Reading Log #7

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History 1120

October 24th, 2016

1. The primary documents held a common theme. BC was difficult to live in and the rewards were not worth the risks. The miners who had come to BC generally had a very difficult time sustaining profits due to flooding and weather conditions. Jorgenson’s article on the other hand was focused on Barkerville and the roles that the First Nations people played there. The article also touched on Aboriginal activities in the area before contact with the Europeans.

2. In the primary documents, there are several negative passages about the gold rush. Charles Major wrote: “Gold is not coming down fast enough to satisfy their wishes…”1 and C. Gardiner wrote: “I should not advise anyone from P.E. Island to come to the Fraser River, with the intention of making their fortune…”2. The authors make very good cases for their argument. Jorgenson’s article was very enlightening. The activities of Aboriginals in Barkerville are often overlooked or unknown. Jorgenson was sure to highlight their importance in Barkerville. “Indeed, the evidence suggests that Aboriginal people of a variety of origins in British Columbia came to Barkerville to engage in a range of occupations, including berry picking, laundry services, packing and packhorse support, hunting, selling salmon and eulachon, letter-carrying, mining, and prostitution”.3 By this account, it is quite clear that the First nations were highly engaged in the goings on in Barkerville, while previously, they haven’t been stressed as strongly.

3. There are many interesting points and questions that arise from these texts. If on one side of things, the Fraser River was such a negative experience for many miners, what gave them the notion to move north to Barkerville? If BC was so difficult to make a living in, what led to the discovery of gold farther north? These texts were highly engaging and full of valuable information.