

PREFACE

Since Charles Hill-Tout's pioneering investigations at the famous Marpole site in the terminal 1800s, a considerable number of significant and richly informative archaeological studies have been conducted within the Lower Fraser River Region of southwestern British Columbia. As a result, a great deal has been revealed and learned about pre-contact period and early post-contact period human occupation, settlement, and use of natural resources. The majority of these projects have occurred within the last 50 years due to routine culture resource management assessment and mitigation studies required for land-altering developments, and there have also been several purely research-based investigations that have contributed new and significant data. While detailed unpublished final reports are available for most of these past archaeological studies, results from only a few have been summarized and formally published. Consequently, in order to gain a broad and comprehensive understanding of the human occupational history of the Lower Fraser River region, researchers have been compelled to seek out these many reports individually, and then wade through their often lengthy and dry contents in search of new, interesting, comparative, or otherwise useful information.

Recognizing a glaring and long overdue need to round up and publish summary accounts for many of these studies in a single volume that would be widely available to all, in 2011 I approached Dr. Roy Carlson, Department of Archaeology at SFU, and related that I would be willing to solicit and edit chapters if Archaeology Press would publish it. Dr. Carlson instantly and graciously agreed, and shortly thereafter I sent out a call for chapter submissions to our professional community. The initial response from our colleagues was immediate and overwhelming, with over 50 chapter abstracts being submitted within a few weeks.

During early mornings, evenings, and some weekends over the next five years, with a brutal red pen in hand, I edited about 35 chapter submissions as they slowly rolled in. During that long editorial journey I absorbed and ruminated over a staggering amount of information, and I learned a great many new and wonderful things. Suffice to say, my knowledge of the region and various aspects of its past human occupation have been substantially enhanced and broadened thanks to all our colleagues that submitted chapters for this book. The same will happen to you if you read all of it. Regrettably, many of the initially submitted chapters were withdrawn for various reasons, but fortunately the majority of them appear here.

I was very pleased and amazed by the wide spectrum of topics, interests, issues, paradigms, theories, conjectures, explanations, inferences, cultural and personal perspectives, methodological approaches, opinions, and other expressed concerns relating to matters of human occupancy and archaeology in the region. This has resulted in a comprehensive and "well-rounded" volume, and surely there is something here for everyone.

When I learned that we could include lots of images – and also have unrestricted use of colour – I was thrilled, since past publications have often fallen short in these regards due to prohibitive production costs associated with ancient printing technology. Some of the photographs and images presented herein are outstanding, and when collectively considered, they significantly enhance the educational value and visual appeal of this book.

It is my wish and expectation that this volume will be widely distributed in the Pacific Northwest, and that it will be read and appreciated by many, since thousands of "free-time" hours were willingly donated to make it a reality. All the chapter contributors are highly praised and thanked for their hard work, and for putting up with my heavy-handed edits and numerous annoying requests and comments. I also hope that the eclectic information presented in the chapters will be used by heritage professionals in the future for personal edification, for research involving intra- and inter-regional comparisons, for continued reconstruction and revision of regional culture-historical sequences, for modelling and explaining behavioural changes in subsistence and settlement through time, and for formal educational purposes. Most of all, I want it to be a primary source of academic inspiration and impetus that will incite future professionals to rigorously pursue, address, clarify and resolve some of the myriad of interesting questions and problems that remain in this diverse, fascinating and beautiful riverine region.

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