



The Private Journal of Captain G.H. Richards: The Vancouver Island Survey (1860-1862)

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Literary Nonfiction. History. Memoir. Native American Studies. Captain Richards's journal is an account of three survey seasons on Vancouver Island aboard two British Navy ships, the HMS Plumper and the HMS Hecate. Between 1860 and 1862 Richards and his dedicated crew surveyed and charted the entire coastline of Vancouver Island, creating baseline information for the nautical charts we use today. This monumental task, faithfully and often humorously recorded, also includes a lively description of California on the eve of the American Civil War as Richards sits in dry dock following the near wreck of the Hecate. Part of the private collection of a direct descendant of Captain Richards, the journal is a little known and untapped resource. Extensively annotated and supplemented with excerpts from the journals of Second Master John Gowlland, the journal provides a unique and personal view of the aboriginal, colonial, nautical and natural history of Vancouver Island. Richards is revealed as a man of immense energy and diplomacy; the descriptions of the First Nations he encounters are remarkably unbiased for the time and his keen observations are a portal into the social and political life of Vancouver Island during these formative years of the colony. The journal will appeal to historians, anthropologists, sailors, meteorologists and the general reading public alike.

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