

READING LOG #7

Madison Smith
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The indigenous peoples of the interior of British Columbia were very shocked when the gold rush was beginning to move north. Barkerville and surrounding areas was home to many aboriginal tribes that successfully lived off the land for many years. As the gold rush kept pushing toward that area, many natives became very sick with diseases brought in by the gold miners. The tribe numbers drastically dropped leaving very few indigenous people in and around Barkerville itself. But as Barkerville became more developed, more and more indigenous peoples came from all over the province. At first, they would just observe the booming town, but it didn't take long for them to find work and be able to make a profit and spread their knowledge to the people of the gold rush and of Barkerville.

There were a range of occupations that were available to the indigenous people including berry picking, laundry service, packing and packhorse support, hunting, selling salmon, letter carrying, mining and prostitution.¹ A lot of natives had an upper hand on the miners because of having a deep knowledge of the land and animals in the area. They had very efficient tactics for hunting and gathering making them very useful to the miners. Running mail and other parcels from town to town was a ton of work, but it needed to be done. Again, their vast knowledge of the land made it easy for them to navigate around the Cariboo delivering items. Another job that natives did during the gold rush was prostitution. The females would sell themselves to the miners in order to make money. Considering the majority of miners were males, there was a lack of females for the males. Although it wasn't the nicest job, the women got paid for their work. All peoples involved in the Barkerville gold rush were able to make a profit.

The indigenous peoples were able to gain knowledge and money because of the gold rush. Although the idea of the gold rush was frowned upon at the beginning, indigenous peoples soon became thankful for the major boom that hit their territory. Considering the economy at the time of the gold rush, all parties involved had positive outcomes of the legendary gold rush

¹ Mica Jorgenson, "Into That Country to Work: Aboriginal Economic Activities during Barkerville's Gold Rush," *BC Studies*, no.185 (2015): 135.