

The Port Simpson Reserves, on the Lax Kw'alaams First Nation's Traditional Territory

O'Reilly allotted 10 reserves for the Lax Kw'alaams First Nation, which were called the Port Simpson reserves. The largest, Reserve no. 2, spanned approximately 70 400 acres along the sea coast between Port Simpson and the southern end of Digby Island. He allotted one fishery in this region in Reserve no. 5 at the mouth of the Clo-ya River.



Sidewheel steamship Princess Louise at Port Simpson, BC, August 1888. Photographed by Richard Maynard. Public Domain. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Princess_Louise_\(sidewheeler\)_at_Port_Simpson_1888.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Princess_Louise_(sidewheeler)_at_Port_Simpson_1888.jpg)

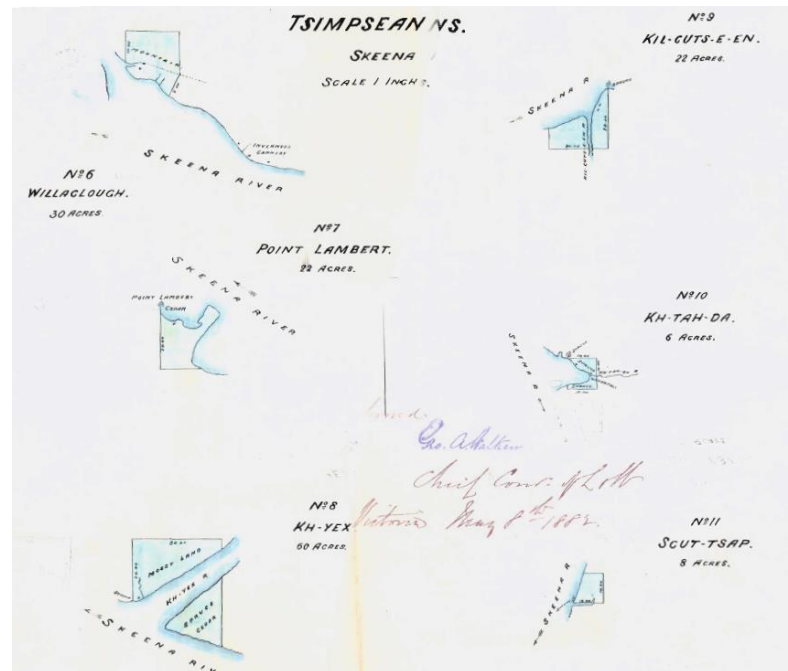
'Indian Houses in Port Simpson.' Photographed by Horatio Needham Topley. Published in Views of Alaska, 1894. <http://www.wayfarersbookshop.com/Wayfarers-December-2014.php>



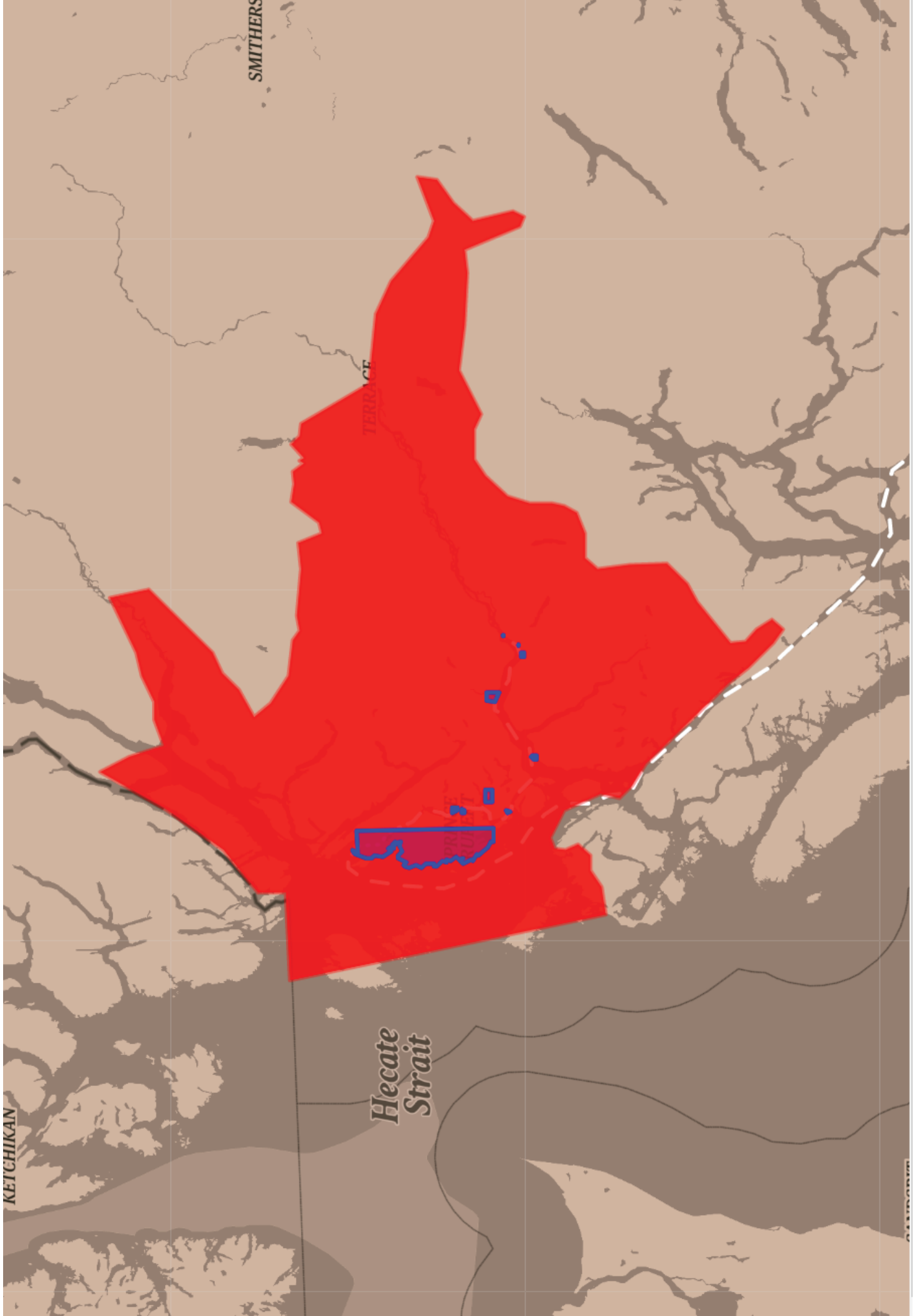
Indian Houses on Island

O'Reilly's travels to Port Simpson were tiring, but he worked hard to get his job done. He woke up before sunrise and went to sleep well after sunset each day so that he could get as much done as possible. Sometimes when he tried to meet with someone, he could not find them, and had to proceed without their input. Many times, the weather stopped him, with strong winds and tides not allowing him to travel. When disputes between settlers and Indigenous people arose, O'Reilly tried his best to be fair. One time he received complaints from settlers and the local missionary that a reserve was taking away land from a settler's homestead. After interviewing people on both sides of the issue, he decided that the fairest solution was to split the land evenly between the Indigenous people and the settler, rather than choosing sides.

Many residents of the Port Simpson reserves were unhappy with how O'Reilly had dealt with them. In particular, they were angry that O'Reilly had excluded a significant amount of farmland from the reserves. They said that O'Reilly was in a hurry and that they did not understand what was happening. Also, O'Reilly allotted the reserves while the chiefs were not present.



Sketches of the Port Simpson reserves in 1881, sketched by O'Reilly's surveyor, Ashworth Green. Copied from Provincial Binder 6, Federal and Provincial Collections of Minutes of Decision, Correspondence, and Sketches, collected by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Research Department and Resource Centre. <http://jirc.ubcic.bc.ca/node/11>



SMITHERS

TERRACE

Hecate Strait

KETCHIKAN

ASTORIA