During the Gold Rush of British Columbia, people from a variety of different countries and regions of Canada relocated to the west coast for the chance to strike it rich. Among those that lived in the province were Indigenous people, many of whom had resided in the area long before the Gold Rush began. Unfortunately, many Indigenous individuals and their contributions to the Gold Rush were erased from history, only to be remembered as a “frontier myth” (Jorgenson 109).

According to some sources and scholars, Indigenous people did not reside in Barkerville or the surrounding area. Many were thought to have been killed by disease before miners arrived in the area (Jorgenson 112). Contrary to this belief, it has been noted that Indigenous people did, in fact, live in the area, as Barkerville was within the region occupied by the Dakelh people before the Gold Rush. Not only were Indigenous people present in Barkerville during the Gold Rush, they also contributed to the economy through commercial and wage work (Jorgenson 112).

As mentioned earlier, Indigenous people were erased from the history of the region with ease. “Total destruction by disease,” (p118) provided a simple explanation as to why so few Indigenous people were recorded as living and working in the area. This explanation was easily accepted as written records, such as the 1866 census, do not depict where the small fraction of Indigenous people lived (Jorgenson 119).

While Indigenous people were active members of the community and contributed to the economy in Barkerville, any traces of their presence was erased or turned into myths. In comparison, individuals who had immigrated to British Columbia, be it from Europe, Africa, or Asia, were often more documented than those of Indigenous heritage.