

The 'Titus Trail' from Queenborough to Burrard Inlet — Building the North Road from New Westminster to Port Moody Arm

Researched and written by: [Ralph Drew](#), Belcarra, BC, October 2020, Updated: March 2021.

The British Admiralty Chart (No. 1922) drawn in 1859 by Captain George Henry Richards, RN (1820–1896) and the crew of the survey ship 'H.M.S. Plumper' — see map below — shows an early trail from the Royal Engineers' Camp ('Sapperton') to the eastern end of Burrard Inlet. (The 'North Road' alignment — shown as the red-dotted line on the map below — did not follow the route this early trail.) This "first trail" route ⁽¹⁾ antedated the 'Titus Trail' (a.k.a. 'North Road') but was soon superseded by the 'North Road' route and fell into disuse. ⁽²⁾

There does not appear to be any written record that the Royal Engineers built this "first trail" between the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet. It is also important to note that the eastern end of Burrard Inlet has extensive tidal flats and is not navigable by large ships; whereas a military trail would have been built to the navigable deep water of Burrard Inlet. Consequently, this "first trail" was a route used by indigenous people ⁽³⁾ that went between the Kwantlen settlement located at 'Skaiaimetl' (near 'New Westminster'), occupied prior to the establishment of Fort Langley in 1827, ⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾⁽⁶⁾ and the indigenous site called 'Tay-tum-sun' at the head of Burrard Inlet ⁽⁷⁾⁽⁸⁾ — see map below.

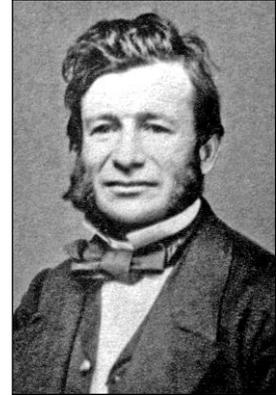
Even before departing Great Britain for the Pacific Coast, Colonel Richard Clement Moody, RE (1813–1887) studied the maps and other information available regarding the geography of the Fraser Valley and Burrard Inlet areas with the view of selecting a potential site for the capital of the proposed new colony. In assessing potential locations, strategic military considerations were paramount for Colonel Moody. In his letter dated 16 September 1858 ⁽⁹⁾ conveying his instructions to Captain J. M. Grant, RE, Colonel Moody included the following:

"If it be possible within the time before I arrive, I would wish you to examine the ground around the junction of the Pitt River and the Fraser [River]. Send also an intelligent non-commissioned officer with guide to examine the best route from that point to the deep inlet [Burrard Inlet] northwards." – **Colonel Moody, 16 September 1858.**

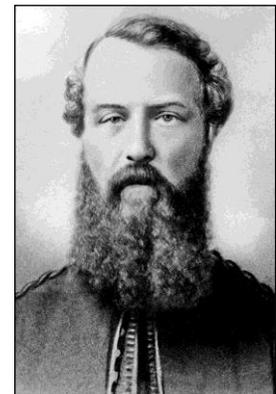
One of Colonel Moody's first tasks was to recommend to Governor James Douglas (1803–1877) a location for the capital of the newly proclaimed 'Colony of British Columbia'. In a letter to Governor Douglas dated 28 January 1859 ⁽¹⁰⁾ written aboard the 'H.M.S. Plumper', Colonel Moody described the strategic advantages of his proposed location — the future 'New Westminster' — including military defences of the site:

"At the rear of this position and distant five miles is Burrard Inlet any access to which could be rendered most hazardous by placing a work on the island [Stanley Park] which extends across it. There is also on that side a range of high ground from East to West on which could be placed earthen works and intrenched camp preventing any advance." – **Colonel Moody, 28 January 1859.**

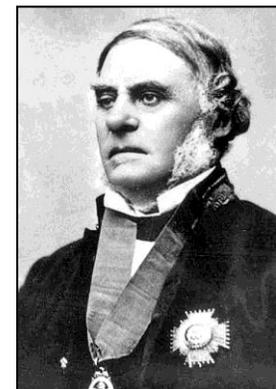
Once the location of the capital for the new 'Colony of British Columbia' was decided, Colonel Moody worried that an invading American army could blockade the Fraser River and cut-off supplies to 'Queenborough' — the original name spelling for the new settlement later known as 'New Westminster'. ⁽¹¹⁾⁽¹²⁾⁽¹³⁾



Capt. G.H. Richards, RN
(BCA A-03352)

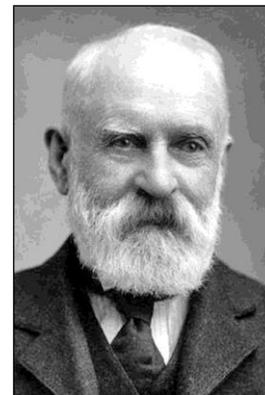


Col. R.C. Moody, RE
(BCA A-01722)



Sir James Douglas
(BCA A-01229)

It was in March 1859 that Colonel R.C. Moody employed English-born Walter Moberly, C.E. (1832–1915), son of Captain John Moberly, RN, and famous explorer of the B.C. Interior. ⁽¹⁴⁾⁽¹⁵⁾ Colonel Moody tasked Moberly with assisting the Royal Engineers with the “founding” of ‘Queenborough’ and surveying the streets of the new capital. ⁽¹⁶⁾⁽¹⁷⁾



Walter Moberly, CE
(BCA A-01814)

In a letter to Governor Douglas dated 17 March 1859, Colonel Moody wrote: ⁽¹⁸⁾

“I now learn from the Indians that a lake [Burnaby Lake] does exist... [Robert] Burnaby and Blake [Lieutenant G. S. Blake, Royal Marines Artillery] immediately volunteered their services to explore and also to trace the mouth to Burrard’s Inlet and to report generally on the countryside north of the town. After a considerable reluctance on account of the weather, I have let them go with four days’ provisions in ‘Light Marching Order’, not even tents, two Indians, a Canadian Voyageur attached to [Captain] Parson’s survey party and my own trusty Corporal Brown, R.E. They have been away now three days in the most deplorable weather. The rain was in torrents all last night and it is streaming down still in tropical torrents — nothing would gladden my eyes more than to see them back.”
– **Colonel Moody, 17 March 1859.**

The foregoing was the first documented European expedition inland between the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet. The expedition served to determine the closest approach and most suitable overland route between Queenborough (New Westminster) and Burrard Inlet. In a letter to Colonel Moody dated 25 April 1859, Lieutenant Blake reported on the expedition to explore Burnaby Lake and the area north to Burrard Inlet and, in particular, the discovery of the valley that ran north to Burrard Inlet from the Brunette River: ⁽¹⁹⁾

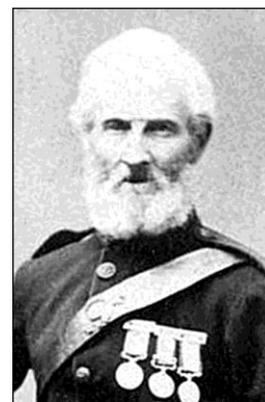
“I took a course due North from the eastern point of the lake over a Mountain [Burnaby Mountain] 600 feet above the level of the sea — covered with dense forest — on reaching the summit I found Burrard’s Inlet to be immediately beneath it on the opposite side branching-off into two arms the Southern-most one of which bore to the eastward [Port Moody Arm] and appeared to terminate within a short distance. The Northern-most one [Indian Arm] hugging the base of the opposite high range of mountains was shut-out from any observation. The mountain I ascended had an exceedingly steep descent to the Northward the breadth of the inlet was at the broadest part two miles: observing on this occasion that the mountain a short distance from where I had crossed it terminated abruptly to the Eastward and that a comparatively cleared valley about a mile in width skirted it in the direction of the Inlet, I devoted my third day to endeavouring to find out the nearest and most direct point from the latter to Queenborough and by returning about a mile and a quarter down the river Brunette from the Lake, I entered the valley and found it led over a perfectly level and nearly cleared country direct to the termination of the Southernmost branch of the inlet the distance from River [Brunette River] to the latter being about two and a half miles and I compute the distance that exists between that part of the river and Queenborough to be about three miles in a direct line this would make the nearest point of the Inlet five and a half miles from Queenborough.”
– **Lieutenant G.S. Blake, RMA, 25 April 1859.**

In the early Spring of 1859, a gang of 25 Royal Engineers was detailed to cut a trail from the new capital to Burrard Inlet. The foreman was Sergeant John McMurphy, RE (1812–1901), a Crimean War veteran who had been decorated by Queen Victoria for bravery. ⁽²⁰⁾⁽²¹⁾

A road right-of-way 66 feet wide was surveyed straight north from the military camp and called “The North Road”. A narrow roadway was hewed for the first mile and a rough bridge was constructed across the Brunette River. The Royal Engineers had progressed only half the distance to Burrard Inlet when peremptory orders came in July to hurry over to San Juan Island to provide a needed military presence. ⁽²²⁾⁽²³⁾⁽²⁴⁾

Two weeks later, in a letter to Governor Douglas dated 11 August 1859, ⁽²⁵⁾ Colonel Moody outlined the urgent need for military intelligence regarding the number and location of American troops near the southern frontier of the colony, as well as the need for defensive preparations for the capital — renamed ‘New Westminster’ by Queen Victoria in May and proclaimed by Governor Douglas on 20 July 1859:

“I must now further urge Your Excellency to enable me by your authority to employ civil labour (the military being all engaged) immediately to form a reasonably good Utility Road from the upper end of Burrard’s Inlet to New Westminster [and] to construct landing piers and a simple Block House containing a store at Burrard’s Inlet extremity of the road. The determination of the exact position there is a question to be decided by a Naval authority in conjunction with myself.” – **Colonel Moody, 11 August 1859.**



John McMurphy, RE
(BCA A-08864)

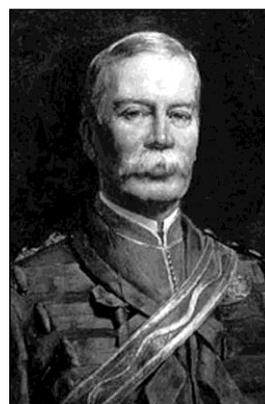
In a follow-up letter to Governor Douglas dated 27 August 1859, ⁽²⁶⁾ Colonel Moody elaborated further regarding the proposed “military road”:

“With reference to the construction of a Military Road from New Westminster to Burrard Inlet, I have reason to think that I can form a contract for clearing the 20 feet width on the shortest of the two routes; viz., the one to the upper end of the inlet at the estimated cost of £480 — ¹/₁₀th to be paid in money and the remainder in land [Scrip] ... I would strongly urge Your Excellency’s sanction to a contract being made to form this road at once. I really believe that, apart from the vital military principle involved and which may any moment be tested, the saving in expense in the transport of troops and material with the considerable naval aid by any class of vessel can thus be made available...”
– **Colonel Moody, 27 August 1859.**

The “military road” requested by Colonel Moody on 27 August 1859 was quickly approved by Governor Douglas on 30 August 1859. ⁽²⁷⁾ A party of Royal Engineers under the supervision of Walter Moberly was immediately assigned to survey the trail. ⁽¹⁵⁾ On 2 September 1859 Colonel Moody signed a contract ⁽²⁸⁾ with seven men to construct a military “pack trail”: Andrew Hardie, Alexander White, Angus H. Manson, Francis E. Wade, Alexander Cameron, ⁽²⁹⁾ Joseph Clearihue ⁽³⁰⁾ and James Hogg. ⁽³¹⁾ The seven men adopted the name ‘Burrard Inlet Trail Company’ and immediately started work. ⁽³²⁾

In a letter to Captain J. M. Grant, RE, dated 30 September 1859, ⁽³³⁾ Colonel Moody communicated the following details of the trail work:

“There are at present here 2 parties employed cutting trails to Burrard’s Inlet, one, on the north line from your Quarter [Sapperton], the other, from Douglas Street in the town [New Westminster]. The first-named have entered into an agreement to cut the trail, or rather to clear the trail, levelling all trees 10 inches and under in diameter, & cutting down those of larger diameter at chopping height (rolling the whole off the trail) at £70 a mile ... the payments being made to both in Cash & Land, viz. 25% in Cash & 75% in [Land] Scrip at 10s [shillings] per acre — the money to be paid at the completion of every mile, and the [Land] Scrip at the termination of the work ... In the contracts I above alluded to, there is [sic. are] no conditions for levelling the ground — and the contracting parties provide their own rations, tools, &c.” – **Colonel Moody, 30 September 1859.**



Capt. J.M. Grant, RE
(BCA A-01315)

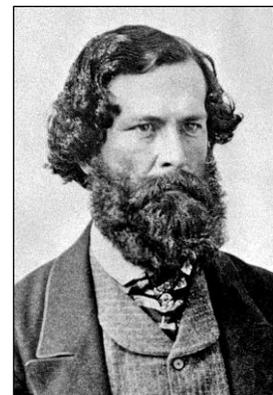
The ‘Burrard Inlet Trail Company’ built the trail “due north” to Burrard Inlet over a period of five months between September 1859 and February 1860 ⁽³⁴⁾ at the rate of one mile per month. It was constructed for the sum of £70 per each of the 5 miles completed, inspected and approved: 25% in cash and the balance in Land ‘Scrip’. In total, the company was paid £93 in cash and £277 in Land ‘Scrip’. At that time, the British Pound was valued at \$5.00 US dollars and Land

'Scrip' was valued at 10 shillings per acre which equalled a total of 354 acres of land. In a 'Statement of Expenditures' dated 31 December 1860, ⁽³⁵⁾ Colonel Moody reported the total amount expended (cash) on the "military trail" to Burrard's Inlet was £92-7s-8p = £92.38 (25%) which was equivalent to an overall contract cost of £370 including cash and Land Scrip.

The opening-up of the 'North Road' trail spurred land purchases along its route, especially by the company of road contractors, all but one of whom bought lots in the vicinity. ⁽³²⁾ Andrew Hardie was granted Pre-emption Record No.1 (160 acres) on January 19th, 1860, ⁽³⁶⁾ located on Burrard Inlet on the east side of the "military trail" around the same time that the trail reached the inlet. (This parcel later became District Lot 26 (Crown Grant No.1391, 120 acres) issued to John Alfred Webster on March 27th, 1874. In 1882, John Alfred Webster built a hotel on DL 26, and in 1893 'Aliceville' was named after his daughter Alice May Webster.) William Holmes was granted a Pre-emption Record on January 27th, 1860, for the narrow strip of land (120 acres) located between 'North Road' and the Naval Reserve (District Lot 114) located on the west side of 'North Road'. ⁽³⁶⁾ (This parcel of land (DL 31) — with frontage on Burrard Inlet — was subsequently sold to John Johnston around 1880 who built the 'Johnston House' hotel in 1882.)

In a letter to Acting Colonial Secretary W.A.G. Young dated 29 November 1860, ⁽³⁷⁾ Colonel Moody was compelled to forcefully defend his expenditures on the trails to Burrard's Inlet:

"These cheap and rude sort of paths finished through the dense forest that hemmed us in close around were necessary not only to ascertain the character of the country about to be opened up around New Westminster by survey for occupation, and to aid in execution of that survey, but to give access to and from the Camp [Sapperton]. The longest trail, viz. that to Burrard Inlet was indispensable considering our military position to enable us to communicate at any time with any class of Vessels of War; the largest of which could come up to where the trail terminates. Ready means of communication with 'Support' are of an importance not to be exaggerated."
– **Colonel Moody, 29 November 1860.**

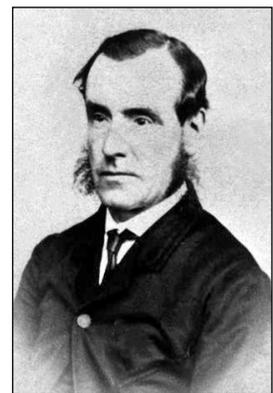


W.A.G. Young
(BCA A-07029)

Also included in the letter of 29 November 1860, ⁽³⁷⁾ was a reference by Colonel Moody to the person hired to oversee clearing of the trail "...he [Governor Douglas] was aware [work] was executed by Titus...".

Construction of the military "pack trail" to Burrard Inlet built in 1859 was supervised by Miles Marcus Titus (1815–1871) who was described by Robert Burnaby (1828–1878), private secretary to Colonel Moody: ⁽³⁸⁾

"One character, Mr. Miles Marcus Titus, a regular back-woods man, makes us laugh all day with his queer sayings and doings. He has one eye only by day, the other never opens 'till night. He must by metempsychosis have a bit of the owl in him. He said the other day "Yas! I'll do it for you Sir, as soon as I've fixed a bite", meaning, got his dinner. And another job he was after he said he'd make quite an upright job of it." – **Robert Burnaby, 24 April 1859.**



Robert Burnaby
(BCA A-01134)

Robert Burnaby also described the trail built by Titus as follows: ⁽³⁹⁾

"Up at the end of the E. arm [Port Moody Arm of Burrard Inlet] i.e., going straight on from the sea as far as you can, a trail is being cut across to Queenborough [New Westminster], and will be a great achievement. I think I have before told you of Mr. Marcus Miles Titus [*sic.* Miles Marcus Titus] the one-eyed trail cutter, who says the woods grow as thick as the hairs on a dog's back, and he goes this 'em end ways, and then he has to be greased to do it."
– **Robert Burnaby, 21 July 1859.**

In October 1859, Admiral Sir Robert Lambert Baynes (1796–1869) was in Burrard Inlet onboard the 'H.M.S. Plumper' when he thought to pay a visit to Colonel Moody, the commanding officer of the Royal Engineers. Writing of the occasion, he speaks of Port Moody as: ⁽⁴⁰⁾

“...a fine harbour from which there is a trail cut to New Westminster, the future capital of British Columbia.” **He then proceeds:** “The trail [‘Titus Trail’] is a rough path cut through the woods, the distance about six miles which I had nearly accomplished when a horse sent by Col. Moody met me. I was not too conceited to mount and save myself the last half mile. These trails are rough walking with stumps and inequalities liable to trip one up every moment; so that it is necessary to look at your steps.” – **Admiral Baynes, October 1859.**



Admiral R.L. Baynes
(BCA PDP00253)

The “pack trail” cleared by Titus and his crew was not finished until January 1860. As a consequence, the first two or three miles from Burrard Inlet traversed by Admiral Baynes must have been the surveyors “cut-line” which, indeed, would have been a very rough trail. The fact that Colonel Moody was able to send an RE with a horse to meet Admiral Baynes at the south end indicates that he was hiking the new ‘Titus Trail’ and not traversing the earlier indigenous trail.

In a letter to Governor Douglas dated 12 November 1859, ⁽⁴¹⁾ Colonel Moody proposed that the “pack trail” be upgraded to a “military road” as soon as possible. In a follow-up letter dated 8 December 1859, ⁽⁴²⁾ Colonel Moody even provided a draft “Notice of Tender” for construction of the ‘North Road’. However, in a letter dated 23 December 1859, ⁽⁴³⁾ Governor Douglas replied:

“...I beg to inform you that I am not disposed to authorize an expenditure on military account for an object purely colonial, and which may be disallowed. The completion of this road must therefore be deferred until the question of cost is laid before the Secretary of State [5th Duke of Newcastle].” – **Governor Douglas, 23 December 1859.**

In a letter to Governor Douglas dated 8 February 1860, ⁽⁴⁴⁾ in response to Governor Douglas’ letter of 23 December 1859, Colonel Moody again proposed that the “military road” should be constructed:

“I beg with great respect to repeat that the object with me is on grounds of proper Military Defence, and that its early construction is of an importance that cannot be overrated. ... I do not desire to form an elaborate wide Turnpike road with heavy cuttings and embankments, but a narrow way of about 12 feet in width, passible for ordinary carts.”
– **Colonel Moody, 8 February 1860.**

In a letter dated 27 February 1860, ⁽⁴⁵⁾ Governor Douglas forwarded Colonel Moody’s letter to Henry Pelham Fiennes Pelham-Clinton (the 5th Duke of Newcastle) requesting further instructions on the matter:

“My Lord Duke... I have requested Colonel Moody to defer taking any steps in the matter, until I can lay the same before your Grace, and receive your instructions thereon.”
– **Governor Douglas, 27 February 1860.**

In a letter dated 24 April 1860, ⁽⁴⁶⁾ the Duke of Newcastle responded to Governor Douglas as follows:

“I have to acknowledge receipt of your despatch [*sic.*] of the 27th of February last enclosing a letter from Colonel Moody recommending the construction of a Military Road from New Westminster to Burrard’s Inlet. In reply, I have to instruct you that I cannot sanction the formation of such a road at the cost of Imperial funds.”
– **Duke of Newcastle, 24 April 1860.**



Duke of Newcastle
(UK NPG 4576)

It would be early January 1861 before Colonel Moody finally received authorization and financial resources from Governor Douglas for upgrading the Burrard Inlet “pack trail” to the very basic standard of a “military road”.

On 16 July 1860, New Westminster incorporated as the first municipality west of Upper Canada (Ontario) governed by a Council consisting of seven citizens from the city. This development resulted in the civilian population having much greater participation in making decisions regarding infrastructure expenditures deemed important to the city.

In a letter to Governor Douglas dated 24 September 1860, ⁽⁴⁷⁾ Colonel Moody forwarded a Petition from 23 settlers, including himself, “permanently settled on the North Line”:

“...having no possible way of bringing their produce into market, without a road be made and graded to New Westminster ... would most respectfully petition your Excellency to take into consideration at your earliest convenience, the necessity of having it [North Road] finished in order to enable your petitioners ... easier and speedier means of reaching market with their produce.” – **Petition, North Road Settlers, September 1860.**

In a letter to Colonel Moody dated 12 October 1860, ⁽⁴⁸⁾ Acting Colonial Secretary W.A.G. Young communicated the perspective of Governor Douglas:

“...the question of affording assistance to the settlers on the North Line leading from New Westminster to Burrard’s Inlet, by making and grading a road to New Westminster must, His Excellency regrets, be deferred until the means of the Colony will admit of the expenditure.” – **Acting Colonial Secretary, W.A.G. Young, 12 October 1860.**

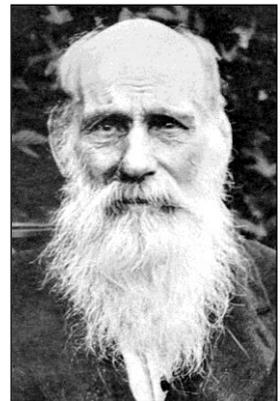
In November 1860, His Honour Judge Begbie, Chief Justice of British Columbia, convened a Grand Jury in New Westminster to provide guidance on a number of civil matters. The Grand Jury issued a report ⁽⁴⁹⁾ to Judge Begbie and requested that it be presented to Governor Douglas. The report included, amongst several, the following recommendation for “immediate action”:

“That we have in the immediate vicinity of this city large tracts of land suitable for agricultural pursuits, from which the colony will derive a large revenue when made available for settlement, and having several farmers already settled on the line of roads who are unable to bring their produce to market, we recommend that a waggon [sic.] road be made from the [Royal Engineers] Camp [Sapperton] to Burrard Inlet by the north line, and that another be constructed from the end of Douglas Street to English Bay.”
– **New Westminster Grand Jury Report, November 1860.**

On 18 December 1860 a public meeting was held at the New Westminster courthouse to discuss the best approach to be adopted for the construction of roads through the agricultural districts around New Westminster. The meeting was called by the President (Mayor) of the Municipal Council in response to a petition from the public: ⁽⁵⁰⁾

“Mr. [William] Holmes, a respectable farmer living on the north line to Burrard Inlet, was then voted to the chair.” [William Holmes pre-empted the first homestead on the west side of North Road located in the future municipality of Burnaby.]

The public meeting unanimously passed the following resolution for subsequent presentation to His Excellency Governor Douglas: ⁽⁵⁰⁾



William Holmes
(BCA G-09610)

“That, as there is a large tract of land in the vicinity of New Westminster — especially between the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet — fit for immediate settlement were there two wagon roads constructed — one running from New Westminster to English Bay and the other from the [Royal Engineers] Camp to the head of the inlet — it is desirable that the Government of the colony should devote a portion of the revenue of the country to the carrying-out of this objective, so essential to the existence of a farming community, which in its turn will be as necessary to New Westminster, the capital of the colony.”
– **Public Meeting Resolution, 18 December 1860.**

The foregoing initiatives must have motivated Governor Douglas to approve construction of the ‘North Road’ given the following newspaper article published 5 January 1861: ⁽⁵¹⁾

“We believe it is the intention of the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works [Colonel Moody] to proceed at once with the formation of this road [North Road] to Burrard Inlet.”
– **New Westminster Times, 5 January 1861.**

This was followed by another newspaper article one week later announcing that the Royal Engineers had started work on the wagon road to Burrard Inlet: ⁽⁵²⁾

“The wagon road on the north line to Burrard Inlet was commenced last week by the Royal Engineers, and exhibits every indication of being a credible work when completed.”
– **New Westminster Times, 12 January 1861.**

A newspaper article that appeared 13 February 1861 provided further information: ⁽⁵³⁾

“The Royal Engineers have been engaged for some time upon the North Trail, which connects this place with Burrard Inlet, and we understand that a wagon road is now completed some four miles out, with excellent bridges and ditches. This road passes through beautiful agricultural district, and leads to the farms of Mr. [William] Holmes and Col. Moody, R.E.” – **New Westminster Times, 13 February 1861.**

The ‘North Road’ was completed in January of 1861, and that Spring the ‘British Columbian’ newspaper reported that Burrard Inlet was “becoming quite a resort for pleasure seekers”. ⁽⁵⁴⁾ However, the newspaper also criticized the commercial viability of the “road”: ⁽⁵⁵⁾

“The North Road, starting from the R.E. [Royal Engineers] Camp, and striking the Inlet at Port Moody, is all very well as a military road, for which it was made; but we are inclined to the opinion that for commercial purposes, it is scarcely the thing.” – **British Columbian, 6 February 1862.**

The “road” was actually nothing more than a wide trail, and during the Fall and Winter of 1861-62 a party of sappers (Royal Engineers) chopped the timber from the entire surveyed road width “thereby throwing it open to the influence of sun and wind”. ⁽⁵⁶⁾

In a summary of ‘Land Scrip Issued’ dated 2 November 1861, ⁽⁵⁷⁾ Colonel Moody reported the total amount of Land Scrip issued to ‘Andrew Hardie & Co.’ for construction of the “military road” to Burrard’s Inlet amounted to £554 (75%), which meant that the overall cost of the project was £739. The Royal Engineer’s specifications for construction of the ‘North Road’ are available in the ‘British Columbia Archives’. ⁽⁵⁸⁾

In 1862, British Columbia’s future Lieutenant-Governor, Joseph Trutch (1826–1904), described Miles Titus in correspondence to his brother John Trutch: ⁽⁵⁹⁾

“Munroe sends a man up by this steamer to complete his portion [of construction of ‘Yale Road’]. The man’s name is Titus. I know something of him — a pushing fellow — a Yankee — he is anxious to work for me this summer — you can see what he is worth.”
– **Joseph Trutch, 12 May 1862.**

There are very few references to the 'Titus Trail', but one reference is by F. W. Laing where an early pre-empted parcel of Crown Land is described as "100 acres on the south side of Burnaby Lake commencing at the terminus of what is commonly called the 'Titus Trail'..."⁽⁶⁰⁾

Another reference appeared in the 'British Columbian' newspaper in 1882 wherein a government surveyor looking to find the best alignment for the new 'Port Moody Road' which was in the process of being built along the 'North Road' alignment:⁽⁶¹⁾

"He [government surveyor Hargreaves] was fortunate in finding the old 'Titus Trail' run for Colonel Moody twenty years ago [*sic.* 22 years ago], which affords an excellent grade and will be inexpensive to construct as a wagon road." – **British Columbian, 8 October 1882.**



Sir Joseph Trutch
(BCA A-01004)

In 1871, Miles Marcus Titus was sent-up from Victoria to the new settlement of Comox.⁽⁶²⁾ He was to make proper roads out of the trails that had been created by the first settlers along the Tsolum River. He was working on the road when he suddenly died:⁽⁶³⁾⁽⁶⁴⁾

"Late from Comox: SUDDEN DEATH of Miles M. Titus, Government Road 'Boss'. Mr. T. C. Milburne arrived in a canoe yesterday morning from Comox to bring the news of the death of Mr. M. M. Titus, Government Road Boss [*sic.* Foreman], which occurred quite unexpectedly on Friday night last. He had been complaining of pain in the side for some weeks and after supper at the camp that fateful evening he spat blood. The same day he started for Wilson's Landing to look for some timber, and had got as far as Duncan's house when he commenced to vomit a great deal of blood. Duncan saw him and kindly assisted him to his house; the men were sent for and hurried down to Duncan's. At Mr. Titus' request, carried him toward the camp as he said he wished to die amongst his men. They bore him to Mr. Wilson's house — by this time he had grown very weak — and put him to bed there. He gradually sank down and died ten minutes past 10 o'clock. Death was supposed to have resulted from the rupture of the main aorta of the heart."
– **Victoria Daily Colonist, 11 July 1871.**

In a letter to the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works dated 27 April 1867, Corporal Alfred Richard Howse, RE, examined the bridges on the North Road between the Brunette River and Maryfield Farm (owned by Colonel Moody) and reported the following:⁽⁶⁵⁾

"1. The bridge crossing the Brunette is now impassable caused by the breaking of the stringers and decay of the two trestles...; 2. A small crib at the North end of the next bridge decayed...; 3. The bridge near Maryfield should be rebuilt as the crib and stringers are decayed and broken..." – **A.R. Howse, RE, 27 April 1867.**

The state of the 'North Road' after 1869 was related by John Murray Jr, son of Lance-Corporal John Murray, RE, to City of Vancouver Archivist Major J.S. Matthews, in July 1934:⁽⁶⁶⁾

"After the capital of B.C. was moved to Victoria in 1869, the 'North Road' deteriorated into nothing more than a trail for Indians; a track you could not get a horse over, because all the bridges put-up by the Royal Engineers on the North Road had been burned-out. [Note: a great bush fire ran through this area in 1864.] There was no way in which a horse could be got to the Burrard Inlet end of the North Road until 1881. During Governor Seymour's residence on the Mainland [1864–1869], he kept the North Road open for the purpose of conveying the mails when the Fraser River was frozen-over; he made the North Road into a sleigh road, but after he left [in 1869], it went wild again, so that's when we [John's father, Lance Corporal John Murray, RE, and the survey party] came on the scow [to Port Moody] in March 1882 ... there was no direct trail that I ever heard of from Sapperton to the present site of Port Moody." – **John Murray, Junior; son of Lance Corporal John Murray, RE.**

References:

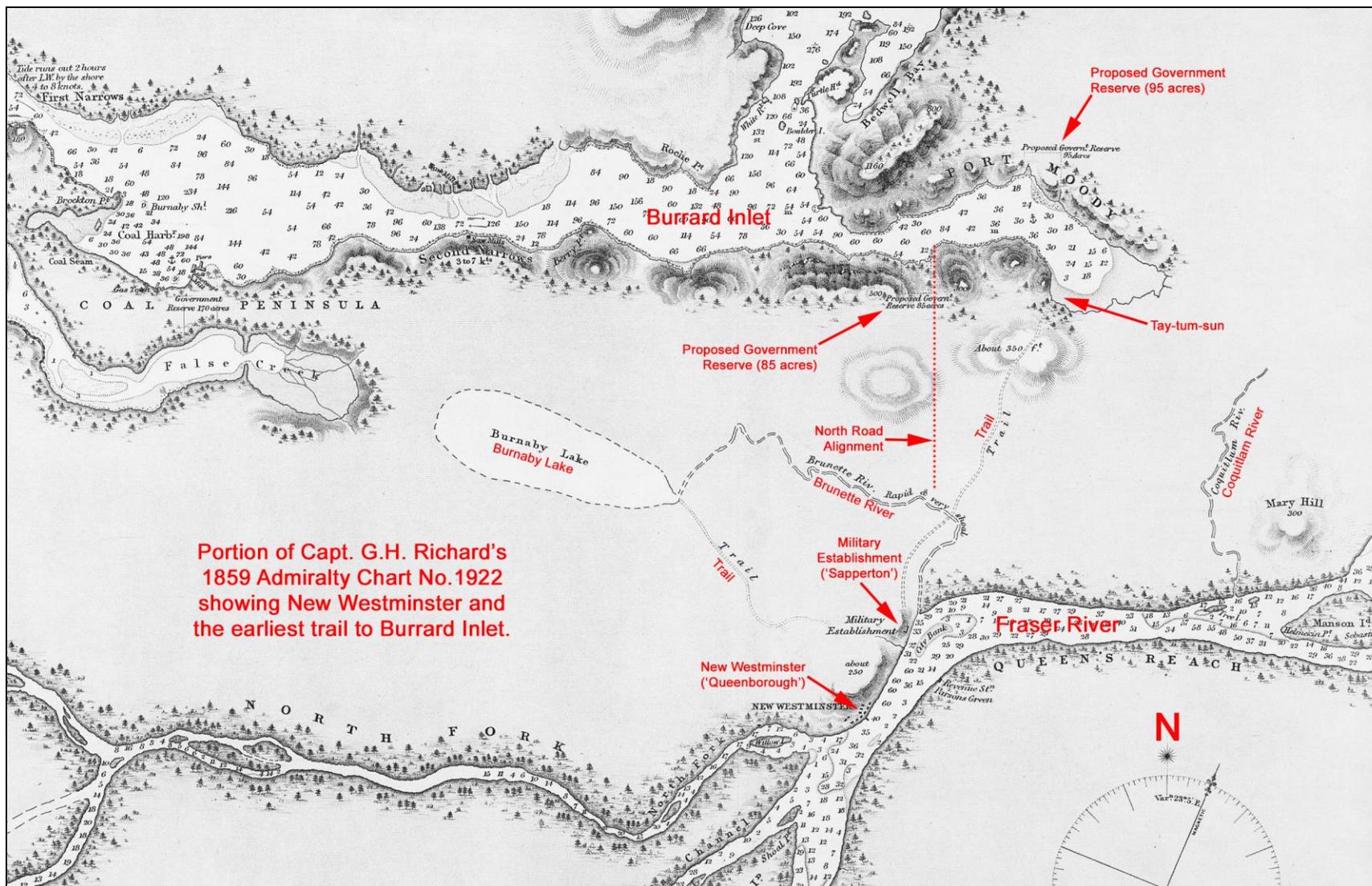
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About the Author:

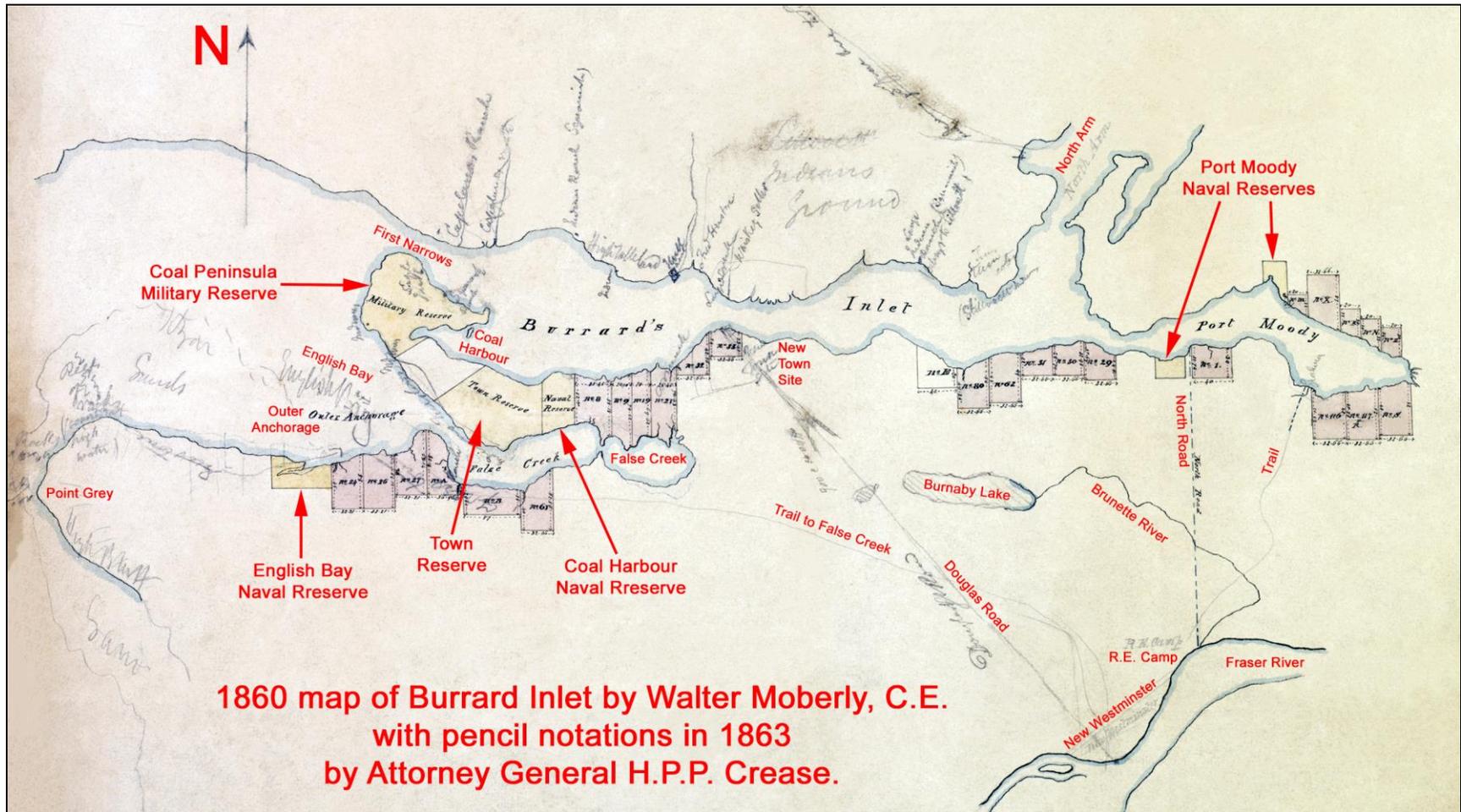
[Ralph Drew](#) is a local historian and self-publishing author who lives in the Tri-Cities community of Belcarra. In 2014, Ralph was awarded first prize in the [B.C. Historical Federation](#) annual book competition, receiving the [Lieutenant-Governor's Gold Medal](#) for historical writing for his self-published history, [Forest & Fjord: The History of Belcarra](#). In 2016, Ralph was awarded second prize in the [B.C. Historical Federation](#) annual book competition for his book titled: [Ferries & Fjord: The History of Indian Arm](#). In 2017, Ralph published his third book titled: [Townsite Tales: The History of Ioco](#). Ralph's fourth and most recent book was published in October 2018, titled: [Coquitlam Chronicles: Historical Crossroads on the Fraser River](#).



Source: City of Vancouver Archives (CVA Map LEG1801.088).

Map annotated by Ralph Drew.

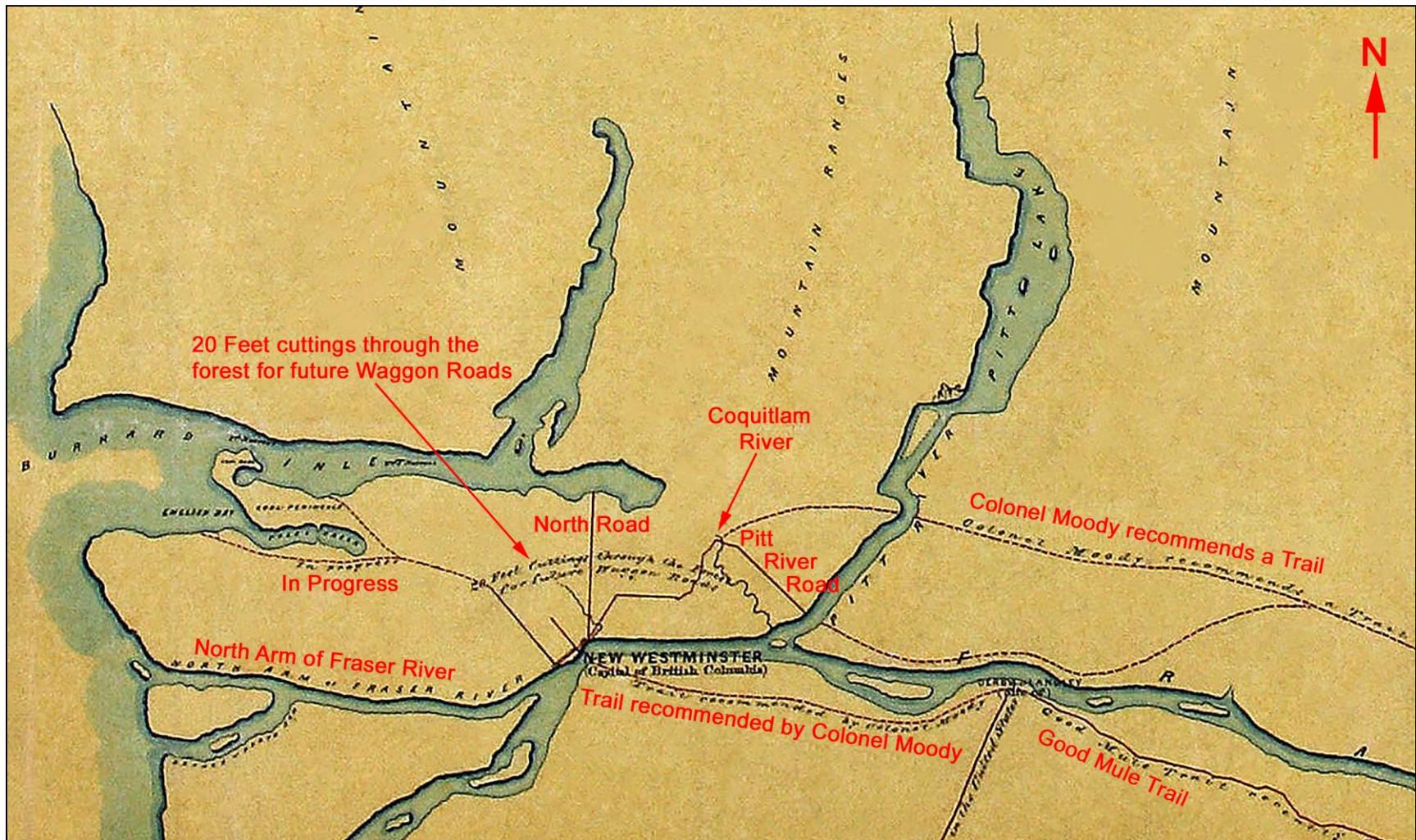
Portion of Capt. G.H. Richard's 1859 Admiralty Chart showing New Westminister and the first trail to Burrard Inlet. — note that 'North Road' between New Westminister and Burrard Inlet is not shown as it was not yet constructed.



Source: British Columbia Archives, Map Collection (BCA CM / A1701 SH1).

Map annotated by Ralph Drew.

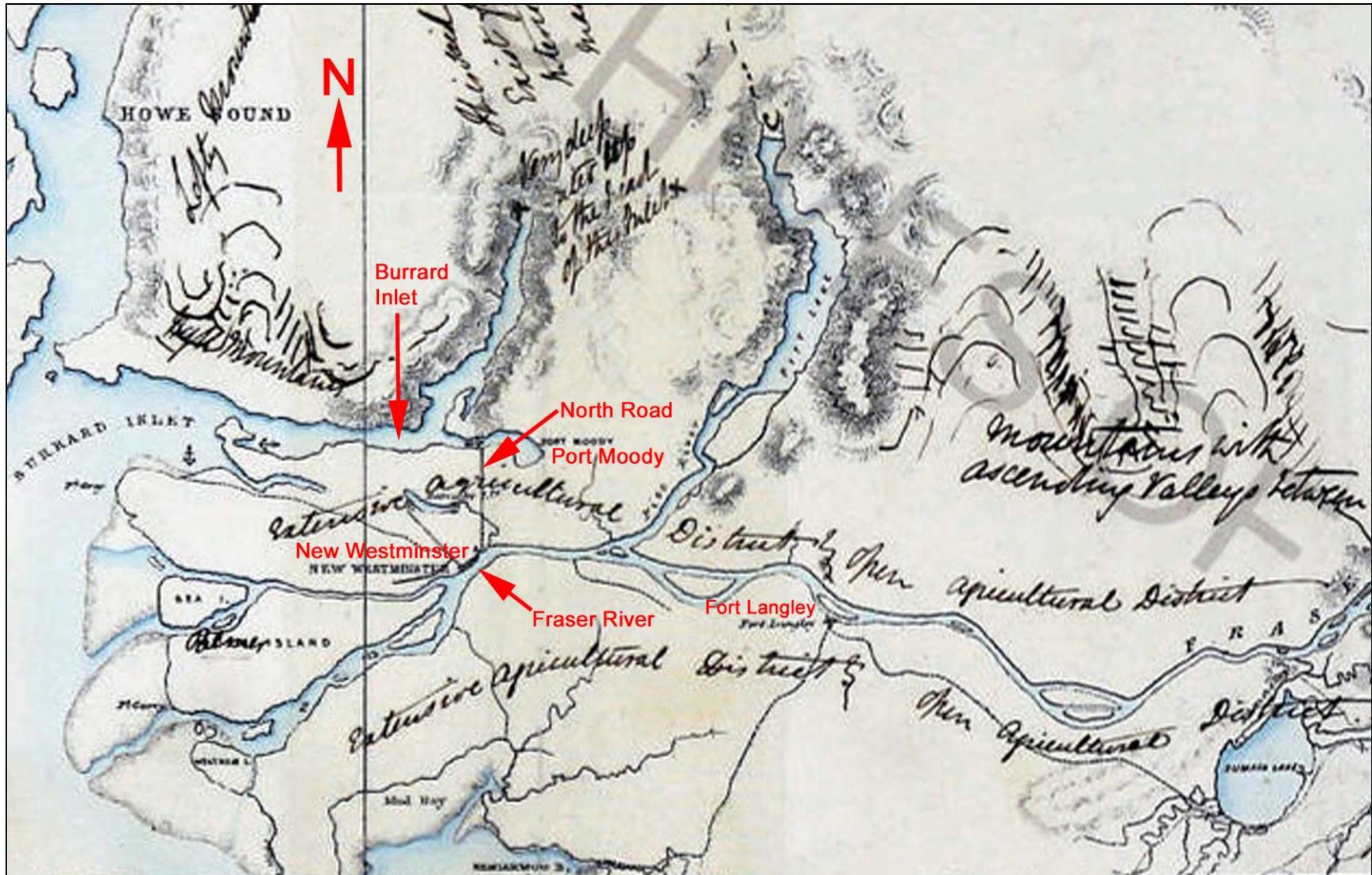
1860 map of the Reserves and Crown Land pre-emptions around Burrard Inlet by Walter Moberly, C.E., with pencil notations in 1863 by Attorney General H.P.P. Crease — note that ‘North Road’ is shown on this map.



Source: UK National Archives (Map No. MPG1-657); sketch map drawn by Colonel Richard Clement Moody, RE.

Map annotated by Ralph Drew.

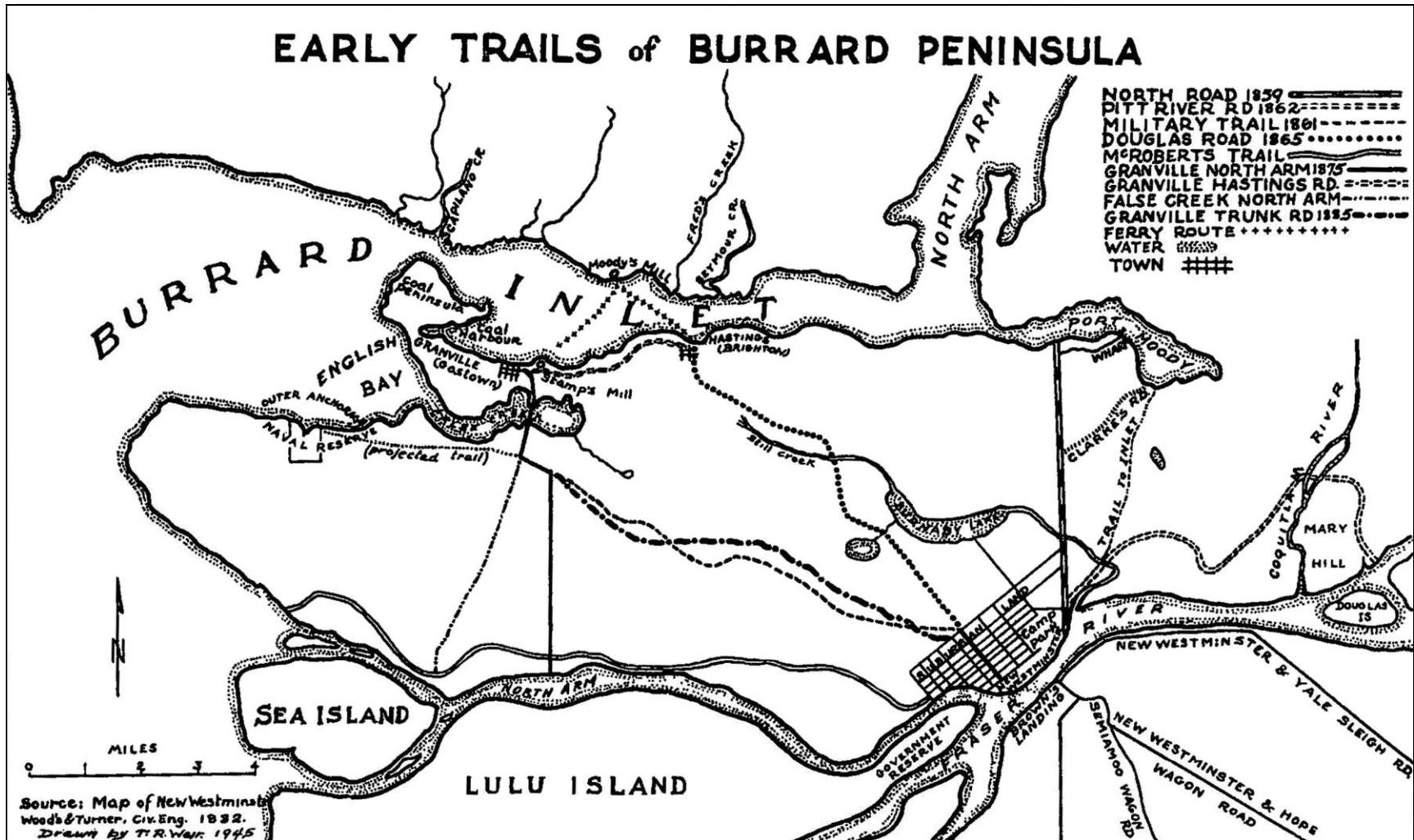
Colonel R.C. Moody's June 1860 sketch map showing 'New Westminster' with 'North Road' (then just a trail) and 'Pitt River Road' — although shown as a solid line in this map, 'Pitt River Road' was not completed until June 1862 — note Moody's comment: "20 Feet cuttings through the forest for future Waggon [sic.] Roads".



Source: University of Victoria, Colonial Dispatches, 1846–1871 (Penfold No.399, Map Identifier: CO 700 / BRITISH COLUMBIA 11/2).

Map annotated by Ralph Drew.

Portion of the 1861 map of B.C. “New Westminster to Lillooet” from a map prepared by the Royal Engineers — note that the ‘North Road’ between New Westminster and Burrard Inlet is clearly shown and aligned “North”.



Source: Thomas R. Weir, B.C. Historical Quarterly, 1945, No.4, pages 273-275.

'Early Trails of Burrard Peninsula' drawn from an 1882 map by Woods & Turner — note the first trail from 'Sapperton' to the head of 'Burrard Inlet' used by indigenous people