

## “Indians on White Lines”: Bureaucracy, Race, and Power on Northern British Columbian Traplines, 1925–1950

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### Résumé de l'article

À la suite de la décision du gouvernement de la Colombie-Britannique en 1925 d'imposer l'enregistrement obligatoire pour tous des territoires de piégeage, les gardes-chasse, les fonctionnaires du ministère des Affaires indiennes et les Autochtones habitant dans le nord de la province sont rapidement entrés en conflit à propos de la place des trappeurs autochtones, des revendications autochtones au sujet du territoire de piégeage et de l'applicabilité de la réglementation coloniale concernant le gibier aux communautés autochtones. Si certains chercheurs ont laissé entendre que la principale conséquence de la décision du gouvernement britanno-colombien a été la dépossession massive des peuples autochtones, il faut savoir qu'environ la moitié des territoires de piégeage enregistrés de la province sont demeurés officiellement entre les mains des autochtones, ce qui soulève des questions quant à la manière dont les fonctionnaires ont reconnu, classé et cherché à administrer ces territoires. En pratique, l'application des lois sur le gibier a souvent été incertaine, arbitraire et fréquemment régie par des arrangements officieux existant parallèlement à la réglementation officielle. Dans les années 1930, les trappeurs ayant le statut d'Indien ont gagné une certaine protection et certaines exemptions par rapport aux lois sur le gibier, en raison notamment d'une campagne énergique menée par le ministère fédéral des Affaires indiennes. Néanmoins, la tentative toujours inachevée de définir une frontière racialisée entre trappeurs, trappage et territoires de piégeage « indiens » et « blancs » a souvent eu autant d'importance pour les fonctionnaires, sinon plus, que le but manifeste de la province — la conservation du gibier — et du gouvernement fédéral — la prospérité économique des Autochtones.

# “Indians on White Lines”: Bureaucracy, Race, and Power on Northern British Columbian Traplines, 1925–1950

DAVID VOGT\*

## *Abstract*

*After British Columbia imposed universal mandatory trapline registration in 1925, game wardens, Department of Indian Affairs officials, and Indigenous people in the provincial north quickly came into conflict over the place of Indigenous trappers, Indigenous claims to trapping territory, and the applicability of colonial game regulations to Indigenous communities. Although some scholars have suggested that the primary result was the large-scale dispossession of Indigenous communities, roughly half of the province’s registered traplines remained officially in “Indian” hands, raising questions about how bureaucrats recognized, classified, and sought to administer such lines. In practice, game law enforcement was often uncertain, arbitrary, and frequently governed by informal arrangements that existed alongside the official regulations. By the 1930s, trappers with Indian status had gained some measure of protection and exemption from the game laws, in part due to an energetic campaign by the federal Indian Department. To bureaucrats, however, the never-completed quest to define and solidify a racialized boundary between “Indian” and “white” trappers, trapping, and traplines often became as important as — or even more important than — the ostensible provincial goal of game conservation and the federal goal of Indigenous economic prosperity.*

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## Résumé

*À la suite de la décision du gouvernement de la Colombie-Britannique en 1925 d'imposer l'enregistrement obligatoire pour tous des territoires de piégeage, les gardes-chasse, les fonctionnaires du ministère des Affaires indiennes et les Autochtones habitant dans le nord de la province sont rapidement entrés en conflit à propos de la place des trappeurs autochtones, des revendications autochtones au sujet du territoire de piégeage et de l'applicabilité de la réglementation coloniale concernant le gibier aux communautés autochtones. Si certains chercheurs ont laissé entendre que la principale conséquence de la décision du gouvernement britanno-colombien a été la dépossession massive des peuples autochtones, il faut savoir qu'environ la moitié des territoires de piégeage enregistrés de la province sont demeurés officiellement entre les mains des autochtones, ce qui soulève des questions quant à la manière dont les fonctionnaires ont reconnu, classé et cherché à administrer ces territoires. En pratique, l'application des lois sur le gibier a souvent été incertaine, arbitraire et fréquemment régie par des arrangements officieux existant parallèlement à la réglementation officielle. Dans les années 1930, les trappeurs ayant le statut d'Indien ont gagné une certaine protection et certaines exemptions par rapport aux lois sur le gibier, en raison notamment d'une campagne énergique menée par le ministère fédéral des Affaires indiennes. Néanmoins, la tentative toujours inachevée de définir une frontière racialisée entre trappeurs, trappage et territoires de piégeage « indiens » et « blancs » a souvent eu autant d'importance pour les fonctionnaires, sinon plus, que le but manifeste de la province — la conservation du gibier — et du gouvernement fédéral — la prospérité économique des Autochtones.*

Between 1934 and 1949, Kitkatla trapper Matthew Hill struggled to gain and then regain British Columbia government recognition of a portion of his house's territory on the Northwest Coast as a registered trapline. Hill won recognition in 1934, at a time when Indigenous trappers, Indian agents, and game wardens had reached a series of informal compromises to protect and expand "Indian" trapping following the mass displacement of Indigenous trappers during the mid-1920s; he lost it in 1936, when regional game managers decided to test the influence of

the federal Indian Department and of the informal agreements by selecting a few test cases (including Hill) for cancellation; and he was ultimately promised it back, but only once the white trappers to whom the land had been ceded in the meantime ceased their operations.<sup>1</sup> When the Kitkatla people moved to reclaim the land in 1949 in accordance with the settlement, however, they also would have encountered a new tactic employed by game bureaucrats: their categorization as so-called “Indians on white lines,” upon whom were imposed more obligations than “Indians” on “Indian lines.”<sup>2</sup> Hill’s struggle was a microcosm of the broader currents of the politics of trapping in B.C. after 1925. The category into which such reclaimed lines fell also hinted at the underlying racial logic employed by bureaucrats: traplines carried their own racial designations, occasionally independent of the trappers to whom they were registered.

In B.C. after 1925, and in the seven provinces and territories that subsequently established similar systems,<sup>3</sup> trapline registration was not merely a licensing system but also a novel sort of land tenure. The colonial state granted specified use rights on defined parcels of land to registrants and permitted registrants to designate successors.<sup>4</sup> Notably, except for reserves, not many other forms of land and resource tenure awarded by the B.C. government prior to World War II went in such large numbers to Indigenous people with Indian status. But the significance of how the system operated with respect to Indigenous people lies largely at the level of informal practices and encounters rather than within the official legislative texts. As Ruth Sandwell observes of pre-emption and settlement on Saltspring Island, the broad ideological contours of colonial law do not necessarily tell us much about how land systems actually operated.<sup>5</sup>

To date, the B.C. historical and anthropological literature on trapline registration has mainly emphasized territorial and legal dispossession. Following the highly influential work of Hugh Brody in the 1980s, John Lutz and Brenda Ireland in the 1990s, and most recently Jonathan Peyton, we have understood B.C.’s trapline registration as a political project to remap rural areas (and their inhabitants) as standardized subjects of state administra-

tion, marginalize Indigenous trappers for the benefit of settlers, and compel Indigenous people to follow colonial law — what game wardens sometimes called “the white act.”<sup>6</sup> Indian Affairs officials either mounted ineffectual resistance or were actively complicit.<sup>7</sup> In this narrative, the provincial game office largely triumphed: Ireland claims that “consultation in trapping and the allocation of trapping lands was non-existent, Indian petitions were ignored, and third-party ... recommendations to ... have [Indigenous people] exempted from game laws, were dismissed,” while Lutz, Cole Harris, and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples suggest that by the 1950s Indigenous people held just ten percent of the province’s traplines (compared with about 90 percent in 1914).<sup>8</sup>

These arguments obviously contribute to critiques, in the broader Canadian historiography of Indigenous peoples’ engagement with state environmental programs, of; the framing of wasteful and irrational “Indians” within middle-class conservation discourses; the assimilationist bent of initiatives that claimed to accommodate Indigenous people while reducing their rights to temporary privileges;<sup>9</sup> and the extent to which the Indian Department supported or opposed restrictions on Indigenous hunting, fishing, and trapping.<sup>10</sup> However, viewed both as a means of contributing to the broader historiography and of testing the more specific claims prevalent in the B.C. literature, the contents of the under-researched trapline administration files at the B.C. Archives suggest the need for new and nuanced interpretations of the politics of traplines. As Darcy Ingram observes in a recent history of the origins of modern conservation in Québec, focussing upon the “simple act of dispossession”<sup>11</sup> obscures the more significant but elusive ways in which the regulation of people and environments was actually enacted through the daily practices of bureaucrats. Indeed, the belief that just ten percent of traplines remained in Indian hands by mid-century is simply erroneous: in 1949, 56 percent of registered trappers were status Indians, and they held 45 percent of all traplines (in the northern “D” Division whose files survive at the B.C. Archives, these figures were 71 percent and 57 percent, respectively). Today, the

B.C. government still designates “about half” of registered trappers as Aboriginal.<sup>12</sup>

I do not mean to suggest that the settler occupations of Indigenous territories legitimized by trapline registration were trivial, or that half of all trapline registrations constitutes adequate or even meaningful compensation for Aboriginal land title. However, bureaucrats — especially in Indian Affairs ones, but also in the provincial game service — were often less interested in eliminating “Indian” trappers, than in devising means of differentiating “Indian” from “white” trapping and of attacking “Indian” customs that they deemed most inimical to rational game management, such as matrilineal inheritance practices. “White” and “Indian” trappers filled out the same application forms, but in practice they held different types of traplines: the first were supervised exclusively by game wardens for conservation purposes, and the second largely by Indian agents, with less obvious or consistent objectives. Locating and policing the boundary between “white” and “Indian” therefore took on great importance for bureaucrats.<sup>13</sup>

Bearing the broader colonial context in mind, one might suppose, tongue in cheek, that *all* of British Columbia’s “Indian lines” were actually “white lines” too, or at least, “colonial state lines.” The process by which they became so, however, did not involve the simple or straightforward pursuit by the state of clearly defined objectives. Since P. Whitney Lackenbauer complained that historians of Indigenous-state relations “fixate on the rational-actor model” when thinking about state action, many have produced new and more nuanced interpretations of Indigenous encounters with the state, and I follow in this vein.<sup>14</sup> Colonial states, Ann-Laura Stoler remarks in another context, were not purposive and decisive colonial actors so much as amalgams of “failed projects, delusional imaginings, [and] equivocal explanations.”<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Akhil Gupta argues that bureaucracies enact structural violence against marginalized populations not merely through the orderly imposition of uniform mechanisms, but through the practices of arbitrariness and opaqueness.<sup>16</sup> To Gupta, variation, arbitrariness, and inconsistency are not simply white noise through which the

scholar must listen to detect other underlying patterns. Instead, they are defining characteristics of the encounter between marginalized groups and state bureaucracies.

Closely exploring how these arbitrary and informal mechanisms developed and operated in the particular conflict over trapping in northern B.C. can also yield fresh insights of interest to historians probing similar programs in other contexts. Ingram observes that one feature of the middle-class sport hunting and fishing movement was an assault on exemptions for ostensibly wasteful Indigenous people.<sup>17</sup> However, the extent to which state bureaucrats actually sustained this assault in practice varied considerably. As Sandlos has already suggested of conservation initiatives elsewhere in the Canadian north, conservation bureaucrats eventually had to determine whether Indigenous people should receive preferential access to game (a position often, though not universally, held by Indian Department bureaucrats) and, if so, what those privileges should be and who should be eligible for them.<sup>18</sup> In northern B.C. between the 1920s and 1950s, the Department of Indian Affairs (technically, after 1936, the Indian Affairs Branch) secured several such exemptions, but, in the context of an uneasy and often tested truce with the provincial game branch, simply shoring up the racialized boundaries of what it viewed as its segregated “Indian” trapping system seems to have become a central policy objective in its own right.

When B.C. introduced mandatory universal trapline registration in 1925, the majority of trappers in the province were Indigenous, and conflicts between Indigenous and increasingly numerous settler trappers were central to the effort to regulate traplines.<sup>19</sup> In 1923, the two senior Indian Affairs officials in B.C., William Ditchburn and George Pragnell, carried out widespread consultations on reserves and concluded that all of B.C. was divided by “ancient Indian custom” into exclusive hereditary trapping territories. These, they held, could best be protected either by excluding whites from trapping altogether or by subjecting all trappers to mandatory registration.<sup>20</sup> When the province predictably opted for the latter over the former,<sup>21</sup> Ditchburn pronounced himself cautiously optimistic: all that

remained was to “get [the Indians] in early and have all their trap lines registered.”<sup>22</sup> M.B. Jackson, chairman of the Game Board, promised the Indian Department that his subordinates would give “preferential treatment to Indians.”<sup>23</sup>

Superficially, all of the “registered” traplines in B.C. created under the ensuing program were the same. Their basis was a standardized form, the Application for Registration of a Trapline, which reduced both trapper and line to a set of elementary variables that might be readily glimpsed and manipulated by bureaucrats: name, ethnicity, a written description of the line (supplemented by a sketch), the duration the applicant had trapped this line prior to applying for it, and so on.<sup>24</sup> To the registration certificates were added annual renewal forms and, when required by game officials, returns of the animals caught on the line in the past year.<sup>25</sup> When bureaucrats ostensibly gained “control” over traplines in B.C., what they really aimed to do so was translate the complexity of Indigenous and settler trapping into summary paper form.<sup>26</sup> The forms were also written on the assumption that rational individuals would manage their own lines: according to later Game Commissioner Arthur Bryan Williams, the system’s strength was the outsourcing of the actual hard work of conservation to rational individual trappers who could best ascertain the specific conditions and requirements of their territories.<sup>27</sup>

But of course, all applications were not created equal, and the registration process was neither smooth nor uniform. Contrary to Ditchburn’s and Pragnell’s expectations, many Indigenous leaders boycotted registration as an unjustified intrusion into Indigenous trapping, and several Indian agents also refused to participate in the registration of the lines.<sup>28</sup> In contrast, the Bella Coola and Skeena River agents who managed the northwest coast visited reserves and canneries to gather information and then submitted collections of applications soon after the registration system was enacted.<sup>29</sup> The motives and competence of game wardens likewise varied widely. Some, following Jackson’s instructions regarding preferential treatment, turned whites away from what they considered to be “old Indian trap-

ping country,” and worked closely with Indian agents to process paperwork from Indigenous applicants.<sup>30</sup> Others found various reasons to reject applications both individually and, where Indian agents had filled out the application papers, *en masse*.<sup>31</sup> Decisions about the boundaries of trapping territories were made on vague, cursory, and inconsistent bases, as one might expect from a few dozen game wardens faced with the daunting task of receiving and inspecting thousands of applications. In the process, game wardens occasionally carved out space for white newcomers,<sup>32</sup> concluded that Indians were fraudulently applying for lands they had no intention of actually trapping, or, most commonly, simply deferred to a settler’s application for a territory on the grounds that it had arrived at the office first.<sup>33</sup>

The game office does not seem to have compiled statistics on the proportion of Indian and white traplines in the late 1920s, but it estimated that 90 percent of trappers were Indian in 1914,<sup>34</sup> compared with just 40 percent in 1936<sup>35</sup> — by which time numerous new Indigenous lines had already been registered under the informal rules permitting acquisition of lines by the Indian Department. Desperate to salvage economic prospects for people dispossessed during the early years of the trapline system, Ditchburn persuaded the game office to hold special conferences at Prince Rupert and Fort St. John, at which federal and provincial bureaucrats simply drew “traplines” into vacant areas on their maps, filled out “applications for registration” accordingly, and presented the finished products to ostensibly fortunate Indigenous trappers in their agencies.<sup>36</sup>

Not all Indigenous traplines were delineated without regard to the trappers themselves; indeed, these conferences were exceptional. Other compromises also occurred that marked Indigenous lines as a departure from the liberal ideal of privatization as the solution to game depletion. First, and most importantly, game wardens in the interior regularly approved registrations submitted by Indian “bands” or house- and family-based “companies” rather than individuals.<sup>37</sup> Because Indigenous families trapped together, one game officer commented, it was suitable to allot “trap lines for white men and ... trapping areas for Indians.”<sup>38</sup>

(Later, bureaucrats decided to map white lines using the easier “block” system, as well.)<sup>39</sup> Moreover, while senior bureaucrats like Williams emphasized the importance of the liberal individual in conservation, field officers found that it “greatly simplifie[d] matters” to register families, houses, or other groups together, thus obviating the need to map out each individual line.<sup>40</sup> As Peace River Indian agent H.A.W. Brown explained in 1937, with the advent of company rather than individual lines, “the Indians decide amongst themselves ... just who is to trap,” typically after a chief, or the head of a house, or family was designated as the head of the company.<sup>41</sup> Thomas Van Dyk, the northern B.C. regional supervisor in Prince George, also exempted Indians from the usual requirement to submit an annual renewal and report of furs taken — a waiver that was practiced at least until the 1960s.<sup>42</sup> This latter exemption had the practical effect of nullifying the game office’s surveillance of private conservation measures with respect to Indigenous traplines.

These accommodations effectively restricted, at least temporarily, state involvement in the governance of trapping within those lines allocated to “companies” and bands, and the conservation of fur on all “Indian” lines. Northern game officials agreed to cease cancelling Indian lines, except with the approval of the Indian agent, who was also expected to arrange for the designation of a successor.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the Victoria game office headquarters promised to notify Indian agents whenever vacancies arose in “areas where Indians trap.” On this basis, Indian agents subsequently purchased numerous lines for Indigenous trappers.<sup>44</sup> These informal provisions remained in force at least until 1956, when a Game Commission procedural manual specified that Indian lines could not “be transferred to a white trapper unless the Indian Agent approves.”<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, although Ireland argues that the trapline regulations barred most Indians from nominating successors for their lines, throughout the 1930s the Stikine, Stuart Lake, and Babine agents, for example, regularly consulted Indigenous communities when these questions arose.<sup>46</sup> Of a visit by Pragnell to the Cassiar region in 1936, the local agent reported that “it was Tribal affairs

that you settled, under the cover of Registration of Grounds, [and] all the Indians knew this and that is why they were all dressed up.”<sup>47</sup> Cecil Muirhead, long-serving police constable and game warden at Telkwa in the Bulkley Valley (within Wet’suwet’en traditional territory), similarly cited “Indian Hereditary rights” as the determining factor in company registrations.<sup>48</sup>

This arrangement should not be read as an unqualified victory for Indigenous trappers: the practical effect was rather that game wardens outsourced to Indian agents the decision of how best to accommodate Indigenous governance of trapping. Nevertheless, the reasons that game wardens so effectively undermined their capacity to monitor the progress of game conservation on, ultimately, approximately half of the province’s traplines for the benefit of Indigenous people require closer analysis. Firstly, and quite simply, they did not do so without qualification: the confrontation with Hill arose, for instance, because his warden wished to challenge the alleged power of the Indian Department. Second, and more generally, Indigenous trappers were simply sufficiently numerous that the legitimacy of game wardens’ own claims to govern all trapping in the province necessitated some form of meaningful engagement — and Indian agents presented themselves as uniquely equipped cultural mediators. In the archives, most Indigenous people appear essentially passive in the face of settler incursions, occasionally managing to send in letters of protest. The archive, of course, does not capture historical reality. Some trappers confronted whites, openly or by poaching their lines.<sup>49</sup> More often, as territories were registered by whites or trapped out, families moved onto other lands to which they believed they could press at least some claim, leading to conflicts with neighbouring communities or among families within communities.<sup>50</sup> In the same way as they downloaded responsibility for rational conservation to settler trappers, game wardens also outsourced the management of “Indian” problems to the Indian Department. “Most of the disputes are among the Indians, really,” one Indian agent commented to Ditchburn, and these were best “adjusted” by negotiations between agents like himself and “the very old Indians and Chiefs.”<sup>51</sup>

The extent to which Indian agents were well-versed in Indigenous governance practices may seem dubious, but game wardens freely and even proudly admitted their ignorance of such matters.<sup>52</sup> If game wardens were to get involved in “tribal” disputes, Muirhead claimed, “we would be plunged into an intricate maze of fathers, mothers, grandfathers, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, etc. etc. that has no end ... and from which we would never be able to extricate ourselves.”<sup>53</sup> Informally reducing the regulatory burden on Indigenous trappers, and then relying on Indian agents to share the burden of supervising what remained, enabled the game office to claim that it governed trapping while distancing itself from the purportedly disordered and mysterious realm of Indigenous law.

This anxiety about involvement in Indigenous law was not an idle or abstract problem: to the contrary, factions within Indigenous communities often attempted to mobilize the power of the state through the manipulation of registration papers. In 1938, for instance, a serious succession dispute occurred amongst the Gitksan at Kitwanga. Frog chief Lakmitz and Eagle chief George Moore disagreed over the management of a deceased registered trapper’s territory near the Skeena River.<sup>54</sup> Lakmitz endeavoured to cement his title by instructing Hazelton Indian agent G.C. Mortimer to fill out a registration form for the line in his name. Then, he and his son-in-law called upon Prince Rupert game warden Edmund Martin to deal with “two [unnamed] men” — actually Moore and another Eagle clan member — whom he claimed were poaching his line.<sup>55</sup> In May, Muirhead and Mortimer went to Kitwanga to attend “a large representative meeting” of members of the Frog and Eagle clans, at which the government officials found “almost unanimous approval” to register most of the territory to the Eagle clan and to register to Lakmitz only the small portion he actively trapped, with the whole matter to be re-assessed at his death. Registration forms were duly completed, granting the colonial state’s sanction to the resolution.<sup>56</sup> When neighbouring groups were trying to resolve boundary disputes, trapline registration also offered a means of enlisting state support: in 1928 and 1932, for instance, com-

munities on the northwest coast persuaded their Indian agents to submit registrations formalizing “boundary line[s]” to protect “their hereditary trapping lands” from encroachment by their neighbours.<sup>57</sup>

The ever-present tensions between Indigenous and settler law, and between Indigenous, Indian Affairs, and game branch control over traplines, return us to Hill’s line on the northwest coast. If, as Muirhead claimed, the Indian Department was useful because its agents could negotiate the “intricate maze” of Indigenous law, he and other game wardens were still deeply dissatisfied by the compromises these concessions could engender. Muirhead knew enough about the Gitksan and Wet’suwet’en feast systems to supply garbled accounts of what he depicted as rampant bribery in “the ‘Potlatch House’” in 1934<sup>58</sup> and again in 1939, when he added that the chief evil of “Indian Hereditari-ism” was its matrilineal tendencies. To Muirhead, matrilineal inheritance, Indigenous corruption, and lax supervision by the Indian Department combined to render the extent of ongoing “Indian” trapping and trapline registration intolerable.<sup>59</sup> He also hoped to deliver “a rap on the knuckles” to particularly unhelpful Indian agents.<sup>60</sup> Edmund Martin, his colleague in Prince Rupert, fretted over what he perceived to be an additional flaw in the working agreement: since Indian lines were supposed to be passed only to other Indians and the Indian Department frequently obtained vacant white lines, the informal “policy would... eliminate all white trappers in time.”<sup>61</sup>

Accordingly, Martin and Muirhead seem to have decided to protest the informal procedures by means of select test cases. In April 1936, Martin cancelled Hill’s trapline in favour of a white applicant on the grounds that he had failed to submit his annual renewal and catch return statement.<sup>62</sup> This allegation was doubtless true insofar as, like other Indian-status trappers, Hill thought he enjoyed an informal exemption from certain requirements of the game laws.<sup>63</sup> Trapline cancellations were commonplace on white lines during the 1930s for similar failures; for that side of the system, game wardens routinely compiled lists of dozens or hundreds of suspected offenders who had not renewed their req-

uisite licenses or submitted their paperwork, or were suspected of prolonged inactivity.<sup>64</sup> Indian lines were ostensibly released only to other Indians, at the request of the Indian agent. The cancellation of Hill's line was, if well within the bounds of the trapline regulations, exceptionally dubious from the perspective of the informal code. In Prince George, Van Dyk well understood the implications. "Such action will undoubtedly [sic] create a lot of criticism from the Indian Department, but sooner or later the rights of white trappers and prospects will have to be recognized," he argued of a second test attempt, pursued the same year.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, he observed, despite the informal agreement "there is nothing" in the actual law "to prevent [game wardens] from accepting applications and forc[ing] the issue."<sup>66</sup> Initially, the Game Commission staff in Victoria seem to have agreed with Van Dyk. Hill's cancellation was approved and, shortly thereafter, Martin processed new registration paperwork for a white trapper.<sup>67</sup>

The ensuing diplomatic crisis is revealing. Hill's Indian agent, W.E. Collison, gathered a sworn statement indicating Hill's intent to continue trapping the line and his sale of furs to a Prince Rupert trader, then penned a thunderous condemnation of Martin's violation of "the expressed policy of the Game authorities with regard to Indian aboriginal hunting areas": not only was the removal of the line from Hill unjustified, but the territory was adjacent to a Kitkatla reserve and consequently ought to have remained in Kitkatla hands.<sup>68</sup> D.M. MacKay, who had succeeded Ditchburn as regional Indian Affairs commissioner, also blasted the "definite departure from the generally accepted policy."<sup>69</sup> Martin prepared a carefully worded defence of his decision. Without addressing the substance of the complaints from Hill, Collison, and MacKay, he pointed out that "if [Hill's] application were reinstated, the Indians in this district would assume that the Game Department had no control over their trapping activities."<sup>70</sup> Van Dyk chimed in with a letter of support, equally carefully worded: there had been sufficient reason to cancel the line under the trapping regulations (admittedly, seldom fully enforced against Indigenous trappers), and there was also "the

necessity of creating an impression on the Indians that the Game Department, and not the Indian Agents, are in charge of the Trap-line registration." If Martin maintained "a firm stand in the present case," he explained, it would enable the Game Commission to pursue "a great number of similar cases" in the future.<sup>71</sup>

Whatever Martin and Van Dyk might feel about the importance of advancing the interests of white settlers, their violation of the informal governance practices was stark. In 1938, Indian Affairs and game officials met in Vancouver to discuss the future of the trapping territory. (As was typical of such conferences, they did not bother to invite Hill.) No minutes seem to have survived, but those present recalled that an "implicit" verbal agreement had been reached: once the white men who had registered lines in Hill's former territory left, he could have the land back.<sup>72</sup> Officials kept their word. In the late 1940s Hill's territory opened up again, and the Indian Department promptly submitted a new application for him and other Kitkatla trappers, reverting "this line to Indian status."<sup>73</sup> By the time the new application was processed, however, a significant new notation was being added to "Indian" applicants procuring lines already held by whites: "Indian on white line."<sup>74</sup>

The term is intriguing because the "Indian-ness" of the actual registrants in the era of "Indians on white lines" was not in question. (Neither, in the case of the Kitkatla dispute, was some degree of recognition that they enjoyed an informal right to resume control of the area.) Instead, it reflected one facet of the increasing rigidification of the racial boundary between "Indian" and "white" trappers: the agreement by the Indian Department and the game branch, in 1938, that any future "white" lines acquired by "Indian" trappers would remain "white" for certain purposes of the game regulations (most significantly, the requirement to pay a \$10 fee to register and renew the line).<sup>75</sup> As a game warden later explained to a seemingly recalcitrant Indigenous trapper on a "white line," "your trap-line was once held by a white man, and therefore each year" he was required to obtain and pay for a \$10 trapping license.<sup>76</sup> The racialization of traplines was fundamentally a paternalistic policy: although offi-

cials initially accommodated Indigenous governance within the Indian system, ultimately it was they who policed the boundaries. Soren Larsen, in his study of the Ootsa Lake area, notes that the Cheslatta Carrier formally granted permission to some settlers to trap within their territories.<sup>77</sup> Such local negotiations, carried out beyond the bureaucratic gaze, may have been far more commonplace in the early twentieth-century interior than historians yet realize, and culturally situated oral history may be particularly helpful for future researchers. From the perspective of most Indian agents, however, agreements reached between white and Indigenous residents beyond the gaze of bureaucrats were anathema — or at least “dangerous policy,” as one Indian agent put it in 1940.<sup>78</sup>

By the late 1930s, Indian Affairs officials seem to have been largely united in an effort to solidify what MacKay called “a clear line of demarcation.”<sup>79</sup> Indian agents regularly lobbied the game office to veto efforts by Indigenous trappers to lease or sell their lines to non-status Indigenous people and to white settlers.<sup>80</sup> In 1938, for instance, Duncan George of Vanderhoof tried to sell his line to a white man; he was told that he might *give* the line to another Indian, but could not *sell* it to a white man.<sup>81</sup> The reason for such informal restrictions, MacKay blithely explained to Butler, was that without them “this Department could not have the control that is . . . essential in such matters.”<sup>82</sup> In 1939, commenting on several recently procured traplines, Superintendent of Reserves and Trusts, D.J. Allan, opined that the names on the registration forms of lines the Indian Department purchased for Indigenous communities were mere paper fictions: such lines were “not band property or the property of the licensee but the property of this Branch and subject to Branch control.”<sup>83</sup> The fact that the legal paperwork on which trapline registration was based identified such Indians as legal owners, therefore, was a mere administrative contrivance to be amended as necessary by bureaucrats. In 1941, Inspector of Indian Agencies J. Coleman even floated the possibility of cancelling *all* of the Indian registrations and signing them over to the Indian Department.<sup>84</sup> (Thus, far from seeking to protect Indigenous traplines from provincial

officials, on this occasion Coleman actually lobbied to seize all of them; Van Dyk promptly denounced this Indian Department scheme to obtain “autocratic powers.”<sup>85</sup> That same year, MacKay decided it should be formal policy to “br[ea]k down” company lines and eliminate “local customs” of matrilineal transmission<sup>86</sup> — one of the salient features of the Indian trapline system, once it had been established, which is not addressed substantively in this paper but is a vital subject of historical inquiry.<sup>87</sup>

The next most common group to fall under the “white act” was Indigenous people who lost Indian status through voluntary enfranchisement or marriage.<sup>88</sup> Such trappers’ lines either became white lines or were transferred to others with Indian status. Newly enfranchised people listed on band or company lines were required either to surrender their trapping rights entirely or, mirroring the long-abandoned treatment of reserve land at enfranchisement, to negotiate the separation of a suitable block of land from the group line for their personal use as whites.<sup>89</sup> Indian women who married non-status men faced a similar dilemma, or simply had the choice made for them: in 1950, for instance, one Indigenous woman who “assumed white status” through marriage had her line turned over to the local Indian Agent so that he could designate an appropriately Indian successor.<sup>90</sup> Explaining such amendments to the people involved, Muirhead commented with what must have been no small amount of understatement, that it required “a lot of persuasion.”<sup>91</sup> Indian agents viewed enfranchised Indians as policy problems rather than successes: they, too, constituted a threat to the integrity of the Indian trapline system. In 1951, F. Earl Anfield, the Skeena River agent, took the opportunity of an enfranchised Kitkatla man’s court conviction to propose that his line be cancelled and turned over to a more deserving band member who had retained his status.<sup>92</sup>

Between the early 1930s and the 1950s, then, B.C. moved from a trapline system in which Indians were ostensibly assured preferential treatment, protection, and a degree of self-governance on “Indian lines” to one in which “Indian lines,” and the boundaries between Indian and white lines, were closely monitored

by government agents. The effects of this system — intensified succession conflicts and the loss of what are now asserted to be traditional territories to white trappers, for instance — are worthy of more study. However, it is also important to understand the broader context of trapline registration as the creation of a racialized “Indian” form of land tenure (and a corresponding “white” form), and not merely as an act of destruction, dispossession, or assimilation. Under this racial tenure system, status Indian trappers had become a majority of registered trappers by 1950. However, the boundary between “Indian” and “white” lines also rigidified, to the point where Indigenous trappers were barred by the state from cooperating with white partners, and Indigenous trappers who regained lines lost to whites found themselves working on ostensibly “white lines” despite their own status as Indians. The legacy is felt not just in Indigenous communities: settler trappers today often express the same suspicions about lazy Indian trappers dodging paperwork and leaving lines fallow as their counterparts did 80 years ago.<sup>93</sup>

But the history of this novel and highly contested form of land tenure is intriguing not just in its own right but for what it can tell us about the actual daily operations of the colonial state — or indeed, any modern state. Refining our historical assessments and critiques of such systems remains an important and valuable task, since it means developing more nuanced and intricate depictions not just of conflicts on traplines in northern B.C., but also of many other aspects of the colonial encounter. As Gupta observes, bureaucracy enacted structural violence, but in an arbitrary, not a systematic fashion, and often through uncertain networks of informal rules rather than through the systematic imposition of official policy. In the case of B.C. trapline registration, the informal mechanisms took on great importance, leading to conflicts over racial segregation, the purpose of conservation, and the role of Indigenous law that were clearly not anticipated within the framework of the initial or official rules. The efforts of the federal Indian Affairs and provincial game bureaucracies were significant not only as assaults on Indigenous trappers, but also as efforts to protect (and, in so doing, to create)

a generic and carefully policed mode of “Indian” trapping. Nor were these efforts wholly successful: Indigenous trappers continued, and continue, to seek space within the rules to reassert traditional claims. Still, between 1925 and the 1950s, informal rules of racial classification and segregation became prevalent within a system that government officials internally acknowledged was not working well — to the Indian agents, because of racist game wardens and Indian trappers;<sup>94</sup> and to game wardens, because of Indian trappers and obstinate Indian agents.<sup>95</sup> The Indian Branch’s fur supervisor went so far as to claim that “our basic organization is the old Indian family system of land tenure” in 1950,<sup>96</sup> by which time the “old system[s]” had come under sustained assault and some of their practitioners were no longer on officially “Indian” lines at all.

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## Endnotes

- 1 B.C. Archives (BCA), GR-1085, box 71, file 7, Butler to Officer Commanding D Division, 21 June 1950, and E. Martin to Officer Commanding D Division, 11 July 1949.
- 2 See, for instance, BCA, GR-1085, box 76, file 1, Application for Registration of a Trap-line, “Anonymous,” 25 January 1949; for consequences of holding lines “once held by ... white m[e]n,” see BCA, GR-1085, box 82, file 4, Walker to “Anonymous,” 10 October 1956.
- 3 Trapline registration was imposed in Ontario (1935), Alberta (1937), Manitoba (1940), Québec (1945), Saskatchewan (1946), the Northwest Territories (1949), and the Yukon (1950): see Kerry Margaret Abel,

- Drum Songs* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 218; Ken Coates, "Best Left as Indians: The Federal Government and the Indians of the Yukon, 1894–1950," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 4, no. 2 (1984), 186; Tina Loo, *States of Nature* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 24; Toby Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha: The Colonial Challenge to the Crees in Quebec* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 166; and David Michael Finch, "'It Is Only the Beginning': An Ethno-history of Mid-Twentieth Century Land Tenure in Fort Severn, Ontario" (MA thesis, Lakehead University, 2013), chapter 4.
- 4 Interpreting trapline regulations as a system of land tenure — and especially of claims to Aboriginal land title — may seem far afield of the ostensible objectives of a game conservation scheme, especially since game commissioner F.R. Butler insisted in 1956 that registration connoted merely the "authority to hunt and trap fur bearing animals during season and that is all": see Indian Affairs Branch, minutes of the Indian Superintendent's Conference: British Columbia & Yukon Regions, 16—20 January 1956 [copy held by Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs], 62). However, the focus upon title and land tenure is consistent with the emphasis placed upon registration by numerous Indigenous communities and with the existing academic literature discussed below.
  - 5 Ruth Sandwell, *Contesting Rural Space: Land Policy and Practices of Resettlement on Saltspring Island, 1859–1891* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 5, 63–4.
  - 6 BCA, GR-1085, box 69, file 5, A.W. Vinson, Report Re: Complaint, 24 November 1947.
  - 7 Hugh Brody, *Maps and Dreams: Indians and the British Columbia Frontier* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988), chapter 6; Brenda Ireland, "'Working a Great Hardship on Us': First Nations People, the State, and Fur-bearer Conservation in British Columbia Prior to 1930," *BC Studies* 11, no. 1 (1996), 65–90; and Jonathan Peyton, "Imbricated Geographies of Conservation and Consumption in the Stikine Plateau," *Environment and History* 17 (2011), 555–81. In contrast, Finch's recent assessment of trapline registration in Ontario in 1947 emphasizes the "close working relationship" between provincial and federal officials and the significance of consultations with Indigenous communities: Finch, "It Is Only the Beginning," 75.
  - 8 Brenda Ireland, "Implementing Delgamuukw," transcript of speech given to the Implementing Delgamuukw conference, March 1999; John Lutz, "The White Problem: State Racism and the Decline of Aboriginal Employment in 20th Century British Columbia" (paper presented to the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, 1994),

- restated in *Makuk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 203; the latter claim has subsequently been cited by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, volume 2, part 2, chapter 4; and Cole R. Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 282.
- 9 See, for instance, Peyton, “Imbricated Geographies,” on game management, including trapline registration; Dorothee Schreiber, “‘A Liberal and Paternal Spirit’: Indian Agents and Native Fisheries in Canada,” *Ethnohistory* 55 (2008), 87–118, and Douglas C. Harris, *Fish, Law and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 58, on fisheries; and Paul Nadasdy, *Hunters and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003), on hunting, wildlife management, and land title.
  - 10 See, for instance, Ted Binnema and Melanie Niemi, “Let the Line be Drawn Now’: Wilderness, Conservation, and the Exclusion of Aboriginal People from Banff National Park in Canada,” *Environmental History* 11 (2006), 724–50; David Calverley, “Who Controls the Hunt? Ontario’s Game Act, the Canadian Government and the Ojibwa, 1800–1940” (Ph.D. diss., University of Ottawa, 1999); John Sandlos, “Not Wanted in the Boundary: The Expulsion of the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway Band from Riding Mountain National Park,” *Canadian Historical Review* 89 (2008), 189–221; and Schreiber, “A Liberal and Paternal Spirit,” 90–1. For contrasting assessments emphasizing the Indian Department’s defence of Indigenous hunting and fishing, Harris, *Fish, Law, and Colonialism*, 91–2; and Sandlos again in his study of northern game, *Hunters at the Margin: Native People and Wildlife Conservation in the Northwest Territories* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 39–41.
  - 11 Darcy Ingram, *Wildlife, Conservation, and Conflict in Quebec, 1840–1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), 21.
  - 12 For contemporary figures, see B.C. Ministry of Environment, *2014–2016 Hunting & Trapping Regulations Synopsis* (Victoria, 2014), 90. For 1949 figures, see Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG 10, volume 8407, file 901/20-10, part 1, H.R. Conn to R. Kendall, 23 September 1950, enclosing “Number of White and Indian Registered Traplines in B.C. as of February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1949.” The seemingly discrepant percentages arise because traplines were registered to individuals (or rarely to partners), with the exception of 256 “Indian” lines registered to “groups” or “companies,” typically consisting of four or five individuals and led by traditional chiefs, their designated representatives, or other persons of authority. More lines (of indeterminate number) were held by Aborig-

inal people without status, including metis people, Indigenous women married to white men, and enfranchised people. The Game Commission does not seem to have generated or published these statistics routinely on an annual basis, but there is no indication in the files of widespread cancellation of Indigenous registrations between 1949 and 1956. To the contrary, Lutz seemingly misinterprets an awkwardly phrased statement made at a 1956 Indian Affairs conference, that ten percent of *Indian* lines were being actively trapped, leaving the vast majority vulnerable to threats of cancellation by the province due to inactivity: Indian Affairs Branch, *Indian Superintendent's Conference: British Columbia & Yukon Region, January 16–20, 1956* (unpublished minutes; photocopy held at Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs Resource Centre), 61, 73. James McDonald's early and contrasting observation that "some lines (over a majority) were recognized as 'Indian'" is thus confirmed: see James McDonald, "Trying to Make a Life: The Historical Political Economy of Kitsumkalum" (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 1985), 232. McDonald, in his anthropology of the Kitsumkalum people, observed that the trapline administration system possessed several characteristics intended to differentiate white from Indian traplines and sometimes extended tenuous protection to the latter, but he did not fully explore how these processes developed or functioned during the early years of the registration era.

- 13 Trapline administration thus inspired something akin to the anxiety located by Renisa Mawani amongst other bureaucrats seeking to establish and police racial boundaries in colonial B.C.: see *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871–1921* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009). These challenges were not unique to traplines: for instance, John Sandlos argues that federal bureaucrats experimented with establishing different hunting regulations for Treaty and non-Treaty hunters in northern parks: *Hunters at the Margin* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 25. The trapline registration system is distinguished by the formal similarity of registration for "whites" and "Indians" coupled with the increasingly rigid boundary drawn between the two groups between 1925 and the 1950s.
- 14 P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *Battle Grounds: The Canadian Military and Aboriginal Lands* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 9). See, for instance, Shelley Gavigan, *Hunger, Horses and Government Men: Criminal Law on the Aboriginal Plains, 1870–1905* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012), on law enforcement; Ted Binnema, "Protecting Indian Lands by Defining Indian: 1850–76," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 48, no. 2 (2014), 5–39, on the origins of Indian status; and Byron King Plant, "The Politics of Indian Adminis-

- tration: A Revisionist History of Interstate Relations in Mid-Twentieth Century British Columbia” (Ph.D. diss., University of Saskatchewan, 2009), on integration.
- 15 Ann-Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 21.
  - 16 Akhil Gupta, *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 1, 46.
  - 17 Ingram, *Wildlife, Conservation, and Conflict in Quebec*, 86, 170.
  - 18 Sandlos, *Hunters at the Margin*, 25, 49.
  - 19 For reasons of brevity, I do not present a comprehensive history of pre-1925 trapline politics in this paper, but some of these programs — moratoria, closed seasons, local preserves, and annual licensing — are discussed by Ireland, “Working a Great Hardship.”
  - 20 Pragnell did not keep minutes or transcripts of these meetings, so only his summaries survive in the files. He argued that by “ancient tribal custom” all of British Columbia was divided into exclusive hereditary trapping territories, of which a typical family or house held several between which it rotated in order to conserve fur stocks; and that these constituted recognized, managed territories in precisely the same way as a settler’s ranch: LAC, RG 10, volume 6735, file 420-3A, G.S. Pragnell to Assistant Deputy and Secretary, 12 September 1923, Pragnell to Provincial Game Board, 21 August 1924, and Pragnell to Provincial Game Board, 5 August 1925.
  - 21 British Columbia, Order-in-Council O/C 909/25, 18 August 1925, and *Revised Statutes of British Columbia 1924*, Game Act (chapter 98), enabling legislation.
  - 22 LAC, RG 10, volume 11291, part G, W.E. Ditchburn to G.S. Pragnell, 8 May 1925.
  - 23 LAC, RG 10, volume 6735, file 420-3A, M.B. Jackson to J.D. McLean, 4 November 1926.
  - 24 An exemplar form may be found in a public file: BCA, GR-1085, box 15, file 8, Application for Registration of a Trap-Line, Tom Peter, 13 January 1930. The forms filled out between at least 1928 and the postwar period for which files survive at the B.C. Archives were index card-sized; between 1925 and 1928, a similar but letter sheet-sized form was completed; many of these survive in GR-1085, box 7.
  - 25 LAC, RG 10, volume 6735, file 420-3C, C.C. Perry to the Secretary, 23 October 1934.
  - 26 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 2.
  - 27 LAC, RG 10, volume 11290, A.B. Williams to W.B. Ditchburn, 11 May 1931, and A.B. Williams to W.E. Ditchburn, 23 June 1930.
  - 28 For instance, the Nisga’a denounced registration as a vehicle for “outsider[s to] ... apply for a district within the Nishga territory” and

- evicted the Dominion Constable from Kincolith in protest: LAC, RG 10, volume 6735, file 420-3A, Nishga Tribe Lan petition to Scott, 29 December 1925, and Newnham to Collison, 16 December 1925. The Tahltan, Kwakwaka'wakw, and numerous groups in the Okanagan Agency likewise defied the new regulation: same file, Ball, Monthly Report for September 1926, Simpson to the Assistant Deputy and Secretary, 31 October 1926; file 420-3B, Joe Coburn, telegram to the Department of Indian Affairs, 15 February 1929; and file 420-3-2, part 1, Todd to the Secretary, 22 April 1939. Indian agents likewise refused to participate in registration because they thought treaty rights trumped provincial game laws: file 420-3A, King to D.C. Scott, 17 March 1924, and file 420-3C, Brown to Christianson, 13 January 1936. Others romantically thought it “unfair to Indians to tie them down”: Volume 11291, Simpson to Ditchburn, 6 January 1926). At least one pronounced himself simply too busy to bother: file 420-3A, MacLeod to Assistant Deputy and Secretary, 1 August 1927). In contrast, Harper Reed of the Stikine Agency spent more than a decade fighting for more trapline registrations for what he paternalistically called “my Indians,” earning enduring enmity from the game office, his own superiors, and hereditary chiefs in the process. Ultimately, Reed’s initiative helped the Tahltan and other northern nations obtain more land, but he was regarded as “frequently nonsensical” and hot-headed: LAC, RG 10, volume 11292, MacKay to Reed, 19 March 1940.
- 29 Many surviving Skeena River applications are in BCA, GR-1085, box 7, file 3. Ultimately, so many of these initial registrations were misplaced or deemed illegible across the province that they were scrubbed en masse and applicants were instructed to fill out new applications in 1927 and 1928: box 9, file 9, Williams, Report re Dispute, 19 April 1927, and box 8, file 3, Fougner to Spiller, 4 December 1928.
- 30 See, for instance, LAC, RG 10, volume 6735, file 420-3B, F.G.C. Ball to the Assistant Deputy and Secretary, 13 April 1928; box 15, file 5, T. Van Dyk to the Game Commissioner, 29 May 1930; box 29, file 8, report by W. Spiller, 6 April 1929; box 29, file 8, C.D. Muirhead to CO i/c, 6 March 1929; and box 3, file 2, T. Van Dyk to G.C. Mortimer, 23 June 1934.
- 31 LAC, RG 10, volume 6735, file 420-3B, Perry to Ditchburn, 1 June 1932, and BCA, GR-1085, box 17, file 2, T. Van Dyk to “Anonymous,” 9 March 1931. Stuart Lake agent R.H. Moore submitted 26 applications on behalf of Indigenous trappers, only to be told that the applications had been shelved pending “a definite deci[sion] on the system to be put into effect in regard to taking care of such applications”: file 420-3B, F.R. Butler to R.H. Moore, 13 January 1926.
- 32 BCA, GR-1085, box 26, file 5, “Anonymous” to J.H. McMullin, 12 October 1934.

- 33 BCA, GR-1085, box 17, file 2, T. Van Dyk to “Anonymous,” 9 March 1931.
- 34 B.C. Department of Attorney-General, *Tenth Report of the Provincial Game Warden of the Province of British Columbia* (Victoria: William H. Cullin, 1915), J7.
- 35 B.C. Provincial Game Commission, *Report of Provincial Game Commission for the Year 1936* (Charles F. Banfield, 1937), Q7.
- 36 LAC, RG 10, volume 6735, file 420-3B, C.C. Perry to W.E. Ditchburn, 1 June 1932, and file 420-3C, H.A.W. Brown, monthly report for August 1934.
- 37 The use of the company registration system has already been noted among the Babine by Fiske and Patrick, Kaska Dena by Peter Dimitrov, and Nisga’a by Sterritt: Peter Petkov Dimitrov, “A Northern Indian Band’s Mode of Production and its Articulation with the Multinational Mode” (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1984), 42; Fiske and Patrick, *Cis Dideen Kat*, 168–9; Sterritt et al., *Tribal Boundaries in the Nass Watershed*, 168. See, for example, LAC, RG 10, volume 11291, Application for Registration of a Trap-line, Teslin Band.
- 38 BCA, GR-1085, box 2, file 7, M. Furber to “Anonymous,” 9 June 1926.
- 39 LAC, RG 10, volume 11290, memo on meeting between C.C. Perry and A.B. Williams, 12 September 1930.
- 40 BCA, GR-1085, box 14, file 5, R.H. Moore to T. Van Dyk, 22 March 1930.
- 41 LAC, RG 10, volume 4736, file 420-3-5, H.A.W. Brown to T. Van Dyk, 25 April 1937.
- 42 GR-1085, box 16, file 6, C.D. Muirhead to T. Van Dyk, 27 January 1931. As an alternative, he asked the Indian agents to supply updated lists of active trappers at the beginning of each season so that he could update the trapline registrations accordingly: LAC, RG10, volume 11291, T. Van Dyk to D.M. MacKay, 20 November 1940. This practice too continued throughout the timeframe for which files are present at the B.C. Archives, within which there is a file of lists of Indian trappers, submitted by the Indian agents, for each year. According to testimony given during the Delgamuukw trial, the treatment of “special Indian status traplines” continued into the mid-1970s: University of British Columbia Library Digital Collection, Delgamuukw Trial Transcripts collection, B.C. Supreme Court, Delgamuukw v. British Columbia transcript, 27 November 1989, 22924.
- 43 BCA, GR-1085, box 16, file 8, T. Van Dyk to C.D. Muirhead, 18 December 1931, and C.D. Muirhead to T. Van Dyk, 16 January 1932; and LAC, RG 10, volume 11292, E. Martin to B.C.P.P. Constable Telegraph Creek, 15 December 1937, with marginal note by H. Reed quoting letter from T. Van Dyk to H. Reed, 14 December 1934.

"INDIANS ON WHITE LINES": BUREAUCRACY, RACE, AND POWER  
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- 44 LAC, RG 10, volume 6735, file 420-3-6, H.A.W. Brown, monthly report for April 1938; file 420-3-2, D.M. MacKay to the Secretary, 13 September 1939, and Gillett, Agent's Report for January 1940, 16 February 1940; and file 420-3C, A.F. Mackenzie to H.W. McGill, 4 October 1934.
- 45 BCA, GR-1790, B.C. Game Commission, Procedure Manual, 1 January 1956.
- 46 Ireland, "Great Hardship," 79; contrast with, for instance, BCA, GR-1085, box 46, file 5, D. Roumieu to O/C D Game Division, 20 May 1939, and box 3, file 2, C.D. Muirhead to Officer Commanding D Game Division, 9 January 1934, and G.S. Pragnell to T. Van Dyk, 2 February 1935.
- 47 LAC, RG 10, volume 11292, H. Reed to G.S. Pragnell, 4 June 1937.
- 48 BCA, GR-1085, box 21, file 2, C.D. Muirhead to T. Van Dyk, 9 October 1932.
- 49 In 1951, an Indian agent proposed that the branch purchase the line of an inactive trapper to protect some Nlaka'pamux men who were, as he put it, "surreptitiously looking after the surplus fur" on the line: LAC, RG 10, volume 8407, file 902/20-10, part 1, R. Kendall to H.R. Conn, 3 August 1951.
- 50 McDonald, "Trying to Make a Life," 235, 237–8.
- 51 BCA, GR-1085, box 20, file 7, E. Hyde to W.E. Ditchburn, 16 December 1927.
- 52 BCA, GR-1085, box 8, file 8, C.D. Muirhead to NCO i/c Prince George, 21 January 1929.
- 53 BCA, GR-1085, box 20, file 7, C.D. Muirhead to T. Van Dyk, 5 January 1933.
- 54 BCA, GR-1085, box 41, file 4, C.D. Muirhead to the Officer Commanding D Game Division, 11 April 1938.
- 55 BCA, GR-1085, box 41, file 4, telegram from E. Martin to T. Van Dyk, 29 March 1938, B. Shearman to E. Martin, 31 March 1938, C.D. Muirhead to the Officer Commanding D Game Division, 11 April 1938, and C.D. Muirhead to the Officer Commanding D Game Division, 4 May 1938.
- 56 BCA, GR-1085, box 41, file 4, C.D. Muirhead to the Officer Commanding D Game Division, 4 May 1938.
- 57 BCA, GR-1085, box 21, file 1, W.E. Collison to E. Martin, 16 February 1932, and box 10, file 8, W.E. Collison to Game Division Office, 8 August 1928.
- 58 BCA, GR-1085, box 57, file 3, C.D. Muirhead to R.H. Moore, 6 November 1934.
- 59 BCA, GR-1085, box 46, file 4, C.D. Muirhead, Report re Registration of Trap-Line Complaint, 26 July 1938.

- 60 BCA, GR-1085, box 57, file 3, C.D. Muirhead to Officer Commanding D Game Division, 7 November 1934.
- 61 BCA, GR-1085, box 33, file 3, E. Martin to Officer Commanding D Division, 26 October 1936.
- 62 BCA, GR-1085, box 34, file 7, F.R. Butler to Officer Commanding D Division, 20 March 1936.
- 63 BCA, GR-1085, file 41, box 5, F.R. Butler to D.M. MacKay, 5 February 1937.
- 64 For instance, failure to renew trapline license: GR-1085, box 16, file 3, T. Van Dyk to the Game Commissioner, 7 February 1930; failure to renew firearm license: box 26, file 4, Report, 3 March 1934.
- 65 BCA, GR-1085, box 34, file 3, T. Van Dyk to the Game Commission, 11 March 1936.
- 66 BCA, GR-1085, box 41, file 4, T. Van Dyk to C.D. Muirhead, 16 May 1938.
- 67 BCA, GR-1085, box 41, file 5, E. Martin to Officer Commanding D Game Division, 13 June 1938, and box 71, file 7, F.E. Anfield to W.S. Arneil, Indian Commissioner for B.C., 15 June 1949, F.E. Anfield to Martin, 30 May 1950, and Martin, Report: Registration of Trapline: Lundy, Frank, Hunts Inlet, B.C., 11 July 1949.
- 68 GR-1085, box 41, file 5, W.E. Collison to Game Commission, 30 December 1936, and statement of F.M. Lockwood, 26 February 1937; and LAC, RG10, volume 11080, file 168/20-10, W.E. Collison to G. Cunningham, 23 March 1937.
- 69 LAC, RG 10, volume 11080, file 168/20-10, D.M. MacKay to F.R. Butler, 9 March 1937.
- 70 BCA, GR-1085, box 41, file 5, Martin to the Officer Commanding D Game Division, 25 January 1937.
- 71 BCA, GR-1085, box 41, file 5, T. Van Dyk, marginal comment on Martin to Van Dyk, 25 January 1937.
- 72 BCA, GR-1085, box 71, file 7, Martin to Officer Commanding D Game Division, 13 June 1938; box 41, file 5, F.E. Anfield to W.S. Arneil, Indian Commissioner for B.C., 15 June 1949, F.E. Anfield to Martin, 30 May 1950, and Martin, Report: Registration of Trapline: Lundy, Frank, Hunts Inlet, B.C., 11 July 1949.
- 73 LAC, RG10, volume 11080, file 168/20-10, F. Earl Anfield to Ed Martin, 30 May 1950.
- 74 BCA, GR-1085, box 76, file 1, Application for Registration of a Trapline, "Anonymous" et al, 25 January 1949.
- 75 LAC, RG 10, volume 4736, file 420-3, part 5, T.R.L. MacInnes to D.M. Mackay, 25 February 1938.
- 76 BCA, GR-1085, box 82, file 4, C.J. Walker to "Anonymous," 10 October 1956.

- 77 Soren Larsen, "Collaboration Geographies: Native-White Partnerships During the Re-Settlement of Ootsa Lake, British Columbia, 1900–52," *BC Studies* 138/139 (2003), 87–114.
- 78 GR-1085, box 49, file 1, "Anonymous" to W.L. Forrester, 28 December 1940.
- 79 LAC, RG 10, volume 6735, file 420-3, D.M. MacKay to T. Van Dyk, 12 December 1939.
- 80 LAC, RG 10, volume 6735, file 420-3, H. Reed to D.M. MacKay, 8 June 1939 and BCA, GR-1085, box 30, file 7, F.R. Butler to Officer Commanding D Division, 24 January 1936, R.H. Moore to T. Van Dyk, 31 December 1935, and T. Van Dyk to the Game Commissioner, 3 January 1936.
- 81 LAC, RG 10, volume 6736, file 420-3, part 5, D. George to H. McGill, 18 January 1938, and R.H. Moore to the Secretary, 7 February 1938.
- 82 LAC, RG 10, volume 11292, D.M. MacKay to F.R. Butler, 20 January 1938.
- 83 LAC, RG 10, volume 6736, file 420-3-2, part 1, D.J. Allan, Memorandum to H. McGill, 5 October 1939.
- 84 LAC, RG 10, volume 6736, file 420-3-2, part 2, J. Coleman to Indian Commissioner for B.C., 19 March 1941.
- 85 BCA, GR-1085, box 55, file 2, T. Van Dyk to the Game Commissioner, 19 March 1942.
- 86 *Delgamuukw II*, pp. 1831–3.
- 87 Inheritance became a particular problem during the *Delgamuukw* trial and consequently it is explored to some extent in the contemporary ethnographic context by Antonia Mills and Robert Daly: *Eagle Down is Our Law: Witsuwit'en Law, Feasts, and Land Claims* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994), 70, and Robert Daly, *Our Box was Full: An Ethnography for the Delgamuukw Plaintiffs* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), 250. Notably, by the time they conducted their fieldwork, those who held the legal registrations would have had little difficulty transferring them back to the "rightful" owners under Indigenous law and evidently not all did so; as I note here, mobilizing the power of the state was an important component of political conflicts over land and title in Indigenous communities after 1925. Susan Roy is currently conducting research into traplines and gender among the Tahltan and may shed important new light on this question.
- 88 BCA, GR-1085, box 84, file 9, W.A.H. Gill to L.J. Cox, 24 April 1957. The "white act" is discussed in box 69, file 5, A.W. Vinson, report, 24 November 1947.
- 89 BCA, GR-1085, box 66, file 7, T. Van Dyk to "Anonymous," 16 April 1947.

- 90 BCA, GR-1085, box 85, file 3, W.A.H. Gill to "Anonymous," 28 January and 17 February 1958.
- 91 BCA, GR-1085, box 65, file 6, C.D. Muirhead to Officer Commanding D Game Division, 17 December 1945.
- 92 LAC, RG 10, volume 11080, file 168/20-10, F. Earl Anfield to Game Warden, 23 February 1951.
- 93 As one member of a public forum explained in 2008, for instance, the "real problem" is that "the majority of traplines in this Province are Native owned and inactive": Boonerbuck, "Re: Wolf Control, 19 Feb. 2008," on Hunting B.C. online forum, <http://www.huntingbc.ca/forum/showthread.php?16542-Wolf-Control/page7> <accessed March 2015>.
- 94 LAC, RG 10, volume 6735, file 420-3B, F.G.C. Ball to the Assistant Deputy and Secretary, 13 April 1928.
- 95 LAC, RG 10, volume 11291, A.B. Williams to W.E. Ditchburn, 21 December 1931, and T. Van Dyk to E. Allard, 12 April 1933.
- 96 LAC, RG 10, volume 8407, file 901/20-10, part 1, H.R. Conn to G.H. Gooderham, 6 December 1950.