

BOOK REVIEWS

*The Elusive Mr. Pond:
The Soldier, Fur Trader and
Explorer Who Opened the
Northwest*

Barry Gough

Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre,
2014. 256 pp. \$34.95 cloth.

GEORGE COLPITTS
University of Calgary

IN *The Elusive Mr. Pond: The Soldier, Fur Trader and Explorer Who Opened the Northwest*, Barry Gough masterfully grapples with the challenge of interpreting an important figure in the Canadian fur trade. Peter Pond has raised many obstacles to generations of biographers. Famous for having expanded the Canadian fur trade from Montreal into the Athabasca district in 1778, Pond unfortunately left few written documents, a fragment of a memoir, and unscientific maps of his discoveries. North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company journals make only brief mention of him. Pond's own marginal literacy and his cartographic unorthodoxy, in turn, left him overshadowed in his time by his more politically engaged peers and their

greater paper record. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the most notable example, wrote a definitive narrative and crafted maps of greater use to empire builders. Historians writing about Pond, then, have had to accept what contemporaries said of him, often disparagingly, or to contain Pond's story within the larger history of the North West Company and, with it, a Canadian transcontinental narrative.

Gough works within the extant record and draws on his talents both as a superb writer and as an established historian of empire to lay out what is and what is not known about Pond. He effectively describes Pond's birthplace and youth in Milford, Connecticut, and the likely formative influences of colonial Congregationalist values, entrepreneurship, geographic expansionism, and militia service. Pond's engagement in the fur trade after the Seven Years' War, following in the steps of his father who traded fur, provided him backwoods experience in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. His Plains Sioux trade further joined his strong personality with the individual autonomy offered by bourgeois trading. Pond entered the British Northwest trade from Montreal in 1775; in 1778, by then in partnership with the recently

formed North West Company, he used the Methye Portage to become the first trader in the Arctic drainage, an event of not only commercial but also imperial significance. Gough then returns with Pond to Montreal in 1784, examining how the trader's geographic discoveries reached Quebec and metropolitan audiences keenly interested in unlocking an overland connection to the Pacific coast. Still aloof from the close social and commercial networks of Montreal, even though still partnered with the Nor'Westers, Pond's next inland foray implicated him in a murder – the second in his career – making his place in Montreal increasingly untenable while his own discoveries and maps were being eclipsed by Alexander Mackenzie's. Pond retired from trading and, in 1790, returned to his former Connecticut birthplace to live out the rest of his life.

Gough does a good job of establishing Pond as “an outlier, an extraordinary person standing apart from others” (6); indeed, throughout his life, Pond's personal inclinations, fierce independence, and strong temperament seem to have made him, at best, “respected, but unloved” among his peers (119). His outlier status is key in understanding Pond's place both within and beyond Montreal society. Gough superbly situates this Connecticut Yankee's enterprising personality in the distant Athabasca district, while explaining how his discoveries, in turn, were critically appraised and sifted by British and American geographers and strategists who were in the business of building empires. Gough's biographical treatment of Pond, then, offers valuable insights into an individual who, through his “Athabasca odyssey,” changed fur trade and imperial history in the northwestern portions of the North American continent.

*The Laird of Fort William:
William McGillivray and the
North West Company*

Irene Termier Gordon

Victoria: Heritage House, 2013.
208 pp. \$19.95 paper.

*Forging a Fur Empire:
Expeditions in the Snake River
Country, 1809-1824*

John Phillip Reid

Norman, OK: Arthur H. Clarke
Company, 2011. 208 pp. \$29.95 paper.

*Jedediah Smith: No Ordinary
Mountain Man*

Barton H. Barbour

Norman, OK: University of
Oklahoma Press, 2011. 304 pp.
\$19.95 paper.

*Obstinate Hope: The Western
Expeditions of Nathaniel J. Wyeth*

Jim Hardee

Pinedale, WY: Sublette County
Historical Society and Museum of
the Mountain Man, 2013. 500 pp.
\$24.95 cloth.

ROBERT FOXCURRAN AND

JOHN JACKSON

Bellevue and Olympia

IN *The Laird of Fort William: William McGillivray and the North West Company*, Irene Gordon, a true daughter of the Saskatchewan prairies, provides

an informative outline of the western operations of the North West Company (NWC) as historical background to this long overdue biography of William McGillivray, a major figure in the NWC's long battle with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) for the "Indian" trade of Rupert's Land. A casual reader or interested scholar will not find a better description of the demands of the trade upon McGillivray and his brothers, Duncan and Simon, who acted as downstream agents defending the NWC's business in Rupert's Land and extending the fur trade to the largely unexplored and undeveloped Pacific Northwest. Hampered by what turned out to be a faulty business plan for shipping Columbia River and Snake River beaver skins to the China market, the Montreal agents of the NWC could not stem an inevitable downward profit spiral. Unfortunately, the author devotes a scant seven and a half pages to a major factor – the NWC's ill-fated China trade – in the company's decline and its 1821 amalgamation with the HBC. Modestly documented with a reasonable bibliography and a few samples of new writing, the "Laird of Fort William" has found his amanuensis in Gordon's lively and homely treatment.

The NWC's expansion to the Pacific slope is also the subject of John Phillip Reid's *Forging a Fur Empire: Expeditions in the Snake River Country, 1809–1824*. Reid has published other books dealing with this period of the early Pacific Northwest, including *Patterns of Vengeance: Crosscultural Homicide in the North American Fur Trade* (1999) and *Contested Empire: Peter Skene Ogden and the Snake River Expeditions* (2002). Reid's fascination with empires has now led to another study of the only two expeditions the NWC managed to put into the field before it realized that the price paid for beaver on the Chinese market was

insufficient to support its faulty business plan.

The first one hundred pages of Reid's book contain seventy-eight citations of Alexander Ross's *Fur Hunters of the Far West* as a source. This brands him as an admiring and uncritical admirer of Ross's data. Reid fails to grasp that Ross's descriptions of Donald McKenzie, or even of Ross's own adventures, are an untrustworthy source upon which to build an accurate version of the oft-told tale of the early Snake River fur trade. Reid, like other fur trade historians lacking collaborative data, takes Ross's opinions, written thirty years after the events described, as unchallenged fact. After Ross served as a clerk for the Astorians, the Nor'westers, and the newly amalgamated HBC, the London directorate sent a new overseas governor (George Simpson) west in 1824/25. The astute Simpson saw through Ross without actually meeting him. The self-inflated former clerk was then sent east to return to the relatively unchallenging role of schoolmaster. Ross tried to salvage his reputation through the publication, decades later, of two memoirs based on his experiences in the fur trade, but he was not the man he portrayed himself to be. Reid's uncritical reliance on a questionable source diminishes his book, which is published by a respectable and long-established press.

With these two books filling in some gaps in our understanding of the NWC and HBC eras and operations, we can turn to slightly later – and American – characters in western history. Readers may have to decide whether Barton H. Barbour in *Jedediah Smith: No Ordinary Mountain Man* has succeeded in producing a balanced new treatment of this far from neglected western hero. Smith was indeed an overlooked mountain man of the 1820s until a few documents were rediscovered in 1902, which, together with

some uncritically examined data, inflated him into the popular symbol of the iconic mountaineer. It is curious that Barbour starts this book with Smith's fatal encounter with a band of opportunistic young Comanche on the Santa Fe Trail in May 1831, before retracing his steps through a generally unfortunate fur trade career – a career that cost the lives of many of his followers. In the electronic world of hand-held gadgets and limited twitters, it is disappointing that the author of a book intended to refresh the facts chose to provide neither citations of documentary evidence nor even a bibliography of the published studies consulted. In our opinion, Smith's admirers, rather like the self-serving Alexander Ross, tend to rewrite the record on the sly.

Of a morning Jim Hardee sits on the porch of his excellent library at Tetonia, Idaho, with a cup of coffee, watching the sun break over the snowy peaks of the Teton Mountains. As an adopted and dedicated son of the Rocky Mountain beaver hunt and fur trade, Hardee has devoted himself to keeping that sometimes over-romanticized era alive while working to better document and clarify its literature. As comfortable in greasy buckskins as in an editor's sometimes uneasy chair, Jim Hardee's *Obstinate Hope: The Western Expeditions of Nathaniel J. Wyeth* is the first of a two-volume study of this New England business-oriented ice merchant's venture into the highly competitive skin games of the American west in the 1830s. Wyeth carried only a few beaver pelts back over the Rockies, but his attempt to reorganize the trade encouraged a passel of adventurers, missionaries, and immigrants to move west. These people, by their presence, influenced the outcome of the Anglo-American claim to the disputed Oregon Country. Before the HBC began withdrawing to

British Columbia, Wyeth had already (1834) established his experimental Fort Hall in the declining garden of the western beaver hunt. But the HBC's John McLoughlin refused to cut a cooperative deal with Wyeth, who sold Fort Hall to the HBC in 1837. Canadian readers who are firmly convinced that the sun rose and set on the semi-imperial ambitions of the HBC may be enlightened by this engrossing volume.

*The Bastard of Fort Stikine:
The Hudson's Bay Company
and the Murder of
John McLoughlin, Jr.*

Debra Komar

Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane
Editions, 2015. 288 pp. \$19.95 paper.

COREY LARSON
Simon Fraser University

DURING HIS round-the-world voyage in 1842, Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) governor George Simpson arrived at Fort Stikine and discovered that chief trader John McLoughlin Jr. had been killed. Two recent books discuss this event. In *Empires, Nations, and Families*, Anne Hyde tells us that the killer was Urbain Heroux but acknowledges that much about the incident remains shrouded in mystery. Rather than attempting to unravel this mystery, she focuses on how the murder affected the father and chief factor of Fort Vancouver, John McLoughlin Sr. Similarly, in *Emperor of the North*, James Raffan names the shooter and then segues to the ensuing dispute between Simpson and McLoughlin Sr. It seems we have consensus on who pulled the trigger, with little attention paid to why

or to who else may have been involved. In *Bastard of Fort Stikine*, Debra Komar recentres the narrative on the murder itself by using forensic science to address lingering questions. Her big point is that “biohistory” can move us beyond merely identifying remains to tackling complex historical problems by using the methods of contemporary homicide investigators (10). This effort not only yields new details but also prompts new and important questions.

Part 1 consists of seven chapters, each beginning with a brief text box detailing some aspect of the murder. Komar provides context to allow readers to put the case together as they progress. Using secondary histories and biographies along with primary documents, the early chapters build essential background on the McLoughlin family, George Simpson, the HBC, Fort Stikine’s employees, and the physical setting. Part 2 examines Simpson’s treatment of the incident and his conflict with McLoughlin Sr. Revisiting these issues from the perspective of a murder investigation reveals how certain facts were obscured. Simpson overlooked vital evidence in his hasty rush to judgment, and his vicious clash with the grieving father deflected attention from key elements of the case. Komar’s background in forensic anthropology and the depositions taken after the murder allow her to recreate the crime and the roles of those involved. The result helps clarify the events surrounding McLoughlin Jr.’s death while offering important insights into the ensuing feud. The book concludes with the impact of the murder on the legacy of the HBC, Simpson, and McLoughlin.

While *Bastard of Fort Stikine* is well written and engaging, the narrative occasionally loses the forest for the trees. Individual biographies and the Simpson-McLoughlin rivalry are interesting

and important components, but they sometimes eclipse the murder as the central focus. However, when Komar gets to the biohistorical investigation, she presents a solid and convincing argument. Chapter 11, appropriately entitled “Putting Flesh to Bone,” meticulously scrutinizes the testimonies of three independent investigations, triangulating eyewitness accounts for consistency, consensus, and alignment with physical evidence (167). Her methods compellingly reconstruct the events prior to the murder, the crime scene, and even a virtual autopsy, demonstrating along the way that forensic science holds significant potential in historical inquiry, especially concerning questions of spatial relations and anatomy. The upshot is the strongest argument yet for who murdered John McLoughlin Jr., but Komar also makes a persuasive case for an oft-overlooked conspirator and provides, for historians in particular, the motives behind the crime.

REFERENCES

- Hyde, Anne F. 2011. *Empires, Nations, and Families: A History of the North American West, 1800–1860*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Raffan, James. 2007. *Emperor of the North: Sir George Simpson and the Remarkable Story of the Hudson’s Bay Company*. Toronto: HarperCollins.



*Men in Eden: William
Drummond Stewart and
Same-Sex Desire in the Rocky
Mountain Fur Trade*
William Benemann

Lincoln: University of Nebraska
Press, 2012. 384 pp. \$29.95 paper.

*Nature's Noblemen:
Transatlantic Masculinities
and the Nineteenth-Century
American West*
Monica Rico

New Haven: Yale University Press,
2013. 305 pp. \$45.00 cloth.

ELIZABETH VIBERT
University of Victoria

READING THESE two books in tandem is a reminder, if one were needed, that all is relational. Considered in isolation, each work offers illuminating insights into imperial hunting culture in the American West. Read in light of one another, the authors' political and analytic investments come into sharp relief. William Benemann's lively work is a tale of same-sex desire in a libertine wild west. Monica Rico's engaging volume places in transnational context the efforts of elite big-game hunters to secure or rejuvenate their masculine identities (while giving short shrift to colonial domains to the north, about which more shortly). Benemann's prism is sexuality, while Rico's is elite white male anxieties seeking resolution in the West. Benemann is a little too dogged in pursuit of same-sex love: Stewart, we're told, had scant interest in "anything he could not shoot or embrace" (69). Rico

is a tad instrumentalist in her analysis of how elite identities were fashioned on the western frontier. The West might have served as "therapeutic space" (84) for stressed-out wealthy men, but surely the therapy was not always as anticipated.

Benemann's *Men in Eden* is the first biography in many years of William Drummond Stewart, a Scottish big-game hunter and adventurer best known for taking painter Alfred J. Miller to the Rocky Mountains in the late 1830s. Exhaustive archival research grounds Benemann's central argument, which is that Stewart was gay and involved in a lasting sexual relationship with Métis hunter Antoine Clement. I find his reading of and around the documentary evidence on Stewart (including Stewart's problematic novels) convincing. The study moves onto thinner ice, though, when Benemann tries to generalize more broadly. His theory that the Rocky Mountain fur trade held special attraction for men seeking licence for heterodox sexualities seems a stretch, not least in light of extensive scholarship on fur trade intimacies and marriage practices. In the regions where Drummond travelled, many traders would have had wives and partners of Indigenous, African, or Mexican heritage. Some of the 16 or 17 percent (we get both figures) who performed as "lifelong bachelors" (7, 74), who Benemann implies may have been gay, would have been men who chose to keep their interracial intimacies under wraps. No doubt a proportion were keeping same-sex intimacies quiet, but there is not enough evidence here to convince the reader that the Rocky Mountain fur trade was a hotbed. Nonetheless, Benemann's book is an important reminder that there was more opportunity for same-sex erotic love in the past than many present-day commentators are willing to accept.

Rico's *Nature's Noblemen* guides readers through five fascinating case studies of imperial and metropolitan players in the nineteenth-century West. Many are well known – Buffalo Bill Cody, Theodore Roosevelt (the comparison with his less illustrious brother is instructive), and Isabella Bird, the sole woman in the field – and others new to most readers. I found Rico's analysis of William Drummond Stewart intriguing on first read, although her account of the "friendship" (25) between Clement and Stewart is undone by Benemann's revelations. Rico's graceful, lucid prose is turned to excellent effect in cultural historical analyses of her subjects' preoccupations along axes of gender, race, and class. Training in British history allows her to delve usefully into the context of elite culture there and on the east coast of the United States and to put her finger on the class and racial anxieties of men who found their privilege under increasing threat at home. All being relational, though, I couldn't help thinking how Rico's analysis might be sharpened by bringing subaltern masculinities – and femininities – into the frame. The most satisfying chapter, in my view, is the one that looks at the Earl of Dunraven alongside Isabella Bird, both of whom sought "western solutions" (85) for the maladies and marginalization they experienced at home.

Reading these works brought to mind my first journal article, over which a US reviewer took me to task for having overlooked a particular American title relevant to my work. These two books remind us – again, if we needed reminding – that American authors do not labour under the reverse expectation. No one drew the authors' attention to the wide field of Canadian scholarship on the fur trade, imperial gender fashioning, or manly sport. Rico's study is usefully transnational in a number of ways – we learn about networks of privileged

hunting men that traversed the Atlantic and, in Roosevelt's case, drew in India and Africa as well – but the eminently relevant Canadian northwest is hardly to be found. Rico briefly mentions the work of Tina Loo (103) but would have benefited, for instance, from engagement with Adele Perry's work (influential well beyond Canada) on the ways imperial identities might be profoundly unsettled, and ultimately reworked, in challenging colonial settings. There seems a little too much unfettered self-discovery, at times a too tidy "resolving" of tensions in the texts of Stewart, Dunraven, Bird, and Roosevelt. Benemann's study, meanwhile, would be enriched by exposure to more than two decades of fur trade scholarship attentive to gender and sexuality. His discussion of fur trader liaisons with Indigenous women (e.g., 7-8, 73-74) cries out for a reading of Sylvia Van Kirk and Jennifer Brown (and, more recently, Ann Laura Stoler).

Beyond Canadian scholarship, both books would benefit from engagement with the rich ethnohistorical literature about the American West. Rico's study, albeit focused on elite self-fashioning, tends to portray western landscapes as empty. Indigenous peoples are mentioned but usually as undifferentiated "Indians" and mostly for the way they are "elided" in her subjects' narratives. Limited attention is paid to the way Indigenous performances of masculinity may have influenced elite men seeking to devise their own frontier variant. Similarly, studies of racialization of the peoples of the West might help to nuance Benemann's representation of Clement as a man with "a wild, mischievous streak, an irreverence in the face of authority, and a pernicious addiction to alcohol" (89). Not to say he didn't have those qualities, but the language is loaded in ways that bear unpacking. These books make important contributions to the

historiography of the American West as site for sexual discovery and as a node in transnational webs of manly enterprise. Both would be enriched by casting an eye northward.

*Masculindians: Conversations
about Indigenous Manhood*

Sam McKegney, editor

Winnipeg: University of Manitoba
Press, 2014. 248 pp. \$29.95 paper.

ELDON YELLOWHORN

Simon Fraser University

JUDGING A BOOK by the cover, we are told, is never a good idea. In this case the artwork by Dana Claxton implies an ironic, wind-in-his-hair-style cruise down a testosterone highway. Twenty-three authors, including eight women, offer their words and perspectives about manifestations of the Y-chromosome and the gender that dares to speak its name. Within these pages, Sam McKegney distills the acumen of the scholars, journalists, playwrights, authors, poets, mothers, fathers, and sons who sat with him and identified, and commiserated on, the paradigms of maleness and manliness. He shoehorns twenty-one dialogues into three subthemes of wisdom, knowledge, and imagination, each of which has seven chapters devoted to it.

This is not a treatise weighed down by extensive research. The thirty-five works cited are mostly those of McKegney's colleagues plus a few classics in the genre of Native studies. The bibliography is more a suggested reading list. There is no overarching narrative to upset, so reading the book sequentially is not necessary, and randomly selecting chapters does not disturb the cadence

of interpretation. McKegney's intention in editing the transcripts is to preserve the casual wisdom that emerges spontaneously from each conversation. These conversations are the product of semi-structured interviews, a method instantly recognizable to social scientists, and they concern the themes of manhood and meaning. Thus, we veer through an array of male relationships, including the obligatory bromance, the elder's voice, and many a vented spleen. From this cacophony we learn that Indigenous men, whether two-spirited or just plain spirited, live the spectrum of masculinity.

I recommend reading first the chapters authored by women because they illuminate some worrisome insights. Modern times have eroded the value of the brotherhood because contemporary male lifestyles have morphed beyond the vocations of hunting, warring, and politicking that once filled male lives. Exacerbating this theme of "warrior-made-redundant" is the cognitive dissonance rising from a warpath overgrown due to lack of footfalls. Janice Hill Kanonhsyonna recognizes what the absence of the male implies in practical terms. As the mother of boys, she sees a sample of a generation of boys who will be raised by women who cannot teach them how to be men. Indeed, the absence of men from families and communities, and especially from the lives of sons and daughters, is a trope visited here by Lee Maracle, Kim Anderson, Louise Bernice Halfe, Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, and Joanne Arnott. Their lamentable observations bring to mind the old adage that Soviet women told each other back in heyday of the USSR: "A man is like a suitcase without a handle. It is of no use to anyone – but what a shame to leave it behind." Finding cause for this male malaise in the culpability of colonialism, residential schools, and traumatic stress may ultimately satisfy the desire for

explanation, but finding the cure will take many more conversations.

*Recollecting: Lives of Aboriginal
Women of the Canadian
Northwest and Borderlands*

Sarah Carter and
Patricia McCormack, editors

Edmonton: Athabasca University
Press, 2011. 432 pp. \$29.95 paper.

SUSAN NEYLAN
Wilfrid Laurier University

THIS MULTIPLE award-winning collection takes a regional approach to the consideration of Aboriginal women. Its chapters contribute to several intersecting historiographies: women's and gender histories, Aboriginal women's history, and biography. Beyond these, the chapters are unified through their methodologies, which apply the best practices of feminist scholarship to understand, among other things, the female side of the "contact zones" of Indigenous-settler relationships.

Two works directly address BC history through women of mixed heritage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Maureen Atkinson studies North Coast cultural mediator Odille Quintal Morison. Atkinson calls her a bicultural woman (Tsimshian/French Canadian) who drew upon her Tsimshian upbringing, marriage to an Englishman, and life-long commitment to the Anglican Church "to move between cultures, with varying degrees of fluidity and grace" (135). Atkinson focuses on two formative periods in Morison's life. The first, through fragmentary source material, contemplates her youth as she entered the orbit of missionary William Duncan at Metlakatla. The second

period explores Morison's adulthood, when she most demonstratively came into her own as a cultural intermediary during a time of tremendous political, social, and economic upheaval. Highly proficient in languages, Morison was regularly called upon to translate and interpret for her family, community, church officials (she identified her most significant achievement as translating religious texts into Sm'álgayax [Coast Tsimshian]), government representatives, visiting dignitaries, and scholars. She also acted as ethnographic consultant and collector for anthropologist Franz Boas. By emphasizing two moments in one woman's life, Atkinson shows readers how hybridity, while a fluid identity, was also affected deeply by the choices and skills of the individual.

Jean Barman explores the extraordinary Sophie Morigeau, another woman of mixed heritage whose hybridity defies simplistic categorization. Barman gives readers a preview of a socio-economic world that she fleshes out in her recent *French Canadians, Furs, and Indigenous Women in the Making of the Pacific Northwest* (UBC Press, 2014), set in the borderlands of southeastern British Columbia and Washington, Idaho, and Montana. As a freight-operator, free trader, entrepreneur, and rancher, "few women whose life stories have survived," writes Barman, "succeeded with such aplomb, living as Sophie did, between countries, races, and among men" (176). Barman evaluates Morigeau's identity formation through familial fluidity, occupational flexibility, and racial stereotyping – structures that infused fur trade families such as hers. Yet Morigeau was in every sense a strong-willed, free woman whose colourful personality and determination set the course of her own history. Born into the itinerant world of free traders in the Kootenay region and raised on a farm

near a Roman Catholic mission and the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Colville at the Columbia River's Kettle Falls some four hundred kilometres to the south, Morigeau rejected the dominant society's gender expectations for marriage and motherhood and, instead, charted a course of self-sufficiency. A shrewd trader and savvy businesswoman, she supplied miners and railway crews, homesteaded (something rare for a woman at this time), and owned her own trading post. Well into old age, and on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel, she utilized familial networks (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) to facilitate favourable economic and social opportunities.

More than emphasizing an active role for Aboriginal women in history, Atkinson, Barman, and their fellow contributors offer highly readable biographies showcasing hybridity, resiliency, contradictory historical experiences, and, above all, the diversity of Aboriginal women's identities.

The Gold Will Speak for Itself:

Peter Leech and Leechtown

Patrick Perry Lydon

Victoria: Lydon Shore Publishing,
2013. 110 pp. \$22.00 paper.

The History of Leechtown Part I: The VIEE and the Discovery of Gold on the Sooke and Leech Rivers

Bart van den Berk, editor

Sooke: Van Den Berk Books, 2014.
279 pp. \$22.00 paper.

Those Island People

Lynne Bowen

Nanaimo: Nanaimo and District
Museum Society and Rocky Point
Books, 2013. 118 pp. \$17.95 paper.

*Vancouver Island Scoundrels,
Eccentrics and Originals: Tales
from the Library Vault*

Stephen Ruttan

Victoria: Greater Victoria Public
Library and TouchWood Editions,
2014. 184 pp. \$19.95 paper.

Port Alberni:

More Than Just a Mill Town

Jan Peterson

Victoria: Heritage House, 2014. 280
pp. \$19.95 paper.

*Tofino and Clayoquot Sound:
A History*

Margaret Horsfield and Ian
Kennedy

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing,
2014. 640 pp. \$36.95 paper.

PATRICK A. DUNAE

Vancouver Island University

VANCOUVER ISLAND has a distinctive personality among the regions of British Columbia, one that has been shaped in complex ways by geography and history. The books reviewed here vary in their candlepower, but all of them illuminate people, places, and events that have contributed

to Vancouver Island's multifaceted character.

Two of the books deal with Leechtown, the site of a gold rush in 1864. Located near Sooke, not far from Victoria, it was named for Peter Leech, deputy leader of the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition (VIEE). The VIEE was organized by Victoria business interests to identify and promote the mineral resources of the region. The Dublin-born Leech had earlier served as a corporal in the British Columbia detachment of the Royal Engineers. The VIEE leader, Robert Brown, had come to Vancouver Island under the auspices of the Edinburgh Natural History Society to collect botanical specimens. The twelve-man expedition included the English artist, Frederick Whympier, and John Foley, an American miner. It was Foley who found gold on a tributary of the Sooke River. He generously named the location for Leech, whom history has credited with the discovery. Posterity has likewise been good to Brown, who reported the find and included a sample of nuggets in a dispatch to the governor of Vancouver Island, Arthur Kennedy. "The whole value of the diggings cannot be easily underestimated," Brown wrote. "The gold will speak for itself" (14).

Patrick Lydon's book takes its title from that dispatch. The author, who was born in Ireland and trained as a doctor in Dublin, practised medicine in Victoria for many years. He is active in several local history organizations, including Victoria's Old Cemeteries Society. In this attractive, self-published book, he extols Leech's Dublin roots, valorizes his work with the VIEE, and celebrates his marriage to Mary MacDonald, who came to Victoria on the "bride ship" *Tynemouth*. The book contains some archival images, reprints of recent articles about the Leech family, and a potpourri of other items, including

a timetable from the late 1920s, when Leechtown was a stop on the Victoria-Youkou branch line of the Canadian National Railways. In addition, there are colour photographs from the 2012 unveiling of new gravestones for Peter and Mary Leech in Victoria's Ross Bay Cemetery. This publication, the author says, "is more of a scrapbook than a book" (5). It was compiled in anticipation of the 150th anniversary of the Leechtown gold rush, which was celebrated at Sooke in July 2014.

Bart van den Berk succeeds in establishing the central place of John Foley in the Leechtown saga. His commendable self-published book is based on primary sources, notably the Robert Brown Papers in the British Columbia Archives. The author has examined letters from Whympier and other VIEE members, as well as contemporary newspaper reports about the Leechtown "El Dorado." He has consulted many secondary sources and scholarly works to place events and participants in their historical context. The book comes with endnotes (which provide additional information on the text) and a substantial bibliography. In 2015, *The History of Leechtown Part I* was deservedly nominated for the BC Historical Federation's prize, the Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing (it received Honourable Mention). We look forward to Part II.

Both authors are active historians who bring first-hand knowledge to their research. Lydon is a director of the Vancouver Island Placer Miners' Association. He has a placer claim on a creek near the Leech River. Bart van den Berk, who emigrated from the Netherlands a few years ago with a degree in engineering, is also a member of the association. In the preface of his book, he evocatively describes the allure of

panning for gold and the contemplation of history:

Some go fishing, some like hunting, I love sitting in the middle of nowhere, quietly surrounded by nature on a river or creek, playing with water, rocks, gravel and sand, hoping to find that little shiny nugget which makes the day even more special. And while I'm sitting there panning, armed with a modern survival kit, GPS, bear spray and satellite emergency beacon, I always try to imagine how it must have been in the early days. No modern equipment, no beaten trails, logging roads or bridges, no detailed maps.

"This fascination and respect for those early pioneers," van den Berk writes, "brought me to my interest in Leechtown's history" (xii-xiii).

Lynne Bowen's book, *Those Island People*, was inspired by a different situation. Visiting a remote village in the Italian Alps, she and her husband were surprised to see familiar surnames on the village cenotaph. "We recognized many of the names because their relatives had emigrated [from Italy] to Nanaimo, our home town" (vii). She was struck by the legacy of immigration. "This book is about those [Vancouver] Island people: those who came from Europe, Asia, Africa or the Americas, those who caused trouble and those who became hometown legends, those who died tragically, and those who had the courage to come from very far away and whose descendants live here still" (ix). She offers sketches of about thirty Islanders – single men, women, and married couples. Some of them were introduced in Bowen's earlier books about Vancouver Island coal miners and Lake Cowichan residents. But other subjects – such as the affable Kim Lee Jung, who operated the Green Lantern restaurant

in Chemainus for many years – have not been profiled before. It is a pleasure to meet them. Many of the people presented here were involved in labour unions, socialist political parties, and kindred organizations; they contributed to a leftist, progressive character that remains evident in some parts of Vancouver Island today. The vignettes in *Those Island People* are finely crafted, as we might expect from this award-winning author who, for many years, taught creative non-fiction at the University of British Columbia.

Bowen's book is published in partnership with the Nanaimo and District Museum Society, which supports one of the best regional museums in the province. Stephen Ruttan's book, *Vancouver Island Scoundrels, Eccentrics and Originals*, is co-published by the Greater Victoria Public Library (GVPL). The main branch of the GVPL in downtown Victoria houses one of the best local history collections on the Island. Ruttan, the GVPL's local history librarian, was born and raised in Victoria; he studied history and library science at UBC. As its subtitle – *Tales from the Library Vault* – suggests, this book was intended to publicize the GVPL's resources. Some of these tales first appeared in the *Victoria Times Colonist* and were recounted for listeners of CBC Radio's *On the Island*. In this edition, which consists of twenty brief chapters, Ruttan describes colourful figures like Amor de Cosmos, the irascible Victoria newspaper editor and politician; events such as the so-called Pig War on nearby San Juan Island; and phenomena – notably the Cadborosaurus sea monster (a.k.a. "Caddy") and the April Ghost of Doris Glavin (d. 1936) that haunts the Victoria Golf Club's fifth hole fairway. While all of the tales are well told, it's not always evident how some of the subjects should be remembered. Brother XII, who founded a cult colony near Cedar in the late 1920s, was undoubtedly

a scoundrel. Should we say the same of Joseph Trutch, the colonial official who refused to acknowledge the legitimate claims of Native people to lands and resources? What about Stella Carroll, a flamboyant brothel-keeper in Victoria, or the celebrated architect Francis Rattenbury? Were they “eccentrics” or “originals”? Readers can form their own opinions by following up on the sources for further reading that are included at the end of this entertaining collection of tales.

Jan Peterson has written a love letter to Port Alberni. The prolific Nanaimo-based historian is the author of several earlier works on this central Vancouver Island community, but *Port Alberni: More Than Just a Mill Town* is the most personal. It describes “Port” in the early 1970s, when the author moved there with her husband, who had been hired as plant engineer at the MacMillan Bloedel plywood mill. The community had recently (1967) been enlarged with the voluntary amalgamation of the twin cities of Alberni (now called North Port by locals) and Port Alberni (South Port). The 1970s was a boom time for the coastal forest industry as production levels, corporate profits, and workers’ wages rose steadily each year. The boom was evident in the construction of new houses, apartment buildings, and a large shopping mall. For those who supported the New Democratic Party – as most voters in the Alberni Valley did – it was an exhilarating time. The city’s MLA, Bob Skelly, first elected in 1972, would later become leader of the party. Culturally, it was a golden age, with the opening of the Echo Community Centre, creation of the Rollin Art Centre, and expansion of the Alberni Valley Museum and Archives. Throughout this period, Peterson was a reporter for the *Alberni Valley Times* and member of the city’s Parks and Recreation Commission: “I felt like I

had a front seat to the developing history of the town” (10). She also saw how the city struggled in the 1980s as a result of labour disputes, a severe economic recession, and the near collapse of the forest industry; and how it adjusted to new conditions in the 1990s, with the rise of the environmental movement and the assertion of Aboriginal land claims. Peterson describes these recent developments objectively and sensitively. *Port Alberni* does not have an index, but it does have endnotes and a useful bibliography. The cover image, a photo by Martin Pederson, is striking. Instead of a conventional view looking down towards the harbour and Alberni Inlet, the cover photo looks up Argyle Street towards Mount Arrowsmith. Peterson has provided a good, modern history of a vibrant community; the publisher, Heritage House, has added another popular title to its growing catalogue of Vancouver Island chronicles.

Recent social, political, and economic developments on the west coast of Vancouver Island are examined closely by another Nanaimo-based historian, Margaret Horsfield, and Ian Kennedy, who lives in Comox. Their new book, *Tofino and Clayoquot Sound: A History*, comes from Harbour Publishing, arguably the leading regional book publisher in the province. This is an outstanding publication in all respects. The aesthetics and design elements of the book are impressive. The authors’ scholarship and critical analysis of historical and contemporary events are profound. The authority of their work is conveyed assuredly but lightly in an engaging prose style. Although the main focus is Tofino and environs, the narrative ranges over the entire west coast of the Island. It comprises over twenty chapters and runs to nearly six hundred pages. It opens with a description of geological events that

formed the land millions of years ago and seismological threats that are pervasive today. Readers are conducted on a fascinating journey that travels across mountains and seas, along beaches and through forests, over a time span of more than three centuries. The book includes informative, clearly presented maps, plus historical photographs and drawings. The timeline is an excellent feature. There are no footnotes, but the selective bibliography is extensive. As well as printed books, monographs, and periodicals, the authors include references to archival material. (Archival records from Ottawa and Oregon help to inform their penetrating analysis of missionary activities and Indian residential schools at Ahousat and Alberni.) The authors indicate that a “complete bibliography and notes on sources are available on the Harbour Publishing website” (582). And so it is. The online bibliography, which includes private documents, scholarly dissertations, and documentary films, is definitive. This magisterial book concludes on an optimistic note, with observations on a growing spirit of reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents and, among the latter, a growing respect for the environment. The authors sound a chord of resilience as well as anticipation: “Residents of Tofino and Clayoquot Sound are keenly aware that challenges and surprises lie ahead. They expect nothing less. After all, this is an area where people live with the knowledge that a tsunami could easily engulf them ... Meanwhile, they ready themselves to catch the next wave of change, not knowing where it will take them. Here on the west coast, another wave is always about to break” (567).

Each of the books reviewed here highlights the diversity of Vancouver Island. This diversity is evident in Aboriginal cultures and settler

communities, and in various economic activities that, over the years, have been conducted on land and sea. As these writers indicate, the region’s multifaceted character has also been shaped by the ambitions and achievements, foibles and follies of people – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – who resided, settled, and sojourned there. The social history of Vancouver Island sparkles in these works. To borrow a phrase from the intrepid Mr. Brown, readers who delve into these books will discover rich diggings and gold that will speak for itself.

*New Perspectives on the Gold
Rush*

Kathryn Bridge, editor

Victoria: Royal British Columbia
Museum, 2015. 192 pp. \$24.95 paper.

MICA JORGENSEN
McMaster University

UNDER EDITOR Kathryn Bridge, *New Perspectives on the Gold Rush* teams up academic historians, archaeologists, and museum professionals in an effort to add previously marginalized voices to traditional histories of British Columbia’s gold rush. Despite good intentions and a few fine chapters, the collection’s inability to fully do away with the old perspectives and associated celebratory clichés of progress limits its impact.

New Perspectives was released to coincide with the Royal British Columbia Museum’s (RBCM) *Gold Rush! El Dorado in BC* exhibition. Bridge asked authors to “pick a topic that interest[ed] them,” and the resulting work includes examinations of painters and photographers, immigrating Chinese, women, First Nations, old timers,

government employees, and politicians (23-24). The chapters focus on British Columbia and proceed in roughly chronological order, following Bridge's introduction, to immigration, mining, conflict with Indigenous peoples, infrastructure development, and historic preservation. There are two anomalies in this basic structure. The first chapter, by Colombian scholars María Alicia Uribe Villegas, Juan Pablo Quintero Guzmán, and Hector García Botero, examines pre-Hispanic metalworking in Colombia, reflecting the companion exhibition *Allure of Gold* on loan at the RBCM from Bogotá's Museo del Oro. This connection is not explained in the text and precludes any discussion of British Columbia's own prehistory. The second anomaly comes in Lorne Foster Hammond's chapter, "The Gold Rush and Confederation," which breaks the book's chronology by coming after Barkerville CEO Judy Campbell's account of creating Barkerville Historic Park in the 1970s.

The chapters that stand out include Lily Chow's "Chinese Footprints in the Fraser Gold Rush," which features reproduced census records and other primary documents that allow the reader to get a valuable glimpse of the hard data used to piece together marginalized pasts. Also of note is Tzu-I Chung's "Trans-Pacific Gold Mountain Trade," which locates the gold rush's Chinese participants within the context of a burgeoning transnational Pacific exchange. The piece expertly weaves RBCM artefacts with a gold rush historical narrative. Finally, Daniel Marshall's "Conflict in the New El Dorado" links the Fraser River War to its American precedents and acknowledges informational exchange between Nlaka'pamux and Indigenous contacts south of the border (129). Marshall's chapter is an impressive amalgamation of scattered sources and a welcome addition to the literature on

First Nations participation in British Columbia's gold rush.

Unfortunately, old perspectives such as those of white, male prospectors take centre stage at crucial moments in the book. For example, Bridge opens her introduction with a discussion of white miners' experiences on British Columbia's gold frontier and a poem by an American miner longing for home – hardly a "new perspective" on the gold rush (18-19). In Lily Chow's chapter, an image of a white man with a rocker illustrates a section on Chinese gold-mining technology: clearly, an image of a Chinese miner would have been more appropriate (82). At the end of the collection, Hammond's piece gives credit to Barkerville resident Dr. Robert W.W. Carrall for his underappreciated role in Confederation negotiations but leaves out any mention of this event's implications for First Nations, Chinese, black, or female residents. Many of the chapters, particularly Marshall's "The British Columbia Commonwealth," portray British Columbia as a haven of unrivalled colonial opportunity and equality. These tired tropes fit awkwardly with Bridge's claim that *New Perspectives* aims to "explore new ground" and "rethink some of the clichés about the gold rush" (24).

Ultimately, *New Perspectives* is a product of the tension in BC history caused by historians' attempts to elevate alternative voices without disturbing cherished celebratory narratives. Doing justice to truly "new" perspectives of the gold rush means admitting to the existence of racism, discrimination, colonialism, and other unpalatable themes sidelined in this collection. Nevertheless, the authors' interest in untold stories, the self-consciousness of their history, and their thorough footnoting are welcome additions to the popular literature. Hopefully, *New Perspectives* is only the first step in a

growing effort to deal openly with the skeletons in British Columbia's historical closet.

Men and Manliness on the Frontier: Queensland and British Columbia in the Mid-nineteenth Century

Robert Hogg

Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 232 pp. \$115.00 cloth.

LAURA ISHIGURO

University of British Columbia

IN *Men and Manliness on the Frontier: Queensland and British Columbia in the Mid-nineteenth Century*, Robert Hogg examines the gendered expectations, manly identities, and lived experiences of British men in mid-nineteenth-century Queensland and British Columbia. Specifically, Hogg asks: How were mid-Victorian ideas of manliness reconfigured on the transformative colonial “frontiers” of Queensland and British Columbia? In seven chapters (including introduction and conclusion), he unpicks the knotted answers to this question in order to argue that British men both produced and navigated new expectations of manliness in relation to changing meanings of class, race, and violence in these colonial sites. Weaving together broad conceptual framing and the rich detail of individual lives, the book reveals both (1) significant similarities between Queensland and British Columbia and (2) the diversity of men's lived experiences in each place. In so doing, *Men and Manliness on the Frontier* demonstrates both the deep complexity and the deep connectedness

of histories of gender, race, class, and settler colonialism across the mid-nineteenth-century Pacific world.

This book has much to offer to readers of *BC Studies*. Hogg's rich attention to men's lived experiences not only makes this an eminently readable book but also helps to deepen existing understandings of mid-nineteenth-century British Columbia. Thanks to the work of scholars such as Adele Perry, the general parameters of Hogg's British Columbian historical context should be familiar: a nascent and tenuous settler colony in which British men's daily lives deviated from metropolitan gendered expectations. Hogg's generous use of men's writing – especially letters and journals – enables him to flesh out a discussion of personal perspectives and experiences that both shaped and were shaped by broader discourse, policy, and regulation. In so doing, he illustrates the complexity and diversity of British men's colonial experiences, underscoring that it is not enough to talk about “settler” as a singular experience or stable identity. This is a critical point that deserves further attention in the field.

Hogg's comparative approach should also be intriguing for readers interested in colonial British Columbia. Throughout the book, he draws connections between men's experiences in the two colonies, ultimately justifying the book's multi-sited framing by suggesting that these were very similar places in the mid-nineteenth century. Although comparative colonial work on Canada and Australia is not unusual, the pairing of British Columbia and Queensland is much more rare. Given this – and the probability that many readers will be unfamiliar with one or both of the colonies in question – it is unfortunate that the only maps in the book are historical reproductions that are very difficult to read. That point aside, Hogg's

treatment of the two sites is impressively balanced for a comparative study and raises important questions for further research and analysis. What do we make of such similarities? How and why might differences have mattered between colonial sites? And what do we gain by such comparisons? Although his comparison is thought-provoking, I would have liked to see Hogg explore its implications further, especially by engaging with such critical questions.

While further work could be done to this end, this is an accessible and engaging book overall. Through his attention to individual lives and his comparative framing, Hogg effectively demonstrates both the diversity and the striking similarities of manliness in British Columbia and Queensland and, in so doing, decisively rejects the value of simplified or romanticized “frontier myths” in either place. Ultimately, *Men and Manliness on the Frontier* is a compelling reminder that we cannot understand the pivotal mid-nineteenth-century years in British Columbia or Queensland without taking seriously histories of gender, the complexities of settler power, and the possibilities of trans-imperial comparison.



*Legacy in Time:
Three Generations of
Mountain Photography in the
Canadian West*

Henry Vaux

Victoria: Rocky Mountain Books,
2014. 128 pp. \$30.00 cloth.

MARY SANSEVERINO
University of Victoria

BRITISH COLUMBIA and Alberta are home to the most iconic mountain landscapes in Canada. To many of us, visitors and Canadians alike, these landscapes are the embodiment of Canada. They tempt us to stop, explore, and discover the forces that give shape to the beauty and grandeur of the Canadian mountain west. And so it was with a Quaker family from Philadelphia named Vaux. In 1887, George Vaux and family travelled from Vancouver to Montreal on the new Canadian Pacific Railway. Stopping at Glacier House Hotel in Rogers Pass, at the far eastern edge of British Columbia, the family fell under the spell of the Selkirk peaks and were captivated by the Great Glacier, today known as the Illecillewaet Glacier.

Keen photographers, the Vaux family made stunning images of the mountains in Glacier, Yoho, and Banff national parks. They returned frequently to the region, passing on their passion for the “Canadian Alps” to their children. In *Legacy in Time*, Henry Vaux – the third generation of his family to photograph in the Canadian Cordillera – gives us a peek into his family’s substantial photographic collection. He selects thirty-seven photos taken by the first Vaux generation, all in the years around the turn of the twentieth century, and returns to the precise spot that the

original photographs were taken to create his own (modern) version of each image. With only a whisper of structure to set the scene, and with every image displayed unadorned on its own white-bordered page, he allows the photographs to speak. Each tells a compelling story. Taken together, these pairs of historic and modern views put the landscape on a continuum of transformation. Some places, especially with glacial features, have changed drastically, while others seem timelessly similar. The historic images, captured with exceptional clarity and detail on glass plate negatives, are particularly stunning.

Edward Cavell, former curator of the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies in Banff, provides a foreword that places the Vaux family and their photographic collection firmly in the recreational and artistic milieu of North America at the turn of the twentieth century. Vaux himself provides insights into why three generations of this American family have returned again and again to the Canadian Alps to research, photograph, write, and reflect on these mountain environments.

Only one absence in the book is notable: it has no map to the photos. Those familiar with Glacier, Yoho, and Banff parks will recognize many of the places captured in *Legacy in Time*, but a map would situate the pairs of images within a broader landscape context. That said, the lack of geographic reference, apart from what is revealed topographically by the photographs themselves, keeps our interest focused directly on the images. For example, Figure 10, taken in 1898, features an image of the Illecillewaet Glacier from Avalanche Crest Trail in which the enormity of the Great Glacier fills the horizon. The play of light and contrast on a sea of ice illuminates massive crevasses, providing an almost three-dimensional look. Not only do we get a

feel for glacial extension in this image, we see the thickness of the ice.

It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words, but that only begins to describe the fascinating nature of change displayed in the *Legacy in Time* landscapes. This compelling book makes it easy to fall under the spell of the Vaux images and the family that made them. An outstanding legacy indeed – and long may it continue.

The Railway Beat: A Century of Canadian Pacific Police Service

David Laurence Jones

Markham, ON: Fifth House Publishers, Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2014. 312 pp. \$24.95 paper.

HEATHER LONGWORTH SJOBLOM
Fort St. John North Peace Museum

THE CANADIAN PACIFIC Railway Company (CPR) experimented with many different forms of policing throughout its long history. How do you protect a thirty-two hundred kilometre transportation network that keeps growing? David Laurence Jones's *The Railway Beat* looks at the CPR's law enforcement from the company's initial use of the North-West Mounted Police during railway construction in the 1880s to the development of its own police force in 1913 to the present. Jones examines the challenges and responsibilities undertaken by the Canadian Pacific Police Service (CPPS) and how the role and structure of this law enforcement body changed with the life of the company.

As the CPR expanded its rail lines and diversified into other modes of transportation, such as steamships, the company moved from an ad hoc

system of policing to its own private professional police force, which enabled it, Jones argues, to minimize losses from theft and strikes and to run an efficient and safe transportation network. Using correspondence, photographs, and newspaper clippings from the CPR Archives along with personal testimony from police officers and CPPS chiefs, Jones shows that this police force grew with the company to gain worldwide respect. The CPPS adapted in the face of new security challenges (such as gentleman bandits and bombs) and took preventative measures by promoting public safety through educational initiatives. The CPPS changed with the times, accepting women into the force in 1987 and dealing with cutbacks and restructuring.

Throughout, Jones highlights the personalities of police chiefs and the role of other railway police forces, including those on American branch lines later acquired by the CPR. Though he does mention that the Canadian National Police (CNP) worked in conjunction with the CPPS on certain cases, Jones never explains how the CNP came about or how changes in its structure and responsibilities compared to those associated with the CPPS. Since Canadian National was the CPR's biggest competitor, this information would have been useful. Jones discusses the relationship between the North-West Mounted Police and First Nations during the CPR's construction, but we need further research into how the CPPS and First Nations interacted throughout the railway's operations.

The Railway Beat is the first book to focus on the history of CPR law enforcement. Most CPR histories say little about policing, especially after the railway's initial construction. Jones's work also fills a significant gap in the history of policing in Canada. *The Railway Beat* will be especially useful to scholars of

British Columbia for the light it sheds on the CPPS's role in policing steamships out of Vancouver, dealing with gentleman bandits like Bill Miner, investigating Doukhobor (Sons of Freedom) bombings in the Kootenays, and tracing the role of a package flown by CP Air through Vancouver in 1985 and then used in the Air India Flight 301 bombing.

The Railway Beat is a much needed addition to the history of one of Canada's largest transportation companies. Without the reach and efficiency of the CPPS, the CPR would have been vulnerable to greater losses from theft, terrorism, and vandalism, and might never have styled itself "The World's Greatest Transportation System."

*Names on a Cenotaph: Kootenay
Lake Men in World War I*

Sylvia Crooks

Vancouver: Granville Island Publishing, 2014. 249 pp. \$19.95 paper.

DUFF SUTHERLAND
Selkirk College

SYLVIA CROOKS's *Homefront and Battlefront: Nelson BC in World War II* (2005) brought to life the lives of all the men honoured on the Nelson cenotaph and the impact of the war on their families and hometown. In this new book, *Names on a Cenotaph: Kootenay Lake Men in World War I*, Crooks does the same for the Great War of 1914–18. In *Homefront and Battlefront*, we learned of the lives of seventy West Kootenay men who went to war and never came back. In *Names on a Cenotaph*, Crooks introduces us to over two hundred of the 280 men listed on the Nelson cenotaph and on community cenotaphs around Kootenay

Lake. The much higher Great War losses reflect that conflict's very high rate of military casualties – something that is noticeable on most community cenotaphs across Canada. *Names on a Cenotaph* is a token of remembrance, an offering of respect for men, families, and communities prepared to sacrifice so much for what they believed to be a righteous cause. As the portraits accumulate through chapters dedicated to each year of the war, the reader can also share in Crooks's anger at so many ghastly deaths "in a futile war" (xiii).

Crooks's work, now stretching over two impressively researched books, began with a desire to know more about Maurice Latornell, who taught her how to skate as a three-year-old growing up in Nelson. He died in a bombing raid over Berlin in 1944. Historians and researchers of British Columbia have benefited from Crooks's work, which has its origins in her memory of this young man.

In 1914, Nelson was a city of five thousand, the hub of a West Kootenay region transformed since the 1880s by mining, fruit farming, railway construction, and large-scale British immigration. As in other parts of the province, the outbreak of war led many men to enlist for patriotic and personal reasons, especially the recent arrivals from Britain. The members of the first contingent left Nelson at the end of August; by the spring of 1915, they were fighting in Belgium as part of the First British Columbia Regiment. Over the course of the war a substantial number of the region's men would sign up for British Columbian, Canadian, and British battalions, including over a thousand for the 54th Kootenay Battalion established in 1915 with headquarters in Nelson. Crooks calculates that one-third of the first six hundred who joined the 54th Kootenay Battalion did not survive the war.

West Kootenay men, along with other Canadians, fought in some of the war's bloodiest battles: they were gassed at St. Julien near Ypres, experienced heavy casualties on the Somme, participated in the victory at Vimy Ridge, suffered "the horrors" of Passchendaele, and were involved in Canada's "Hundred Days Offensive" on the road to Cambrai in the last months of the war. A sniper killed twenty-one-year-old Private Percival Frederick Coles on 6 November 1918 beside the Grand Honnelle River in northern France. He was the last of the Kootenay soldiers commemorated on the cenotaphs to die in battle. Crooks found that, before the war, Coles had worked with his widowed father on a fruit ranch at Proctor on Kootenay Lake. As was common for Kootenay Lake families that suffered losses, his father gave up the ranch and returned to England soon after the war.

Crooks's painstaking research on the lives and deaths of these men who came from all walks of life in the region shows how well local history can illuminate a wider experience such as the Great War. On the one hand, we are reminded of the incredible violence and suffering that soldiers experienced during the war. The portraits reveal over and over again how death came from guns fired at close range, from shrapnel shells, and from explosions during intense artillery bombardments. In 1916, an officer let Lance Corporal George Roe's mother know that her son's death was "instant and painless" when a shell destroyed his dugout (64). Crooks's evidence shows that, in many other cases, wounded men suffered terribly before they died on the battlefield or in field hospitals. In September 1918, Captain Garland Foster, a former editor of the Nelson *Daily News*, suffered a gunshot wound to the chest at Bourlon Wood. Foster's nurse wrote to his widow that he suffered "untold agonies" and that "one

felt [in] the last few days [that] it would be a blessing to see him go" (163).

On the other hand, Crooks's research and photographs bring the war dead back to life. Her evidence and images document many young men like Corporal Alfred Killough of Castlegar who enlisted as an eighteen-year-old and died two years later on the Somme. Older men also fought and died: Private Frank Labege, a lumberjack from the Slocan Valley, was fifty years old when he died in the battle for Hill 70 in 1917. Fathers and sons fought together. Brothers fought together. Close friends fought together. Bert Herridge of Nakusp reported that a shell killed his friend Private Frederick "Freddie" Day as he was singing him a song. And, in many cases, men died courageously in horrendous battles and while rescuing wounded comrades. Many know of Nelson's Lieutenant Hampton "Hammy" Gray, who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for heroism during the Second World War. Crooks tells the less well-known story of the first Nelson man to win the VC – Lieutenant Commander Rowland Bourke – who daringly rescued drowning sailors at Ostend Harbour, Belgium. Bourke survived the war, but, on every page of her book, Crooks reminds us of the appalling human cost of the war.

Crooks shows that, to the very end, the people of Nelson, like people in most communities across the province, strongly supported the war. Along with high enlistment rates, citizens provided financial support to families of men serving overseas, raised money to send "comforts and supplies" to the men of the 54th Kootenay Battalion, attended "win the war" rallies in support of conscription in 1917, and contributed heavily to Victory Loan campaigns. Individual women and women's organizations in Nelson also offered strong support for new recruits, men on leave, and men overseas. Local

women served as nurses, filled jobs vacated by enlisted men, and pledged in large numbers to support at home the government's efforts to increase the export of foodstuffs. Yet, by 1918, the government's perceived need for more censorship and the increasing numbers of arrests for speaking out against the war suggests a growing weariness. In September 1918, police charged the secretary of the Miners' Union in Silverton for sedition after he stated "that the soldiers in France were not fighting his battles" (131). We do not learn what happened to him. More broadly, we wonder, at the end of *Names on the Cenotaph*, how Nelson and Kootenay Lake families coped with their grief, and how the city and resource economy of the region recovered from so many losses. These sorts of questions arise from Sylvia Crooks's excellent research and writing.

*Witness: Canadian Art of the
First World War*

Amber Lloydlangston and
Laura Brandon

Ottawa: Canadian Museum of
History, 2014. 118 pp. \$9.95 paper.

*Art at the Service of War:
Canada, Art, and the Great War*

Maria Tippett

Toronto: University of Toronto
Press, 2013 [1984]. 136 pp.
\$29.95 paper.

SARAH GLASSFORD
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THE CENTENARY of the First
World War currently being

commemorated has only further sparked our perpetual fascination with that conflict. With the eyewitnesses now gone, we are left to ponder the records and reflections they bequeathed to us. The two books reviewed here focus on their evocative and still potent artistic legacies.

Amber Lloydlangston and Laura Brandon's *Witness: Canadian Art of the First World War* is the souvenir catalogue of the Canadian War Museum's (cwm's) 2014 centenary exhibition of the same name, but readers need not have attended the exhibition to appreciate the catalogue. The book includes fifty-six high-quality full-colour reproductions of paintings, prints, and sketches by official war artists and ordinary soldiers. The artists came from across Canada and Britain, but readers of *BC Studies* may particularly note "The Author at Work," an amusing sketch by George Sharp, the architect who designed Vancouver's Burrard Bridge and a number of buildings at UBC (18), and Charles Simpson's "Lumbering Aeroplane Spruce in BC" (44-45). The chosen works are not the most iconic Canadian First World War paintings (such as Frederick Varley's "For What?" or Richard Jack's "The Second Battle of Ypres"), which allows viewers to approach them with fresh eyes: we see their subjects rather than simply icons.

Lloydlangston and Brandon group the images into four sections: "Canadians at War," "Tools of War," "Landscapes of War," and "Ruins of War." Each section and image is accompanied by a brief text passage in which the authors highlight themes and describe the artists' experiences of, or attitudes towards, the war. We learn that Canadian troops were never portrayed as fearful, women appear only in depictions of munitions work, ruined landscapes symbolize the human costs of war, and military technologies often dwarf humans. Lloydlangston and

Brandon hope *Witness* will "encourage Canadians to reflect on the personal and national reach" (9) of the First World War, and the catalogue seems likely to inspire that reflection. The authors maintain a light touch throughout, largely leaving it to the viewer to draw meaning from each image.

Witness is a testament to the present-day influence of two earlier projects that grappled with the legacies of the First World War: (1) the official war art commissioned by the Canadian War Memorials Fund (cwmf) beginning in 1916 and (2) Maria Tippett's study of the cwmf's war art program, *Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art, and the Great War*. Originally published in 1984, Tippett's book has been reissued with a new introduction for the war's centenary.

When historian Robert Craig Brown reviewed the original volume in 1985, he called it "a handsome and valuable book" in which careful research and clear writing complemented fifty-one black-and-white illustrations of cwmf war art. This assessment holds true three decades later: Tippett (a frequent reviewer for *BC Studies*) uses political, artistic, and military archival sources to trace the story of Max Aitken's (Lord Beaverbrook's) personal crusade to create, promote, and sustain the cwmf; the political machinations, institutional agendas, and artistic currents with which the cwmf became embroiled; and the remarkable collection of First World War art it produced. Yet one senses Brown was not entirely sure what to make of Tippett's self-described "study in cultural history" (xvii): political and economic history were still ascendant in 1985. Cultural history has subsequently gained traction and the book's true importance has become clear. *Art at the Service of War* helped pioneer the Canadian study of "public memory" – how the past is used in the public sphere – and influenced (among others) Jonathan

Vance's award-winning 1997 monograph *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War*. Its influence on *Witness* is also obvious.

Tippett's book concludes with a look at the reception and legacies of the CWMF's war art program. She argues that, although the art itself soon lost favour (languishing in obscurity from the 1920s to the end of the century), the program had a positive impact on Canadian art and artists themselves. The collection went uncatalogued until 1962, and the National Gallery (citing insufficient artistic merit) foisted it onto the CWMF in 1971. The new 2014 introduction disappointingly covers much the same ground as the original text, but Tippett does extend her survey of the collection's afterlife, noting that Vance and others have brought war art into the mainstream of Canadian history, while CWMF war art exhibitions in 2000 and 2009 (and 2014, we might add) suggest a new recognition of its value.

First World War art by eyewitnesses has obvious historical value, but, as Tippett writes, it also has the ability to move viewers today. This makes the works explored in these two centenary books "not just memorials" but also "art works of extraordinary power" (xvi).

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Bootleggers and Borders: The Paradox of Prohibition on a Canada-US Borderland

Stephen T. Moore

Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. 239 pp.
\$59.95 cloth.

DANIEL FRANCIS
Vancouver

GIVEN HOW contentious relations between Canada and the United States became during the American Prohibition era (1917-33), it is surprising how little scholarly work has been done on the subject. There are many popular books about the swashbuckling exploits of the rum-runners, but very little has been written specifically about how the border was a zone of conflict – and cooperation – during the period. Which is to say that this new book by Stephen Moore, a professor of history at Central Washington University, is a welcome addition to a small bookshelf.

Moore begins his account in September 1921 with a crowd gathering south of Vancouver to dedicate the Peace Arch, a newly constructed monument straddling the Canada-US boundary. Built to commemorate one hundred years of amicable relations, the Peace Arch is a dazzling white gate over twenty metres in height. The monument, in its location and its message, is a testament to the special relationship existing between the two countries. Odd, therefore, that it was built at the beginning of American Prohibition, when that friendship would be tested more than at any time since the War of 1812. This is just one "paradox of prohibition" that Moore mentions in his title.

British Columbia had its own version of prohibition, of course, lasting from

1917 to 1921, and Moore is subtle in his explanations of why the province abandoned the experiment so much earlier than did the Americans. The reasons were partly demographic: British Columbia's population had a large proportion of single, male wage workers, who were unsympathetic to the dry crusade, and a large proportion of Anglicans and Roman Catholics who did not endorse the zealotry of the more evangelical Methodists and Baptists. British Columbians were also intolerant of the corruption and hypocrisy associated with the enforcement of the liquor ban. But underlying other explanations, Moore argues, was a fundamental difference of opinion about the role that government should play in enforcing moral standards. "Canadian political culture has been much less utopian than its American counterpart," writes Moore, "and without any expectation that its politicians would legislate the millennium" (40).

One of the most interesting chapters in *Bootleggers and Borders* deals with the Vancouver hearings of the Royal Commission on Customs and Excise. Smuggling led to a federal customs scandal that almost toppled the Mackenzie King government in 1923. To keep himself in power King had to create a commission, and Moore provides a good account of its West Coast hearings, which were, he argues, a "turning point" in local attitudes towards smuggling. Appalled at what the commission revealed about the extent of the corruption, the BC public, which formerly had tolerated rum-running as harmless hijinks, now condemned it.

In Moore's view, while prohibition revealed "fundamentally different outlooks and beliefs" (169) on the two sides of the border, it also revealed the durability of the special relationship. British Columbians, he argues, with their long history of cooperation with

their American neighbours, were more concerned about maintaining friendly relations and concluded much earlier than did other Canadians that a lawless border was harmful to this objective.

Bootleggers and Borders is a very readable study of prohibition in the BC-US borderlands, combining discussions of political culture and ideology with accounts of the clandestine activities of the liquor smugglers. It will appeal to anyone with an interest in Jazz Age British Columbia and/or Canadian-American relations.

*Negotiations in a Vacant Lot:
Studying the Visual in Canada*

Lynda Jessup, Erin Morton, and
Kirsty Robertson, editors

Montreal and Kingston: McGill-
Queen's University Press, 2014.
312 pp. \$39.95 paper.

JOHN O'BRIAN

University of British Columbia

THIS BOOK changes how we should think about visual culture and art history in Canada. By focusing on how the visual has been shaped by liberal and neoliberal ideologies of individualism, property rights, and progress from the nineteenth century to the present, it demonstrates that the discipline of art history in Canada has been a state narrative. The formation of the field, however, has been obscured and unacknowledged. If alternative futures for visual culture and art history in Canada are to be imagined, their liberal underpinnings need to be recognized and unpacked. This is precisely what this book sets out to do.

The book's editors, Lynda Jessup, Erin Morton, and Kirsty Robertson, contend

that the economic logic of liberalism has turned Canada into a “vacant lot,” a phrase borrowed (and used in the title of the volume) from historian Ian McKay. “Why have a field of Canadian history,” McKay asks rhetorically in an article written in 2000, “if even the most powerful and far-reaching methodologies often treat Canada as a stage on which universal processes and formations interact?” (3). In other words, why bother to have a discipline at all if the real action is always conceived as being elsewhere?

The economic logic of liberalism and its impact on visual culture and art history are addressed by all fifteen contributors to this volume, sometimes directly, more often obliquely. Barbara Jenkins, in a chapter entitled “National Cultural Policy and the International Liberal Order,” observes that order and stability need to be widespread among the nations of the world if global order is to exist. She points to intellectuals like Vincent Massey and Lawren Harris, who trained as an artist in Germany and later moved from Toronto to Vancouver by way of the United States, as dyed-in-the-wool internationalist liberals. They understood that, for Canada to participate in the transnational project of liberalism, it had to fall in step with international economic and cultural expectations. This required falling in step with the codes of liberalism, including dominant codes of artistic practice. Like others who were part of the ruling order of liberalism, Jenkins concludes, they had a “cosmopolitan world view that was a central component of Canada’s perception of itself nationally” (124).

If art history in Canada is to depart from the liberal and neoliberal conditioning that has shaped the field for so long, it has a lot of work ahead of it. In a chapter entitled “The Vacant Lot: Who’s Buying It?,” Richard William Hill writes: “We need to be able to articulate

local experience, cultural difference, and notions of ethnicity and cultural heritage without ‘nationalizing’ them into rigid identity politics. What we absolutely need to stop doing is imagining ourselves as agents of the state” (171). More than this, historians, curators, and others working with the visual need to stop thinking of nationalism as a defence against globalism or other nationalisms, notably the patriotic version of nationalism in the United States. It is not a defence, Hill asserts, because it puts art history at the service of a dominant narrative that excludes other narratives. Canadian art will continue to be talked about as an entity, of course, because the nation-state will continue to exist in the face of globalization, but cultural theorists and historians must guard against internalizing its ideologies and identity formations.

Alice Ming Wai Jim, in a chapter that relates to Hill’s, asks what it means to teach ethnocultural and global art histories in Canada and Quebec. What she and Hill say adds up, as does the collection as a whole. For this the editors, who contribute valuable chapters of their own to the book, must be congratulated. Visual culture and art history in Canada will never look the same again.

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*Traffic: Conceptual Art in
Canada, 1965-1980*

Grant Arnold and Karen
Henry, editors

Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre
and Vancouver Art Gallery, 2012.
196 pp. \$55.95 cloth.

VYTAS NARUSEVICIUS
University of British Columbia

Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada, 1965-1980 is the catalogue of arguably one of the most important exhibitions of Canadian art in recent history, which, in turn, deals with one of the most transformative art movements of the twentieth century. Conceived by Catherine Crowston and Barbara Fischer, the exhibition and catalogue resulted from a collaboration with the Art Gallery of Alberta, the Justin M. Barnicke Gallery at the University of Toronto, and the Vancouver Art Gallery. First shown at the University of Toronto and then in Halifax, Montreal, Edmonton, and Vancouver, the cross-country tour was fitting since the exhibition explored the works of some lesser-known artists as well as regional features, both of which are often excluded from the better documented histories of Vancouver's and Halifax's contributions to conceptual art.

The non-commercial aspects of conceptual art, which made it so radical in the 1960s and early 1970s with its focus on text and photography rather than on painting and sculpture, resulted in a circulation that was often found only in alternative artist publications or exhibitions at university and art school galleries. This catalogue effectively recounts how these publications and spaces formed an important network

that stretched across the country and facilitated debates that were vital to the development of conceptual art in Canada and to the many artist-run spaces that it spawned. *Traffic* explores numerous instances of artist exchanges across geographies, such as Bill Vazan's *Canada Line* (1969-70) project, a collaboration between Vazan (in Montreal) and Ian Wallace (in Vancouver).

Freed from the burden of making and transporting large canvases, conceptual artists made art wherever they happened to be or, since ideas travelled faster than objects, by merely sending instructions to complete a work. The catalogue chapters by Jayne Wark, Vincent Bonin, William Wood, Catherine Crowston, and Grant Arnold all provide thorough overviews of the kind of work produced across the country and the importance of these contributions not only to the regional and Canadian art scene but also to the global conceptual art movement as a whole.

While the catalogue chapters provide excellent accounts of the artworks, there is little analysis of why conceptual art happened to appear at this time in the first place. Luckily, in the back of the volume is a transcript of a panel discussion that included Lucy Lippard, an important curator of some of the first conceptual art exhibitions and a historian of the subject, who identifies a particular socio-political zeitgeist as the crucial factor. This zeitgeist included opposition to the Vietnam War, capitalism, authority, and patriarchy—an opposition that motivated artists to get out of the confines of their studios and step into the world. The repudiation of frames and pedestals was in sync with the rejection of the repressive social and political climate of the time. Despite the fact that conceptual art practices rarely displayed explicit or radical political content, the catalogue makes it clear that the ideas and experimentation of

conceptual artists were often informed by the same need to throw off dominant traditions and norms. Conceptual art's ability to offer an alternative to the world in its then current form remains a lesson well worth revisiting.

*Whose Culture Is It, Anyway?
Community Engagement in
Small Cities*

W.F. Garrett-Petts, James
Hoffman, and Ginny Ratsoy,
editors

Vancouver: New Star Books, 2014.
320 pp. \$35.00 paper.

ERIC BROWN
Simon Fraser University

Whose Culture Is It, Anyway? addresses important questions about the contribution of arts and culture in small- and medium-sized cities, and the ethos and ethics of supporting cultural development in these environments. Small- and medium-sized cities tend to be overlooked in urban studies literature, and this book brings much needed attention to the role of arts and culture in these underexamined settings.

Through an exploration of broader urban studies theory and the specific documentation of practice, *Whose Culture Is It, Anyway?* makes a compelling case for the importance of arts and culture in community development initiatives in small cities such as Kamloops. Arts and culture serve to engage local residents while contributing to quality of life. In diverse ways, the eighteen authors contextualize arts and cultural development in small BC towns within broader societal and intellectual trends.

The case studies included here show how residents, researchers, and community development practitioners have used arts and culture to reflect on what makes their communities unique and how arts and culture can be leveraged to achieve broader community development goals.

Whose Culture Is It, Anyway? emphasizes the importance of developing cultural programming that reflects the local community. By embedding programming in the community, we can avoid transposing mainstream culture onto that which is local. Artistic endeavours should challenge the status quo, but they should be firmly rooted in the local reality of the place. Consequently, this book places art and artists at the centre of the community development process. The role of artists, it is argued, is to reflect society back on itself and imbue the physical and social landscape with meaning. In small communities, which may lack the social infrastructure to resist the forces of surrounding urban cores, it is especially important to focus on local history and geography in artistic and cultural endeavours to push back against the homogeneity emanating from larger urban centres. The local character of culture deepens sense of place and, in turn, generates community pride and encourages local economic development. Thoroughly researched and eclectic in its intellectual approach, and featuring a contribution from the poet bill bissett, this book reveals the important role that arts and culture can play in sustainable community development in small towns on the rural-urban fringe.



*Resettling the Range:
Animals, Ecologies, and Human
Communities in
British Columbia*

John Thistle

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015. 244 pp.
\$95.00 cloth.

MAX FORAN
University of Calgary

THIS IS A thought-provoking book. Focusing on the rangelands of interior British Columbia, John Thistle describes how commercial ranching begot inequities, dispossessions, and ecological degradation. All of which, according to his analysis, were avoidable.

Resettling the Range is clearly written, and its argument is convincingly based in archival sources and relevant secondary material. In addition to the researched narrative, this book is enhanced by an insightful foreword by renowned environmental historian Graeme Wynn and by Thistle's own excellent conclusion, which reaches beyond his central historical argument.

Thistle takes a unique approach, setting his narrative within two broad non-human signifiers. Wild horses and grasshoppers were synergies that resulted in the emergence and development of human conflicts. In reacting to these two biological threats, ranchers and government sought immediate rather than longer-range solutions. In these decisions, the wishes of the dominant group prevailed. Those without voice or economic resources were disadvantaged, as were the grasslands environments upon which they all depended.

The wild horses that grazed freely on the bunchgrass that belonged to no one were situated firmly in Aboriginal

culture and daily life. However, in the eyes of ranchers with paid-up grazing rights, they were worthless marauders in competition with their cattle for pasture and prime candidates for extermination. Thistle argues that this eradication of wild horses was carried out without any consideration of the Indigenous people who depended on them. Dispossessed by government policies that allowed a few individuals and corporate interests to control leases containing the best grazing land, Aboriginal people were left with small parcels of inferior, waterless land unsuitable for commercial ranching, and their ranching prospects were further diminished by their horses being confined on their meagre reserves. Thistle shows how government officials heeded those who could pay for grazing rights while ignoring the pleas of Aboriginal ranchers and undermining their willingness to compete. Had they been given half a chance, they might have kept a foothold in their traditional ranges.

Thistle's focus on grasshopper irruptions enables a fascinating discussion. The fact that the irruptions are little understood, that they might have been overestimated in terms of damage caused, and that, in a natural environment, they might actually have been ecologically beneficial will come as a surprise to many. Thistle refers to the uneven impact of grasshopper irruptions. Since the state of the range and economic status were determining factors, Aboriginal people were the most severely affected, followed by the smaller ranchers. The big operators with more grass and surplus hay were the least affected. Some even profited by buying out ruined ranchers or selling their surplus hay. Thistle discusses the irruptions' link to overgrazing and notes that range restoration was never considered as a solution; rather, lethal poison programs were implemented and,

in fact, mandated since opponents had no choice but to participate.

The land was the main casualty in these discourses. Haphazard land-use practices resulted in long-term overgrazing and ecological degradation. Lethal poisons indiscriminately destroyed much more than grasshopper eggs. Thistle underscores the complexity of range management and its scientific applications. He also discusses the place of fire in the ecological paradigm. The difficulties faced by smaller livestock operations in a semi-arid climate more suitable to large units employing economies of scale, though not a central argument, comes through in the narrative. Additionally, in Thistle's telling, Aboriginal ranchers virtually lost a way of life as well as their occupation and stewardship of the land.

Given the number and type of non-human creatures that inhabited the grasslands pre-empted by ranching, I was surprised that Thistle did not give them more attention. Wild horses and grasshoppers might have made his main argument, but they did not do justice to the ecology of a land transformed by ranching. Also, in my opinion, the book's wide range and frequent mention of individual ranches calls for chapter summaries and detailed explanatory maps.

Thistle is to be commended for bringing this BC example to our attention. I thoroughly enjoyed *Resettling the Range*, with its penetrating insights into the capitalist view of land as commodity. Sadly, Thistle's lesson about the human readiness to use lethal options to combat non-human threats has far too many parallels elsewhere.

*A Natural Selection: Building a
Conservation Community
on Sidney Island*

Peter Pearse

North Vancouver: Walhachin Press,
2014. 89 pp. \$15.00 paper.

*Big Trees Saved and Other
Feats: The Story of the Shuswap
Environmental Action Society*

Deanna Kawatski

Salmon Arm: Shuswap Press, 2014.
119 pp. \$20.00 paper.

ERIKA BLAND

University of Victoria

IN MANY BC communities diverse actors have long fought to protect their ecological treasures. Their struggles have played a part in preventing the degradation of vast expanses of land: about 14 million hectares (14.4 percent) of the land base in British Columbia have been protected since 1911 (BC Parks 2015). Two recent publications tell of this continuing struggle in the forests of British Columbia.

In *A Natural Selection: Building a Conservation Community on Sidney Island*, economist and forester Peter Pearse outlines how the residents of Sidney Island, in the Salish Sea opposite the Saanich Peninsula, created a community-based strata corporation to found and manage the island's Sallas Forest. The aim, largely achieved, was to balance resource use and ecological conservation; but, over forty years, there have been significant ups and downs. Pearse's personal account of the creation of a community forest sheds light on some of the issues and challenges faced in

the early stages of community forestry work in British Columbia, in the process providing lessons that apply more broadly.

In *Big Trees Saved and Other Feats: The Story of the Shuswap Environmental Action Society*, author and environmentalist Deanna Kawatski, whose roots in the Shuswap bioregion go back a century, sketches the history of the Shuswap Environmental Action Society (SEAS) and outlines its challenges and successes over more than two decades. Kawatski documents efforts to protect large stretches of the Shuswap region, which is within the traditional territory of the Secwepemc people, and relies on a number of sources, including newsletters, photos, figures, cartoons, posters, and activists' fervent speeches. British Columbia's "War in the Woods" saw community groups challenging the state and corporate stakeholders to bring about reforms in forest management (Salazar and Alper 2000), and Kawatski traces how political shifts and economic fluctuations have affected the environmental movement and groups like SEAS since then, especially given recent funding cuts for scientific programs in Canada (e.g., Sisler 2014). By identifying key challenges and successes, this socio-ecological and political history of the Shuswap will serve as a roadmap for future environmental activism, both in the region and more widely.

Pearse and Kawatski explain how changing principles and practices of forest governance, management, and conservation have been applied in these coastal and interior settings, and together they offer an overview of key issues surrounding community involvement in forest conservation. British Columbia has been a global leader in community forestry initiatives as an alternative to state control, a move that, as McCarthy (2006) argues, represents a wider shift in the role of non-state

actors in environmental governance. This has resulted, in stark contrast to forest policy in the United States, in progressive changes in land tenures in British Columbia. Pearse and Kawatski support the work of McCarthy and others writing of these shifts. Readers could enrich their reading of these two texts in conjunction with critical texts written about the Community Forest Agreement Program, inaugurated in British Columbia in 1998 (e.g., Duinker et al. 1994; Bradshaw 2003).

Though their approaches differ, both Pearse and Kawatski demonstrate the interconnections between environmental work and activism, both of which involve a collective and collaborative effort among a range of NGOs, all levels of government, First Nations, industry, schools, children, artists, musicians, and many exceptionally hard-working individuals. These books offer accessible and practical insights into the ways in which struggles to protect natural environments in British Columbia have intersected with a myriad of other initiatives.

Regrettably, neither book delves into how decolonization efforts may soon affect land use and governance in their respective regions. Understanding this will be essential as government-to-government and treaty negotiations unfold in practice and as new legal precedents arise surrounding Aboriginal rights and title (e.g., *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*, Supreme Court judgments, 26 June 2014). With the large-scale implementation of ecosystem-based management in the Great Bear Rainforest, historical accounts of the integration of conservation and resource management efforts will be helpful to all those trying to make sense of this new political-economic territory.

These works also reveal a disappointing subtext of anthropocentrism, in that the

preservation of wilderness spaces is seen as largely for the benefit and enjoyment of people, the purpose being to maintain “viewsapes” or to preserve wildlife areas for human provisioning, recreation, or hunting. This reflects a common tendency in environmental literature to overlook the agency and importance of more-than-human actors and communities. Pearse’s and Kawatski’s anecdotal histories might fruitfully be read alongside the work of scholars who explore this aspect of environmentalism – for instance, Bruce Braun, Sarah Whatmore, Steve Hinchliffe, and John Cianchi.

Overall, Kawatski and Pearse use vastly different approaches to present their narratives. Having sifted through twenty-five years of files and records, Kawatski presents an incredible amount of detail chronologically in just over a hundred pages. Pearse, while offering a tantalizing account of conserving and developing (sometimes in tandem) Sidney Island’s lands, left me wishing for more detail about the lived reality of that undertaking – information I might be able to transfer to the context of similar efforts in my own community of Denman Island.

Nonetheless, Pearse and Kawatski make visible the diversity of actors involved in British Columbia’s environmental movement and, in their accounts of community conservation, celebrate the names and faces behind some critical moments and campaigns. Together, they reveal the richness of this history and the personal commitment of impassioned people to protect the places they love. They are to be commended for their success in balancing factual reporting with specific and engaging stories. We need more books like these to build a locally and deeply rooted anthology of the socio-ecological history of British Columbia.

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*Drawn to Sea: Paintbrush to
Chainsaw – Carving Out a Life
on BC’s Rugged Raincoast*

Yvonne Maximchuk

Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, 2013.
272 pp. \$24.95 paper.

Born Out of This

Christine Lowther

Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, 2014.
208 pp. \$21.95 paper.

MOLLY CLARKSON

University of British Columbia

EVER SINCE Muriel Wylie Blanchet’s *The Curve of Time* (1961), memoirs of some of the West Coast’s most tough and toothsome women have enjoyed a prominent position on BC Ferries’ gift shop bookshelves. Recent publications such as Sylvia Taylor’s *The Fisher Queen* (2012), the collection *Gumboot Girls: Adventure, Love and Survival on British Columbia’s North Coast* (2012), and the stories of Nikki van Schyndel in *Becoming Wild: Living the Primitive Life on a West Coast Island* (2014) nestle in among cookbooks trading in seafood or kale-centric cuisine. But these aren’t just stories for tourists. Even we West Coasters need some escapism from time to time (after all, not all of us can live on houseboats or forage for our evening’s supper), and the two most recent additions to the genre offer up the ultimate literary staycation for those who like it wet, tough, and woolly.

Maximchuk’s memoir *Drawn to Sea*, set in the Broughton Archipelago, is an exemplary archetype of the genre: woman sets out into the coastal wilds (with two young children in tow) to begin a new life marked by toil, adversity, and (eventual)

fulfilment. Leaving the southern tourist town of White Rock to be with Albert, lover and prawn fisher, Maximchuk soon discovers the pleasures and pitfalls of living in the tiny community of Echo Bay. There are first encounters with their new neighbours (including the finned and feathered varieties), wild storms, fishing adventures with neighbour Billy Procter, family turmoil, and, of course, what no West Coast memoir could be considered complete without: agonizing descriptions of homestead construction projects. Photographs of labouring family and friends, piles of slimy fish, ragtag houseboats, and the occasional glimpse of stunning north coast scenery set the scene.

A painter and potter by trade, Maximchuk depicts her world with the practised eye of an established landscape artist. The colours are bright and, at times, the renditions can seem overly effusive (though I am unclear whether to attribute this to jealousy or literary snobbery). The intricacies of waterline construction, tiling techniques, and septic field systems are, at times, explored in a detail unsuitable for vacationing minds. But there is a refreshing lack of inhibition to Maximchuk’s account and an unpretentiousness that is thoroughly enjoyable.

Christine Lowther’s autobiographical collection of short stories, *Born Out of This* – a reference to the Roman goddess of passion, Venus, who emerged from the ocean in a seashell – works within the West Coast memoir genre but offers up something quite different from that of the generations of writers who preceded her. In contrast with Maximchuk’s wild palette, Lowther’s writing has the slick, cool texture of a river boulder. The restraint to her prose can, perhaps, be attributed to her long career as a poet. An undercurrent of grief runs through the book, which opens

with her and her family's memories of the events surrounding the murder of her mother, the poet Pat Lowther, and fragments of her experiences growing up in foster and group homes around North Vancouver. As a young woman in the 1980s, Lowther threw herself – Doc Martens first – into the burgeoning punk scene of Vancouver, then headed to the west coast of Vancouver Island to protest the logging of old-growth forest at Clayoquot Sound.

Born Out of This is as much about punk and politics as it is a meditation on wild places. The excellent chapter entitled “Generally Giving a Damn” chronicles Lowther’s work as a young zine creator and punk activist in Canada and the United Kingdom, while “We Tremble in Response” reflects on growing up during the Cold War and the author’s early activism against nuclear armament. The politics of Clayoquot Sound also infuse these stories. Lowther’s houseboat is anchored at Meares Island, site of the 1984 protests by members of the Nuuchahnulth nation to stop proposed logging of the island by MacMillan Bloedel. In one memorable chapter, Lowther climbs an eight-hundred-year-old western red cedar to save it from the ragged teeth of the developer’s chainsaw.

Born Out of This is a deeply place-based account of one woman’s life on the edge. Unlike other contributors to the genre, however, Lowther embraces the fluidity between urban and wilder places in a way that is wholly her own, and she includes meditations on urban wildlife and calls for the “mingling” of writers across the coast’s social landscape. Daring to criss-cross activist stereotypes and literary genres, Lowther’s passion lives up to her title. May I offer a home-brewed toast to the wild west coast women’s memoir – and to these two excellent additions to the collection.

Unarrested Archives: Case Studies in Twentieth-Century Canadian Women’s Authorship

Linda M. Morra

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014. 244 pp. \$29.95 paper.

PATRICIA DEMERS
University of Alberta

THIS PRECISELY researched and engaging study enlarges our understanding of the archive by focusing on the decisions taken by or imposed upon five Canadian women writers regarding the disposition of their papers or literary record. Invoking and then challenging the foundational theories of Foucault and Derrida, *Unarrested Archives* deftly grounds its analyses in an expanded theoretical field, including the work of Ann Cvetkovich on trauma, Antoinette Burton on the omnipresence of archive stories, and Anjali Arondekar on the colonial archive. Through the lens of gender trained on distinct socio-political and cultural traces of women writers as citizens, Morra explores what was allowed, disallowed, and kept away from material institutions. Using “unarrested” in the sense of being freed or mobilized, she asks the important question: By whom and for whom are archives?

The case studies present both troubling features of erasure and condescension and positive instances of fastidious preservation, according to the writer’s own conditions. For the subject of the first case study, Pauline Johnson, Morra argues forcefully for public performances as “a form of the unarrested archive” (24), complicated by the fact that archival records related to these performances have mysteriously disappeared (from the University of Reading and subsequently

from the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas). Noting that “orality and embodied performances are key to the production of knowledge in Indigenous cultures” (19), Morra underscores Johnson’s British and Mohawk heritage as a performer who embodied both her Indigenous presence and proud participation in imperial Canada. She uncovers the power of Johnson’s performance of “A Cry from an Indian Wife,” offering insight into the predicament of an Indigenous woman at the same time as it asserts Johnson’s authorship and challenges “the restrictive national imaginary espoused in the period” (42). Morra’s treatment of the second case study, Emily Carr, concentrates on the strong, shaping, revising role played by Professor Ira Dilworth in the publication of her writing, especially the posthumously published *Growing Pains*. Since Carr actually allowed Dilworth to make these decisions, Morra manages quite adroitly to present his collaboration as Carr’s acquiring “greater ontological weight” and “securing the very self-agency that would have been threatened or denied altogether” (54). Her case study of Sheila Watson is a related but distinct instance of an imminent narrative of a writer’s withheld personal story and another example of the significance of male endorsement, this time by F.M. Salter, leading to the approbation of Watson’s *The Double Hook*.

The remaining two case studies, Jane Rule and M. NourbeSe Philip, change the tone from appropriation, marginality, and reluctant disclosure to activist involvement and attention to the materiality of racial exclusion. Rule’s interventions in the raid of the Little Sister’s bookstore, her refusal to abide by the heteronormative conditions of a contest in *Chatelaine*, and her uncompromising opposition to

unapproved editorial changes to her work are among the examples of fully informed artistic integrity contained in the Rule archive, now housed – after considerable negotiation – at the University of British Columbia. Philip’s protracted court case, bringing libel action against reporter Michael Coren and Toronto radio station CFRB, constitutes a minor archive that effects something major. As Morra comments on this archive, which refuses the erasure of the African Canadian community, Philip “is social activist rather than social outcast, legitimate protestor rather than public parasite” (175).

Through its range of genres and cultural periods, meticulous scholarship, and respect for the public life of women writers’ documents, *Unarrested Archives* recalibrates perspectives on what might be uncovered and what must be preserved.

*Vancouver Blue:
A Life against Crime*
Wayne Cope

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing,
2015. 224 pp. \$24.95 paper.

BONNIE REILLY SCHMIDT
Langley

WAYNE COPE joined the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) in 1975, the fulfilment of a childhood dream to be a police officer. Like most police memoirs, Cope’s is filled with anecdotal stories, some humorous and some sad, acquired during his thirty years in the force. Stories about filling traffic ticket quotas (44), playing “Jailhouse Jeopardy” (127), and buying the best dog food available for his canine partner Wolfe (91), make for entertaining reading for a popular audience.

Cope's personality dominates the narrative and the events he describes. His self-proclaimed "signature move" as a police officer was to bring his personal weapons to work, where he could "play with them." During one shift, Cope, an avid hunter, decided to bring his compound bow to the office, where he fired it in the hallway leading to the kitchen jail. The arrow narrowly missed him as it rebounded off the target wall and back towards him (126-27). While foolhardy, this example demonstrates Cope's gunslinger approach to police work and the lasting influence of watching *Gunsmoke* on television as a child (14-15).

In the narrative, Cope relies on generalizations that dehumanize others. While a distraction in the text, this practice is a coping mechanism that many police officers adopt to relieve stress. Those who break the law are called "scrotes" (short for scrotum) (19, 127), "worthless scum" (19), and "jailhouse rats" (39), while members of the public are referred to as "idiots" (80). Cope is unapologetic for these characterizations, explaining that, when writing tickets, he left "the humans [i.e., regular taxpayers] alone." It was the drunks, criminals, and gangsters who received tickets, a personal "rule" he followed for "more than thirty-four years of policing" (45).

Further, some of Cope's fellow police officers are referred to as "peasants" (149); "lazy, stupid, incompetent" (77); and, in the case of one competitor for the same promotion, a "drunken little malingerer" (118). Indeed, Cope devotes one section of Chapter 7 to what he terms "The Idiot Factor" in the VPD (77-79), a critique that does little to instill confidence in Vancouver's police force. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are also singled out for criticism. They are described as "incapable" of municipal policing and of no benefit to local

communities because of their federal policing model (215-17).

The more interesting part of the book comes at the end, with Cope's description of his work with the VPD's Historical Homicide Unit, particularly his work in successfully solving Vancouver's 1980 "Centrefold Murders" (174-98). Cope's detailed discussion of the case provides insight into how the police investigate and solve serious crimes. It is here that readers gain a real sense of Cope's skills as an investigator. The importance of preserving physical evidence and the use of modern scientific tools such as DNA testing to solve decades-old crimes make for the most engaging reading (206, 212).

Interestingly, Cope does not discuss in any detail the VPD's handling of Vancouver's murdered and missing Aboriginal women file. This may be because his involvement was limited to interviewing the suspect's friends in 2002 (185-86). Nevertheless, Cope avoids any discussion surrounding the politics behind the case, the VPD's handling of the investigation, or the public outcry that ensued. Readers hoping to gain insight into one of Canada's most horrific mass murder investigations will be disappointed by this omission.

Cope ends his book with "Enigmatic," a challenge to readers to solve a code he has devised. Budding cryptographers are encouraged to e-mail their answers to Cope, who will reward the first person to break the code with a five-dollar silver maple leaf coin. It is an unusual close to a memoir about law enforcement in the City of Vancouver.

*A Better Place on Earth: The
Search for Fairness in Super
Unequal British Columbia*

Andrew MacLeod

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing,
2015. 246 pp. \$22.95 paper.

WARREN MAGNUSSON
University of Victoria

THIS IS A journalist's book about one of the crucial issues of our time: growing inequality. As Thomas Piketty shows in his careful study entitled *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2014), the tendency for inequality to increase over time in market societies is not just a possibility: it is a demonstrable fact. Andrew MacLeod explores this trend in British Columbia, focusing on the years since the Liberals came to power in 1991. If one of the aims of a good government is to reduce poverty, our current government has been a failure. Its policies have increased inequality, and this has exacerbated many ills that MacLeod explores, not just poverty. Of course, the BC government has had a lot of help in this regard: from a federal government with a similar ideology, international organizations and foreign governments that push in the same direction, think tanks and commentators who keep telling us that less is more in terms of regulation and taxation, and an economics profession entranced by market models and isolated from the other social and historical sciences. As Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin explain in *The Making of Global Capitalism* (2012), the current order of things was established politically and will not be undone easily. MacLeod does not do as much as Piketty to prick the bubble of neoliberal pretensions, but

he particularizes things to British Columbia in a way that will be genuinely useful. He writes well, illustrates his account with the sort of human-interest stories that journalists do so well, canvasses a wide range of opinion, marshals a mass of statistical evidence in easily digestible form, and draws attention to a wide range of problems. He well knows that British Columbia is not unique and that it would be wrong to lay every problem at the feet of the provincial government. Nevertheless, he shows quite convincingly that British Columbia is often at the bottom of the league tables in interprovincial comparisons, for reasons connected to provincial policy.

All that said, the book is a bit frustrating for an academic reader – or indeed for anyone who is looking for a tight analysis of the problem of inequality in British Columbia. MacLeod suggests thirty-six different ways of reducing inequality, some of which are relatively easily achievable (like raising the minimum wage or enhancing pensions), others of which are doable but would produce stiff opposition (like taxing capital gains the same as other income or imposing inheritance or wealth taxes), and still others – like creating more “well-paying jobs,” his No. 1 recommendation – that are more like dreams than programs of action. It is hard to develop a plan of action without a more careful analysis of the sources of the problem or the obstacles to solving it. MacLeod canvasses various views, but he lacks the means to do the analysis himself, so the reader is left wondering how to think about the many facts he presents and is liable to choose whatever solutions seem easiest, which are not likely to be the ones that actually work. As many commentators besides Piketty have made clear, the technical difficulties involved in reducing inequality are by no means as great as the

political ones. No doubt, inequality is bad for all of us, as Richard Wilson and Kate Pickett show in their brilliant *The Spirit Level* (2009). Wealthy people are not much convinced of that, however. Unless the disfavoured are mobilized, there is not likely to be much change, and the change is unlikely to be in the right direction if there is no coherent and easily understandable analysis of what the problems are and how they might be addressed. Scholars have to do the analysis. MacLeod has reminded us of the many tasks before us in that respect.

*The Answer Is Still No:
Voices of Pipeline Resistance*

Paul Bowles and Henry
Veltmeyer, editors

Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 2014. 144 pp. \$22.95 paper.

JONATHAN PEYTON
University of Manitoba

The Answer Is Still No is a disparate collection of voices united in opposition to Enbridge's Northern Gateway Pipelines: First Nations activists and hereditary chiefs, members of the environmental movement establishment and those self-consciously on its fringes, youthful activists ushering in new strategies of dissent, and seasoned campaigners offering the experience of years in the proverbial trenches. Fishers and world-renowned carvers appear in these pages alongside stalwart metropolitan veterans and incidental environmentalists – for example, Shannon McPhail of Hazelton, whose questions about the effects of drilling for gas in the headwaters of salmon-bearing rivers made her, very unexpectedly, one of the

most prominent voices in opposition to the heedless development of industrial and extractive economies in northwest British Columbia. The interviews collected here expose the tensions within and between these groups, but, more important, they highlight the political, strategic, and material threads that unite these actors into a powerful force advocating for the democratic control of resources and development.

The Answer Is Still No is remarkable for its many expressions of solidarity, particularly among the diverse collection of Indigenous peoples acting against the pipelines and also across the broad cross-section of coalition interests described above. Some of this solidarity can be attributed to the missteps of pipeline proponents. It is clear that the voices here from the environmental advocacy sector are not the “foreign radicals” of former federal finance minister Joe Oliver’s fevered imagination but, rather, a thoughtful, committed, well informed group of active and concerned citizens who were given a sense of mission, and were motivated to act for a common anti-pipeline purpose, by Oliver’s strange characterization of those who disagreed with the Conservative Party’s position on development. Equally, the diverse Indigenous groups of British Columbia, especially those that face the material burdens and opportunities of industrial development, have been emboldened by the strategic ineptitude of Enbridge, especially its lack of consultation and engagement. Nikki Skuce of ForestEthics suggests that “opposition to Enbridge created a lot more solidarity, a lot more people working together, a lot more understanding” (82).

Most interviewees condemn the company for its failure to acquire “social licence,” defined by McPhail as “the blessing of the community” (100). The absence of social licence –

which might also be called “corporate social responsibility” – reflects the company’s allergy to consultation with local communities and First Nations governance structures. Interviewees also exhibit sophisticated understandings of complex social, political, and ecological phenomena. Dene youth leader Jasmine Thomas brings an awareness of the cumulative impacts of multiple developments to her discussion of the lack of consent obtained by Enbridge, while the interviewees themselves often coax reflections on the inequities that manifest locally from interactions with colonialism and modern industrial capitalism, which are expressed variously in terms of neoliberalism and extractivism.

The material threads are equally powerful. In particular, multiple voices mention the discursive power of water and salmon. For John Ridsdale, a Wet’suwet’en hereditary chief, water is a metaphor for the solidarity evident in the struggle against Enbridge. It is the element that ties everyone together. And for long-time environmental campaigner Pat Moss, salmon is everything, a keystone species at the heart of regional ecologies and economies.

For those with an interest in the future of northwest British Columbia, and for others who share concerns about the trajectories of development elsewhere in the Canadian north and beyond, *The Answer Is Still No* offers a compelling indictment of the state of contemporary resource politics while also providing a case for being optimistic that the most hubristic projects will remain unsuccessful development dreams.

Salmon: A Scientific Memoir
Jude Isabella

Victoria: Rocky Mountain Books,
2014. 240 pp. \$20.00 paper.

STEPHEN BOCKING
Trent University

INSPIRED BY John Steinbeck, journalist Jude Isabella combines narrative and knowledge in a well crafted and informative ode to the Pacific coast. Her account of salmon, science, and history is drawn from her studies and from experience, especially time spent travelling along the coast, working with scientists and others who know it well.

One significant theme is the practical, often hard work involved in doing science in the field. For John Reynolds, an ecologist at Simon Fraser University, it means dragging bags of dead salmon through the woods, mimicking wolves and bears so as to understand their role in moving nutrients from ocean to forest. Out at sea with Marc Trudel of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, it is about studying water chemistry and picking through plankton to piece together evidence of what salmon do in the “black box” of the Pacific. And with ecologist Anne Salomon and her students, Isabella plants bags of clams on beaches to understand how they grow when cultivated. Along the way she observes how scientists reason and produce knowledge, how they struggle to gather funding during an era of constrained research budgets, and how, on the coast, science is not just a job but a way of life.

Isabella also learns, as does the reader, about the ecology of salmon and other coastal species: how they relate to each other, change over time, and experience threats such as climate change and pathogens. Reynolds explains to her why

salmon can also be considered creatures of the forest. From Trudel she learns about the uncertain survival of salmon in the Pacific. Salomon shows how clams cultivated by coastal First Nations communities were essential food. These lessons have practical implications, such as the need to be aware of and to protect salmon-spawning streams, even the small “ghost” creeks that scientific surveys often miss. Striking observations also emerge along the way, such as the lovely notion that salmon, through their influence on forests, also affect the diversity of birds and, therefore, their songs: salmon thus keep the forest in tune.

Many of her most intriguing passages relate to the history of coastal First Nations as deduced from middens, the ancient remains of fish traps and clam gardens, the memories of elders, and the reports of early anthropologists. This history also provides a necessary corrective to the common view of British Columbia as the “salmon coast.” While salmon have always been important, so have other foods, including herring, eulachon, clams, and waterfowl. This diversity speaks to what life was like for those who depended on what the coast could provide. It has never been an easy paradise but, rather, a place on the edge of an often chaotic ocean, marked by unpredictable cycles of abundance and scarcity that demanded caution, adaptation, and the cultivation of diverse options. Understanding this has required scientists and First Nations, and archaeologists and ecologists, to cooperate – a model, Isabella suggests, of the conduct required if life on the coast is to be guided by knowledge and wisdom.

