

"A Great Humbug" speaks of the gold rush in British Columbia and how it ended up being a bust for most. This, along with "Into that Country to Work" touch base on the existence (or nonexistence) of first nations people in this area, at this time.

"A Great Humbug" is a series of letters ranging from the years 1858-1865. All three letters state that there is no gold and that it isn't worth it for anyone else to make the travel to BC. Charles Major says "I would just about soon hear that anyone belonging to me was dead, as to hear they had started to come out here." (Thomas T. and Thor F.N. *A Few Acres of Snow: Documents in Pre-Confederation Canadian History. 3rd Edition*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009: P. 238.). To wish someone's fate is a bold statement so it's evident that they aren't making light of the fact that there is really nothing to come to BC for.

Each letter in "A Great Humbug" make a point about the First Nations people. They are not positive statements though. C. Gardiner has a very negative impression of the peoples; "...each in his turn had to keep watch, with revolver in hand, that the Indians did not steal our provisions, as well as [kill] us while asleep. Notwithstanding our guard, every few mornings one or the other of the companies would have something missing that the Red Skin had stolen at night." (Thorner and Frohn-Nielsen, *A Few Acres of Snow: Documents in Pre-Confederation Canadian History. 3rd Edition*, P. 236). Major seemed kinder about them but finished his statement, negatively; "the Indians were not troublesome at the mines; they are kept down pretty well. They are very numerous here and on the island, the lowest degraded set I ever saw." (Thorner and Frohn-Nielsen, *A Few Acres of Snow: Documents in Pre-Confederation Canadian History. 3rd Edition*, P. 239.). It is clear that these men have had poor interactions with the First Nations people.

"Into that Country to Work" speaks more on the Aboriginals behalf. As with most First Nations history, there isn't much, if any, documentation that First Nations peoples existed in Barkerville. Many researchers are trying to disprove this theory. We learn that it is due to disease that the First Nations people were absent in this time frame; "Unfortunately, 'total destruction by disease' has provided a ready explanation for Aboriginal peoples' apparent absence in the subsequent rush, even though First nations did, in fact, live and work in the region." (Mica J., "*Into that country to Work*," *BC Studies* V. 185. Spring (2015): P. 118)

Work Cited

Thomas Thorner and Thor Frohn-Nielsen (Eds.), *A Few Acres of Snow: Documents in Pre-Confederation Canadian History (3rd Edition)*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009: 232-253