Memoranda of a trip round Vancouver Island and Nootka Island on board H.M.S Scout Capt'n Price A.D 1866, for the purpose of visiting the Indian Tribes by His Excellency Sir. A.E. Kennedy the Governor

Wednesday Aug 9th 1866, 10 P.M. Weighed anchor and steamed out of Esquimalt Harbour at the rate of 9 ½ knots an hour until we came within a few miles of the entrance to Barclay Sound, when we hove to at 8.30 a.m on account of a thick mist which prevented us for seeing the land as we intended visiting the Alberni Lumber Mills and hoping the weather as the day advanced would clear up. Thursday Aug 10th Foggy and rainy weather all day. Friday A Barclay Sound Indian came on board this morning; halted several times on account of the fog, entered Barclay Sound about 11.30 a.m passed an Indian Village on the right hand side about 12.15 and met several canoe loads of Indians from the village. The mountains on either side are covered with trees from their summits to the waters edge, and arrived at the Alberni Mills at 4.45 p.m the same day. The place wears an air of desolation, no new woodwork, or houses in course of building, there is a small indian village adjoining the settlement, which appears neither to increase, nor to diminish
in size. Friday Aug 11. 4 a.m weigh anchor and drop it again at 7 a.m in Barclay Sound, raining very fast. In the evening the only white man at the settlement came off to see for letters and papers which had been sent on shore to him. He informed me that there were about 60 natives at the village and about as many more away fishing and berry hunting and that the Indians were quiet and friendly. He had been in charge of the Mills about 13 months, he likewise informed me that another white man was higher up the canal taking care of the farm, but there was no market for the produce. There were a few head of cattle on the farm. At 10.30 a.m Governor Kennedy and Captn Price left the ship to visit a few indians at their village Ochuok–lesit of about 8 houses and 90 Indians; practiced with the great guns at a target, good shooting generally. Visited the Sheeshat Village this evening, [illegible word] the chief came to visit the ship.
A trade was done with the Sheeshats for some salmon, paddles, and Indian hats, but his wife and three girls were taken home again. Saturday at 4 p.m weighed anchor and at 6.15 a.m the Governor left in a boat to visit a few Indians that live to off Village Island a cod fishing settlement. At 7 a.m under steam again passing numerous small islands all densely wooded on our way to Clayoquot Sound.

Capcha the Chief

At two o clock I took a photographic view of th Ahouset village^which appeared to contain about 500 inhabitants it is a long village situated in a beautiful bay, at the foot of a large rounded mountain covered with pine trees, when I put my head under the focussing cloth of the camera to my surprise on withdrawing it, I found myself surrounded by about 20 of the natives squatting on the ground watching my movements, and as I had chosen a small hillock jutting out into the bay on the right hand side to get a full view of the village, I could not imagine how they came there without being seen, so I packed up the camera as quickly as possible, and found in my pocket a plug of tobacco which I cut into small pieces a gave them to the natives as far as they would hold out and then raised my hat to them and [illegible word] to the dingy. (See the account of the bombardment of the village amongst the newspaper cuttings)

At 2.30 p.m weighed anchor, when 40 canoes filled with indians came to have a look at the ship, they were dressed in blankets which were wrapped round them, and had rings and brass pins run through the cartilage of their noses. At 4 p.m we anchor in Refuge Bay and sent out the Jolly-boat and Dingy on a seining excursion, but as
usual they returned without catching a single fish, the scenery around was densely wooded and the hills were of a rounded shape. The Governor gave away to the natives some blankets, coats, trousers and biscuits, also told them to remember to behave themselves. Sunday the Governor and Mr. Hankin at 8 a.m visited the indians at Friendly Nootka Sound Cove and the village had just the same appearance that it had when Capt. Cook visited it nearly one hundred years previously and the engraving of the village as shown in his voyages might have answered for a photograph of it as seen by the ships crew, I was about to take a photo of it but was prevented for appearance sake. I noticed a patch of potatoes growing between the waters edge and the village evidently the produce of Capt. Cook those that had been left when he visited this settlement year in the 1778. The two carved heads of huge size in the Chiefs house were still to been seen supporting the roof and the natives were still to been seen wearing their cedar bark short capes, or their cedar bark blankets wound round their loins, and several families in the same ranch.
The capes and blankets are made from the soft inner bark of the cedar tree by teasing it, or rather pulling the shreds apart until they make a sort of tow of it, which they use for many purposes, for ropes, polishing slate and other carvings, for gambling with round pieces of wood the size and shape of draftsmen highly polished and wrap them inside the tow and guess the number in each hand, and with these they will gamble away everything that they possess even their wives and canoes.

The Chief at Friendly Cove brought off to the ship in a canoe a most beautiful half breed woman whom he wanted to sell to the Governor, or for the Governor to marry which he declined as he had a wife at home; then the old chief presented the Governor with a valuable sea otter skin, for which he was given a sovereign, but after considering the transaction a short time he brought back the money asking to have the skin returned to him and became very voluminous considering that he had been cheated, I failed to learn the result, but there was no trade done.
On Monday morning we left the village at Friendly Cove and soon after ran on some rocks which did the ship but little damage, and passed a Moutchut Uquot Indian village which looked very picturesque, and having three small potato patches in front of their lodge, and many frames of sticks for drying salmon and herrings upon over a wood fire, and when the drying salmon become fly blown and the fat maggots fall to the ground are eagerly sought for and eaten as a delicacy.

About 30 canoes of various sizes came around the ship, many of the men in them were perfectly naked, About 9 a.m we struck the rocks again, but got off safely; about mid day we came to anchor in Eliza Cove on account of the stormy weather.

The custom of wearing the hair long seems to be the universal custom on the west coast, with scarcely any clothing, except a few garments made of cedar bark and dog hair blankets. The faces slightly tattooed, and legs in front with a blue colour. Painting their faces, Red and black, the women paint the parting of the hair. I never saw a chair, or stool in anyone of their lodges. I could not find any trace of letters amongst them anywhere, but they understood hieroglyphical carvings as represented in their totems, and tribal emblems.
When We were visited by many indians in their canoes who were anxious to come on board to trade; much rain during the day.

Tuesday Aug 15, we steamed through the Strait that divides Nootka Island from Vancouver Island and in the middle of it bumpted on a round tipped rock which carried away 14 feet of the ships pulse reel, the approach of the ship was to the natives such an alarming surprise that they fled into the woods on all sides leaving their huts untenanted. We anchored in Quatsans Harbour about 6 p.m. I landed at once and took a view of the indian village which is small during the time that I was taking the photograph, the atmosphere was thick, and raining heavily. At this village the indian mothers flatten the female babies skulls to such an extent that it is almost incredible. When I was living in Victoria with my friend Dr Robert Brown, I met him returning from purchasing of the Captain of a trading schooner of a wonderfully deformed Quatsans Indian womans skull which is now in the Museum of the R. Coll of Surgeons–Lincolns in Fields.
Skull for which he paid two dollars and a half, and I was only ten minutes too late to make the purchase as I was on my way to the schooner when I met him with the trophy.

This skull is now in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons Lincoln’s Inn Fields London. We weigh anchor at 4.30 am and put on a full head of steam for Fort Rupert the weather improving for hitherto it had been very inclement, we pass Cape Scott on the N.W. Coast Vancouver Island during the morning also a number of islands and reach Fort Rupert at 1.30 pm when yards were manned and the Governor went to see the Trader at the Hudson Bay Fort with a salute of 17 guns.

(Kecumia the chief)
The Indian Village at this place is the largest on V. Island numbering several hundred inhabitants, about 5 p.m.
The chief and six others came off in a canoe to make a request for payment for the damage done by H.M.S [illegible word] Quaquoutlet the previous year when the village was bombarded and destroyed for their insolence, and the murder of a white man.

Wednesday Augt 16th 1866 Weigh anchor at 4 a.m and with a full head of steam and at 8 p.m anchor in Tribune Bay

The weather was perfection, and the view of the island and
inland mountains which still had snow remaining on their summit made the scene more beautifull than a panorama, and the mountains were numerous and well covered with forests of pine, we passed on our left hand side the Ukletan Village containing perhaps 250 inhabitants reported to be all armed with muskets and very troublesome to their neighbours, the ranches appeared to be newly built after the recent bombardment and situated on the beach, there was a stockaded part on the hill at the back of the village. This tribe was the dread of travelers in the Queen Charlotte Sound, as so many had been murdered without the slightest notice being taken of the circumstance as everything conduced to hushing up of the matter, the distance from Victoria and no white mans settlement near to, and the numerous islands in the vicinity. There were two bad indian youths hung at Victoria in the year 1867 one [illegible word] who admitted to having murdered 9 whitemen, and the other admitted to 7 whitemen being slain by his hand; Young men go in canoes to camp out and live on what they kill, for instance deer, bear, grouse
salmon +c, and are as free and independent as it is possible
to be, but so many cost their lives by being killed by the indians
on the various islands. Their guns, clothing and flour and
bacon, were articles not to be missed by the savages, the young
fellows would go away on a shooting expedition and when
their friends would made inquiries about them they would
come to the conclusion that they had gone up country, or to [illegible word]
or maybe home, and as no one knew, there the matter would rest
We arrived at Comox and I went on shore and took six
very good views, the weather being beautifully fine and warm.
the carvings at this village were generally painted one had
red eyes and brows, blue nose, red mouth, anothe image
had a blue top hat, and a red brown face siwash-like.
The central mountain in the view was snow-capped and had
a beautiful glacier running through it. The day that I was
there, they were burning on the beach the body of a young
woman that had died of a loathsome disease. Friday Aug 18, 1866
At 4 a.m got up steam and arrived at Nanaimo at 11 a.m
took four views and went into the town, called upon D’ Carroll
who decorated the roof of his shanty with the names of all the
distinguished visitors that called upon him.
A man named Carey who had been working in the coal pits to make a raise, showed 10 or a dozen black pearls that he had got out of some oysters that were found there, one was as large as a pea. I never saw any more in the possession of anyone.
Saturday Aug 19 made steam for Cowitchan and arrived during the morning, this place is noted for the beautiful flowery potatoes grown by the Indians from seed obtained from the white men.
The harbour is very good, and the inn on the wharf is kept by a Mr. Harris the son of a Waterloo veteran, the country around is good and having a fair population living in the district.
I was greatly interested in watching an Indian spearing a salmon which was darting about with a false point sticking in its side which was attached to the spear by a length of deer sinew and having no possible chance of escape unless it tore itself from the sharp pointed end of the spear.
Near to this spot I came across a place where there were about 30 adult native skulls, mostly flat heads, and no other bones, some had been so long there and undisturbed that moss was growing perhaps on the upper surface most likely for a hundred years or more.
N.B. Great is the name of Sausiett. The old Cowichan Chieff.
These skulls are most likely the remains of a tragedy which had taken place some years previously and had made the murders famous in the tribe to which or they belonged, and had never become known to the settlers, or traders; for if they had died a natural death, some other bones would have been amongst them, I was about to lift one up to more closely examine it, when a small snake wriggled out of the mental foramen. The natives of Vancouver Island are still in a primitive state only one stage removed from barbarism and have no horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, nor goats, cats, cocks and hens, the dog is the only domesticated animal. On Saturday we returned to Esquimalt after an interesting voyage of a weeks absence, all well.

A note on the great assemblage of Indians, Queens Birthday Celebrations at New Westminster May 24. 1865.
1st heat, with 12 men in canoe; 9 canoes started, mile race, 5 canoes nearly abreast at finish, race won by a neck a large Eucultau heavy war canoe, the natives in shirts and trousers, some only in shorts. The second race a tie with two, the stakes divided, 5 canoes started. The third race, two canoes, won by the warlike Cowitchans.