "marked off," in his words, "the whole width of the valley,"³³ even though in doing so he just barely met Trutch's maximal specifications and allotted but a fraction of the acreage originally lost at Kamloops. At Savona's Ferry, O'Reilly acquiesced to the staking out of a reserve for the Bonaparte Secwepemc, although Trutch had not specifically instructed him to do so, but in the end he "came to the conclusion that the extent of land claimed by them was out of all proportion to their requirements,"³⁴ and reduced their claim from five square miles to one. At Nicola Lake, he allotted three reserves. At the west end of the lake he "had considerable difficulty in effecting any arrangement with [the] tribe, as they claimed a large extent of valuable land, but at last the chief consented that I should mark out about 1000 acres."³⁵ O'Reilly concluded his report by claiming that "the boundaries were defined ... so that no misunderstanding can arise [and that] the chiefs requested that they might be furnished with a map of their land."³⁶ As we shall see, O'Reilly's version of these events was not shared by the Nicola Lake Nlha7káp̓mx, but it was good enough for Trutch. "Mr. O'Reilly's adjustments of these reserves appears perfectly satisfactory," he wrote, "and I recommend that ... the remainder of the lands formerly included ... be declared open for pre-emption."³⁷

³¹ 19 June 1868, *Papers*, 49.

³² 5 August 1868, *Papers*, 50.

³³ O'Reilly to Trutch, 29 August 1868, *Papers*, 51.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ To Acting Colonial Secretary William A.G. Young, 14 September 1868, BCA, CC, reel B-1353, file 1289.

In May 1871 O'Reilly authorized magistrate and rancher J.C. Haynes to stake a pair of reserves at the confluence of the Similkameen and Ashnola Rivers, and at the head of Osoyoos Lake. In October he proceeded to the Omineca country where another mining rush was just getting under way and, after taking a census, allotted eight small reserves on the shores of Babine and Stuart Lakes.³⁸ In August 1872, on his return from the Omineca, O'Reilly visited the Tsilhqot'in, whose territory was then being surveyed as a possible route for the Canadian Pacific Railway. O'Reilly's report of his visit to the area has not been located, but memories of the Chilcotin War were still fresh. According to the new Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, George Walkem, the magistrate "strongly advised [the] Government to reserve the district from further pre-emption [pending] a more specific knowledge of the subject."³⁹ In January 1873, Powell advised Walkem that he was prepared to visit the area and select whatever land was necessary.⁴⁰ By this time, however, both governments were at loggerheads over Article 13, Powell was already in the process of withdrawing his survey crews, and no reserves were allotted. O'Reilly's last trip as magistrate into "Indian country" took place in 1874, when he accompanied Powell on his peace-keeping mission to the Okanagan.

PETER O'REILLY: INDIAN RESERVE COMMISSIONER

Some commentators, not the least of whom was Powell, questioned O'Reilly's appointment as Indian reserve commissioner, especially since his relations with Natives over the land question had been far from harmonious, most notably during and immediately after his tour through the Nicola in 1868. In December of that year John Good, the Anglican missionary at Lytton, advised Governor Anthony Musgrave that the Nicola chiefs were extremely dissatisfied with O'Reilly's stingy allotments and that — contra O'Reilly's own report that the reserves were "fixed upon by the chiefs" — they had "received [their reserves] from the beginning under protest."⁴¹ Citing O'Reilly's rejoinder that the Natives had already acquired "the richest and best watered tracts in the neighbourhood," and that Good had no business

³⁸ O'Reilly's 21 October 1871 report to Trutch, including the minutes of the decisions on these reserves, is found in *Papers*, 95.

³⁹ Walkem to Powell, 5 December 1872, *Papers*, 110-11.

⁴⁰ 6 December 1872, *Papers*, 111.

⁴¹ 17 December 1870, *Papers*, 87.

interfering, given that he had “never been to Nicola Lake,”⁴² the Colonial Secretary replied that he “[did] not think it advisable ... to make any change in the Indian Reserves already assigned.”⁴³ In a following letter Good rejected what he considered to be O’Reilly’s “distortion of the facts” — he had been to Nicola Lake on several occasions — and claimed that O’Reilly had ignored Nlha7káp̄mx burial sites, houses, and gardens and that the reserve at the west end of the lake was “practically useless” because it had no water supply.⁴⁴ Again the secretary wrote back with an enclosure from O’Reilly in which the magistrate proclaimed that his “instructions in laying out these reserves were to deal liberally with the Indians” and that he had done so “to the utmost extent which [he considered] justifiable in the public interest, and far more so than with their present and apparently decreasing numbers the Indians there can ever really require.”⁴⁵ Good’s complaint was dismissed, but when Sproat visited Nicola Lake in 1878 he could not figure out what O’Reilly had done, and the chiefs confirmed everything the missionary had said. As far as the “very serious controversy” was concerned, then, it seems that O’Reilly was no innocent bystander.

In the end, O’Reilly’s appointment must be seen as a consequence of two basic and pragmatic considerations: (1) Ottawa “effect[ed] a saving as [he was] already in the receipt of a retiring allowance,” and it could, by an earlier agreement between the two governments, “avail itself ... of the services of any [retired County Court judge] provided there [was] no diminution of salary ... or rank;”⁴⁶ and (2) he was recommended by his brother-in-law, and now lieutenant governor, Joseph Trutch. In short, O’Reilly came cheap, and the provincial government trusted him in a way that it had never trusted Sproat. O’Reilly’s instructions were laid out in a Department of Indian Affairs memo in August 1880, and, to a point, they mirrored Sproat’s. In allotting reserve land he was “to have special regards to the habits, wants and pursuits of the [Indians,] to assist [them] to raise themselves in the social and moral scale ... encourage them in any branch of industry [and to ensure] an ample provision of water.” He was not to interfere with “any tribal arrangements ... cause any violent

⁴² O’Reilly to Musgrave, 12 January 1871, *Papers*, 88.

⁴³ Colonial Secretary Philip J. Hankin to Good, 18 January 1871, *Papers*, 89.

⁴⁴ Good to Hankin, 3 February 1871, *Papers*, 89.

⁴⁵ O’Reilly to Hankin, 4 March 1871, *Papers*, 91.

⁴⁶ Powell to Prime Minister John A. MacDonal, 30 December 1880, *Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs*, (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs), 1880, xx. Hereafter referred to as *Annual Report* (year not given if same as communication).

or sudden change in [their] habits [or] to divert [them] from any legitimate pursuits or occupations." But underlining all of this — and the source of Powell's concern — he was to "be guided by the spirit of the terms of Union."⁴⁷ A key provision — which had not applied to Sproat, and about which Powell also objected (to no avail) — was that, while O'Reilly was authorized to allot land according to his "own discretion," he was to do so under the joint guidance of the Indian Superintendent for the province and the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, and no reserve so allotted could be scheduled until approved by both parties. In addition, he was to familiarize himself with Sproat's recommendations made between 1877 and 1879. While he was to be guided by those recommendations in areas where reserves had already been staked, he was expected to "adjust" any that he felt were out of proportion to Native requirements or that interfered with "the [legitimate] claims of the white settlers."⁴⁸ Armed with these guidelines and his experiences as magistrate, he took to the field in the spring of 1881.

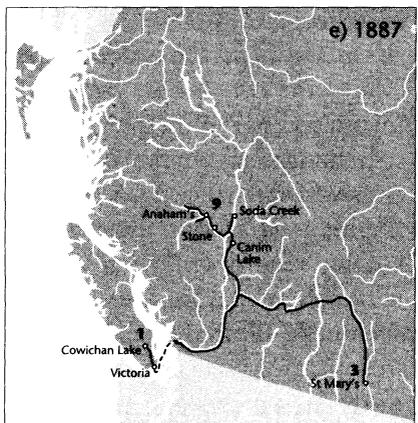
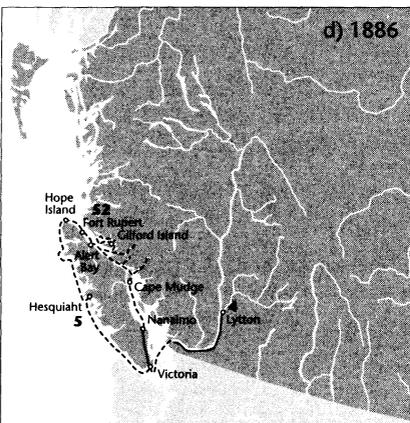
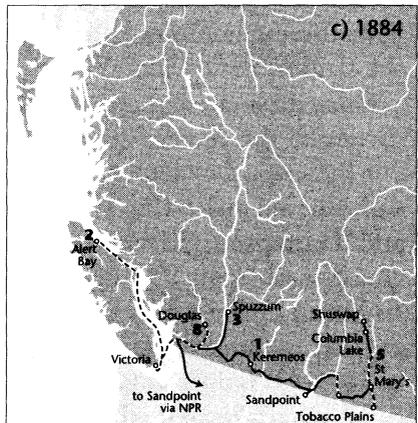
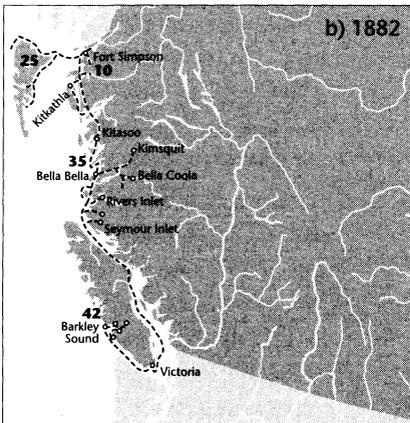
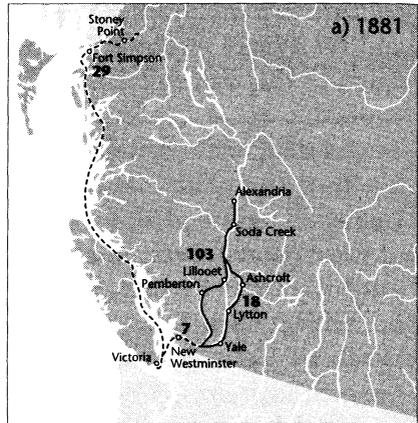
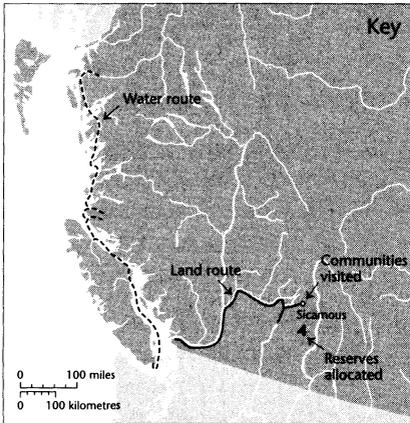
Over the next eighteen years, O'Reilly made twenty-six separate sorties as the reserve commissioner from Point Ellice (Map 1A-0), but the essential elements of his *modus operandi* can be adequately summarized by looking at the journeys of just four years: to the Fraser and Thompsons River Canyons, the Cariboo, and the Northwest Coast in 1881; to Vancouver Island, the Queen Charlotte Islands, and the Central Coast in 1882; to the Kootenays and the Okanagan in 1884; and to the Okanagan and the Central and Northwest Coasts in 1888. O'Reilly's surveys during the 1881, 1882, and 1884 seasons suffice to illustrate both the challenges he faced (as the cartographic I) as he tried to format abstract Cartesian spatial principles (of the cartographic eye) to the specificities of Aboriginal land tenure on the ground and the ordering system that he used to accomplish this. They also reveal how he handled the (re)allocation of reserves in inland areas previously visited by Sproat and the Joint Commissioners.

I then consider the Native reaction to O'Reilly's travels during these first three field seasons. That response was, of course, fragmented; it was filtered through the texts of a Euro-Canadian written record, and there was little or no inter-tribal unity to begin with. These seasons accounted for over one-third of the total reserves eventually allotted by O'Reilly, and illustrate the basic character and

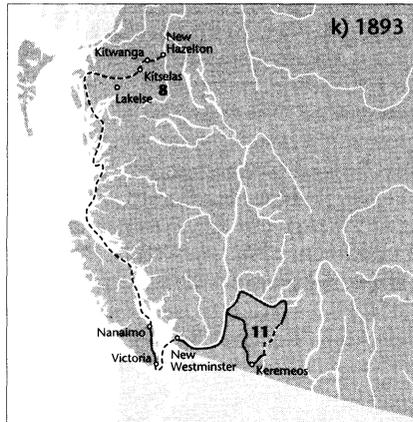
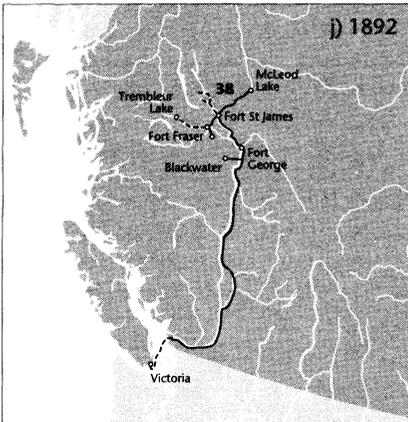
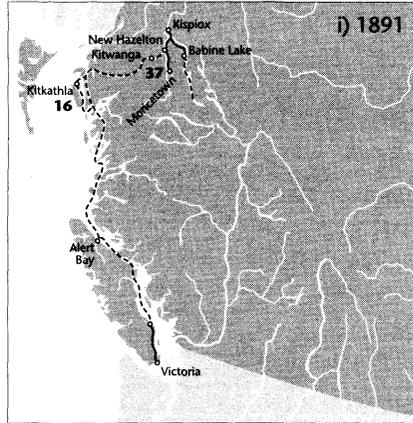
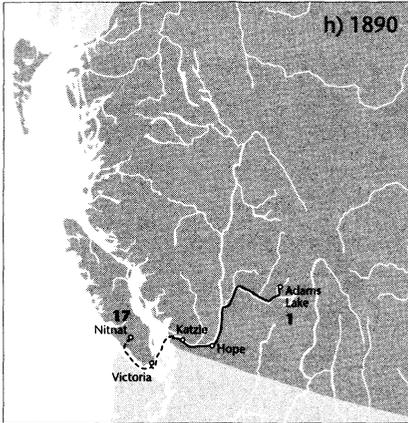
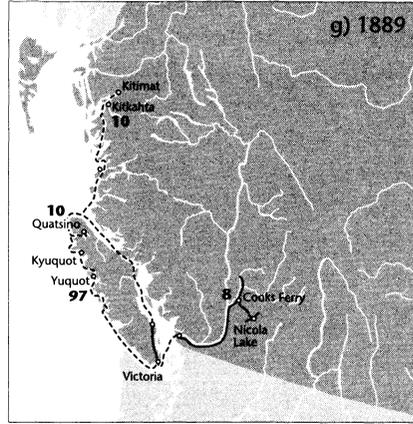
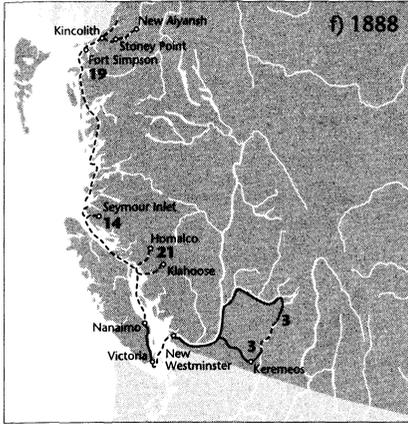
⁴⁷ MacDonald to O'Reilly, 9 August 1880, NAC, DIA, RG10, reel C-10125, vol. 3716, file 22195.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

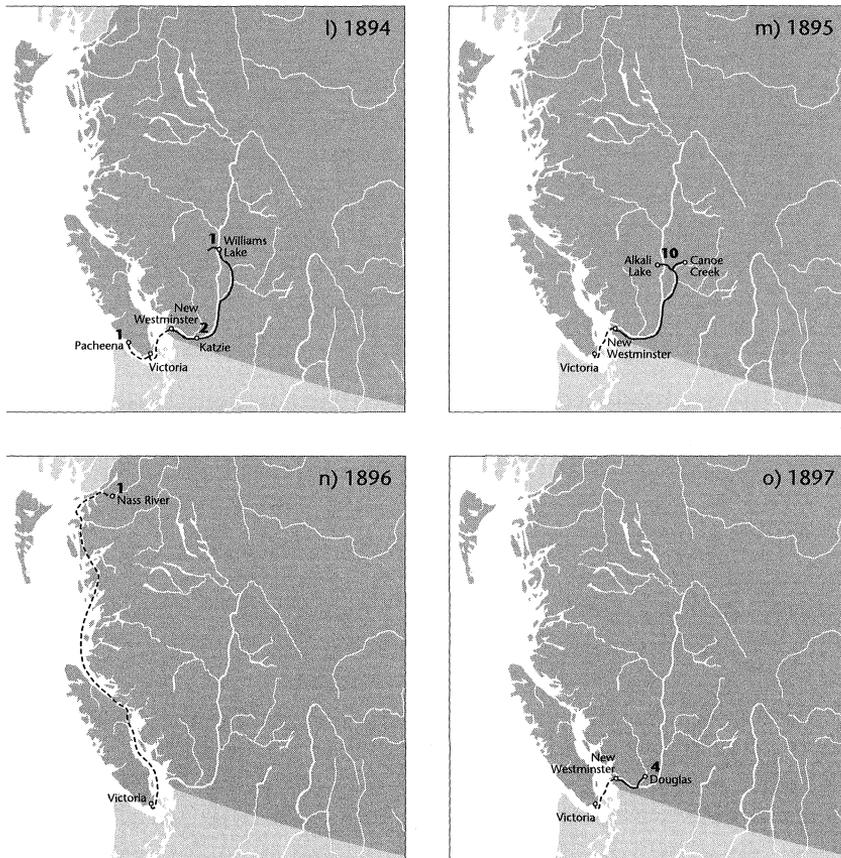
MAP 1 (a-e)



MAP 1 (f-k)



MAP 1 (l-o)



Map 1 (a-o): O'Reilly's journeys as Indian Reserve Commissioner, 1881 through 1897. Excepting transfer points (like New Westminster, Nanaimo, or Sandpoint, Id.), named locations identify the areas in which O'Reilly allotted the majority of reserves on that trip. The numbers indicate the total reserves allotted on each circuit. No reserves were allotted in 1883, 1885, or 1898. Compiled by author from the Federal Collection, Minutes of Decision, Correspondence, and Sketches (hereafter abbreviated as FC), Indian Land Registry Nos. (hereafter abbreviated as ILR) B-64642 through B-64649, vols. 8 through 14 [held at the Regional Office, Department of Indian Affairs, Vancouver (hereafter abbreviated as DIA[RO])]; the *Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs) (hereafter referred to as *Annual Report*), 1881 through 1898; and the O'Reilly Diaries, O'Reilly Collection (hereafter abbreviated as OC), BCA, reels 12a and 13a.

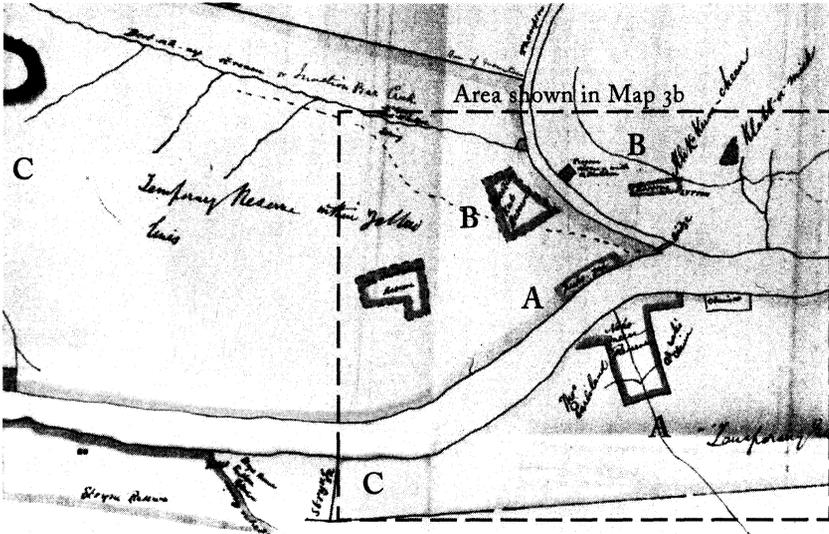
scope of Native resistance to his activities. Particular attention is directed towards O'Reilly's surveys on the Northwest Coast in 1881 and 1882, and in the Kootenays in 1884 as well as to the tactics used by the provincial government to counter the resistance that surfaced in those areas in 1887. Finally, I turn to O'Reilly's 1888 season, which allows me to evaluate the changes, if any, to his procedures in the wake of these disputes. His travels during this season also show how he handled reserve allocation in coastal territories previously visited by Sproat, and they highlight the conditions that prompted O'Reilly to revisit some of his own earlier allotments.

TRAVELS FROM POINT ELLICE

Beginning at the Harrison River in 1881, and working his way up the Fraser and Thompson River Canyons, O'Reilly found himself in places already negotiated by Sproat. In the canyons Sproat had allotted four categories of reserves: (1) "absolute" reserves, with definite boundaries, and which were often affirmations of scheduled colonial reserves; (2) "provisional" reserves,⁴⁹ with indefinite boundaries pending formal survey, and which often included villages and cultivated areas previously staked, but not scheduled, by the Royal Engineers or magistrates; (3) "commonages," which were larger tracts of grazing land intended for joint use by two or more tribal groups or by both Natives and settlers; and (4) "temporary" reserves, more extensive tracts that were Sproat's answer to the problem of "not be[ing] able to find suitable unoccupied agricultural land, with irrigation water [and his inability] to get the government to act in the matter. [These tracts of land were] subject to legal claims and definite assignments of reserves [at some future date]."⁵⁰ For the most part, O'Reilly confirmed Sproat's absolute reserves and used his provisional allotments (usually with some minor modifications but occasionally with enlargements) as the template for his additions. But he cancelled all ten of Sproat's temporary reserves and made no mention of his commonages, although portions of some of them, such as those allotted to the Oregon Jack and Lytton (Map 2a) Nlha7káp̄mx, were included within O'Reilly's additions. At Bonaparte, for example, Sproat had confirmed O'Reilly's 1868 allotment as an absolute reserve in 1878, but he had surrounded it with a

⁴⁹ Sproat does not use the terms "provisional" or "absolute" in his minutes of decision in the canyons, but they are consistent with the classificatory scheme he used throughout the areas he visited.

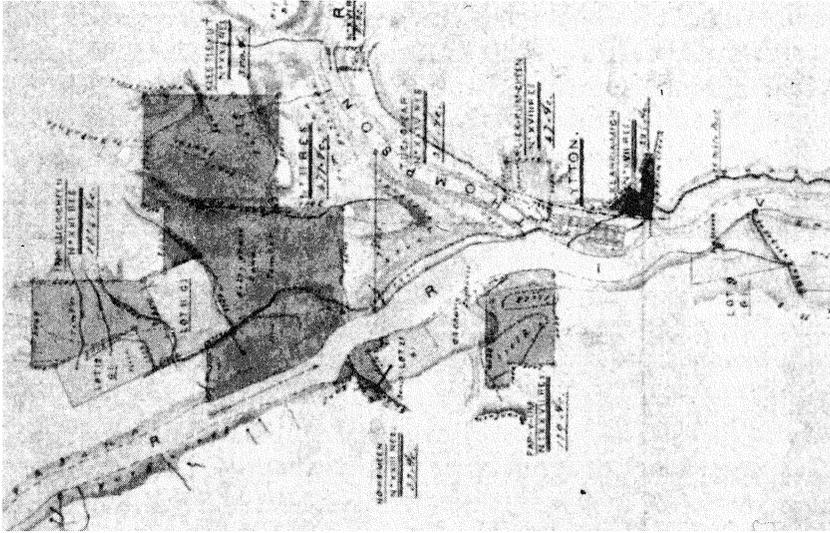
⁵⁰ 10 July 1878, DIA[RO], FC, *IWB* No. 2, ILR B-64639, vol. 5/2, p. 18.



Map 2a: Portion of Gilbert Sproat's untitled 1878 sketch of reserves for the Lytton Indians (DIA[RO], FC, Sproat's *Interrupted Work Book* [hereafter abbreviated as *IWB*] no. 2, ILR B-64639, vol. 5/2, p. 21) with alphabetic superscripts and inset by author. It shows absolute reserves (solid shaded borders, as at A), provisional reserves (dotted shaded borders, as at B), and temporary reserves (extensive areas in solid shaded borders, as at C). As shown here, some of these reserves are not named, and no acreages are given. Sproat appears to have assigned temporary reserve acreage on the basis of how many inches of water he deemed necessary for the Natives, but what formula he used to arrive at his figures is unclear.

temporary reserve covering almost the entire valley. O'Reilly cancelled this temporary reserve in 1881 but compensated with additional reserves at Hat Creek and enlarged his original 1868 allotment at Bonaparte. All told, O'Reilly modified Sproat's grid along similar lines at Scowlitz, Yale, Lytton (Map 2b), Ashcoft, and Bonaparte.

More significant than the allocations per se, however, was the ordering system that O'Reilly imposed on them. As had Sproat, O'Reilly made it a practice to allot reserves according to specific tribal groups living in defined local areas. Unlike Sproat, however, O'Reilly also named and numbered each reserve, incorporating them, and Sproat's absolute and provisional allocations, into a sequential numerical record so that if he had to revisit the area later new reserves could be added consecutively. Excepting those defined by fixed waterways, reserve boundaries were straightened out. Each allocation was enumerated in chains and acres, and it was recorded in an official minute of decision. Each was sketched by one of O'Reilly's assistants (usually a draughtsman or apprentice surveyor), hand coloured (typi-



Map 2b: Portion of William Jemmett's 1887 *Plan of the Lytton Indian Reserves* (true canvas copy of Canadian Land Survey Records plan [hereafter abbreviated as CLSR] BC7032), covering area insetted in Map 2a above. It shows pre-emptions (identified by lot), Sproat's absolute and provisional reserves (light shaded areas) confirmed by O'Reilly, and O'Reilly's additions (dark shaded areas) in 1881. As shown here, some of O'Reilly's additions were informed by Sproat's provisional allotments, and some were of his own making. Acreages are included, and all of them are named and numbered consecutively, in this case in Roman numerals. In his own minutes of decision, O'Reilly annotated Sproat's temporary reserves as "not confirmed."

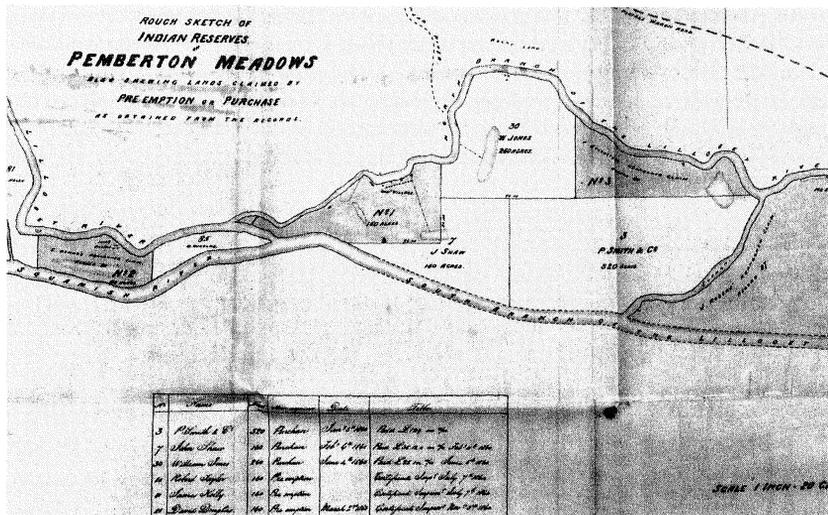
cally using red for old reserves, green for O'Reilly's additions, and yellow for pre-emptions), and annotated with hachuring and other standardized symbols to indicate the general topography of the reserve. A secretary also wrote detailed field minutes, which included most of the information in the minutes of decision and O'Reilly's observations on the general physical and social conditions of each tribe.

In July 1881, on his first assignment in "new territories," O'Reilly went to the Lillooet and Cariboo Districts and, from the outset, confronted the same problem that had bedevilled Sproat elsewhere: how and where to allot reserves in a region in which all the best land had been pre-empted by settlers. At Pavilion he found that the "most suitable land has been purchased by white settlers";⁵¹ and at Bridge River he "found it altogether impossible to provide sufficient land for their requirements."⁵² In almost every instance, however, the "un-

⁵¹ O'Reilly to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 4 February 1882, *Annual Report*, 70.

⁵² 23 February 1882, *Annual Report*, 75.

availability” of land was more a consequence of poor record-keeping during the colonial period than it was of the lack of land per se. At Fountain he could find no record of the reserve allotted in the 1860s (which had since been pre-empted), even though the original stakes were still in place; and at Lillooet he reported that “[t]he Indians stated that the land on which their village stood was given to them in the year 1859 or 1860 by the Governor [Douglas], but there [did] not appear to have been any record made of this fact, and subsequently the land ... was laid out in lots.”⁵³ In some instances O’Reilly improvised as best he could. At Pavilion he allotted four graveyards even though they were on private land; at Pemberton he shoehorned reserves into unimproved pre-emptions (Map 3); and at Lillooet he evicted some Chinese miners, who claimed to have purchased their claim from a local Native, on the grounds that the “the Indians had no power to sell the land ... and that they [had] to discontinue their mining operations.”⁵⁴ Elsewhere he seems to have been rushed or careless. At Bridge River, “finding it impossible within the limited



Map 3: Unidentified author’s 1881 *Rough Sketch of Indian Reserves on Pemberton Meadows* (DIA[RO], FC, O’Reilly’s *Minutes of Decision, Correspondence and Sketches* [hereafter abbreviated as *MDCS*], ILR B-64643, vol. 8, p. 196). As when he was magistrate, O’Reilly had little sympathy for settlers who had failed to improve their pre-emptions, and none for those who acquired them illegally. At Pemberton, unimproved alienations provided a convenient framework for reserves Nequatque 1, 2, and 3.

⁵³ 18 February 1882, *Annual Report*, 72.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

time at [his] disposal to define separately the numerous small patches under cultivation, [he reserved] the entire width ... of the valley";⁵⁵ at Alexandria he found that in order to embrace cultivated sites he had to define an area "larger than required and worthless";⁵⁶ and at Douglas, finding no chiefs present, he deferred some of the reserves until some future opportunity.

Altogether, O'Reilly spent about four months allotting 121 reserves, 18 of which were additions to Sproat's grid along the Fraser and Thompson Rivers between Scowlitz and Bonaparte. Ninety-four were new reserves, averaging 795 acres in size, between Pemberton and Alexandria, and a handful of these were enlargements of old reserves staked, but not scheduled, by Douglas's magistrates around Clinton and Canim Lake. The remaining nine were designated as "exclusive [Native] fisheries"—a category unique to O'Reilly—but the Department of Fisheries and Oceans quickly protested that, by prohibiting public access to waterways, the commissioner was exceeding his authority. None of them were ever confirmed as reserves, and O'Reilly ceased such allotments thereafter. As in the canyons, each reserve was named, enumerated, and sketched, and each was accompanied by a detailed field minute and minute of decision. The field minutes were intended to provide census and other data for the Department of Indian Affairs, while the minutes of decision and the sketches provided all the information necessary for the formal surveys. Because the sketches and minutes of decision had to be sent to both the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs (and sometimes, apparently, to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans) in Ottawa and the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works in Victoria for preliminary approval, formal surveys usually trailed O'Reilly's visits by at least a season or two, and often by as many as six or seven.

This nexus of initial survey, field minute, minute of decision, sketch, preliminary approval, and formal survey not only formalized the chronology of reserve allocation in British Columbia, but it also had the accumulative effect of reducing topographically and culturally distinct cultural spaces to a homogenizing, classificatory, measurable, and endlessly flexible Cartesian grid. By not delineating anything "outside" the reserves themselves, moreover, the sketches conveyed that sense of "detachment" from terra firma that the visual logic of the cartographic eye prefigured. Indeed, each sketch could be viewed

⁵⁵ 23 February 1882, *Annual Report*, 73.

⁵⁶ Cited in Elizabeth Furniss's *Changing Ways* (Quesnel: Quesnel School District 28, 1993), 55.

as a sort of two-dimensional topographical art, enframing idealized places in rather the same way that landscape artists enframed ideal space in panoramic picturesque paintings.⁵⁷ As the cartographic I, O'Reilly located, delimited, and inscribed the reserves on the ground, while his draughtsmen and secretaries quantified and aestheticized their "contents" on the map and in the statistical record. In this manner did the bicameral optic of the cartographic eye/I consolidate visual control over hitherto alternative cultural spaces, opening them up to surveillance by a fixed and central observer that could be located, literally and figuratively, "anywhere."

While O'Reilly was cautioned not to allot exclusive fisheries he was still under instructions from Ottawa "not to disturb the Indians in the possession of any ... fishing stations occupied by them."⁵⁸ In October 1881, he found himself at the mouth of the Nass, smack in the middle of one of the richest Native fisheries on the Coast. O'Reilly's improvisation was to disperse smaller reserves in order to include the best sites, and at Kincolith, "in the presence of [Reverend] Shute [he] had several conversations with the Indians [before] deeming it advisable to examine the fisheries and hear what [they] had to say at the different villages."⁵⁹ He reported that the Nisga'a "subchiefs were very anxious that reserves be made for their individual use [but that he] declined to do so [because] the lands were assigned for the use of the tribe collectively, and not for the particular use of any family."⁶⁰ At Port Simpson, likewise, he proposed to treat the Tsimshian at that locality and at Metlakatla "as one tribe,"⁶¹ but he rejected their claim to the entire peninsula on the grounds that it was not the government's intention "to lock up so large an extent of country of no practical use to them."⁶² He did acquiesce to a reserve of some 110 square miles — about one-third of the peninsula and the largest reserve he would ever allot — but perhaps only because it was, in his opinion, "of a very worthless character."⁶³ At Stoney Point, a valuable oolichan fishery on the Nass River, O'Reilly found an alienation that he believed should never have been allowed, but since it had been purchased by Croasdaile's

⁵⁷ The "picturesque" was the definitive aesthetic of imperialism and early colonialism. For a slightly different take than Ryan's *Cartographic Eye*, I recommend Bernard Smith's *European Vision and the South Pacific*, 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

⁵⁸ MacDonald to O'Reilly, 9 August 1880, NAC, DIA, RG10, r6el C-10125, vol. 3716, file 22195.

⁵⁹ O'Reilly to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 25 March 1882, *Annual Report*, 83.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁶¹ 8 April 1882, *Annual Report*, 88.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 90.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Cannery, he simply wrapped the reserve around it (Maps 4a and b). As far as Native complaints that such canneries were taking all their fish were concerned, O'Reilly stated that "as a result of [his observations no] valid ground exist[ed] for the supposition that the canneries ... interfere[d] with the run of salmon. [But] the Indians ... deriv[ed] great advantages [from] industries of this class [anyway]."⁶⁴ O'Reilly spent three weeks on the Northwest Coast allotting 29 separate reserves averaging, not counting the Tsimshian Peninsula, 341 acres each, before returning to Victoria.

In May 1882, O'Reilly visited the west coast of Vancouver Island, scattering 42 reserves, averaging 149 acres each, around Barkley Sound. At Dodger Cove he reported that he met with the Ohiet chief Keeshan, to whom he "explained [the government's] desire ... that ... they be fairly and liberally dealt with" and that the chief "expressed his satisfaction ... at [O'Reilly's] visit and the prospect of having their fishing stations secured to them."⁶⁵ At Seshart he dismissed Nuuchah-nulth complaints over the Alberni Mill on the grounds that the site had been acquired by a legal sale, and "after a good deal of conversation [the chief] pointed out the various places [he] was desirous of acquiring, nearly all of which were reserved."⁶⁶ At Opetchisaht he received a similar complaint, but this time, finding no official records, he "had no hesitation in declaring [the disputed alienation] as part of [the] Indian Reserve."⁶⁷

After finishing the Barkley Sound allotments, O'Reilly returned to Point Ellice and then went to the Queen Charlotte Islands, where he spent two weeks laying out 25 reserves, with an average size of 139 acres. In August he proceeded to Rivers, Smith, and Seymour Inlets. He reported having "a long and friendly conversation" with the Oweekeno chief Pootlass, who showed him the land he wanted and who was apparently "well pleased"⁶⁸ when O'Reilly complied with his requests. At Wyclese he had some doubts as to the legality of the cannery's alienation but again concluded that, since it would encourage the same material improvement he had forecast on the Nass, it ought to be allowed to continue operating. Apparently "the Indians had no objections."⁶⁹ At Seymour Inlet, however, the

⁶⁴ 25 March 1882, *Annual Report*, 84.

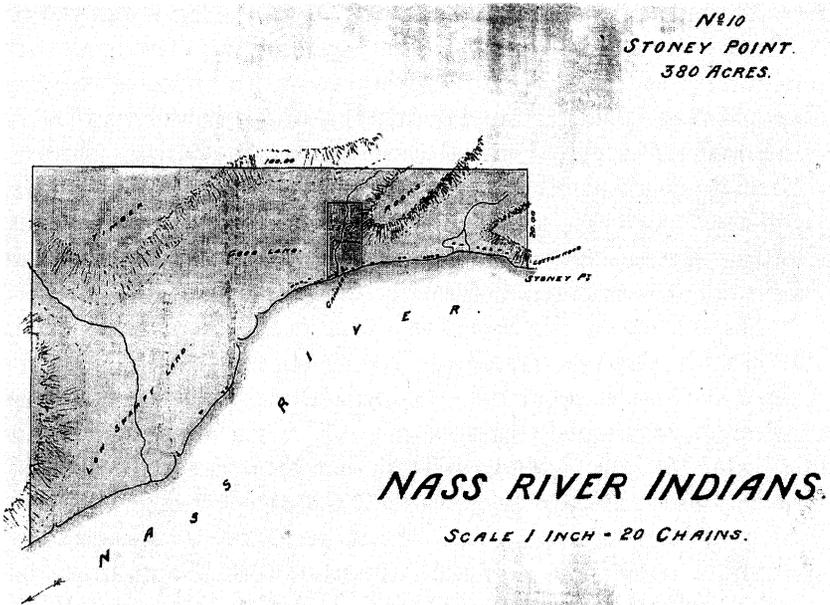
⁶⁵ 6 October 1882, *Annual Report*, 94.

⁶⁶ 9 October 1882, *Annual Report*, 96.

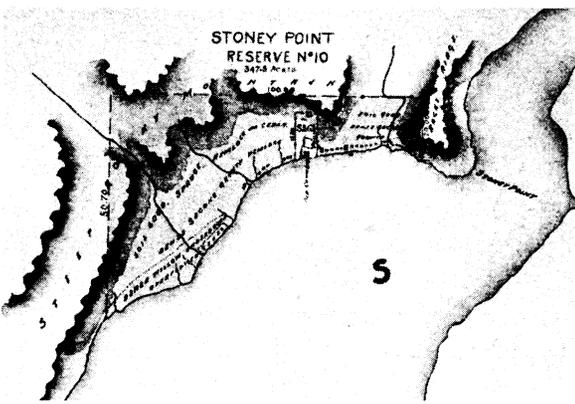
⁶⁷ 11 October 1882, *Annual Report*, 98.

⁶⁸ 30 October 1882, *Annual Report*, 111.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*



Map 4a: Unidentified author's 1881 *Stoney Point* (DIA[RO], FC, MDCS, ILR B-64643, vol. 8, p. 111). Coloured sketches were prepared in the field by one of O'Reilly's assistants and, along with the minutes of decision, would be used as a template for the formal surveys. These surveys were then translated into finished plans, as shown in Map 4b below.



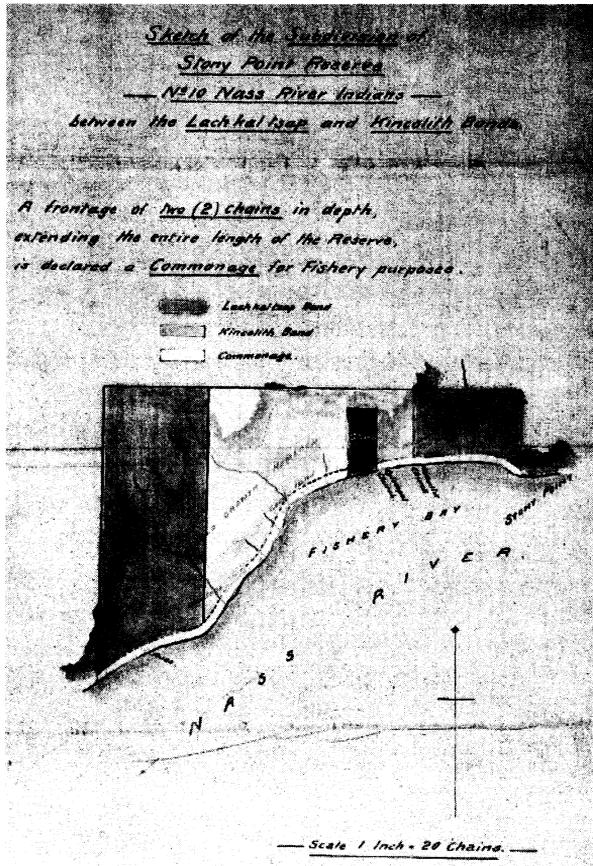
Map 4b: Portion of F.A. Devereaux's 1887 *Plan No. 3 of the Nass River Indian Reserves* (true canvas copy CLSR BC128). There was often considerable lag time between O'Reilly's initial visit and the formal survey (at Stoney Point, five years). Dominion surveyors would go to work only after the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs and

the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works had given preliminary approval to the minutes of decision and sketches (Map 4a above). Finished plans were coloured and would indicate the acreage, chains, and the general biotic and physiographic characteristics of the reserves. They were retraced in triplicate: one each for the federal and provincial governments, and the third for the tribe or band (but usually kept by the Indian Agent). Co-signed by O'Reilly, the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works and the surveyor, they provided the visual confirmation of the approved allotments.

Map 4c: Ashdown Green's 1906 *Sketch of the Subdivision of the Stoney Point Reserve* (DIA[RO], FC, MDCS, ILR B-64650, vol. 15, p. 252), showing the two-chain commonage along the river (which, curiously, neither the sketch nor Devereaux's finished plan [Maps 4a-b] showed) and a further subdivision between areas designated for the Kincolith and Lachkalsap Nisga'a, respectively. O'Reilly's allotment did not properly accommodate the fact that it was never a Tsimshian site, and it exacerbated differences between the two Nisga'a communities. The Kincolith were under the influence of the missionaries and resigned to campaigning for larger reserves, while

the Lachkalsap refused to consider reserves at all until the issue of title had been addressed. This re-survey was a valiant, if ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to resolve this difference. The 1995 Nisga'a Agreement-in-Principle, should it become law, will be the culmination of a century and a quarter of inter- and intra-national conflict first sparked, in large part, by O'Reilly's 'improvisations' at Stoney Point in 1881.

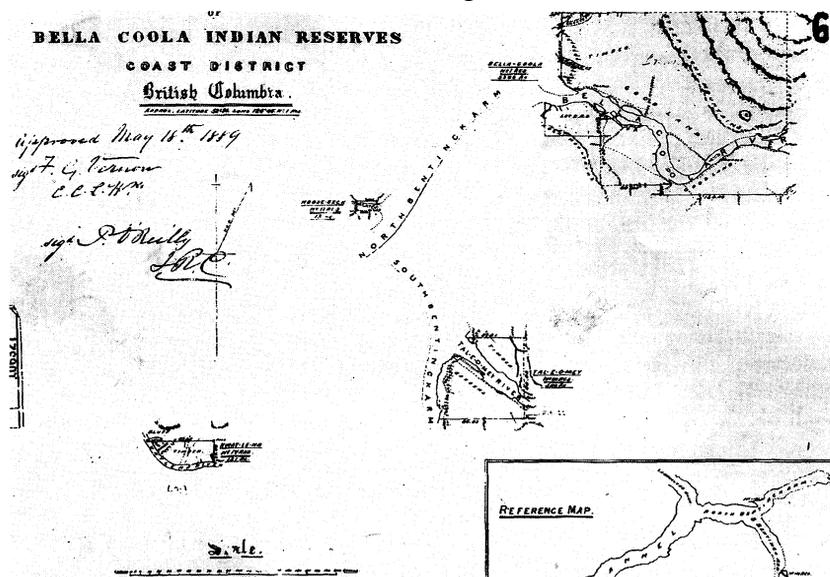
cartographic I seems to have run into a snag. When O'Reilly arrived, the Nahkwockto chief Marqua was away, and while those present allowed the commissioner to mark out their main village site and graveyard at Kequesta, he was told that "they [had] heard [he] was coming and [had] decided amongst themselves not to make known [the location of] their fisheries."⁷⁰ O'Reilly reported that he tried to persuade them to change their minds but had no success in doing so and, instead, met with George Blenkinsop, the Indian agent, and



⁷⁰ 28 October 1882, *Annual Report*, 109.

asked him to ascertain the location of their fisheries and to communicate that information to him at his earliest convenience.

O'Reilly then sailed north to the central coast. At Bella Coola he reported that Chief Onchanny told him that he "had been told by his father that the whole country was theirs, but that he [now] knows it belongs to the Queen" and that "[the chief] accompanied [him] while [he] made an exhaustive examination of the surrounding country, and with [the chief's] entire concurrence"⁷¹ allotted four small reserves on North and South Bentinck Arms (Map 5). At Kitasoo he superimposed the main village reserve over an illegal pre-emption, evidently meeting no objections from either the Tsimshian or the pre-emptor, who apparently said that "his house was of no great value, and one place would suit him as well as another."⁷² At Kitkathla he cancelled an alienation in the middle of the principal village because no improvements had been made but, after realizing that he could not visit the numerous offshore fishing stations "without the aid of a



Map 5: William Jemmett's 1889 *Plan of Bella Coola Indian Reserves* (true canvas copy British Columbia Lands, Surveyor General Branch, Plans Vault [Indian Reserves] plan CT6). It was common practice to consolidate dispersed reserves intended for individual tribal groups on a single sheet. This plan is one of the better examples of how the cartographic eye arrogates visual power over hitherto alternative cultural spaces, subdividing, reclassifying, reorganizing, and then opening them up to surveillance by a fixed and central observer.

⁷¹ 1 November 1882, *Annual Report*, 114.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 118.

steamer was reluctantly compelled to abandon the idea of completing the reserves until some future opportunity.”⁷³ Instead, he reconnoitered the Tsimshian Peninsula and allotted ten additional reserves that he had been unable to complete in 1881. Altogether, O’Reilly spent about six weeks on the middle and northern coasts allotting 77 reserves, averaging 241 acres in size. He reported confidently (if a little prematurely) that “[t]his completes the reserves of all the Indian tribes on the coast of British Columbia, north of Vancouver Island, that I am aware of, excepting the Kitlope tribe.”⁷⁴

In general — and in marked contrast to Sproat — O’Reilly’s minutes of decision were fairly austere, but as he was one of the principal contacts between the Native and non-Native communities it was almost inevitable that some of his own quasi-ethnographic musings would leak through. The Pavilion Stl’atl’imx, he wrote, were “a tribe ... not well behaved, and do not stand well with their white neighbours, being addicted to drinking and gambling, and are accredited with horse stealing; the chief possesses but little influence over them;”⁷⁵ while the Pacheena Ditidaht “would be a prosperous community ... were it not for their hard-earned money [being] wasted in drinking, gambling, and making potlatches.”⁷⁶ At Bella Coola, where the Nuxalk had apparently measured up to agrarian expectations, he was more deferential, suggesting that while “little or no attempt has been made to Christianize these people [they] are industrious and are noted ... for producing the finest quantity of potatoes and other vegetables.”⁷⁷ As a rule he kept his “government work” out of his private letters,⁷⁸ but in July 1882 he wrote Caroline from Masset that “[t]he Hydah [sic] Indians are physically the finest tribe on the coast [and] there are wonderful specimens of carving in wood, to be seen at all the old villages.”⁷⁹ That said, O’Reilly’s sparse “ethnographic” commentary was not merely cosmetic to his prime directive of allotting reserves. O’Reilly was one of the Department of Indian Affairs’ informants, and his commentary provided a way of “colouring” his allocations culturally in rather the same way that his draughtsmen

⁷³ November 7 1882, *Annual Report*, 120.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁷⁵ February 24 1882, *Annual Report*, 70.

⁷⁶ October 18 1882, *Annual Report*, 103.

⁷⁷ November 1 1882, *Annual Report*, 115.

⁷⁸ O’Reilly kept his professional capacities as magistrate, gold commissioner, and Indian reserve commissioner separate from his personal affairs. Excepting the many asides on the physical and mental duress of his travels, the number of times that he wrote in his personal letters about his “government work” can be counted on both hands.

⁷⁹ 7 July 1882, BCA, OC, file AE OR3 OR3.

coloured their sketches for classificatory and aesthetic purposes. In short, it enhanced the incorporation of qualitative information into what was otherwise, at base, a quantitative ordering system.

Aside from the mode of travel, O'Reilly's *modus operandi* along the coast was no different than that worked out in the Fraser and Thompson River Canyons or in the Cariboo, but the visual record included an added twist. Because most coastal reserves (and, for that matter, some smaller inland reserves) averaged a few tens of acres and were dispersed over a wide area, draughtsmen and surveyors initiated the practice of mounting groups of reserves designated for specific tribal groups on a single sheet (see Maps 5 and 10b). Only two finished sheets, for example, were required to display all twenty-five reserves allotted on the Queen Charlotte Islands. Partly, this was a matter of economy, but its ideological effect was significant. The grouping of several reserves on a single sheet opened up geographically disparate allocations to visual surveillance and control at a single glance, and it helped dispel the notion that these tribes or bands ever constituted contiguous nations in their own right. Finished plans of multiple reserves in coastal areas almost always included small-scale insets, but this was not intended to suggest any kind of spatial continuity between the reserves. Rather, the whole effect of these plans was to enforce the notion that these reserves had always been "pieces." It was no longer Native peoples, but rather O'Reilly's travels and the cartography they constructed, that provided the material and conceptual linkages between the allotments.

In April 1884, O'Reilly travelled up the lower Fraser, adding reserves to Sproat's allocations at Chehalis and allotting the reserves at Douglas that he had deferred in 1881, and then returned to the Fraser Canyon. At Spuzzum he made no mention of the commonage, but enlarged one of Sproat's absolute reserves. In July he went to the Kootenays, where no reserves had yet been allotted. He reported that he met with Ktunaxa chief Isadore at St Mary's but that he could not, as he would normally do, take a proper census, because "the habits of the Kootenay Indians have in the past been migratory," and "owing to [Isadore's] excessive demands, and not being provided with a competent interpreter, [he] decided to defer consideration of the land question"⁸⁰ and instead proceeded to Tobacco Plains. There he secured an interpreter and met with the sub-chief David, whom he

⁸⁰ O'Reilly to Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works George F. Vernon, 18 December 1884, NAC, DIA, RG10, reel C-13900, vol. 1275, file 265.

found equally “unreasonable in his demands ... claiming the whole country from the [1846] boundary line to the Columbia Lakes.”⁸¹ Nevertheless, O’Reilly allotted five reserves at St Mary’s, the Plains, and on the Columbia Lakes, totalling 41,031 acres, and he reported that Isadore “expressed himself satisfied”⁸² with these arrangements.

On his return from the Kootenays, O’Reilly visited the Similkameen District and, again, found himself in a fragmented landscape previously reworked by Sproat (Map 7a). Here Sproat had allotted only two classes of reserves: (1) several absolute reserves between Osoyoos and Princeton (including confirmations of two colonial reserves outside Princeton and Haynes’s 1871 allotment at the confluence of the Ashnola River [Map 7d]); and (2) one extensive temporary reserve on both banks of the Similkameen River between the mouth of the Ashnola and the old customs house just north of Nighthawk, Washington. O’Reilly wrote that “[f]rom this tract so temporarily reserved I allotted ... 1,920 acres” (Map 7b), most of which he admitted was “of small value, being steep hillside, but [which would] supply a run for cattle and horses.”⁸³ The rest of the temporary was cancelled outright, but he left the balance of Sproat’s grid untouched. In October he proceeded to Alert Bay, where Sproat had provisionally allotted almost all of Cormorant Island to the Nimpkish in 1879 even though most of it, including the Nimpkish village, had been leased in 1870. O’Reilly cancelled Sproat’s provisional reserve, substituting two smaller allotments (one encompassing the village and one the graveyard) together containing fifty-two acres.

CONTESTING THE CARTESIAN GAZE: NATIVE RESPONSES TO O’REILLY’S VISITS

To peruse O’Reilly’s minutes from his first three field seasons one could easily conclude, as must have his superiors, that the commissioner (the cartographic I) had little difficulty in accommodating Native communities to a geometric cadastral grid (the space of the cartographic eye). Premier William Smithe, for example, was clearly pleased with the progress to that point, writing in November 1884 that, since O’Reilly had replaced Sproat, “a much

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Cited in Powell to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 26 November 1887, *Annual Report*, p. xci.

⁸³ O’Reilly to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 20 January 1885, *Annual Report*, 1886, 183-84.

fairer and more accurate appreciation of the duties and responsibilities of the office has been displayed.”⁸⁴ Indeed, none of the reserves allotted by Sproat or the Joint Commission had been approved by the Departments of Lands and Works when Sproat resigned, but of the total 754 that had been laid out by the end of 1884, 477 had been surveyed and 239 of those gazetted.⁸⁵ Yet O’Reilly’s minutes conveyed only one side of the story. When he stated, as he often did, that he engaged in “long and friendly” conversations with the chiefs, and that they were “well satisfied” with the reserves allotted, this tells us little or nothing about what was understood in the field. At Kimsquit, to take but one example, he claimed that Chiefs Malakuse and Yaltouse, “after a lengthened conversation, accompanied [him], and pointed out the land they wished to have set apart for them.”⁸⁶ But this must be balanced against Powell’s observation that the Nuxalk had “never recovered from the destructive bombardment of their village five years ago by the *Rocket*”⁸⁷ and O’Reilly’s own claim that they had “retain[ed] their primitive habits and customs to a larger extent than most tribes on the coast.”⁸⁸ It is quite unlikely they ever understood O’Reilly’s intentions, much less the “legality” of his actions.

As early as late 1882, in fact, Native peoples were peppering Powell with solicitations of their own. According to the Bonaparte Secwepemc, for example, O’Reilly “did not come to ... where all the Indians were gathered ... for him ... [at Bonaparte in 1881] but ... went to Hat Creek,” and, when they sent an emissary to meet him there, “they were answered that all was already settled ... The Indians find it strange that [O’Reilly] settles with them without ever asking what they want.”⁸⁹ At Port Simpson, wrote Thomas Crosby, the Methodist missionary, “much dissatisfaction ha[d] arisen from the way in which [O’Reilly] laid out what he called reserves. In many cases the Indians have not been consulted at all [and when they] asked for a Council to talk the matter over, he told them he had no time to hear them.”⁹⁰

⁸⁴ Smithe to O’Reilly, 29 November 1884, NAC, DIA, RG10, reel T-3949, vol. 11007, file 42.

⁸⁵ Cail, *Land, Man and the Law*, 224.

⁸⁶ O’Reilly to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 1 November 1882, *Annual Report*, 115.

⁸⁷ Powell to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 22 November 1881, *Annual Report*, 142. (In 1879 Sproat had praised the *Rocket* as “specially intended for Indian service” [to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 111]. I doubt if the shelling of Kimsquit was quite what he had in mind.)

⁸⁸ O’Reilly to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 1 November 1882, *Annual Report*, 115.

⁸⁹ Father J.M. Lejacq, O.M.I. to Powell, 26 August 1881, DIA[RO], FC, *Correspondence to and from Peter O’Reilly, Indian Reserve Commissioner, and Dr. I.W. Powell, Indian Superintendent* (hereafter abbreviated as *CPOIP*), ILR B-64652, vol. 7, p. 396.

⁹⁰ Crosby to MacDonald, 7 August 1882, DIA[RO], FC, *CPOIP*, ILR B-64652, vol. 7, p. 103E.

And yet again, from Barkley Sound, “there were many complaints constantly coming to [Powell] from the Indians, as to the proposed boundaries of their reserves.”⁹¹ On occasion, as O’Reilly’s 1882 encounter with the Nahkwockto suggests, there was open resistance to his activities. But the common denominator in all of these complaints was the hasty manner in which O’Reilly would charge into an area with little or no warning and assign reserves without “proper consultation” or, worse, while the chiefs were absent. In 1887, Ktunaxa dissatisfaction with his allotments forced the provincial government to respond.

After O’Reilly left the Kootenays, Chief Isadore had petitioned Powell that the commissioner had misunderstood his solicitations at St Mary’s and had refused to reserve two valuable grazing areas on the Kootenay River.⁹² Chief David, for his part, testified that at the Plains “[O’Reilly] pulled out his watch and said [that because it was] near noon [he would] close [the] meeting ... and convene again [tomorrow]” but when the Ktunaxa assembled the following day, they were told that “O’Reilly [was] leaving [and] he packed up and left without speaking to the Indians anymore.”⁹³ Their complaints likely would have been ignored, but Major Sam Steele of the North-West Mounted Police was afraid that Native insurgences south of the border would spill into the district if Ktunaxa concerns were not addressed. Accordingly, an ad hoc commission consisting of Powell, O’Reilly, and Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works George Vernon was called in to reconsider.⁹⁴ This time, however, Chief Isadore was at Sandpoint, and, after investigating the matter in his absence, the commissioners wrote to accuse him of not being a “good chief” because he had resisted O’Reilly’s overtures. They argued: “you know that white men come into this country and take up land, according to its laws. There is a good deal of land the Indians do not use and do not require. It is the same in Kootenay as in other places where there are Indians.”⁹⁵ Nevertheless, they did allot three additional reserves, totalling 1,030 acres, and authorized the construction of some

⁹¹ Powell to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 31 October 1883, *Annual Report*, III.

⁹² 26 November 1887, *Annual Report*, xci.

⁹³ Ktunaxa Chiefs Joseph David, Francis Plasway, and Swasa Wakum to Indian Agent Galbraith, n.d., cited in Olga Johnson, ed., *The Story of the Tobacco Plains Country* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1950), 55.

⁹⁴ Steele’s concerns, and the formation of the ad hoc commission, are described in some detail in Cail, *Land, Man and the Law*, 218–21; and Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 202–24.

⁹⁵ Vernon, Powell, and O’Reilly to Chief Isadore and the Kootenay Indians, 10 October 1887, *Annual Report*, xcvi.

irrigation ditches. In his annual report Powell concluded that their “mission to Kootenay ha[d] been in every way successful and that the long-standing grievance [had finally] been settled.”⁹⁶ As far as Chief David was concerned, however, it was nothing of the sort. “Our lands have been stolen” he lamented, “the whites have ... waxed prosperous [and] we have become poor and despondent.”⁹⁷

Far more serious, however, was the confrontation brewing on the Northwest Coast, for which, as Crosby had forecast in 1882, O’Reilly’s “whirlwind tour” through the area six years previously was largely responsible. Contrary to his instructions to be respectful of existing tribal arrangements, O’Reilly had not fully understood that although the Coast Tsimshian were allowed to fish the Nass in season, the river was still Nisga’a territory. At Stoney Point (Map 4c) he had allotted “a frontage on the river [as a] commonage.”⁹⁸ In October 1884, however, the Kincolith Nisga’a petitioned O’Reilly that some Coast Tsimshian — ostensibly “attracted by employment at Croasdaile’s Cannery”⁹⁹ but now effectively handed year-round access to a Nisga’a fishing station — had taken up permanent residence outside the commonage at Stoney Point. The Kincolith claimed that “Friend Chief” [O’Reilly] had originally promised the site to them, and they wanted “a strong paper with [O’Reilly’s] words ... and all that [he had] marked of [their] land written on it [and] with the Queen’s hand to it.”¹⁰⁰ In 1886 several Tsimshian were jailed after physically preventing the surveyors from measuring O’Reilly’s 1881 allotments at Metlakatla,¹⁰¹ and in January 1887 a joint delegation of Nisga’a and Tsimshian chiefs went to Victoria to present their grievances to Smithe.¹⁰² When Smithe

⁹⁶ Powell to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 26 November 1887, *Annual Report*, xciii.

⁹⁷ Cited in Johnson, *Tobacco Plains*, 55.

⁹⁸ *Papers Relating to the Commission appointed to enquire into the state and condition of the Indians of the North-West Coast of British Columbia* (Victoria: Government Printer, 1888) (hereafter referred to as *Commission of Enquiry*), 13.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁰⁰ Petition from the Chiefs and People of Kincolith to O’Reilly, 3 October 1884, NAC, DIA, RG10, reel T-3949, vol. 11007, file 27.

¹⁰¹ Resistance to Dominion Surveyors was not uncommon, especially on the Northwest Coast. On September 26 1886 C.P. Tuck advised O’Reilly that “no progress [could be] made in the survey of Indian Reserve lands assigned to me ... I have continued ... to make an attempt ... but have been prevented by the Tsimshian Indians assembled in force to stop me ... When I attempt[ed] to set up my transit, they surround[ed] me in large numbers and seiz[ed] the tripod ...; and on October 5 William Jemmett reported he was “effectually prevented ... from making any progress with [his] survey ... [and that the Tsimshian] seiz[ed] his instruments whenever [he] attempted to use them” (NAC, DIA, RG10, reel T-3949, vol. 11008, files 11 and 14, respectively). The provincial government’s immediate response was to dispatch HMS *Cormorant* to Port Simpson, where eight Tsimshian were arrested.

¹⁰² The delegation is discussed at length in Raunet, *Without Surrender*, 94-98; and Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples*, 55-58.

asked O'Reilly to clarify his allotment policy on the Nass, he answered that he had assigned Stoney Point in common "so as to prevent disputes between ... the Indians who resort to them"¹⁰³ — when, in fact, he had precipitated what he was ostensibly trying to prevent — and that he had allotted dispersed reserves because to have done otherwise would have been "to declare every inlet, nook, and stream an Indian reserve [which] would virtually be to declare the whole country a reserve ... and this [he] could not justify."¹⁰⁴

But the Kincolith petition alluded to another dimension of the matter that could not be so easily dismissed. Some Nisga'a and Tsimshian communities were raising the question of title, and in October 1887 the provincial government dispatched a Commission of Enquiry to the Northwest Coast.¹⁰⁵ The issue of title was raised eloquently and often, but O'Reilly's 1881 allotments continued to be the flashpoint. At Kincolith, teacher Frederick Allen refuted O'Reilly's claim that "the settlement at [Stoney Point] met with the hearty concurrence of the Indians,"¹⁰⁶ arguing that at no time did he "consult with them [or] give them a choice about their land",¹⁰⁷ and when Commissioner Clement Cornwall asked why they had not shown O'Reilly the places that they had wanted, Allen answered that "[O'Reilly] was in a hurry [and that] we did not understand then as we do now."¹⁰⁸ At Port Simpson, Albert Shakes stated: "This is the land that God has given us to live on. Mr. O'Reilly came up here with the chain to survey the land, and we asked him not to do so, as the Government had not consulted with us [but] he would not listen [and] said he would do as he liked."¹⁰⁹ At Nass Harbour Job Calder explained that "our land is too small [and] we can't live on it ... When Mr. O'Reilly came up [we] told him what [land] we wanted [but] he did not give it."¹¹⁰ Cornwall countered by citing O'Reilly's 1886 statement that the Nisga'a had accompanied him upriver and that he "did everything in [his] power to ascertain their wants ... but ... some of the chiefs were absent [And if] any reserve [was] omitted, it was because it was not

¹⁰³ Cited in Raunet, *Without Surrender*, 98.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ The *Commission to Enquire Into the State and Condition of the Indians of the Northwest Coast* arrived at Nass Harbour on 15 October. Native delegations were heard at Kincolith on 17 October; at Nass Harbour on 18-20 October; at Fort Simpson on 21-22 October; and at Metlakatla on 24 October.

¹⁰⁶ *Commission of Enquiry*, 13.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

mentioned.”¹¹¹ But Calder stated that “[O’Reilly’s account] make[s] it appear as if we went with him and got what we wanted,”¹¹² when he had actually allotted the reserves on his way back down, when the chiefs were not present — a claim borne out by O’Reilly’s diary, and which he later admitted to Smithe in Victoria.

Lachkalsap sub-chief Charles Russ followed Calder with a penetrating enunciation of the “contesting gaze”: “In the first place we did not like the name ‘reserve’ ... [B]ut if we have reserves, there is one thing we want with them, and that is a treaty. We have no word in our language for ‘reserve.’ We have the word ‘land,’ ‘our land,’ ‘our property.’ Your name for our land is ‘reserve,’ but every mountain, every stream, *and all that we see*, we call our forefathers’ land and streams. It is just lately the white people are changing the name. Now it is called the Indian reserve, instead of the Naas people’s land The change [of name] was made by the white people, and ‘treaty’ is to come from them too.”¹¹³ The commissioners, however, had been told to “discountenance ... any claim of Indian title to Provincial lands,”¹¹⁴ and on this score they remained intransigent. In their final report, they blamed the agitation on the Natives’ “isolat[ion] from proper governmental regulations and control”¹¹⁵ and the “curious correspondence between the views held by the Indians and the missionary influence under which [they] are held.”¹¹⁶ They told the appellants that “Mr. O’Reilly will come up [next year], and [we] hope then something definite will be settled about the reserves [but] beyond that we are not authorized to promise anything.”¹¹⁷

THE MORE THINGS CHANGED,
THE MORE THEY STAYED THE SAME ...

O’Reilly did return to the Nass in 1888, but not before making two stops on the mainland coasts of Malaspina and Johnstone Straits. In August he visited the Sliammon, Klahoose, and Homalco tribes to consider the provisional reserves that Sproat had “arbitrarily set aside by simply referring to [the Admiralty Charts]” in 1879 and 1880, and

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., 17.

¹¹³ Ibid., 18 (emphasis added).

¹¹⁴ Attorney General Edmund B. Davie to Commissioner J.P. Planta, 29 September 1887, cited in *Commission of Enquiry*, 2.

¹¹⁵ Addendum to Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of British Columbia Hugh Nelson, cited in *Commission of Enquiry*, 6.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 11.

¹¹⁷ *Commission of Enquiry*, 30.

“after consultation with [them he] decide[d] what the proper boundaries should be.”¹¹⁸ This was O’Reilly’s second tour in coastal territories visited by Sproat, his first on the northeast coast of Vancouver Island and adjacent islands was in 1886. On that trip, O’Reilly substantially altered his predecessor’s grid of 56 provisional allotments, rejecting 18 and adding 14 of his own (see Map 10a);¹¹⁹ but on this coast he stayed much closer to Sproat’s template. Of his predecessor’s 20 provisional allotments on the mainland side, O’Reilly accepted 18 (Maps 6a-b), the majority with modifications, and added 3 of his own making, for a total of 21 reserves aggregating 9,927 acres (although 7,500 were contained in just 4 of them: Harwood Island, Sliammon, Homalco, and Klahoose [Maps 6b-c]).

He then proceeded to Seymour Inlet where he allotted 14 small reserves averaging 35 acres each. This time Chief Marqua was present and, now concerned about increased White encroachment on Nahkwockto fishing stations, was willing to show O’Reilly the places he wanted reserved. It is unlikely, however, that the chief’s presence made any difference. O’Reilly had Blenkinsop’s 1883 sketch with him and, as it turned out, his allocations matched it closely. These allotments appear anomalous to O’Reilly’s usual procedures. Normally he would physically stake reserves, and then the minutes and sketches would be used to translate those allocations onto the fixed, panoramic surface of the artefactual map. This time, however, he used that panorama to inform and fix his allocations on the ground. The anomaly is, however, illusory because if there is a quintessential articulation of panoramic, Cartesian space, it is the artefactual map. Maps, in short, are not territories, but in the space of the cartographic eye, the map *becomes* the territory.¹²⁰

By September O’Reilly was back on the Nass. At Stoney Point he told Calder that “you will never get such a title as you claim and ... you will not be paid for your land.”¹²¹ At New Aiyansh he lied outright when he stated that surveying had nothing to do with intended White

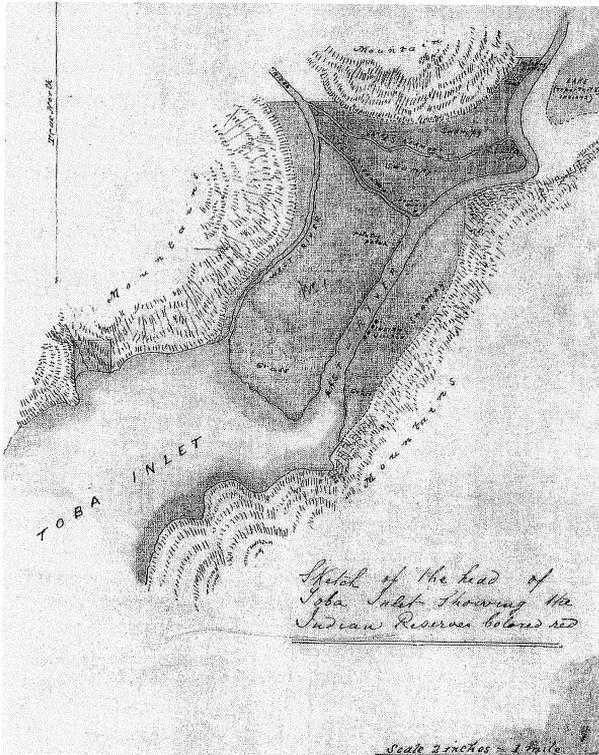
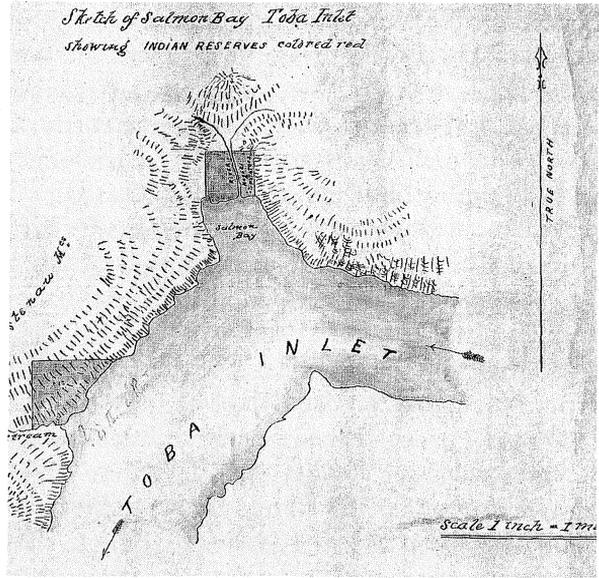
¹¹⁸Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs Lawrence Vankoughnet to O’Reilly, 16 October 1884, NAC, DIA, RG10, reel T-3949, vol. 11007, file 31.

¹¹⁹I will come back to O’Reilly’s work on these coasts in a different context at the end of the article. For a thoroughly researched account of both Sproat’s and O’Reilly’s allotments in the area, and how they dovetailed with traditional Kwakwaka’wakw settlement sites, see Robert Galois’s *Kwakwaka’wakw Settlements, 1775-1920: A Geographical Analysis and Gazetteer* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994).

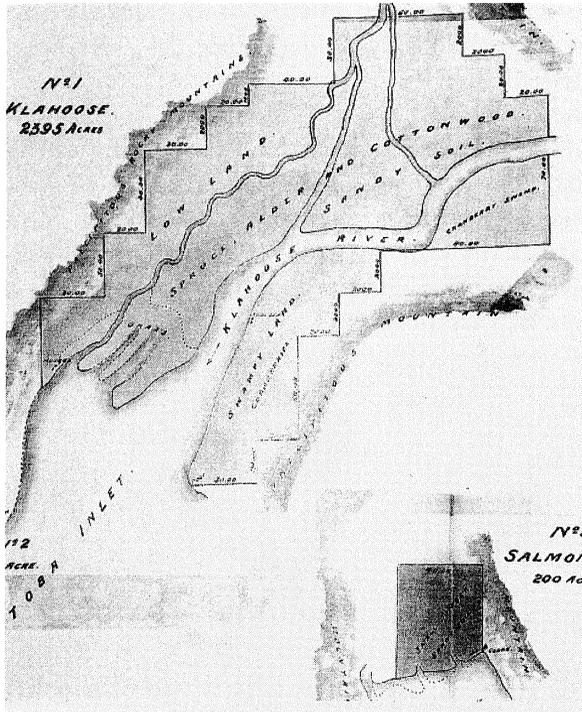
¹²⁰Similar points have been made in David Turnbull’s *Maps Are Territories: Science Is an Atlas* (Victoria, Australia: Deakin University, 1989); and Denis Wood’s *The Power of Maps* (New York: Guilford, 1992), Chapter 2.

¹²¹Cited in Raunet, *Without Surrender*, 99.

Map 6a: Unidentified author's 1880 *Sketch of Salmon Bay Toba Inlet* (DIA[RO], FC, Sproat's *Minutes of Decision and Sketches*, True Copy [hereafter abbreviated MDS], ILR 7470-244D, vol. 18, p. 26a). As shown in Map 6c below, O'Reilly accepted Salmon Bay proper but rejected the allotment at Gastineau Mountain.



Map 6b: Unidentified author's 1880 *Sketch of the head of Toba Inlet* (DIA[RO], FC, MDS, ILR 7470-244D, vol. 18, p. 32a). Of Sproat's twenty-one provisional allotments on the mainland coast, this and Map 6a are the only ones that were sketched. As shown in Map 6c below, both Klahoose allotments were accepted by O'Reilly.



Map 6c: Unknown author's 1888 *Sketch of the Reserves for Klahoose Indians* (DIA[RO], FC, MDCS, ILR B-64646, vol. II, p. 104), reflecting O'Reilly's confirmation of the provisional allotments made by Sproat (Maps 6a-b above). These images point to another major distinction between the two commissioners. Sproat had a habit of allotting reserves by using natural topographical boundaries (as in Map 6b), where convenient. This, however, made it much more difficult to incorporate them into a land tenure system based on sections and fixed transects; and in 1879 the provincial government

changed the survey code to require boundaries using cardinal directions. In Ryan's terminology, it is not that the cartographic eye cannot "see" such spaces, but that it can only achieve visual mastery when "all spaces" can be measured together through the universalizing geometries of the Cartesian grid. All of O'Reilly's reserves were surveyed in this way, even if several transects were needed to do so.

settlement. At Gitwinksihlkw and Gitlakdamix the Nisga'a refused to show him their fishing stations, and when Chief Skadeen told O'Reilly he could expect similar resistance elsewhere, he answered: "I tell you as a friend that if you advise your people to break the law the Government will soon put another chief in your place."¹²² O'Reilly went ahead anyway, dispersing 19 new reserves totalling 5,405 acres on the upper Nass and Observatory Inlet.¹²³ Of his allocations at the mouth of the Homathko River, he stated: "The Indians expressed themselves highly satisfied with the allotments made for their use and the prospect of [them] being speedily surveyed."¹²⁴ And in Victoria, on his return from the Northwest Coast, he claimed: "I can

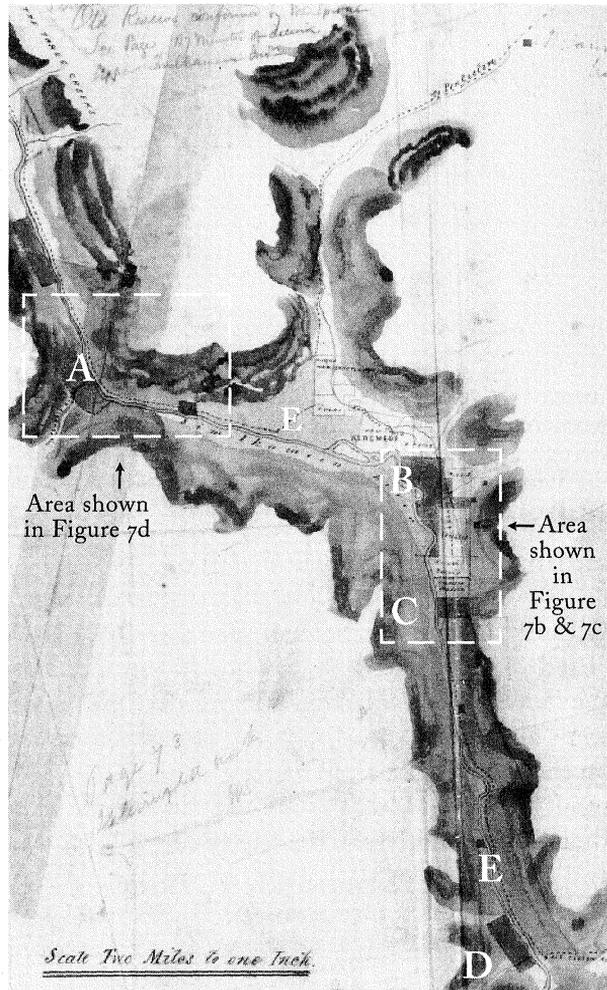
¹²²Ibid., 100.

¹²³How many of these reserves included Chief Skadeen's fishing stations is unclear, and O'Reilly allotted one of them in Alaska!

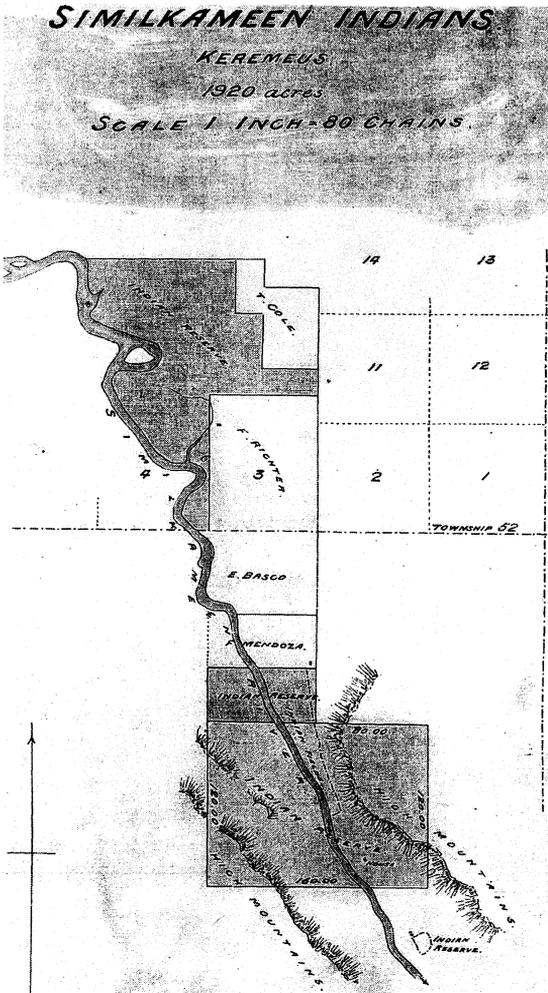
¹²⁴O'Reilly to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 8 December 1888, *Annual Report*, 198.

now confidently state that the Indians of the Tsimpsean [sic] and Nass tribes have been liberally dealt with, and that the reserves ... are amply sufficient for all their requirements."¹²⁵ Needless to say, O'Reilly's work on the Northwest Coast has formed a prominent part of the Nisga'a and Tsimshian oral record. O'Reilly's final sortie in 1888 was a second tour through the Similkameen, where he allotted three reserves along the Similkameen River south of Cawston (Map 7c). They were much larger than the absolute reserves that had been proposed by Sproat (Map 7a) but contained only a fraction of land that Sproat had defined as a temporary reserve in 1878.

Map 7a: Unknown author's untitled 1878 sketch of the Lower Similkameen Reserves (DIA[RO], FC, IWB No. 3, ILR B-6464I, vol. 5/3, p. 73) with alphabetic superscripts and insets by author. It shows Sproat's absolute reserves (the dark shaded rectilinear patches along both banks of the river) between Ashnola (A), Lower Similkameen 1 (B) and 2 (C), and the old customs house (D), and the extensive temporary reserve (light shaded area west and south of Lower Similkameen 1 and extending down both banks to the customs house, as at E). The insets refer to Maps 7b-d. In this instance, the largest allotments were named and numbered in Sproat's minutes.



¹²⁵ 4 October 1888, *Annual Report*, cited in Raunet, *Without Surrender*, 101.

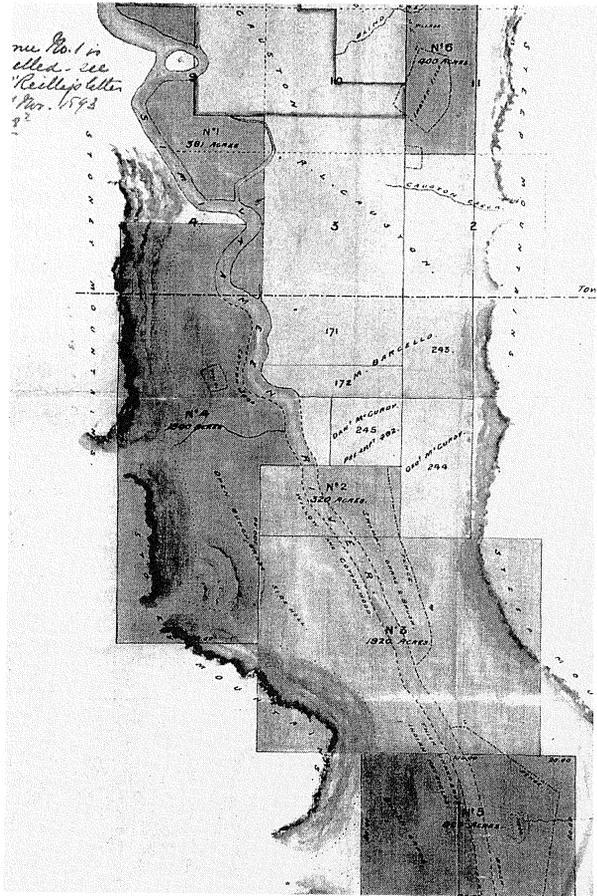


Map 7b: Unknown author's 1884 *Similkameen Indians* (DIA[RO], FC, MDCS, ILR B-64645, vol. 10, p. 8), focussing on Lower Similkameen 1 and 2 insetted in Map 7a. O'Reilly cancelled Sproat's temporary and added Terbasket 3 (the large tinted block lower centre), extending it and Lower Similkameen 2 across the river at the same time.

By the end of the 1888 season Peter O'Reilly's modus operandi as the Indian Reserve Commissioner — both in inland and coastal territories, whether previously travelled by Sproat or not — had been thoroughly worked out. His destinations in any given year were chosen jointly by Powell and the Departments of Lands and Works, but he adjusted his schedules according to the weather or the availability of suitable transportation. If he had to revisit an area he tried to incorporate it into a subsequent schedule. In the field, he gathered his information from local chiefs or their designates but often worked on the advice of the missionaries or Indian agents if Native peoples were uncooperative or if he thought it would expedite his travels.

His allocations were informed less by what his informants told him, however, than by the DIA guidelines. As a rule, his inland allotments were an attempt to encourage sedentary or nomadic agriculture and averaged several hundred acres in size, subject to the availability of water or the extent of White settlement. Smaller coastal reserves averaging a few tens of

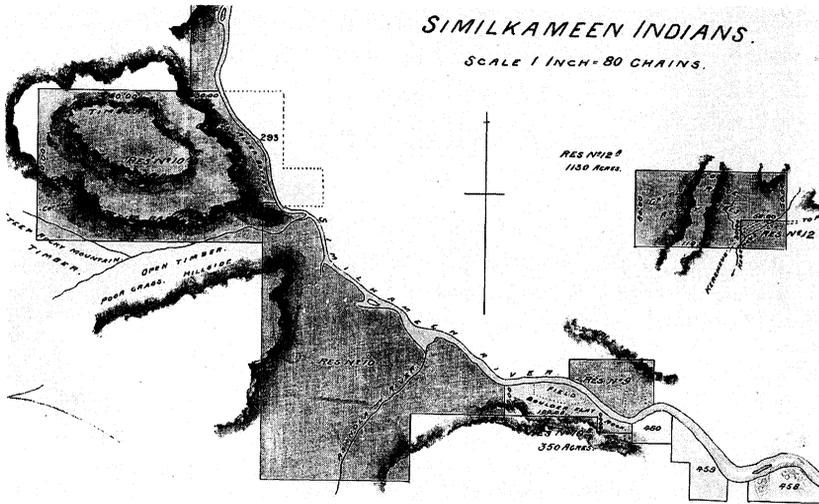
Map 7c: Portion of unknown author's 1888 *Similkameen Indians* (DIA[RO], FC, MDCS, ILR B-64646, vol. II, p. 24) insetted in Map 7a, and showing alienations (light shaded blocks named by owner), Sproat's Lower Similkameen 2 and O'Reilly's Terbasket 3 (medium shaded blocks lower centre), and O'Reilly's 1888 additions Narcisse's Farm 4, Joe Nahumpcheen 5, and Blind Creek 6 (the three darkest areas centre left, upper right, and bottom). How informed by Sproat's smaller allotments (east and south of Keremeos in Map 7a) they are is unclear. What is clear is that sometime between 1884 and 88 portions of Sproat's original Lower Similkameen 1 were pre-empted (and would eventually com-



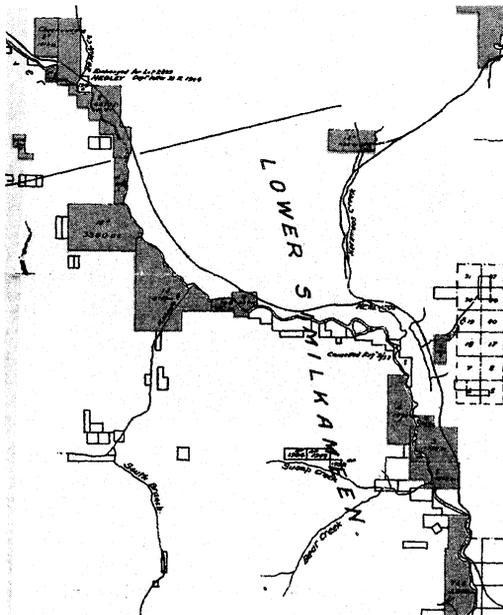
prise the village of Cawston). O'Reilly made yet a third visit to this area in 1893, adding Chopaka 7 and 8 in roughly the same place Sproat defined the old customs house reserve and, as the handwritten note (extreme upper left) hints, cancelled the remainder of Lower Similkameen 1 altogether. He also rejigged Sproat's grid at the forks of the Ashnola (shown in Map 7d), confirming Alexis 9 and Ashnola John's 11, adding 10a and 10b to Ashnola 10, and expanding Keremeos Forks 12.

acres were dispersed to include winter village sites and to accommodate a subsistence fishing economy. In areas previously visited by Sproat he was guided, but not constrained, by Sproat's allocations. In areas not so visited his decisions were his alone. In short, O'Reilly allotted reserves according to his "own discretion," but he did not do so arbitrarily, and there were no ambiguities when it came to the ordering system that he imposed upon them.

Nor did O'Reilly's procedures change in response to the Native unrest that followed in his wake, as in the Kootenays and on the Northwest



Map 7d: Unknown author's 1893 *Similkameen Indians* (DIA[RO], FC, MDCS, ILR B-64649, vol. 14, p. 231) insetted in Map 7a and showing pre-emptions (by lot number), Sproat's Ashnola 9 and 10 (the latter a confirmation of Haynes's 1871 allotment), Ashnola John's 11 and Keremeos Forks 12, and O'Reilly's additions 10a and b, and enlargement 12a.



Map 7e: Portion of Ashdown Green's 1916 *Okanagan Agency* (in *Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia* [Victoria: Acme, 1916]), covering same area covered in Map 7a and showing what happened to Sproat's admixture of absolute and temporary reserves for the Lower Similkameen tribes after three successive passes by O'Reilly in 1884, 1888, and 1893. Working upriver from Chopaka 7 and 8 (Sproat's old customs house, lower right) we pass through Joe Nahumpcheen 5, Terbasket 3, Lower Similkameen 2 (Sproat's original Lower Similkameen 2), Narcisse's Farm 4; then west of Blind Creek 6 through

the town of Cawston (formerly Sproat's Lower Similkameen 1); and thence to the mouth of the Ashnola (shown in Map 7d). (Allotments north of Ashnola were for the Upper Similkameen tribe.) These images illustrate, as well as any, the way in which the cartographic eye progressively fragments, re-orders, and stratifies hitherto non-geometric cultural spaces.

TABLE 1

Summary of Total Reserves (of All Types) Allotted By Commission(er) and Subsequently Approved

	JOINT COMMISSION	SPROAT	O'REILLY	VOWELL	1913-16 ROYAL COMMISSION
Total reserves allotted (all types)	152	325	694	7	455
Reserves approved by 1900	152	197	654	7	—

Note: A.W. Vowell added another thirty-four reserves between 1898 and 1908. Most of the reserves allotted by O'Reilly, but not approved by 1900, were exclusive fisheries and graveyards. It should also be noted that the 1913-16 Royal Commission "cut off" several reserves allotted by Sproat, O'Reilly, and, especially, the Joint Commission, and that several more have since been surrendered. Compiled by author from DIA[RO], FC, *JWB* Nos. 1, 2, and 3, ILR B-64639 to 64641, vols. 5/1 through 5/3; and *MDCS*, ILR B-64642 to 64649, vols. 2 through 8; and crosschecked against the Schedule of Indian Reserves in the 1900 *Annual Report*.

Coast in 1887. If anything, these contestations had the cumulative effect of strengthening O'Reilly's position. The provincial government did ask him to add reserves in areas where Native resistance was most pronounced. However, the provincial government's overall response to Native resistance, and its willingness to back O'Reilly's decisions, by force if necessary, clearly indicated unqualified approval of his procedures. For the provincial government Native unrest was the result of "outside agitation," not of O'Reilly's reserves. In the end, O'Reilly's *modus operandi* was, and remained, entirely consistent with the procedures he employed in the Nicola District in 1868. His travels and allotments from 1889 to 1897, summarized cartographically in Map 1g-o, were merely variations on that theme.

By the time he retired in 1898, O'Reilly had allotted 694 reserves, including graveyards and fisheries, and, thanks to a single trip into the Cowichan in 1887, in every (then-existing) Indian agency in the province; 654 of them (totalling 359,741 acres) have survived to the present. He also accepted 197 of Sproat's allotments (totalling 128,751 acres). Of the 1,010 reserves scheduled by 1900, O'Reilly had a hand in at least 851 (totalling 488,492 acres),¹²⁶ containing about 75 per

¹²⁶How much input O'Reilly had in the joint commissioners' allotments is unclear. Certainly, he had access to all their letterbooks and minutes of decision, and he did visit many of their reserves on his tours through the Okanagan and Shuswap. Excepting his single trip to the Cowichan in 1887, however, I have found no evidence that O'Reilly physically travelled

cent of the total reserve land base in the province at the turn of the century. His successor, A.W. Vowell, would add 41 reserves between 1898 and 1908, and the 1913-16 Royal Commission would add 455; but these, excepting a handful in the Stikine and Cassiar Districts, were mostly cosmetic adjustments to O'Reilly's allocations (Table 1).

THE CARTOGRAPHIC I IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

There are, I think, four points to bring into focus. The first is to recognize the sheer physicality and territorial logistics of Peter O'Reilly's travels from Point Ellice. I have not calculated his circuits in raw miles, but as Indian Reserve Commissioner it is certainly in the many thousands. (If we include his travels as magistrate, gold commissioner, and judge during the 1860s and 1870s, then that figure should probably be doubled.) Much of this was by horse or canoe through, or around the edges of, a topographically forbidding, and culturally foreign, landscape, a large portion of which, from a Euro-Canadian perspective, was either poorly mapped or not mapped at all. In the Babine in 1891 he "found the distances to be travelled far greater than [he] had been led to expect, and the trails in many places ... almost impassable";¹²⁷ while on the outer coast he was continually "retarded by heavy rains and by the dense character of the underbrush ... hindered by the gales which so frequently prevail ... render[ing] canoeing both difficult and dangerous."¹²⁸ It took three successive attempts to complete the allotments at Nitinat, storms preventing a landfall in 1882 and 1886.

O'Reilly's travels were mentally taxing as well. From Bella Bella in 1882 — "the most inclement season [he] had ever known during a residence of over 20 years"¹²⁹ — he wrote to Caroline in exasperation about the "many disappointments and delays, what with bad weather, and the Indians refusing to work, constantly demanding increase in wages";¹³⁰ and to his daughter, Kathleen, from Sandpoint in 1884, "[t]his is the longest day, they are all long to me for I feel very lonely."¹³¹ O'Reilly was 53 years of age when first appointed as commissioner, 60 when he returned to the Nass in 1888, and 65 when

the interior or southeastern coast of Vancouver Island or, for that matter, up Howe Sound or Jervis Inlet.

¹²⁷ O'Reilly to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 17 November 1891, *Annual Report*, 176.

¹²⁸ 12 November 1892, *Annual Report*, 265.

¹²⁹ 1 November 1882, *Annual Report*, 116.

¹³⁰ 22 August 1882, BCA, OC, file AE OR3 OR3.

¹³¹ 21 June 1884, BCA, OC, file AE OR3 OR3.1.

he made his last extended tour up the Skeena in 1893. Small wonder, perhaps, that he was dogged by illness and incapacity — in 1883 due to exhaustion, in 1885 as a result of a carriage accident outside Point Ellice, and in 1890 from an unspecified illness after he finished the allotments at Nitinat.

Yet O'Reilly spent comparatively little time in the field — about 1,000 days, give or take, over an eighteen-year span, and the great majority of them in transit.¹³² Indeed, over half of his reserves were allotted in just three seasons: 1881, 1882, and a six-week blitz up the west coast of Vancouver Island in 1889. This was partly because the Conservative administrations of the day did not consider Indian Affairs a high priority portfolio and were reluctant to authorize anything more than the most minimal expenditures to lay out reserves.¹³³ When O'Reilly was first appointed commissioner he found that “all [of Sproat's equipment] ha[d] been disposed of at auction” and that two of the three tents that had survived the sale were “almost useless.”¹³⁴ When he asked Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs Lawrence Vankoughnet for extra surveyors to clear up the backlog of unsurveyed reserves in 1885, he was turned down.¹³⁵ In 1893 he asked for an extra five dollars per diem to cover his field expenses and again was denied.¹³⁶ And in 1894, surveyors still in the field were “temporarily discharged for the reason that the funds for the survey branch of the Commission were exhausted.”¹³⁷ While the size of his entourage seems to have varied depending on the location and travel mode — and while he occasionally brought along family members when traveling by steamer (as he did on his trip up the Skeena in 1891) — his office was officially budgeted for one assistant and an interpreter, the latter usually obtained on the spot from the local band or tribe. Every dime spent — from the ordering of stationery and supplies, to the buying and selling of equipment, to the hiring of the steamer, and to basic maintenance on the reserves — had to pass through Vankoughnet.

¹³² Obviously, O'Reilly's movements were subject to seasonal constraints, but even allowing for that he spent, proportionally, far less time in the field than his predecessors, and Sproat appears to have passed most of his 1879-80 winter on Johnstone and Malaspina Straits working out of a tent.

¹³³ See, in this connection, Douglas Leighton's “A Victorian Civil Servant at Work: Lawrence Vankoughnet and the Canadian Indian Department” in *As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows*, A.L. Getty and A. Lussier, eds. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1984), 85-103; and Brian Titley's *A Narrow Vision* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986), Chapter 1.

¹³⁴ O'Reilly to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 14 May 1881, *Annual Report*, 175.

¹³⁵ Vankoughnet to O'Reilly, 31 July 1885, NAC, DIA, RG10, reel T-3949, vol. 11007, file 64.

¹³⁶ 20 May 1893, NAC, DIA, RG10, reel T-3950, vol. 11013, file 42.

¹³⁷ O'Reilly to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 24 August 1894, *Annual Report*, 207.

At the same time — and this leads me to my second point — O'Reilly must bear much of the responsibility for what actually transpired on the ground. From his first arrival in British Columbia he was a social climber, and it seems clear from his unofficial correspondence that he considered his government work as supplementary to maintaining his own standing and investments in the colonial and provincial elites. His private letters to Bebgie, Trutch, Cornwall, and other officials were concerned almost completely with the latest gossip, and of the many dinner engagements, tennis tournaments, and parties thrown by these officials, none were more extravagant, or widely reported in the Victoria press, than Peter O'Reilly's. His fondest memory was of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald himself coming to Point Ellice in 1886. His investments included the Albion Iron Works in Victoria, the Bank of British Columbia, the Beddoe Timber Lease near Penticton, and the J.C. Haynes Ranch outside Osoyoos.¹³⁸ While he attended church regularly, there is little evidence that he was a particularly religious man. He was a member of the Anthological Society, the Times Book Club, the Victoria Lodge, and the Navy League.¹³⁹

Given this background, his less-than-harmonious relationship with Native peoples is probably to be expected, but it is important to acknowledge what O'Reilly is *not* responsible for. Statistical comparisons between O'Reilly and his predecessors on anything more than a reserve-by-reserve or, at most, a tribe-by-tribe basis are extremely hazardous undertakings. Sproat wrote obliquely, if voluminously, often burying his minutes in long quasi-philosophical dissertations. Some of his reserves were vaguely delimited and could not be located by either O'Reilly or the surveyors. Sproat's classificatory scheme was inconsistent. He also had a habit of not recording his allotments in acres, making it difficult to determine the size of reserves that used natural topographic boundaries or were bounded on one or more sides by irregular coastlines. Of the seventy-six provisional allotments Sproat made on Johnstone and Malaspina Straits, for example, only twelve were ever sketched. O'Reilly's descriptions, by contrast, were clear and unambiguous. He also wrote detailed field minutes — which neither Sproat nor the joint commissioners did — and all of his allotments were sketched and enumerated in both chains and acres. Robin Fisher's claim that "O'Reilly's procedures were in marked

¹³⁸Surviving records of O'Reilly's investment portfolio are found in BCA, OC, file AE OR3 OR3.30.

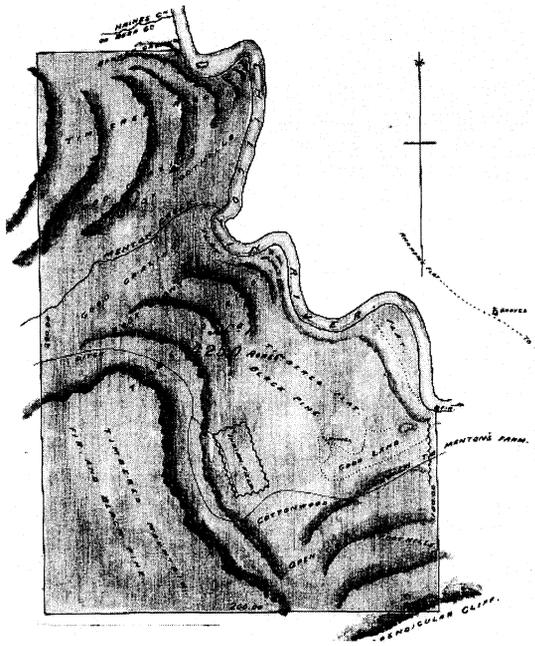
¹³⁹Surviving records of O'Reilly's club memberships are found in BCA, OC, AE3 OR3.25.

contrast to the meticulous care with which Sproat worked"¹⁴⁰ must be reconsidered.

The question of relative acreage is even more problematic. Sproat allotted at least six categories of reserves — absolutes, provisionals, commonages, temporaries, fisheries, and graveyards — while O'Reilly allotted only three — "absolutes,"¹⁴¹ fisheries, and graveyards. The acreages of Sproat's temporary reserves and most of his commonages are unknown. Some of O'Reilly's allotments in the Fraser and Thompson River Canyons and in the Similkameen and Nicola Valleys are clearly "additions" to Sproat's absolutes, but they are "reductions" relative to his temporaries and commonages. And while some of O'Reilly's reserves are obviously based on Sproat's provisionals, the official schedules credit O'Reilly. Nevertheless, we can estimate the acreage of Sproat's reserves and, having done so, must then reject the accepted view — advanced by Fisher and repeated by Paul Tennant — that O'Reilly was the "great reducer" of Sproat's allotments. Working from Sproat's transects, for example, and assuming them to be equidistant on all sides, it appears that Sproat's 56 provisional allotments on the northeast coast of Vancouver Island and the adjacent islands worked out to about 12,500 acres total. O'Reilly's 52 allotments on these same coasts comprised 15,990 acres. Where he accepted Sproat's provisionals, he reduced only twelve and enlarged most of the remainder. On the mainland side of Malaspina Strait, similarly, Sproat's 20 provisionals added up to approximately 6,530 acres, compared with O'Reilly's 21 comprising 9,927 acres. On balance, in inland territories, O'Reilly added to, or enlarged, far more of Sproat's allotments than he reduced or rejected. O'Reilly's reputation as the "great reducer" can be sustained only by including Sproat's commonages and temporaries in the equation. Some of the commonages did survive for some time — in the Okanagan and Nicola Valleys, for example, until 1888 and 1889, respectively, when, on O'Reilly's recommendation, they were cancelled — but the temporaries really only ever existed on paper. And, finally, the notion that none of Sproat's or the Joint Commission's reserves were ever approved by the provincial government must also be dismissed. As shown above (Table 1), a large portion of Sproat's reserves, and most of the Joint Commission's, survived not only O'Reilly's tenure but the 1913-16 Royal Commission as well.

¹⁴⁰Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 201.

¹⁴¹O'Reilly never referred to his reserves as "absolute" but, had he used Sproat's terminology, this would have been the appropriate category. O'Reilly also specified a handful of such



Map 8: Unknown author's untitled 1887 sketch of reserves for the Stone Indians (DIA[RO], FC, MDCS, ILR B-64646, vol. II, p. 164), showing O'Reilly's 1887 allotments to the Stone Tsilhqot'in. As a rule, O'Reilly's allotments in the Interior were much larger than those on the Coast. The problem was that much of the land was of marginal quality, and especially so in the Cariboo and Chilcotin Districts. Of his reserves for the Stone, O'Reilly reported that "[t]he chief expressed his satisfaction and that of his people ... at the prospect of having their lands defined,"¹⁴² but when Vowell visited the area three years later he found that the land was "worthless on account of the poverty of the soil and [lack of irrigation] water."¹⁴³ (It's

worth recalling that O'Reilly visited the area as magistrate in 1871, and recommended that reserves be established then. One can only guess what the Stone may have received had it not taken sixteen years to do so.)

That said, Sproat campaigned on behalf of Native peoples in a way that O'Reilly never did, and much of the land allotted by the latter was of marginal quality or, by his own admission, worthless (Map 8). Certainly, it does seem that O'Reilly endeavoured, following his instructions, to ensure continued indigenous access to traditional resource sites and that he showed a certain amount of ingenuity in dovetailing reserves into landscapes where most of the arable land was pre-empted. He also revisited many locations, sometimes several times. But, from the beginning, he made sure that Native peoples fit his schedule rather than the other way around; if they were not present

reserves as "hay meadows" (as in the Central Interior) or "timber reserves" (as on the Northwest Coast).

¹⁴²O'Reilly to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 19 August 1887, *Annual Report*, 148.

¹⁴³Powell to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 5 November 1890, *Annual Report*, 186.

when he arrived, he frequently went ahead without them. On too many occasions he neglected to take a census, and even those he did take are suspect since most of his travels were in late summer and early fall when Natives were dispersed from their winter villages. He was disingenuous about his own project and obscure about the intentions of the wider colonial prospectus in which he operated.

Often he would reinterpret official policy to suit his own ends. While he was technically correct when he told the Kispiox Gitksan that “a reserve when made protects the land from trespass by others [and] the Indian still has the right to hunt, fish or gather berries outside,”¹⁴⁴ Native experience suggested otherwise. Similarly, he had no compunction about threatening Chief Skadeen with the possibility that the government might replace him if he did not cooperate, but when the Canim Lake Secwepemc complained in 1887 that their chief “spent all of his time in the mountains [and] wanted to know if they could not have another chief appointed,” O’Reilly told them that “this was a matter with which [he] had nothing to do, and referred them to the Indian Agent.”¹⁴⁵ In some cases, his diary accounts do not square with the official record, calling the accuracy of the latter into question. He was not attuned to the complexities of indigenous land tenure¹⁴⁶ and was careless with the allocation of water rights. On balance, O’Reilly’s treatment of Native peoples was harsh, and, I think, increasingly so the older he got. On few occasions did he ever seriously consult with them; O’Reilly was a recorder, not a listener.

In short, it is not so much the quantity of land, or even its quality, that Native peoples received from O’Reilly that was at issue, but the surreptitious manner in which it was allotted. It was “the man himself” whom Native peoples remember most vividly, and whom they most equate with the seizure of their territories.¹⁴⁷ O’Reilly was, in the end, the quintessential Victorian civil servant, a product of his

¹⁴⁴Cited in Maureen Cassidy’s *From Mountain to Mountain* (Hazelton: Ans’pa yaxw School Society, 1984), 30.

¹⁴⁵O’Reilly to Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, 19 August 1887, *Annual Report*, 148.

¹⁴⁶To be fair, of course, few of his contemporaries were. When O’Reilly misallocated several sites to the wrong Kwakwaka’wakw tribes in 1886 he was only repeating the same mistake Sproat had made in 1879. The problem was, of course, that no existing tribal structures could be completely assimilated into the fixed and transparent spaces of the Cartesian grid, as his improvisations on the Nass in 1881 showed.

¹⁴⁷For Native recollections of O’Reilly’s visits on the Nass, see Raunet, *Without Surrender*, Chapter 6; on the west coast of Vancouver Island, the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs’ *A History of Indian Reserves in the West Coast District 1860–1896*, unpublished pamphlet (Vancouver: Land Claims Research Center, 1974), 3–6; in the Babine, Maureen Cassidy’s *From Mountain to Mountain*, 24–32, and *The Gathering Place* (Hagwilget: Hagwilget Band Council, 1987), 30–7; in the Lillooet District, Joanne Drake-Terry’s *The*

time. Late nineteenth-century colonialism was a hard, administrative, disciplinary colonialism. Underscoring its ideological agenda was the assumption that indigenous peoples would either assimilate or become extinct in a futile attempt at resisting assimilation.¹⁴⁸ It is in this sense that O'Reilly was to Trutch as, perhaps, Sproat was to Douglas; and it is against this cross-cultural backcloth that O'Reilly's appointment and *modus operandi* as the Indian Reserve Commissioner, and Native peoples' reaction to them, must be placed. My point, then, is not to condemn O'Reilly, although I do think that most of the recent academic literature, to the extent that it has dealt with this man, has been properly critical of him.

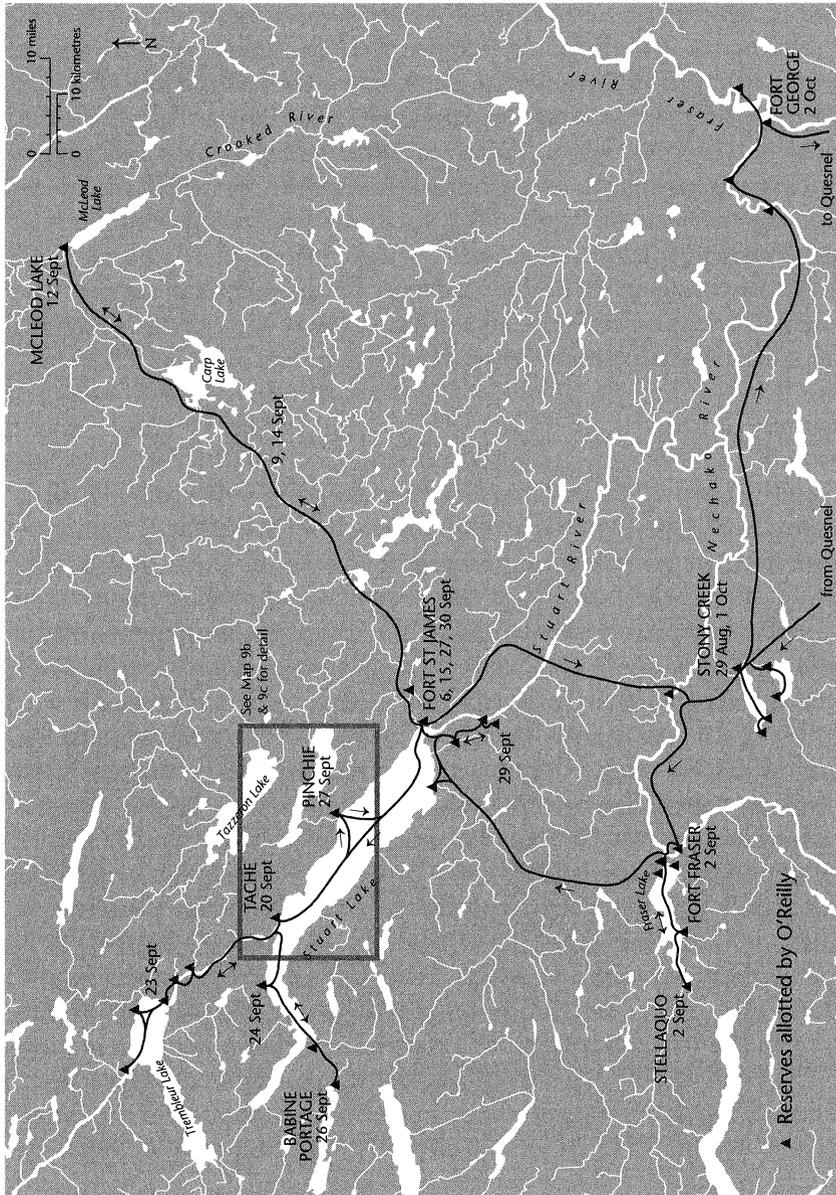
THE CARTOGRAPHIC EYE ON BRITISH COLUMBIA

My third, and by far my most important, point concerns O'Reilly's *geographical* legacy, some snapshots of which we have already glimpsed. If we now splice these snapshots together, magnify them, and assume for a moment the position of the detached and privileged observer, we make completely visible one of the essential components of the human geography in which we live (Maps 9a-c; and 10a-b). As a "visual ideology" there is, as such, no "centre" to the cartographic eye; it "fills space," emanating from "everywhere." Each stratum of panoramic Cartesian space does have, however, an "effective centre": the fixed and central observer that organizes and administers that stratum from a detached and privileged position. For the evolution and implementation of the reserve system in British Columbia, that centre was technically split between two places — the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa and the Department of Lands and Works in Victoria — but there is a sense in which Peter O'Reilly, radiating as he did from Point Ellice, was their mutual touchstone. He was part of that fixed and central observer, but he was the part that was also in *motion*.

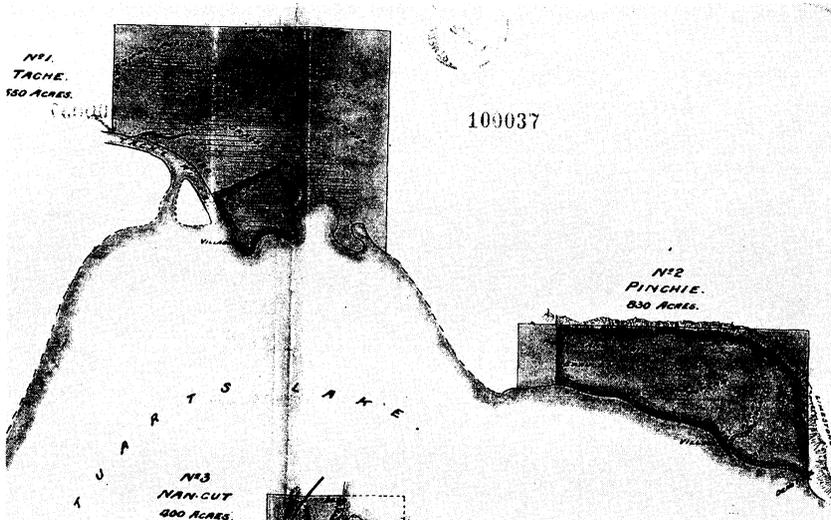
The cartographic eye/I stratifies, layers, and fragments space along "lines of sight": the transparent perspectival lines of sight of the cartographic eye; and the itinerant, on-the-ground lines of sight of the

Same as Yesterday (Lillooet: Lillooet Tribal Council, 1989), Chapter 6; and in Kwakwaka'wakw country, Harry Assu's *Assu of Cape Mudge* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989), Chapter 2.

¹⁴⁸There is an extensive literature on these matters. See, for example, V.G. Kiernan's *The Lords of Human Kind* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967); James Morris's *Pax Britannica* (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968); C. C. Eldridge's *England's Mission: The Imperial Idea in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli 1868-1880* (London: MacMillan, 1973), Chapters 8 and 9; but especially Edward Said's *Orientalism*

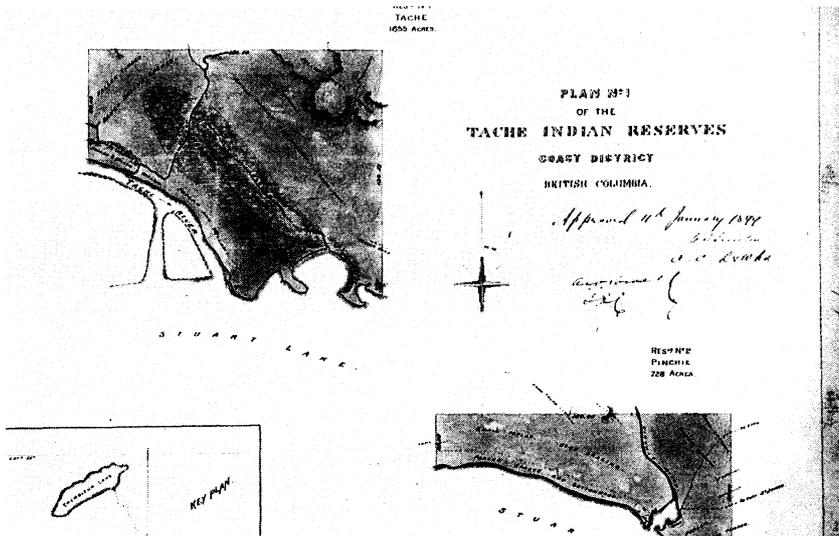


Map 9a: O'Reilly's journey through the "New Caledonia" country in 1892 (upper portion of map (j) in Map 1), showing his route and the places and dates he allotted reserves (two of which are shown in Map 9b). O'Reilly's travels can best be described as a kind of "bio-network," his circuits anchored at the nodes where he allots his reserves. Compiled by author from DIA[RO], FC, *MDCS*, ILR B-64648, vol. 13; 1892 *Annual Report*; and the O'Reilly Diaries, BCA, OC, reels 12a and 13a.



Map 9b: Portion of unknown author's 1892 *Tache Indians* (DIA[RO], FC, MDCS, ILR B-64648, vol. 13, p. 111), showing O'Reilly's 1892 reserves at Tache and Pinchie (inset in Map 9a). It shows that O'Reilly was prepared to reconsider his own work on occasion; the dark shaded solid lines inside the reserves are the boundaries of the allotments he made as magistrate in 1871.

cartographic I. If British Columbia is seen as an iterative construction of such lines — Captain George Vancouver's charting of the Northwest Coast, the filaments of the land-based fur trade, the 1846 Boundary Commission, the cadastral lines of private property and positive laws among them — then it seems that we must add the line that O'Reilly drew between Native and non-Native, along with the stratum of Indian reserves that he created while so doing. O'Reilly's line came late, chronologically; but it was the most important line of all, geographically. All those earlier lines could only anticipate and prefigure the systematic accumulation of Native peoples and their territories in British Columbia. O'Reilly's line completed it. His free and transparent passage through this hybrid landscape, of which he himself was a principal author, was a cypher not only for transforming the dynamic space of travel into the fixed and passive space of settlement, but also for incorporating hitherto alternative cultural spaces into a universalizing, homogenizing, and essentializing spatial uniformity — the ground upon which an expanded sense of *British Columbia* could take shape. This, I would suggest, is the essence of Peter O'Reilly, the reserve system, and the cartographic eye/I on/in British Columbia. By deterritorializing Native peoples onto reserves,



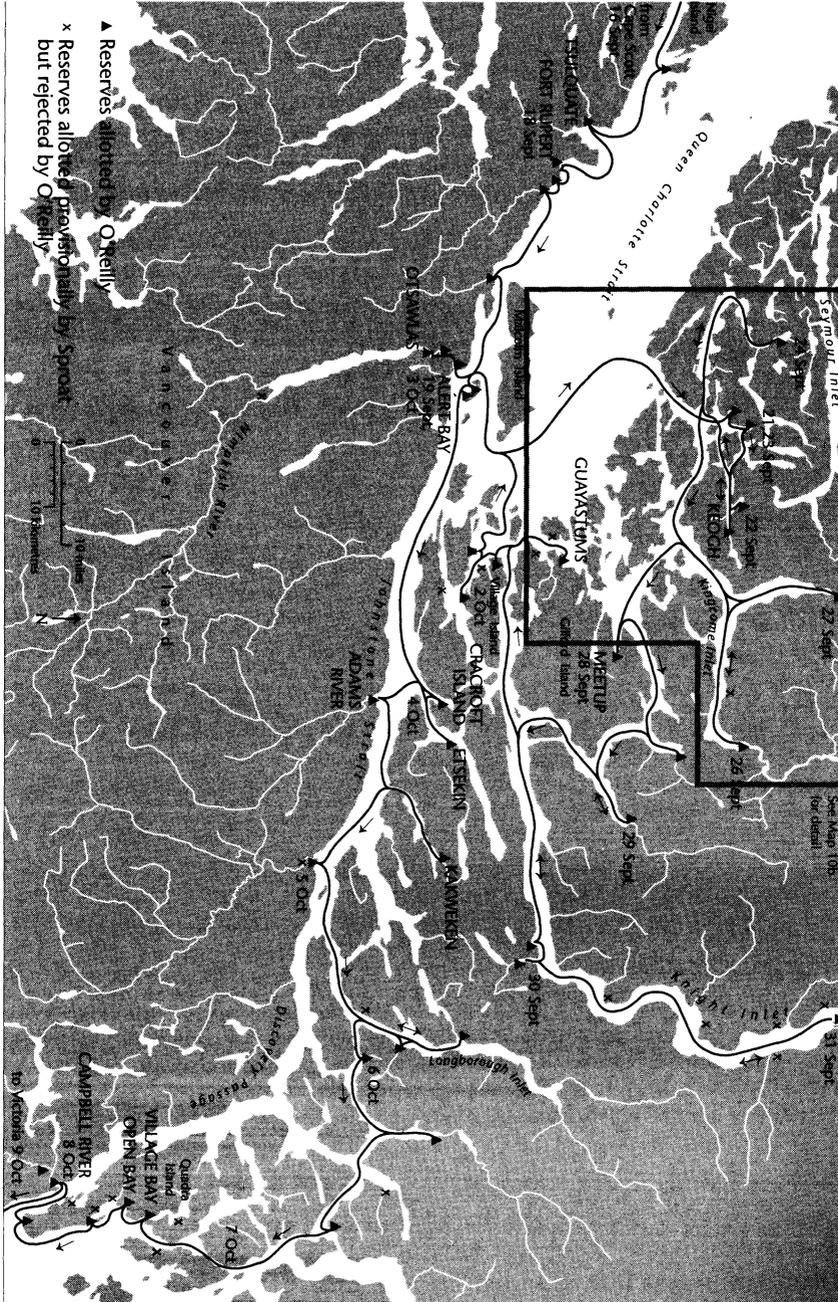
Map 9c: Portion of F.A. Devereux's 1898 *Plan No. 1 of the Tache Indian Reserves* (true canvas copy CLSR BC106), showing O'Reilly's 1892 allotments at Tache and Pinchie (Map 9b above), now without any reference to the old colonial reserves allotted in 1871. This sequence of images reminds me of the French philosopher Michel de Certeau's suggestion that the power of the artefactual map lies in its ability to eliminate, little by little, all traces of the practices that produced it.¹⁴⁹

both conceptually and on the ground, O'Reilly opened up the space in which the province moves.

I am not suggesting that O'Reilly consolidated this space on his own. At every turn he was implicated in the wider nexus of commission, surveyor, census, log book, statute, and map; and the perspectival format of the cartographic eye had certainly been established long before O'Reilly, or the Queen's law, arrived on the Northwest Coast.¹⁵⁰ For that matter, the early reserve geography of the southwest corner of the Mainland and southeastern Vancouver Island properly belongs to Sproat and the Joint Commission. But it was O'Reilly who took Sproat's template, refined it, perfected it, brought it into focus (Maps 6a-c and 7a-e), and then extended it across the province. Nor am I suggesting that O'Reilly's activities comprised the principal fulcrum upon which the decay of Native cultures hinged. In many cases Native peoples simply ignored reserve

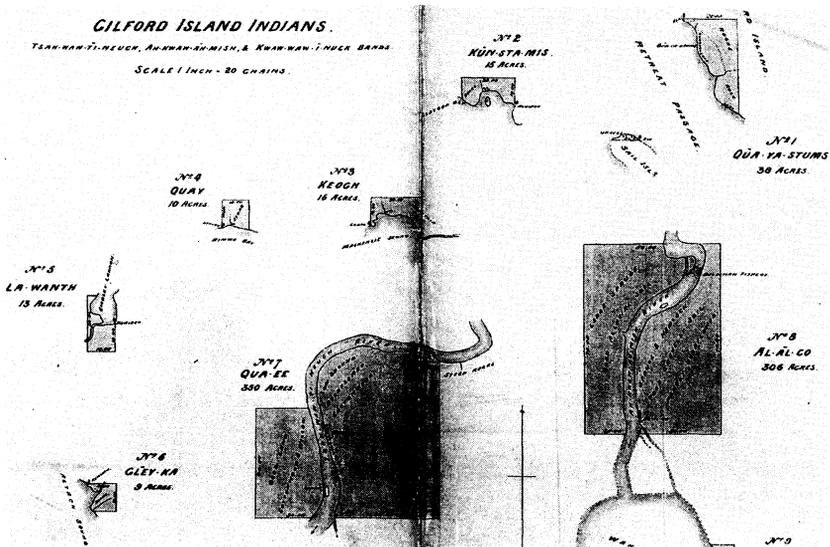
¹⁴⁹ Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 120.

¹⁵⁰ Ryan emphasizes this point, but see, also, David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989), Chapters 14-16; and Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1991).



Map 10a: O'Reilly's cruise through Kwakwaka'wakw country in 1886 (upper right portion of coastal itinerary in map (d) in Map 1), showing his route and the places and dates he allotted reserves (eight of which are shown in Map 10b). Partly because

of uncertainties over pre-emptions and leases (such as at Alert Bay) and of what to do in areas covered by the Douglas treaties (such as at Fort Rupert), and partly because he felt that the provincial government had neglected its responsibilities to the Kwakwaka'wakw to a greater extent than almost any other Native group in the province, Sproat had anticipated at least two full seasons to resolve the land question on these coasts. O'Reilly forecast six to eight weeks. He did it in three. Like the surface on which it unfolds, this circuit strikes me as almost rhythmic. Reserves in capital letters identify Sproat sites that O'Reilly confirmed but reduced. The other reserves include both Sproat sites confirmed or enlarged by O'Reilly and some of his own making. (Because O'Reilly could find no chiefs present at Campbell River, the two reserves at that place were formally allotted by Ashdown Green in 1888.) Compiled by author from DIA[RO], FC, MDCS, ILR B-64646, vol. II; 1886 *Annual Report*; and the O'Reilly Diaries, BCA, OC, reels 12a and 13a.



Map 10b: Unknown author's 1886 *Gilford Island Indians* (DIA[RO], FC, MDCS, ILR B-64646, vol. II, p. 246), showing O'Reilly's 1886 allotments to the Gilford Island tribes (inserted in Map 10a). Reserves Quayastums 1 (reduced), Keogh 3 (reduced), and Alalco 8 (enlarged) are Sproat provisional allotments accepted by O'Reilly; the balance are O'Reilly's alone. There are no known photographs of O'Reilly in the field, but his image is still there — 654 of them to be exact, dispersed throughout British Columbia.

boundaries, while the gritty ideological work of acculturation and assimilation was left to Indian agents, missionaries, and residential schools. What I am suggesting is that the size, quality, and location of the building blocks of the reserve system were, in large measure, O'Reilly's own project, and it is in this very material sense that his

“bio-geography” has survived as the framework upon which our own contemporary provincial geography remains suspended.

I use the term “suspended” — and this is my last point — deliberately. Contra O’Reilly’s own forecast on the Nass in 1888, the “very serious controversy” has not “died out.” If anything, it is as vigorous and pressing now as it has ever been, and it is O’Reilly’s line that is directly responsible. No alternative cultural space — even one subjected to the desiring Cartesian gaze of the cartographic eye, or circumscribed and administered by a fixed observer as centralized as the Indian Reserve Commission(er) — ever disappears completely.¹⁵¹ Indeed — and this is why Ryan insists that the slash between the “eye” and the “I” is permanent — complete “visual closure” over alternative cultural spaces is ultimately unrealizable. There will always be the returning, contesting gaze of indigenous agency in its own element. The cartographic eye can master spaces from a point of panoramic privilege. But it cannot see all of the activities *inside* those spaces. O’Reilly’s reserves have emerged as “power containers”: places of resistance in which alternative cultural practices have reinvented themselves and from which alternative “mappings” of the space outside the reserves can be mounted. As Charles Russ made clear at Nass Harbour in 1887, these counter-mappings have a long history. But it is only in our time that they have cast some doubt over the legitimacy of our own space. For O’Reilly’s space, “our space,” has now become “their space” too — the space of *Calder v. Attorney General* and the Nisga’a Agreement-in-Principle, of the blockades and *Delgamuukw v. BC*, of Xa:ytem, U’mista, and K’san, and of the Sechelt Self-Government Act and the British Columbia Treaty Commission.

CONCLUSION: RETURN TO POINT ELLICE HOUSE

In the only (and generally superficial) biography of the O’Reilly family at Point Ellice House — and in which O’Reilly’s role as Indian Reserve Commissioner is reduced to a single sentence — one historian has written that “[w]alking in the O’Reilly garden in the 1990s is rather like taking a step back in time. There, among the curving brick and gravel paths with the sweet aromas of spring lilac or summer jasmine in the air, one momentarily forgets that many decades have

¹⁵¹Although not in the context of imperial or colonial conquest, a similar point has been made by Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 412.

come and gone since Kathleen O'Reilly herself strolled those same paths with her father and planned their garden. It could easily still be a hundred years ago."¹⁵² Well, it is, but it is not. Like all historical sites, Point Ellice House is a mnemonic site, a place where certain social memories are reconfigured and inscribed.¹⁵³ But it is also a place where other equally vital memories are summarily (if unintentionally, if temporarily) obscured. Point Ellice House is a fragment of colonial space, selectively reconstituted and exhibited for our viewing pleasure. But it is also, it seems, one of the geographical centres of this province. Our task is to penetrate this veil of Romanticist nostalgia, retrace O'Reilly's travels away from Point Ellice, and in so doing, see that his colonial encounters in British Columbia transcend his time as they continue to permeate provincial space. Then, and only then, will we be capable of appreciating not only the inseparability between the past and the present, but also the continuities in geography between the "visitors who never left" and those who have never been anywhere else.

¹⁵²Green, *Above Stairs*, 79.

¹⁵³For the most thorough account of the way in which historical sites serve as mnemonic sites, see Matt Matsuda's *Memory of the Modern* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).