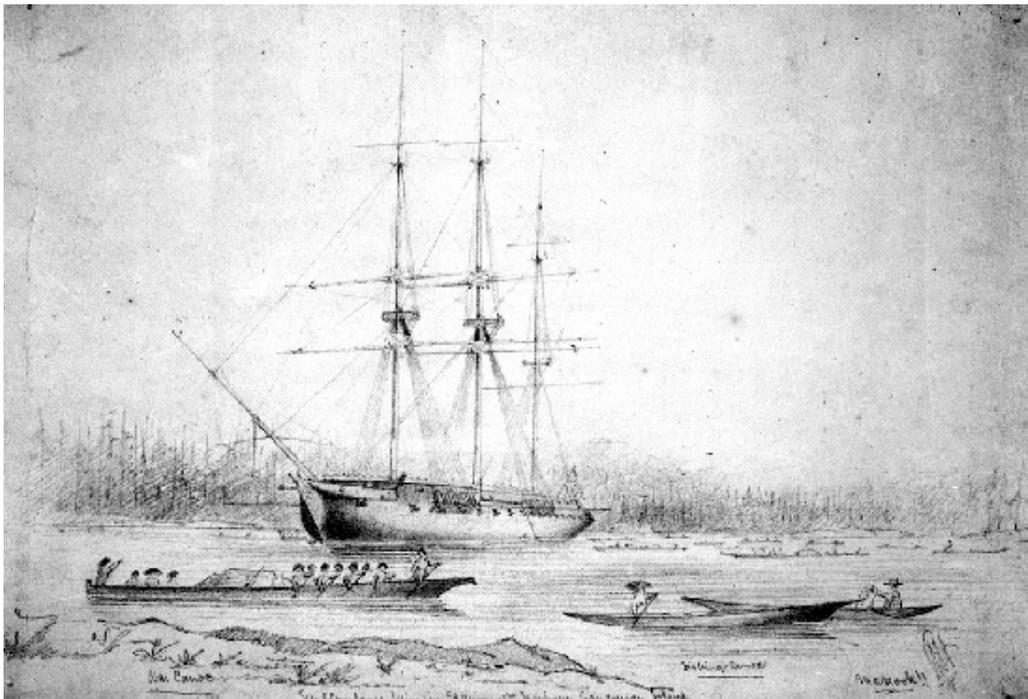


Lieutenant John Haverfield on board HMS Trincomalee 1855



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On 21st August 1855 HMS Trincomalee arrived in Esquimalt Bay, near to Fort Victoria. Victoria was far from the modern 21st century city of today, and thanks to Lieutenant Haverfield we do have some sketches of what the area was like from his visit to Fort Victoria whilst attached to HMS Constance in 1848.



HMS Constance at Fort Victoria (British Columbia Museums)

John Tunstall Haverfield was born in Great Torrington, 8 miles south west of Barnstaple in Devon the son of a commander in the Royal Navy. In 1848 he was attached to HMS Constance at Plymouth and travelled to Vancouver as a first lieutenant, second in command of the ship's attachment of Royal Marines. It was not unusual for an officer at that time to be very capable at drawing. For example, the Royal Engineers establishment at Chatham had courses in surveying, topographical drawing, and practical architecture.

The curriculum in one naval academy comprised of 'Navigation, Geometry, Arithmetic, English Writing, French, Drawing, Fencing and Dancing.'

In August 1848 several native Indian tribes speaking Salishan dialects, collectively known as Salish tribes, were attracted to Fort Victoria and had camped near the bastion and exchanged rifle shots. The Hudson Bay Company at that time had rule at Fort Victoria, and the commander-in-chief of the Pacific station would send the occasional frigate or sloop of war to the area for the purpose of finding spars or coal, or refreshing officers and men in the healthy climate so surprisingly similar to that of southern England.

The company traders Peter Skene Odgen and James Douglas, had previously reported the Indians aggression to the Navy and HMS Constance, a fifty gun frigate captained by Captain George Courtenay, was already in nearby Esquimalt Harbour from where Courtenay heard the shots and saw many Indians paddling towards the fort. In response he sent over four armed boats and ordered a seven gun salute from the boats, which was answered from the bastion. Then all hands, including some thirty marines, disembarked, promenaded around the fort's front yard, and returned in the boats to the frigate.

Next morning, the gunboat diplomacy in Victoria harbour continued when Courtenay landed once again, this time with 250 sailors and marines, with the ship's band playing at their head. For a whole day the naval brigade performed various drills in the fort's yard, while many of the Hudson Bay Company servants enjoyed a day off, watching the novel spectacle.



Bivouac (British Columbia Museums)

The squirmish seems to have passed without incident, although there is no written evidence. In the sketch and watercolour 'Bivouac' Haverfield portrays two peaceful Indian chiefs, one a Clallam called 'King George' the other the Songees chief Cheealthluc ('Freezy'), as well as 'Tatlea Uncle to King George', meeting or perhaps trading on friendly terms with two British officers. Nearby stands a field piece and caisson, a cooking fire, a freshly hung deer, and several carts - one carrying a cask about the size of a 45-gallon keg marked H.B.C. and no doubt containing spirits for the ensuing wilderness feast. In the background, a large group of sailors and marines lie reposed before their tents, resting feet and limbs from the day's rough march.

7 years later, in September 1855, Lieutenant Haverfield was back at Fort Victoria aboard our ship, HMS Trincomalee. He retired from the Royal Marines in 1868 and died 8 February 1885 at Westbourne Terrace, London.

In an auction listing of 28th September 2010, lot 292 was a pencil and watercolour picture by 'John Tunstall Haverfield (c. 1825-1885) of a staircase, apparently in the Royal Naval School dated 1871. The estimate was 120 to 180 pounds but it failed to sell.



Haverfield is also listed on the website of Devon County Council in their biographical dictionary of printmakers and is noted as being 'a capable amateur artist and a naval officer.'

Hugh Turner

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