

Resources of British Columbia.


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appears, and then sandstone and conglomerate, and as we were now in a coal country, it was no use to look for gold. We saw coal here, but I cannot speak as to its quality, not being a judge of it; the formation is similar to that of Nanaimo. From here we returned to Gold Harbor. A party who had remained behind at Gold Harbor to prospect inland, had met with no better success than ourselves; we then consulted what was the best thing to do. I did not wish to return to Victoria, as your Excellency had desired me to explore some of the inlets on the mainland, so with a party of fourteen men I left Gold Harbor for Fort Simpson, and arrived in eight days. The N. W. coast of Queen Charlotte's Island is a low, sandy, and gravel flat, having no resemblance to a gold country.

I left Fort Simpson for the Skeena river on the fifth of August. From Fort Simpson to Fort Essington is about forty miles. The salt water here appears a light blue color, and runs inland about thirty miles; the coarse-grained quartz of Fort Simpson no longer seen here; granite appears. The banks of the river are low; with small hard wood, and cotton trees on its margin, with some good-sized white oaks, the finest I have seen west of Fraser River.

Vessels drawing more than four feet of water cannot go more than twenty miles up the Skeena River, and it is very unlike the deep inlets to the southward. At our camp here, some Indians visited us, they told us they were honest, but in the morning, the absence of my coat rather negatived their statement. Next day we found the river shoal even for loaded canoes as it had fallen much. I went up a small river at our next camp, called Scenatoys, and the Indians showed me some crystalized quartz, and to my surprise a small piece with gold in it, being the first I have seen in this part. The Indians took me to a granite slide, whence he asserted the piece of quartz in question had come from; I found some thin crusts of fine quartz, but nothing like a rich vein. Ten miles further I found more fine grained quartz, but no gold.

I am of opinion, however, that good paying quartz will be found here.

From the small river just mentioned at the mouth of the Skeena or Fort Essington, it is seventy-five miles; a little below it, an Indian trail leads to Fort Simpson, it is through a low pass, and the distance is not great.

From this, ten miles further up, is a small river called the Foes, on the south side; hence is an Indian trail to Kitloops, on the Salmon River. The south branch of Salmon River is called Kittama.

By this time we were fairly over the coast range of mountains, and those ahead of us did not look very high. The current here was strong, and much labor required to get the canoe along, and we had to pull her up by a rope from the shore.

Gold is found here, a few specks to the pan, and the whole country looks like a gold country with fine bars and flats, and clay on the bars. The mountains look red, and slate and quartz can be seen.

Our next camp was at the village of Kitthalaska, and I started in a light canoe ahead of my party, as our canoe, by all accounts, could not get much further; I then determined to penetrate to Fort Fraser, (supposed to mean establishment of H. B. Company.)

The Indian who was with me informed me that a large stream called the Kitchumsala, comes in from the north, the land on it is good, and well adapted for farming; the Indians grow plenty of potatoes here. To the south, a small stream called the Chinkootsh enters, on the south-west of which is the Plumbago Mountain. I had some of it in my hand; it is as clear as polished silver, and runs in veins or quartz. Near this is the words "Pioneer H. B. C." on a tree nearly overgrown with the bark. The Indian told me this was cut by Mr. John Work, a long time ago. From here to the village of Kitcoonsa, the land improves, the mountains recede from the river, and fine flats run away four or five miles back to the mountain sides, where the smoke is seen rising from the Indian huts; They are occupied in picking and drying berries for the winter. The Indians here were very kind to me, and wished me to build a house and live with them.

Above the village of Kitcoonsa the prospect of gold is less; below it, a man could make a dollar a day. As the season was so advanced I was not able to prospect the hills which look so well about here, and unless the Government take it in hand it will be a long time before the mineral resources of this part of British Columbia are known. I think this the best looking mineral country I have seen in British Columbia.

From here to the village of Kitsogatala the river is rocky and dangerous, and our canoe was split from stem to stern.

Here we enter an extensive coal country, the seams being cut through by the river, and running up the