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## Gender Troubled: European Masculinity and Kaúxuma núpika on the Columbia Plateau

**Mira Harvey**

*Kaúxuma núpika was a Ktunaxa guide, prophet and mediator from the Columbia Plateau in the early 19th century that appears in multiple Euro-American fur trader journals and narratives. He left his community as a young woman, and returned a year later as a man, who gained significant political and spiritual influence across the Plateau. Fur traders that hired Kaúxuma núpika as a translator, mediator and guide interpreted him as a man, and often only discovered that he was born a woman long after they had parted ways. Kaúxuma núpika, knowingly or not, was performing a masculinity entirely legible to these traders—and within their narratives they are constantly trying to remind both themselves, and the reader, that this man is not actually a man.*

Kaúxuma núpika was a Ktunaxa guide, prophet, mediator, hunter, and warrior on the Columbia Plateau, whose life was partially recorded by European fur traders during the early 19th century. As a young woman, Kaúxuma núpika left her community to marry a white fur trader. A year later, he returned as a man. Kaúxuma núpika took on masculine roles in his Ktunaxa community, and went on further to guide white fur traders, mediate disputes between warring Indigenous peoples, and prophesy across the Plateau. He was multilingual, a skilled mediator and warrior, and by the time of his death and after greatly respected by many Indigenous peoples.<sup>1</sup> The specifics of Kaúxuma núpika's life are difficult to know - what written records do exist are traders' journals and subsequent narratives, which are far from reliable sources, as Elizabeth Vibert has proven.<sup>2</sup>

But through both trader's accounts and ethnographic data, a fuller picture of Kaúxuma núpika's life may be elaborated on.<sup>3</sup> In this picture, an interesting phenomenon starts to take shape. While traders spend much of their narratives adopting dismissive attitudes towards Kaúxuma núpika's masculinity, Kaúxuma núpika is actually performing a kind of masculinity that is familiar to traders: a masculinity marked by attributes like spiritual power, independence, and involvement in warfare.

1 Claude Schaeffer, "The Kutenai Female Berdache: Courier, Guide, Prophetess, and Warrior," *Ethnohistory* 12, no.3 (Summer 1965): 193-236.

2 Elizabeth Vibert, *Traders' Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997).

3 Suzanne Crawford O'Brien, "Gone to the Spirits: A Transgender Prophet on the Columbia Plateau." *Theology & Sexuality* 12, no.2, 125-143 is, in my opinion, the best overview of Kaúxuma núpika's life and career.

Throughout Euro-American narratives, Kaúxuma núpika is doing a very good job at displaying qualities that traders understand to be ‘inherently’ masculine. Even more interestingly, Kaúxuma núpika’s Ktunaxa culture does not inherently gender spiritual power, independence, or warfare. So what we have is a Ktunaxa man performing a masculinity that is legible to the very European traders that refuse to equate anything but sex with gender, but these activities are not gendered in his own community. Whether Kaúxuma núpika knew what he was doing in relation to the traders is another question, one unanswerable in the way that History as a discipline demands. But in fur trader journals and narratives, there is a distinct gendered tension to be unearthed as they interpret this prophet, guide, and warrior. Kaúxuma núpika’s activities actually affirmed his masculinity in the eyes of European traders, as he demonstrated spiritual power, independence, and involvement in warfare.

#### A note on scholarship, ‘transgender’ and pronouns

Scholars have written about Kaúxuma núpika in a variety of ways – from the dismissive tone of Schaeffer, to Vibert’s continued use of she/her pronouns, until most recently O’Brien’s use of he/him pronouns, and use of the term ‘transgender.’ My positionality, as a white, trans settler in ‘Canada’ has influenced how I wish to approach writing about Kaúxuma núpika, as has writing within an academic tradition that has historically dismissed and derided Kaúxuma núpika’s gender. Firstly, I refer to Kaúxuma núpika as a man, and use he/him pronouns.<sup>4</sup> From what documentation I can access, it appears that Kaúxuma núpika lived and was interpreted as a man.<sup>5</sup> I believe that using she/her pronouns is confusing, inaccurate, and potentially disrespectful to this person—especially if it comes from a settler scholar like myself. Additionally, I am writing in English, and I do not know the Ktunaxa language. This limits my ability to fully elucidate and understand Kaúxuma núpika’s inner experience of gender, and for that reason this essay focuses on *fur trader* reactions to him. I am not the person to explore the personal, inner or cultural aspect of his life—that work, if undertaken, should be done by a Ktunaxa person, and perhaps not necessarily in a settler colonial academic format.

Secondly, I will not be using the term transgender to describe Kaúxuma núpika, as O’Brien does. I am of the opinion that applying that term would be an anachronism and culturally inaccurate. It is tempting, as it provides modern readers with an easy term to understand, but neither the fur traders nor Ktunaxa people would have understood Kaúxuma núpika this way. It is important to recognise that our categories and identifiers of gender are cultural constructions: the binary sex/gender model popularized in Europe is largely absent from most Indigenous societies on Turtle Island, who instead have complex and diverse traditions of gender that variably include third

<sup>4</sup> Additionally, quotations will be replacing she/her pronouns with he/him in brackets, for the sake of clarity, in the same format as O’Brien.

<sup>5</sup> This paper utilizes Butler’s theory of gender performativity, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

genders, differing associated roles, and systems of gender diversity.<sup>6</sup> The term ‘transgender’ is securely located in a relatively modern, Western context. It is not ahistorical, and it does not make sense to apply it to a society that does not have a tradition of binary sex/gender. As we pursue decolonization we must be cognisant of when we use Western terms on subjects that exist outside of Western philosophies and institutions.<sup>7</sup> What I will attempt to do instead is engage with Kaúxuma núpika and the gender dynamics of the Columbia Plateau on their own terms, cognisant of my failings as a settler unconnected to Ktunaxa culture and ignorant of Ktunaxa language.

#### “Received whatever he said with implicit faith...”

Most trader accounts about Kaúxuma núpika are focused on his spiritual power and prophetic presence on the Plateau, which was substantial. Traders describe Kaúxuma núpika largely unfavourably: he was a liar and a cheat,<sup>8</sup> who invented supernatural predictions and ultimately “fell into discredit” in his own community.<sup>9</sup> Despite this, traders very clearly recognised his spiritual power and influence. Alexander Ross, about Kaúxuma núpika and his wife, says “they were the objects of attraction at every village and camp on the way: nor could we, for a long time, account for the cordial reception they met with from the natives, who loaded them for their good tidings with the most valuable articles they possessed—horses, robes, leather, and higwas.”<sup>10</sup> David Thompson thought that Kaúxuma núpika’s prophecies inspired violence in the local peoples and even the desire to silence him via homicide: “... had not the Kootenae been under our immediate care [he] would have been killed for the lies [he] told on [his] way to the Sea.”<sup>11</sup> Thompson’s narrative gives a bit more context to this encounter, where apparently Kaúxuma núpika predicted diseases to the Chinooks, “which made some of them threaten [his] life.”<sup>12</sup> John Franklin claims that Kaúxuma núpika had followers that “received whatever [he] said with implicit faith,” and that his prophecies

<sup>6</sup> For an overview/case studies of different Indigenous sex/gender systems in North America, see Midnight Sun, “Sex/Gender Systems in Native North America,” in *Living the Spirit: a Gay American Indian Anthology*, ed. Will Roscoe (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988): 32-47.

<sup>7</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Dundin: Otago University Press, 1999): 45-60.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1849), 144-145.

<sup>9</sup> John Franklin and John Richardson, *Narrative of the Second Expedition to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1825, 1826, and 1827* (London: John Murray, 1829), 306. The detail of Kauxuma ‘falling into discredit’ after his death is not mentioned in other narratives.

<sup>10</sup> Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers*, 145.

<sup>11</sup> David Thompson, *Columbia Journals*, ed. Barbara Belyea (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), 160.

<sup>12</sup> David Thompson, *David Thompson’s Narrative of His Explorations in Western America 1784–1812*, ed. J. B. Tyrrell (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1916), 513.

"quickly spread through the whole northern district."<sup>13</sup> When traders met Kaúxuma núpika, they saw a powerful person- perhaps not one that had religious power in the way they understood it, but one that had spiritual power and influence on the Plateau.

In European society, religion was led and controlled by men. Women could, and did, exercise influence to varying degrees depending on the religion, but they did so within a patriarchal patriarchy.<sup>14</sup> For Kaúxuma núpika to have as much spiritual influence as he did, as O'Brien has proven, was foreign to Europeans.<sup>15</sup> As outlined above, traders attempted to discredit Kaúxuma núpika in their own narratives, but they could not control the reaction of Plateau communities, who seem to have largely welcomed and respected him as a spiritual leader.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, according to Simon Francis, an informant of Schaeffer, the Blackfoot warriors that killed Kaúxuma núpika understood his power: "Men, you must realise this woman's spirit continues to haunt us. We have killed a powerful woman."<sup>17</sup> To traders, who see religion and its associated power and influence as a male domain, Kaúxuma núpika's spiritual power would support his claims to masculinity. This is a masculinity that is constantly derided and dismissed, as Thompson tells Indigenous peoples that Kaúxuma núpika is lying, or Franklin claims his prophecies to be discredited, but spiritual power to Europeans is masculine all the same.<sup>18</sup>

This point is poignantly proven, I would argue, in that Kaúxuma núpika had wife(s). It is hard to track the individual identities of these women, as traders were uninterested in them, but women travelled with Kaúxuma núpika and were involved in the same spiritual endeavours. When Ross describes the gifts given to Kaúxuma núpika for his prophesying, he describes Kaúxuma núpika and his wife equally participating, and receiving, equal share of the subsequent influence: "These stories, so agreeable to the Indian ear, were circulated far and wide; and not only received as truths, but procured so much celebrity for the two cheats..."<sup>19</sup> Ross is the only trader to mention Kaúxuma núpika's wife participating in these spiritual endeavours somewhat equally, the rest focus solely on Kaúxuma núpika and only mention his wife in passing. It is entirely possible that Kaúxuma núpika's partner was fully involved in their spiritual journeys across the Plateau, as access to spiritual power in Plateau cul-

tures was "almost identical for both men and women."<sup>20</sup> Children searched for and acquired spirit guardians, and both men and women were reported to have spiritual power. Neither gender had to necessarily 'transition' to the other in order to do certain activities or spiritual roles, although individuals who experienced a change in gender identity were understood to be spiritually powerful in Plateau and Plains cultures.<sup>21</sup> But traders focus on Kaúxuma núpika and *his* spiritual influence, and largely conceal or ignore the role of his wife(s). In that strange way, once again they affirm his masculinity within an Euro-American framework of gender.<sup>22</sup> I am not arguing that either traders nor Kaúxuma núpika intended this, but rather, that the *result*—emphasising Kaúxuma núpika at the expense of his wife—does affirm and confer a kind of masculinity to him in Euro-American contexts. Euro-American texts tell us that Kaúxuma núpika, the 'man', is important: the actor, the agent, the subject, and his wife is dependent, submissive, and a possession. Kaúxuma núpika is made visible in the historical record because of his gender, his wife(s) invisible: a trend that continues to this day, as scholars focus on Kaúxuma núpika's gender and spiritual power with little to no attention given to his partner(s) and their spiritual gifts.<sup>23</sup>

### **"Bold and Adventurous"**

Kaúxuma núpika is an independent character in trader's narratives and journals. Despite what derisive or invalidating comments are made, he is undoubtedly an autonomous individual who could travel, provide, and make decisions not only independently, but effectively. Alexander Ross and Gabriel Franchère provide the first documentation of Kaúxuma núpika's exploits, in an episode where he and his wife deliver a letter to the party: "Notwithstanding, we learned from them that they had been sent by a Mr. Finnan M'Donald...that having lost their way, they had followed the course of the Tacousah Tessah (the Indian name of the Columbia), that when they arrived at the Falls, the natives made them understand that there were white men at the mouth of the river; and not doubting that the person to whom the letter was addressed would be found there, they had come to deliver it."<sup>24</sup> Ross elab-

13 Franklin and Richardson, *Narrative of the Second Expedition*, 306.

14 Examples of this in 'Canada' include: Lynne Sorrel Marks, *Infidels and the Damn Churches: Irreligion and Religion in Settler British Columbia*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017. and Lesley Erickson, *Repositioning the Missionary: Sara Riel, the Grey Nuns, and Aboriginal Women in Catholic Missions of the Northwest*, in Recollecting: Lives of Aboriginal Women of the Canadian Northwest and Borderlands, eds. Sarah Carter and Patricia A. McCormack, AU Press: Athabasca University, 2011, 155-134.

15 O'Brien, "Gone to the Spirits," 140.

16 Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers*, 145.

17 Schaffer, "The Kutenai Female Berdache," 216.

18 Thompson, *Columbia Journals*, 160; Franklin and Richardson, *Narrative of the Second Expedition*, 306.

19 Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers*, 145. Emphasis mine.

20 Lillian A Ackerman, "Complementary but Equal: Gender Status in the Plateau," in *Women and Power in Native North America* ed. Laura F. Klein and Lillian A. Ackerman (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 91.

21 O'Brien, "Gone to the Spirits," 138-139. Vibert, *Traders' Tales*, 102.

22 Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers*, 85. Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, 512-513, 520-521. Franklin and Richardson, *Narrative of the Second Expedition*, 305-306.

23 O'Brien and Vibert both largely ignore the question of who Kauxuma's spouses were and what role they may have played. This paper, too, largely doesn't mention Kauxuma Nupika's spouses, in what I think is a symptom of the shortcomings of academic papers in rewriting and re-righting these histories. Sharron Proulx-Turner, *she walks for days inside a thousand eyes: a two spirit story* (Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 2008) is poetry/historical fiction and is, I think, a possible/partial antidote to this problem.

24 Gabriel Franchère, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America in the Years*

orates: "Among the many visitors who every now and then presented themselves, were two strange Indians, in the character of man and wife, from the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains...The husband, named Ko-come-ne-pe-ca<sup>25</sup>, was a very shrewd and intelligent Indian, who addressed us in the Algonquin and gave us much information respecting the interior of the country."<sup>26</sup> Later, Ross characterises Kaúxuma núpika and his wife as "...bold adventurous amazons... In accompanying us, they sometimes shot ahead, and at other times loitered behind, as suited their plans."<sup>27</sup>

Kaúxuma núpika's independent nature affirmed his masculinity in the eyes of these traders. He carried a letter for considerable distances, and was obviously a highly skilled person that could travel extensive distances between forts, speak multiple languages, and exercise autonomy—shooting ahead, loitering behind, as suiting his plans.<sup>28</sup> He certainly did not need a male guardian, and he quite obviously not only took care of himself but also was able to provide for his wife. None of these attributes are gendered in Ktunaxa or Plateau cultures: self-sufficiency, skill and independence are highly valued for men and women.<sup>29</sup> Women were responsible for 70% of the Plateau diet's caloric intake through plant gathering, participated in trade, and owned their own property, including horses, goods, and their mat lodges. Neither husband nor wife could claim the property of the other. Women were fully capable of divorce, as were men, and women had the choice of moving back with kin or living independently, which, as mentioned above, she was fully capable of doing.<sup>30</sup> As noted by O'Brien, it could be argued that men were more dependent on women and women's associated skills.<sup>31</sup> But to the Euro-American trader, none of this is understood. An ideology of 'delicate womanhood' pervaded European thought, so when confronted with Indigenous women who did 'a man's work', traders had two popular discursive responses.<sup>32</sup> Indigenous women were either exploited 'beasts of burden' for the work they did, or they were overemphasised as 'exceptional'.<sup>33</sup> Ross employs

1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814, etc., trans. J. V. Huntington (New York: Redfield, 1854), 118-119.

25 Schaeffer, "The Kutenai Female Berdache," 200. A version of a name that Kauxuma Nupika reportedly took: Qánqon kámek klaúla, 'Sitting-in-the-Water Grizzly.'

26 Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers*, 85.

27 Ibid., 144.

28 Schaeffer, "The Kutenai Female Berdache," 212. By Schaeffer's estimates, the travel that Kauxuma Nupika and his wife would have undertaken to deliver the letter to Astoria would have been exceptionally difficult.

29 Ackerman, "Complementary but Equal," 83.

30 Ibid., 86. Vibert, *Traders' Tales*, 137. Schaeffer, "The Kutenai Female Berdache," 201. This is also attested in Schaeffer's ethnography: one of Kaúxuma's wives leaves him after a fight in a canoe, telling him that she will pitch her lodge alone and Kaúxuma can go his own way.

31 O'Brien, "Gone to the Spirits," 138.

32 Vibert, *Traders' Tales*, 128.

33 Philip Levy, *Fellow Travellers: Indians and Europeans Contesting the Early American Trail* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007), 121-122.

the latter discourse as he refers to Kaúxuma núpika and his wife as "bold and adventurous amazons."<sup>34</sup> Philip Levy notes that when European men witnessed women as independent, autonomous, capable actors, it produced a distinct gendered anxiety for the trader because these things were, supposedly, inherently masculine.<sup>35</sup> Independence, mobility and the 'trail' are so masculine that some traders attempt to justify Kaúxuma núpika's gender by explaining that he dressed as a man in order to travel with more safety.<sup>36</sup> Safety from what would be the question, but these arguments are not logical—they are built on a gendered order that says women cannot be independent and effective actors without being a man, or at least looking like a man. So when Kaúxuma núpika travels incredible distances, provides, translates, and acts autonomously... his masculinity is affirmed in the eyes of the traders that meet him.

### "Carrying a Bow and Quiver of Arrows..."

Kaúxuma núpika was not only spiritually powerful and independent, but a warrior. He was a formidable leader of raiding parties and warfare. Franklin writes,

Having procured a gun, a bow and arrows, and a horse [he] sallied forth to join a party of [his] countrymen then going to war; and in [his] first essay, displayed so much courage as to attract general regard, which was so much heightened by [his] subsequent feats of bravery, that many young men put themselves under [his] command. Their example was soon generally followed, and at length [he] became the principal leader of the tribe, under the designation of 'Manlike Woman'.<sup>37</sup>

The exact facts of this account can be disputed, but Schaeffer's Ktunaxa informants generally agree that Kaúxuma núpika had significant skill in both raiding and mediation between warring groups.<sup>38</sup> While Kaúxuma núpika is not necessarily engaged in warfare when travelling with Thompson and Ross, his skills in mediation and diplomacy is evident. In carrying the letter to Fort Astoria, he and his wife would have had to cross miles of territory occupied by friendly or not-so-friendly communities, a danger that would have been recognised by the traders.<sup>39</sup>

He also acted as a diplomat, translator and mediator for traders as they crossed into unfamiliar territory. John Work highlights Kaúxuma núpika's skill in interpretation when he translates for Work's party—Work also mentions that Kaúxuma núpika "is of some note among [the Kootenay]."<sup>40</sup> Kaúxuma núpika eventually dies in the context of warfare and raiding between the Blackfoot and Flathead. W.H. Gray's ac-

34 Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers*, 144.

35 Levy, *Fellow Travellers*, 120.

36 Franchère, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast*, 122.

37 Franklin and Richardson, *Narrative of the Second Expedition*, 209.

38 Schaeffer, "The Kutenai Female Berdache," 198, 200.

39 Ibid., 212.

40 John Work, *Journal*, ed. T. C. Elliott (Seattle: Washington Historical Quarterly, 1914): 190.

count relates that Kaúxuma núpika was killed by the Blackfoot while attempting a peace negotiation: “[he] has hitherto been permitted to go from all the camps, without molestation, to carry any message give to [him] by either camp.”<sup>41</sup> Schaeffer’s informants assign cause of death to a Blackfoot ambush—Simon Francis describes how Kaúxuma núpika was a formidable warrior and that it took incredible effort to kill this “powerful woman.”<sup>42</sup> While these events occurred after Kaúxuma núpika’s meeting with Thompson, Thompson does do something interesting when writing about Kaúxuma núpika in both his journal and narrative: the way in which Kaúxuma núpika is armed is always included. Thompson, in recounting the episode wherein Kaúxuma núpika came to his tent for protection, states that he was “carrying a Bow and Quiver of Arrows”<sup>43</sup> and that after he declared his sex changed, he “dressed, and armed [himself] as such”<sup>44</sup> Later, Thompson claims he describes Kaúxuma núpika to several parties of Natives, and his description is short and to the point: “the Woman that carried a Bow and Arrows and had a Wife.”<sup>45</sup> Clearly, to Thompson and other Euro-Americans like Franklin, Kaúxuma núpika’s weapons are of interest.<sup>46</sup>

In European society, weapons were a potent symbol of masculinity. Weapons were strongly associated with either military contexts or upper-class/imperial hunting contexts, both of which women were disallowed from participating in.<sup>47</sup> In contrast, the ‘masculine ideal’ of most Plateau culture groups was not traditionally a warrior, but a skilled hunter or fisher.<sup>48</sup> In Kaúxuma núpika’s lifetime, conflict with the Blackfoot increased and warriors became more important in Ktunaxa society,<sup>49</sup> but survival on the Plateau meant that hunting and/or fishing was still highly valued. Both men and women had responsibilities related to hunting and/or fishing on the Plateau, mostly separate, but with flexibility in roles for those with gifts or abilities.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, both men and women could participate in raiding or warfare, although it is less documented on the Plateau than on the Plains.<sup>51</sup> However, Europeans coming into contact with Plateau and Coastal peoples interpreted their way of life through a gendered and hierarchical lens, casting fishing peoples as the ‘lower,’ lazi-

er, more feminine groups, while hunting groups were masculine, healthy, superior.<sup>52</sup> Even above fishing/hunting peoples were the warriors of the Plains: the ‘real Indians’ that demonstrated masculine vigour in buffalo hunts and courage in raiding and war.<sup>53</sup> For Kaúxuma núpika to not only be a hunter, as demonstrated by his bow, arrows and gun, but a warrior would be interpreted as incredibly masculine by the traders that met him and the Euro-Americans that read about him in published narratives. Thompson, Franchère and Franklin consistently include Kaúxuma núpika’s weapons in their descriptions to highlight what they interpret to be the most shocking about ‘Madame Boisverd’: that someone who is not a man could seem so much like one.

### Conclusion

In 1811, Kaúxuma núpika and his partner arrived at Fort Astoria. They were dressed in a Plains-style dress, likely tanned leather with colourful quillwork, noticeably different to the Coast Chinook of the Astoria area, and according to Schaeffer, must have caused a ‘minor sensation.’<sup>54</sup> They remained at Astoria for a month, where Ross and Franchère noticed them. However, Kaúxuma núpika was not known to have been born a woman until a month later, when David Thompson arrives and informs Alexander Ross of his sex. For a month at Fort Astoria, Kaúxuma núpika is understood to be a man: if not by the Indigenous peoples at the fort, at least by the Euro-American traders. Both Ross and Franchère downplay the fact that they interacted with a Native man and his wife without a second thought to either’s gender for an entire month. It must have been a bit of a shock for the Astorians, to realise that someone who was a man was suddenly a woman. They are faced with a choice when interpreting and recounting Kaúxuma núpika: recognise a falseness to their own gender ideology, or clumsily search for explanations for this person’s spiritual influence, independence, strength and courage, traits that were supposed to be the sole purview of men. Kaúxuma núpika, knowingly or not, is performing a masculinity entirely legible to these traders, and in their narratives, you can sense a constant attempt to remind both themselves, and the reader, that this man is not actually a man.

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<sup>41</sup> William H. Gray, *The Unpublished Journal of William H. Gray from December, 1836 to October, 1837* (Walla Walla: Whitman College Quarterly, 1913), 46-47.

<sup>42</sup> Schaeffer, “The Kutenai Female Berdache,” 216.

<sup>43</sup> Thompson, *David Thompson’s Narrative*, 512.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 513.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 512-513.

<sup>46</sup> Franklin and Richardson, *Narrative of the Second Expedition*, 305. “Having procured a gun, a bow and arrows...”

<sup>47</sup> Vibert, *Traders’ Tales*, 257, 261.

<sup>48</sup> Schaeffer, “The Kutenai Female Berdache,” 198.

<sup>49</sup> Vibert, *Traders’ Tales*, 211.

<sup>50</sup> Ackerman, “Complementary but Equal,” 81-82.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>52</sup> Vibert, *Traders’ Tales*, 232-233, 248.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 253-255. This masculine bravery and vigour was not a clear positive attribution to Indigenous peoples: in the same breath, their masculine fortitude made them ‘bestial’, unlike the ‘civilised’ Europeans.

<sup>54</sup> Schaeffer, “The Kutenai Female Berdache,” 203.

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## More than a Fur Trading Post: Agricultural Development at Fort Victoria, 1846

**Collin Rennie**

Just three years after the establishment of Fort Victoria accounts made by Chief Factor Roderick Finlayson in the Fort Victoria Journal show that fur trading was infrequent at best. The first year of journal entries, which provides the closest look at what life at the fort consisted of in its formative years, shows that only 18 days included mention of a significant trade occurring; however, in that same year employees at the fort produced thousands of bushels of vegetables. The fort's role as an agricultural hub was discounted by the colony's first Governor, Richard Blanshard, who commented in 1851 that the fort was nothing more than a fur trading post - a comment that has had an undue influence on historical writing about Fort Victoria. After considering why the fort was designated as a main depot and examining how the Lekwungen People's land management practices incentivized the HBC to appropriate and reorganize land for company farming, this essay challenges Blanshard's comment, suggesting that Fort Victoria was much more than a fur trading post.

To a great extent, the history of the first half of the nineteenth century in the Pacific Northwest has been defined by the Hudson's Bay Company's involvement in the region's fur trade. Until recently, the history of agriculture in the region has mostly been absent from the literature. Except for a few sources, most notably James R. Gibson's 1985 book *Farming the Frontier: The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846*, it wasn't until an archived Hudson's Bay Company Journal from Fort Victoria was made public that agricultural development at Company forts was more critically examined. In 2009, Dr. John Lutz and a collection of students at the University of Victoria began transcribing the Journal and published it online.<sup>1</sup> Written by Hudson's Bay Company (hereafter referred to as HBC) employee Roderick Finlayson, the Journal details the daily activities of those living and working at the Fort from 1846 to 1850, revealing the prominence of the Company's agricultural efforts there. Despite the importance of agriculture at Fort Victoria, this topic has been the focus of few scholarly works and more should be done to unpack why farming became more significant at Fort Victoria than it did at other HBC forts.<sup>2</sup> The Fort Victoria Journal entries from

<sup>1</sup> "About," Fort Victoria Journal, Accessed November 20, 2020, <http://fortvictoriajournal.ca/about.php>.

<sup>2</sup> In this work the terms agricultural development and farming are used interchangeably.