

The Naming of 'Burke Mountain'

By Ralph Drew, Belcarra, BC, January 2019.

The 'Oregon Treaty' of 1846 established the 49th parallel as the boundary between the British and U.S. territories. It stated that the boundary should run from the crest of the Rocky Mountains along "the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude to the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island; and thence southerly through the middle of the said channel, and of Fuca's Straits to the Pacific Ocean..." The British claimed the 'Oregon Treaty' referred to 'Rosario Strait' while the Americans claimed it referred to 'Haro Strait'. The initial treaty totally ignored the many islands between the two straits which were claimed by both sides.

To strengthen British claims to the islands, the 'Hudson's Bay Company' established a fishing camp on San Juan Island in 1850. In 1853, this was expanded into a sheep ranching operation. In 1854, the Americans included San Juan Island in Whatcom County, Washington Territory. The ground was laid for a potentially dangerous dispute.

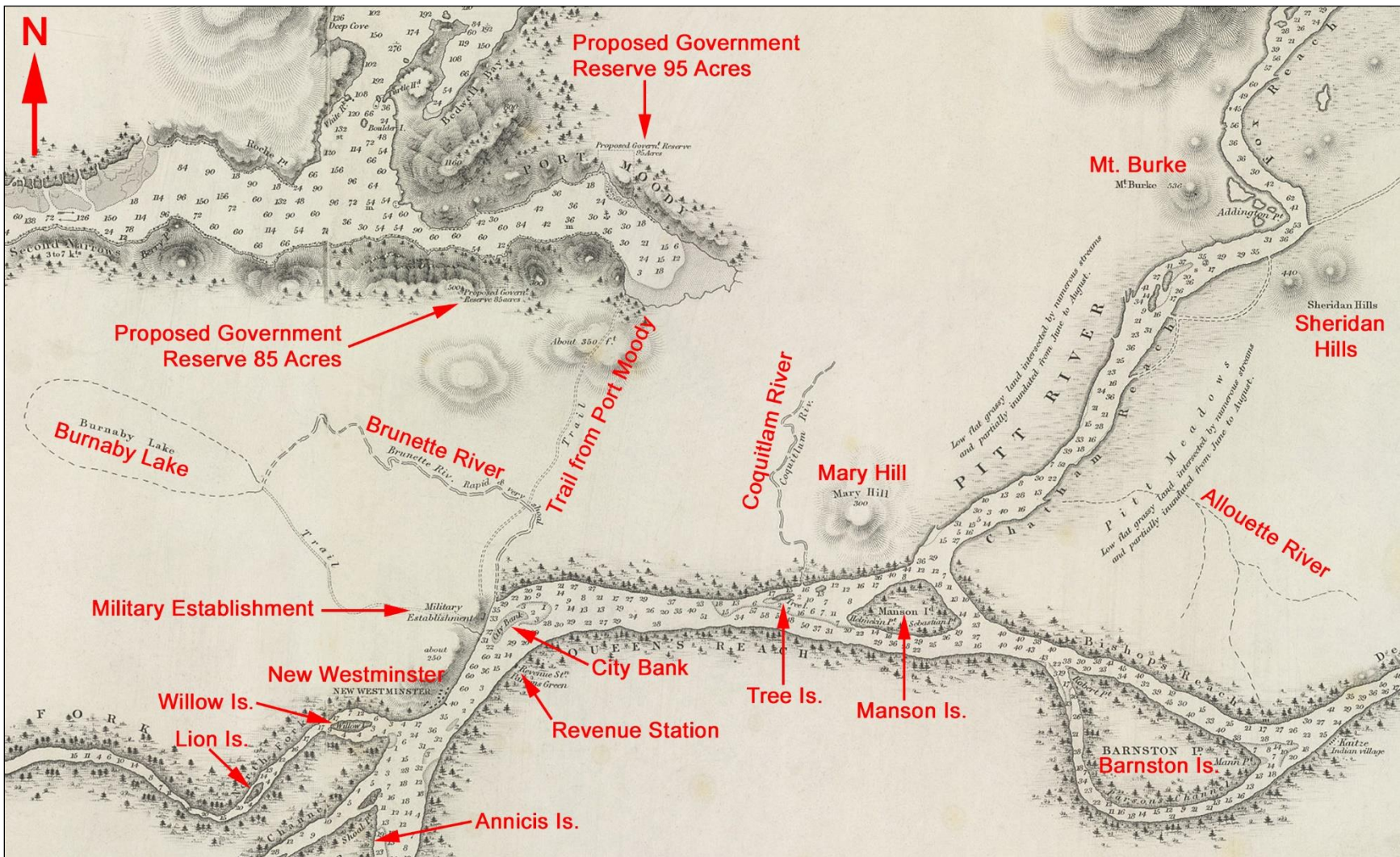
In 1856, the British Admiralty assigned 'H.M.S. Plumper' under the command of Captain George Henry Richards, R.N., and 'H.M.S. Satellite' under the command of Captain James Prevost to survey both the straits. Prevost also acted as commissioner in the boundary dispute. From 1857–59 Captain Richards was in charge of the 'H.M.S. Plumper' and from 1860–63 the 'H.M.S. Hecate'. Richards was the second commissioner in the 'British Boundary Commission for British Columbia' (Pacific to the Rockies), and was a Hydrographer on the coast of British Columbia in 1856–63.

In the furtherance of British sovereignty, Her Majesty's Ship 'H.M.S. Plumper' was assigned to survey the British Columbia coast, and Captain Richards named many geographic features on the coast. In particular, in 1858 and 1859 Captain Richards and the crew of the 'H.M.S. Plumper' conducted a detailed survey of the Lower Fraser River and Burrard Inlet, naming several of the inlet's geographical features and published the hydrographic study as 'Admiralty Chart 1922'.

Although not engaged in the actual survey work, some of the names of the Plumper's crew appeared on the surveys of Burrard Inlet. Among these names was that of the second master, Edward Parker Bedwell, whose name was given to the shallow bay ('Bedwell Bay') situated just north of Burrard Inlet on the east side of Indian Arm. The names of Boulder, Turtle Head (now 'Hamber Island'), Jug, Racoon, Twin and Croker Islands (named after James L. Croker, Assistant Paymaster) also appeared for the first time on the chart drawn by Captain Richards and the crew of the 'H.M.S. Plumper'. Mount Burke was named for Edmund Burke (1730–1797) by Captain Richards while surveying the Fraser River in 1859–60.

About the Author:

Ralph Drew is a local historian and self-publishing author who lives in the Tri-Cities community of Belcarra. In 2014, Ralph received the [Lieutenant-Governor's Gold Medal for Historical Writing](#) for his first book entitled: [Forest & Fjord: The History of Belcarra](#). Ralph's most recent book was published in October 2018, entitled: [Coquitlam Chronicles: Historical Crossroads on the Fraser River](#).



Source: UBC Library, Rare Books & Special Collections, G_3511_P5_svar_G7_CH.1922_1860.

Map annotated by Ralph Drew.

‘Coquitlam’ portion of the 1859–60 Fraser River and Burrard Inlet chart surveyed by Captain G.H. Richards, R.N., assisted by the officers of the ‘H.M.S. Plumper’.

'Pitt River' Name Origin

The 'Pitt River' was named for William Pitt "the Younger" (1759–1806). The first mention of the name, as "Pitt's River", occurs in the 1827 journal kept by James McMillan of the 'Hudson's Bay Company'. The river also has an alternate name, 'Quoitle', which is probably equivalent to 'Kwantlen'.



**William Pitt
"the younger"**

William Pitt "the Younger" was a prominent British Tory statesman of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He became the youngest Prime Minister in 1783 at the age of 24. He left office in 1801 but was Prime Minister again from 1804 until his death in 1806. He was 'Chancellor of the Exchequer' for most of his time as Prime Minister. He is known as "the Younger" to distinguish him from his father, William Pitt "the Elder", who had previously served as Prime Minister.

'Burke Mountain' Name Origin

Mount Burke, 1270 metres (4,167 feet), is a mountain located in the northeast of Coquitlam, north of Port Coquitlam, on the ridge system leading to 'Coquitlam Mountain'. Most of the mountain is part of 'Pinecone Burke Provincial Park'.

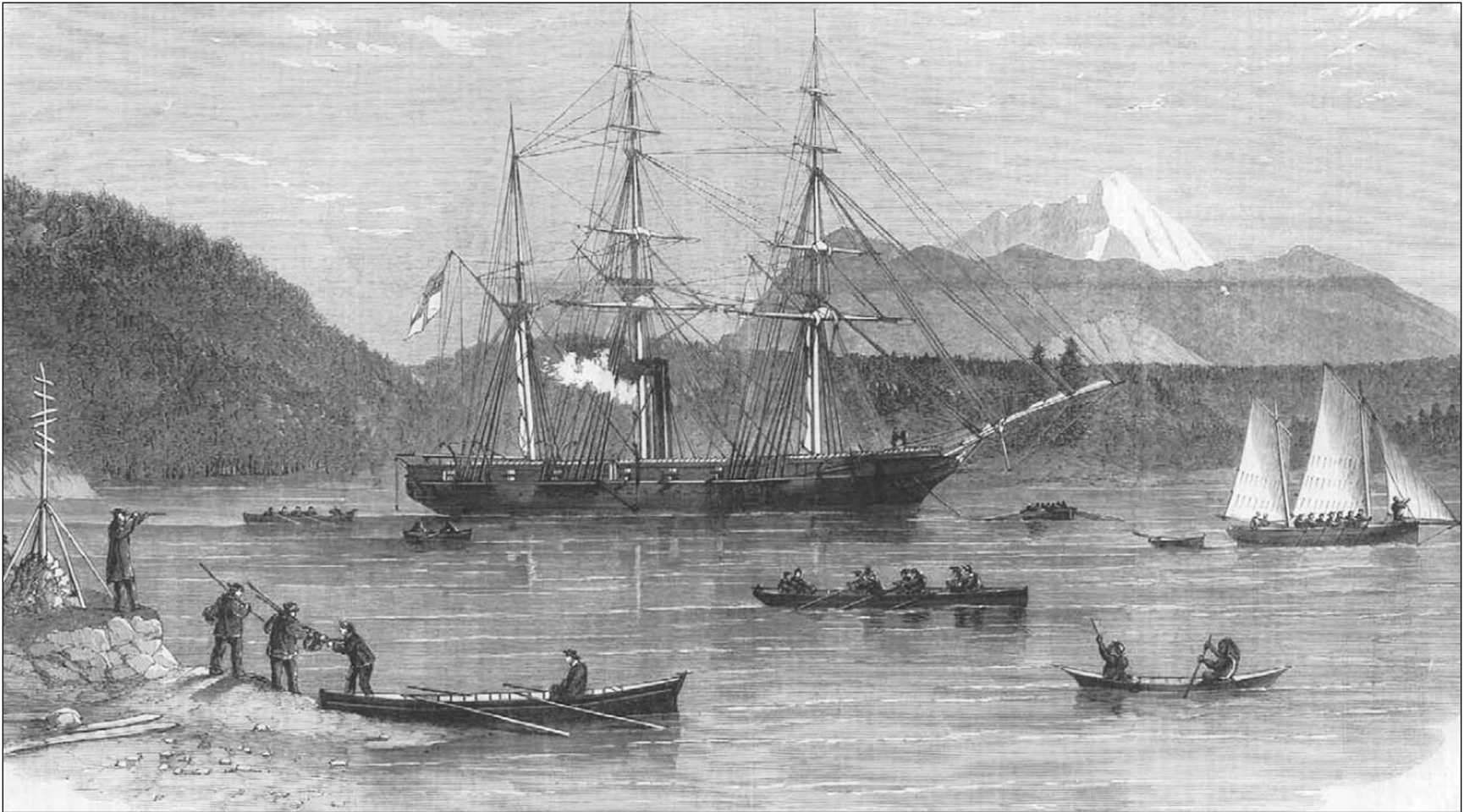


**Edmund Burke
(NPG 655)**

Mount Burke was named for Edmund Burke (1730–1797) by Captain George Henry Richards, R.N., of the 'H.M.S. Plumper' while surveying the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet in 1859–60.

Edmund Burke was an Irish statesman born in Dublin, as well as an author, orator, political theorist and philosopher who, after moving to London in 1750, served as a member of parliament between 1766 and 1794 in the House of Commons with the 'Whig Party'.

In the 19th century, Burke was praised by both conservatives and liberals. Subsequently, in the 20th century he became widely regarded as the philosophical founder of modern conservatism.



Source: *The Illustrated London News*, March 1st, 1862, page 214, engraving after sketch by Edward P. Bedwell, Master, 'H.M.S. Plumper'.

Her Majesty's Ship 'H.M.S. Plumper' at Port Harvey, circa 1860.



Courtesy of Royal B.C. Museum & Archives (B-03617).

Officers of the 'H.M.S. Plumper', 1862.

**Sitting, left to right: Sub-Lieut. E.P. Bedwell, 2nd Lieut. R.C. Mayne, Mrs. Mary Richards, 1st Lieut. W. Moriarty.
Standing, left to right: Dr. David Lyall, Paymaster W.H.J. Brown, Capt. G.H. Richards, Lieut. Daniel Pender**