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Before I begin, I wish to acknowledge that I am writing this thesis as a settler of mixed European descent. I live and study on the unceded territories of the l k n speaking peoples, now known as the Songhees and Esquimalt nations, and the WSÁNE peoples. These peoples have resided on and have had ongoing, complex relationships with the land on which I write since time immemorial, and will continue to for generations to come. In researching and writing this thesis I have had the invaluable opportunity to explore the history of this land and its dynamics with the people who lived here long before mine ever did. My hope with this paper is to help shine light onto the stories of these people and other Northwestern Coastal Indigenous peoples who have historically been ignored and misrepresented in Western scholarship.

At a place called Eelung, on Orcas Island, there is a clam bed cultivated by its owners. They took the largest rocks that were in the clam bed and moved them out to extreme low water marks, setting them in rows like a fence along the edge of the water. This made clam digging very easy compared to what it had previously been because ther

This research and accounts from Indigenous peoples of the region prove that clam cultivation has been an important part of life on the Northwest Coast since long before the arrival of Europeans. However, it is seldom mentioned in any non-Indigenous accounts from before John Harper's work. The question arises, then, of why so many Europeans overlooked these practices. Gilbert Malcom Sproat, the Commissioner on the Joint Committee on Indigenous Reserves asserted in 1868 that the colonization of Vancouver Island can be justified "by the fact of all the land lying waste without prospect of improvement", blatantly disregarding any of the land management practices conducted by Coastal Indigenous peoples that we now know to exist.[8]

In this paper, I argue that the limited acknowledgement of Northwestern Indigenous clam cultivation by Western writers before the 1990s and the failure to acknowledge the description of clam cultivation by Stern in 1934 is at least partially the result of what I call the hunter-gatherer myth. The hunter-gatherer myth is the false, yet common, conception by Westerners that the Northwest Coastal Indigenous peoples, as well as many other Indigenous groups, were historically hunter-gatherer societies, meaning that the two methods of sustenance were the catching or collection of food. This implies a lack of cultivation and suggests that humans played a passive role in the production of their food sources.

To argue this, I will examine descriptions of Northwestern Indigenous culture and clam cultivation by Westerners from the mid-nineteenth century until the Western recognition of clam gardens in the late twentieth century. In an effort to avoid a monolithic description of Northwestern Indigenous peoples I will try to specify which Indigenous population is being discussed throughout this paper; however, many early Western accounts did not clarify which

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[8] Gilbert M. Sproat, Chapter II: Rights of Savages to the Soil, *Nootka: Scenes and Studies of the Savage Life* (Victoria: Son Nis P a ,

Slattery credits these inaccurate accounts to the dominant perspective that sees the journey as "part of a story of conquest and control", as well as common beliefs about a racial hierarchy and the superiority of Western civilisation.[12]

Similar research has focused on the changing Western perspectives of the relationship between North American Indigenous peoples and their environment. In his paper "Beyond "The Ecological Indian"and"Virgin Soil Epidemics": New Perspectives on Native Americans and the Environment", James D. Rice discusses how Western scholars have historically viewed the relationship between Indigenous peoples and nature, and how this view has changed over time. He explains that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the relationship between Indigenous societies and nature was used by Westerners to distinguish Indigenous peoples from Europeans, as they "[regarded] native Americans as lower…on an evolutionary scale, closer to their non-human ancestors".[13]

These dominant narratives are now being questioned. Slattery discusses the ways that the Burke and Wills expedition is being rewritten and retold in literature and museums. Similarly, the notion of the primitive relationship between Indigenous peoples and their environment changed over the twentieth century, and in the 1960s and 1970s this relationship came to be viewed as more positive. The colonial narratives of Indigenous peoples being helpless and less than has started to be challenged, and Western scholarship has begun to recognize the complexity of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and their natural environment; it is in this area of research that the question of the hunter-gatherer myth applies.

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[13] James D. Rice, "Beyond 'the Ecological Indian' and 'Virgin Soil Epidemics': New Perspectives on Native Americans and the Environment," *History Compass* 12, no. 9 (September 2¤

The hunter-gatherer myth is a concept that can be used to help explain misunderstandings about Northwestern Coastal Indigenous peoples, allowing for a revision of the way that these peoples and their relationship to non-human life are understood. It provides a background for re-defining the ways that Northwestern Coastal Indigenous societies are viewed. The concept has been explored in the research of a variety of scholars including Nancy J. Turner and Douglas Deur. Their book *Keeping It Living: Traditions of Plant Use and Cultivation on the Northwest Coast of North America* is one of the first pieces of literature to discuss the hunter-gatherer myth and Northwestern Coastal Indigenous cultivation. The book contains case studies by several authors identifying different types of traditional plant management and credits the longtime unawareness of these practices to the assumption that Northwestern Coastal peoples were primarily hunter-gatherers.[14]

The case studies in this book include the management and harvesting of root plants by Coast Salish peoples, the management of Wapato by the Chinook, prescribed burning in the Fraser Valley by Northwestern Coastal peoples, plant management practiced by the Tsimshian and Tlingit, and the tending of Estuarine root gardens by the Kwakwaka'wakw. These studies show a variety of the different resource management practices of Northwestern Coastal Indigenous peoples, most of which were previously ignored by Western writers.

The idea of the hunter-gatherer myth has been explored in relation to Indigenous groups elsewhere as well. For example, M. Kat Anderson explores cultivation practices of Indigenous peoples in California in her book *Tending the Wild: Native American knowledge and the management of California's natural resources.* She explains the issue with the label "hunter-gatherer", arguing that the term connotes "a hand-to-mouth existence" and implies "that California Indians dug tubers, plucked berries,and foraged for greens in a random fashion, never

[14] Deur and Turner, *Keeping it Living*.

staying in any one place long enough to leave lasting human imprints".[15] This description shows the implications of the term hunter-gatherer and the assumptions it led Western scholars and observers to make about Indigenous peoples. Anderson's book examines how these ideas are false, and describes the complex cultivation practices of Indigenous peoples in California in opposition to this hunter-gatherer assumption.

There are a few hypotheses as to why the assumption that North American Indigenous peoples were strictly hunter-gatherers came to be. First, there is an argument that because the dominant Western view saw Indigenous peoples as primitive and unsophisticated, they did not believe that these societies were capable of agriculture. This is the primary assumption explored in *Keeping It Living*. In the introduction, Deur and Turner accredit the ignorance of Indigenous

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"taking" to "tending": learning about Indigenous land and resource management on the Pacific Northwest Coast of North America", Turner suggests that Indigenous cultivation practices on the Northwest Coast may have in part been ignored because tending to plants was primarily women's work, and historically most anthropological researchers have been men, who only interacted with the men in the Indigenous communities they studied. She argues that this could lead to the false understanding that hunting, as typically men's work, was the primary method of sustenance.[22]

Scholars agree that a combination of factors likely contributed to the existence of the

such a picture".[25] Vancouver was impressed by the nature of the island, but assumed that this was in no way the result of human cultivation.

A similar perspective is expressed in a letter written by James Douglas to his friend Esquire James Hargrave in 1843, in which he discusses clams specifically. James Douglas is an important figure to examine as he was a Hudson's Bay Company representative and the future governor of Fort Victoria. His letter can thus be understood as an insight into the ideas of a prominent colonial figure on the Northwest Coast as well as one of the first texts discussing clams in the region during the colonial period.

Like Vancouver's account, the letter discusses in detail the natural environment of Fort Victoria. Douglas comments on the incredible beauty of the place, describing it as "a perfect 'Eden', in the midst of the dreary wilderness of the North west coast".[26] In his infatuation with the natural environment, Douglas discusses the "horizontal beds of shells, found above high water mark", crediting this directly to the "mysterious agencies" at work in creating this beautiful wilderness.[27] He does not acknowledge that the beautiful landscape around him might have been cultivated by the people of the area.

Douglas continues on to describe the Coast Salish peoples of the area, likely what are now known as the Esquimalt and Songhees nations. In contrast to his sublime descriptions of the environment, Douglas continues on to describe the local Indigenous populations as "desperate savages" who have "yet lost no trait of their natural barbarity".[28] By separating the people and the environment both in location within the text and in connotation of the adjectives used,

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[25] Ibid..
[26] James Douglas, "James Douglas to James Hargrave" in *The Hargrave Correspondence, 1821-1843* (Champlain Society, 2013), 420–22, 420.
[27] Ibid..
[28] Douglas, "James Douglas to James Hargrave," 421.

Douglas shows that he sees the natural environment, including shellfish, as natural and entirely separate from the people of Vancouver Island.

While the assumption that these peoples were hunter-gatherers is not explicitly written in the letter as it was in Vancouver's, Douglas seemingly expresses the same view as Vancouver, failing to acknowledge that the beautiful landscape around him could have been cultivated by the people of the area. Vancouver and Douglas's views of the separation of Northwest Coastal Indigenous peoples and their environment and Douglas's perspective of Coastal Indigenous peoples as lesser than their European counterparts are evident and connect these sources to the ideas behind the hunter-gatherer myth.

The second common type of source from this period is anthropological accounts. Most Euroamerican descriptions of the Northwestern Coastal Indigenous peoples from the mid-nineteenth century into the late twentieth century can fit into this category. Before examining these descriptions, it is important to first understand the significance and development of anthropology in this colonial period.

In his 1904 paper "The History of Anthropology" Franz Boas, one of the founders of the modern anthropological discipline, expldM

These classifications, based on early ideas of evolution, are clearly depicted in figure 1.[30] The Indian race is placed fifth from the bottom in this image. Not only were North American Indigenous peoples considered significantly less advanced than Americo-Europeans, but they were also thought of as one generalized race, with all North American Indigenous groups being relatively the same.

[30] Louise Krasniewicz, "All the World in One Place," *Expedition Magazine* 57, no. 1 (April 2015), https://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/all-the-world-in-one-place/.

wretched portion of the human race", a similar sentiment to that figure 1.[33] Of their relationship with their environment, Sproat writes that they have "no knowledge of agriculture; a condition…similar to the earliest and rudest state of mankind that can be conceived."[34] This indicates a connection between the view of Indigenous peoples as an inferior, primitive race and the belief that they had no cultivation practices. Though food is briefly discussed in Sproat's account, with him writing that the primary food source of the Aht tribes is fish, including "whale, halibut, herring, salmon, anchovy, and shell-fish of various kinds", the topic is not examined in much detail.[35]

In many of the twentieth-century accounts of Northwestern Coastal Indigenous peoples' food is a main point of interest. In their paper "The Anthropology of Food and Eating", Sidney W Mintz and Christine M. Du Bois explain how food has been a major tool in cultural anthropological studies throughout the twentieth century, as food systems are directly tied to social, political, and economic structures.[36]

One twentieth century ethnography of the Northwestern Coastal Indigenous peoples that discusses food systems is Stern's curious account of clam gardens from 1934. As previously mentioned, in 1934 anthropologist Bernhard J. Stern released an ethnography titled *The Lummi Indians of Northwest Washington,* in which he describes Coast Salish clam gardening quite accurately. Stern expressed a good understanding of clam gardens, using the term cultivation several times, and was not afraid to describe this practice as "exceptional".[37] Stern's amazement with the practice suggests that it was unfamiliar to Western scholars. Strangely, despite this

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[33] Gilbert Malcom Sproat, *The West Coast Indians in Vancouver Island* (1867), 245.
[34] Ibid., 244.
[35] Ibid., 249.
[36] Sidney W Mintz and Christine M Du Bois , "The Anthropology of Food and Eating," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002): 99–119.
[37] Stern, *The Lummi Indians of Northwest Washington,* 47.

research being published in 1934, the ignorance of intentional cultivation of clam gardens continued in other anthropological accounts throughout the twentieth century.

Some scholars touched on ways that the clam beds were cared for, but none fully acknowledge the cultivation of the beds in the way that Stern did. In anthropologist and linguist Wayne Suttles' 1951 paper titled "The early diffusion of the potato among the Coast Salish", he explores how and whether potato cultivation by Coast Salish peoples in the post-colonial period is connected to pre-colonial land-use practices. The discussion of clams in this text reflects a greater knowledge of the involvement of Coast Salish people in clam production than earlier accounts, as Suttles states that they "took some care of their property" and that "in clam beds they sometimes took out the bigger rocks".[38] The use of the word "care" to describe the engagement with clam beds, rather than something related to cultivation or agriculture shows that the full extent of involvement with clam beds was not understood.

One theme that emerges in later anthropological accounts is the categorization of clams as a gathered food source In his 1955 ethnography of the Katzie people, Suttles divides his chapter on sustenance into the three categories of fishing, hunting, and gathering.[39] This categorization implies that these are the only three ways in which these people sustained themselves, leaving no room for cultivation practices such as the creation and tending of clam gardens. Morton J. Sloane categorizes clams in a similar way in his 1956 dissertation"The Interrelationship of Economics, Class and Leadership on the Northwest Coast". The text includes Sloane's ethnographical accounts on a variety of Northwestern Indigenous communities, and he mentions clams in the section on sustenance for the Quinault peoples, an Indigenous group

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[38]Wayne Suttles, "The Early Diffusion of the Potato among the Coast Salish," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 7, no. 3 (October 1951): 272–88, https://doi.org/10.1086/soutjanth.7.3.3628605, 281.
[39] Wayne P. Suttles, Wilson Duff, and Diamond Jenness, *Katzie Ethnographic Notes* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1955), 21-27.

located on the Washington Coast. Sloane explains that marine wildlife is the primary source of food for the Quinault peoples, but that land animals and birds are also important. He writes that edible staple plants were rare in the area, but that some such as camas and berries were eaten regularly. In the section on edible plants, he also mentions that "among shellfish, razor clams were an important source of food".[40] The text goes into incredible detail on the ways in which animals were caught and hunted, explaining who did the work and what tools were used. On shellfish, though, all he writes is that "any Quinault had the right to…dig for clams where he pleased".[41]

Sloane's connection between edible plants and shellfish such as clam is elaborated on by Suttles in "The early diffusion of the potato among the Coast Salish". He describes clam harvesting as being connected to a Coast Salish "root-gathering tradition" in the sense that many root plants were harvested in the same way.[42] The association of clams and plants as similarly

clam gardens are managed. Additionally, wild plans such as berries were brought into garden environments within communities.[44] Madonna L. Moss also documents similar practices used to cultivate tobacco among the Tlingit people in the chapter "Tlingit Horticulture: An Indigenous or Introduced Development?".[45] By categorizing plants and clams as a "gathered" food source, though, Sloane and Suttles fail to acknowledge the human involvement in the production of plants and clams, reflecting the hunter-gatherer narrative.

The human-role in plant cultivation is acknowledged in more recent sources, such as *Our Native Peoples: Coast Salish*. This book is a part of the British Columbia Heritage Series, and is a collection of texts about the Indigenous peoples in different regions of British Columbia designed to be taught in ″

created as part of a broader colonial project, that these writers viewed the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast as primitive and unsophisticated. This reflects the first of the proposed reasons behind the existence of the hunter-gatherer myth, that Indigenous peoples were viewed as too unsophisticated for cultivation practices to be considered, and may be a reason that the relationship between Indigenous peoples and clam production was not addressed.

The anthropological texts examined are created with the intent of understanding Coastal Indigenous peoples for academia, rather than for use in colonization and settlement. Food is a primary focus in these texts, and is typically categorized into those hunted, fished, and gathered. The creation of these categories reflects an assumption that these are the only ways in which Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast obtained food. Though Suttles does acknowledge that Coast Salish peoples cared for clam beds, he does not give them credit in the creation of these beds. Stern's amazement at the practice of clam gardening suggests an unfamiliarity with the practice for Europeans, which could be one reason that it was seldom acknowledged as cultivation. These anthropological texts also comment on the gender divide in clam harvesting. Both Suttles and Drucker attributed clam harvesting to women specifically, connecting clam gardens to the theory that the hunter-gatherer myth and gender are related.

While Stern acknowledges the existence of clam gardens in 1934, the idea did not have an impact on the wider academic community until they were re-discovered in the 1990s. I argue that the reason Stern's account had such little impact is the pervasiveness of the hunter-gatherer myth throughout Western thought. It was not until other examples of North American Indigenous cultivation practices, such as the management of roots and berries, were beginning to be acknowledged by Western scholars and the hunter-gatherer myth was starting to be questioned that clam gardens were formally acknowledged by the Western academic community.

In the previous section I examined Western accounts of the relationship between Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast and clams, concluding that the general unawareness of clam gardens by Western thinkers and the inability of Stern's acknowledgement of clam gardens to generate more interest is reflective of the dominant hunter-gatherer myth. In this chapter, I will examine and analyze accounts from Northwestern Coastal Indigenous people, comparing them with the Western sources. In my comparison of the Western texts and the Indigenous sources, I aim to allow the words and stories of Indigenous community members to correct the errors in these Western accounts and provide a complete picture of clam cultivation on the Northwest Coast.

For many Indigenous societies globally, including those along the Northwest Coast, history is primarily an oral tradition. During the colonization of North America and the simultaneous efforts to destroy Indigenous cultures, much of this oral tradition was lost. M ori historian Nepia Mahuika writes that in the "colonization of Indigenous knowledge, the native oral past was stripped of history and repositioned as the unreliable ramblings of superstitious savages".[51] Indigenous methods of historiography across the globe were devalued, as the Western tradition came to view them as unreliable superstitions.

Further, the oral historical tradition relies on language for its transfer and its continuation. The suppression of Indigenous languages by colonizers in Canada led to significant language loss, and with it a loss of history. However, despite colonial efforts to eradicate the culture and histories of these peoples, many oral histories have been passed on successfully and have been recorded both in writing and in video. While there are no written documents created by

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[51] N pia Mahuika, *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition: An Indigenous Perspective* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021), 17.

Clams are featured prominently in stories from other Indigenous peoples along the Northwest Coast as well, such as the WSÁNE   First Nations. The “WSÁNE   Clam Garden Restoration Project Final Report” includes a story written out by WSÁNE   Elder J’SINTEN. The story begins with the creator

his grandfather.[64] Likewise, In *Saltwater People*, Elliot Sr. does not describe a gender divide in the harvesting of clams, stating that in the summer months, while the WSÁNE people were digging and preparing clams, "the women and children were there and the men too".[65]

It is unclear from the sources available exactly whether the gender divide existed in clam cultivation as people like Sproat and Suttles argued. Through the Indigenous testimonies it is evident that men participated in clam harvesting in the twentieth century, but it may have been different in precolonial times. It is also possible that it differed seasonally or across different

This analysis has shown that despite the existence and management of clam gardens long before and throughout the colonial period, clam cultivation was until recently widely ignored by Western observers and academics. An examination of both exploratory accounts from the late

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