

BOOK REVIEWS

Columbia Journals David Thompson, edited by Barbara Belyea. Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 1994. xxiv, 336 pp. \$49.95 cloth.

This is an intriguing book, partly because Thompson's daily journals of his several explorations toward and along the Columbia River and its tributaries have not previously been published (except in fragments) and are full of intriguing material, but particularly because of Barbara Belyea's approach to editing.

Belyea believes that texts should be left, as much as possible, to stand on their own. Editors should modernize texts as little as possible, neither historicizing them nor imposing their own interpretations — as did both Tyrrell and Glover in editions of Thompson's *Narratives*. The "real" Thompson will not be found. Something of him will emerge in the texts he created, but they are to be understood in relation to their purpose and medium. Therefore, Belyea presents texts that are as uninterpreted as possible. There are no footnotes, no note numbers inserted in the text. The notes, keyed to dates and located after all the journals, do not provide supporting information so much as alternative texts. Therefore, for example, the notes rarely make clear where Thompson is. Chevreuril are identified as white-tailed deer, but when Thompson reports having learned from the Kootenays that Blackfoot had plundered Fort Augustus, a note provides an alternative text by Thompson, but no information about Fort Augustus, when, or if, it was attacked, or what happened there. Essentially, Belyea places little store in information; she believes that the world is constructed and given meaning textually, and wishes to give the reader Thompson's text, not hers.

Behind this book lie theory and argument that specialists in textual criticism can engage better than I. The question for those using Thompson's accounts is whether this type of editing provides what we need. For the most part, I think it does. Thompson's texts are clear, and the overburden of an editor's interpretation does not have to be stripped away. The notes, reflecting Belyea's considerable knowledge of related texts, are suggestive but do not direct or foreclose. On the other hand, some of the usual accompaniments of edited collections of explorers' journals are not in this book. There are, for example, no maps showing Thompson's routes (although there are reproductions at various scales of some of Thompson's maps). From Belyea's perspective, presumably, to create such maps is to create another text, not Thompson's. A reader might do so, but not an editor trying to preserve Thompson's textual integrity. Fair enough, I suppose. My only observations are these. A work is inevitably surrounded by other texts, and as long as the editor's comments and interpretations can be distinguished from the original, many readers will welcome such interventions. They can be useful and they would seem to be part of the conversation with the original. For whom, after all, is a publication of Thompson's journals. In one way or another, specialists can probably get to the archives. In large part, a book like this has to be for the general public, few of whom will be in a position, for example, to decipher Thompson's routes. At some point, texts that are not somewhat retextualized may not warrant publication in expensive books if the original (or various reproductions) are available in accessible archives. In this case the importance of the material, the originality of Belyea's method, and the suggestive richness of her notes justify publication, but one could easily be less sure about other similar publications. In short, I suspect a case can still be made for more active editing.

Thompson's journals, beginning in 1800 with his first probes into the Rockies and ending in 1811 with his return from Fort Astoria, are an explorer's often-quite-elaborate field notes. Less accessible reading than his Narrative, they are full of intriguing observations about the watershed of the Columbia at the beginning of European contact. Most interesting for me are his accounts of the establishment of Kootenae House and his descriptions of and comments about the Kootenay, Flat Bow (Western Kootenay), and Flat Head (Interior Salish) peoples. Belyea provides a full bibliography of Thompson manuscripts and editions, and a useful list of secondary sources.

From Maps to Metaphors: The Pacific World of George Vancouver, edited by Robin Fisher and Hugh Johnston. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1993. x, 365 pp. Illus. \$39.95 cloth.

Although the quincentennial in 1992 of the first Columbian voyage drew popular world attention, maritime historians also recognized the bicentennial of two of Columbus' great successors, Alejandro Malaspina and George Vancouver. While Columbus initiated the exploration of the New World in 1492, Malaspina and Vancouver can be said to have finished it in 1792 through detailed reconnaissance of its final unknown corner, the Pacific Northwest. In April 1992, editors Fisher and Johnston convened the Vancouver Conference on Exploration and Discovery at Simon Fraser University to commemorate the many contributions of the Vancouver voyage of 1792-1794; this volume comprises a selection of papers given at that conference.

Following a brief preface of oral tradition, "How the Squamish Remember George Vancouver" by Luis Miranda and Philip Joe, Professors Fisher and Johnston provide a concise introduction through an overview of Vancouver's voyage and its major achievements, a fundamental historiography of the event, and a review of the papers selected for this volume. Chapter 1, "James Cook and the European Discovery of Polynesia" by Ben Finney, treats scientific achievements of the great navigator in the South Pacific, with a good treatment of Spanish, Dutch, and French voyages there. Glyndwr Williams in chapter 2, "Myth and Reality: The Theoretical Geography of Northwest America from Cook to Vancouver," covers the English search for a water passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic in the eighteenth century and ending of the searching through explorations of Cook and Vancouver. "Vancouver's Survey Methods and Surveys" by Andrew David, and "Vancouver's Chronometers" by Alun C. Davies, in chapters 3 and 4, respectively, deal with technical aspects of the voyage.

"A Notable Absence: The Lateness and Lameness of Russian Discovery and Exploration in the Pacific, 1639-1803," chapter 5, by James Gibson, gives an overview of Russian advances in the most difficult of climates and terrain through Siberia in search of sources for furs and arrival in the North Pacific, although he appears overly critical of their delay in doing this, and gives traditional credence to the supposed Spanish concern over the "Russian threat" in the region, when, in fact, that concern was over English encroachment. Chapter 6, "Nootka Sound and the Beginnings of Britain's Imperialism of Free Trade" by Alan Frost, discusses policy and manoeuvring in the area prior to

Vancouver, and a particularly fine overview by Christon Archer of Spanish policy, ethnography, and contact in the northwest follows in chapter 7, "Seduction before Sovereignty: Spanish Efforts to Manipulate the Natives in Their Claims to the Northwest Coast." This theme, as related specifically to complex interactions and alliances between Europeans and Vancouver Island Indian groups, and even greater intricacies of relationships among the latter, are well treated in chapter 8, "Dangerous Liaisons: Maquinna, Quadra, and Vancouver in Nootka Sound, 1790-5" by Yvonne Marshall. This interaction as related to art is interestingly covered by Victoria Wyatt in chapter 9, "Art and Exploration: The Responses of Northwest Coast Native Artists to Maritime Explorers and Fur Traders." Somewhat out of order in the volume is W. Kaye Lamb's fine historiographical treatise on the formation of Archibald Menzies' journal in chapter 11, "Banks and Menzies: Evolution of a Journal."

The scenario shifts from the Pacific Northwest to the South Pacific in chapters 10, 12, and 13. "Kidnapped: Tuki and Huri's Involuntary Visit to Norfolk Island in 1793" by Anne Salmond, "The Intellectual Discovery and Exploration of Polynesia" by K.R. Howe, and "The Burden of Terra Australis: Experiences of Real and Imagined Lands" by David Mackay discuss, respectively, introduction of flax-working to the penal colony of Norfolk; Eurocentric and evangelical views of Polynesian cultures, primarily in the nineteenth century; and the gradual realization that Australia was not the idyllic "New World" as originally imagined.

The work is enhanced by a useful and interesting appendix, compiled by Andrew David, listing Vancouver's instruments, drawings, and charts and by eighteen illustrations of contemporary engravings and paintings, and seven maps appropriately placed in the texts, although a general map of Vancouver's track is unfortunately absent. An analytical index facilitates use of this nicely printed and bound volume. While all of the articles are well researched and interestingly presented, and are of interest to historians of the Pacific Ocean, there are times when the relationship of some of them to Vancouver's voyage is rather tenuous; this is especially true of those chapters treating the South Pacific. Also, very little information is provided relative to pre-eighteenth century Pacific maritime exploration by Spain, which explains the need for Vancouver's voyage and reconnaissance in the first place. Traditional English misuse of Spanish names (Quadra for Bodega; De Fonte for Fonte, etc.) and their irregular accenting also gives a tinge of anglophilia to the volume.

These criticisms notwithstanding, *From Maps to Metaphors* is an important addition to any collection of Pacific Basin history.

Emeritus, University of San Francisco

W. MICHAEL MATHES

Memories of Cumberland Chinatown, by Philip C. P. Low. Privately printed, 1993. "For Information address: Rhonda Low, 12 East 8th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1R3." 92 pp. Illus. \$12.95 paper.

Anyone familiar with B.C. studies or with the history of Chinese Canadians is aware that Cumberland was, until the 1920s, a major site of Chinese residence. Most of the descendants of Chinese families who lived there have now moved elsewhere, although some of them regularly keep in touch through an annual picnic in Vancouver's Stanley Park. They share photographs, reminiscences, and a sense that something of their shared past — a time and place — should be preserved. Philip C. P. Low's newly published reminiscences provide some of what has been hoped for. This is not a scholarly piece, but a set of remembrances, with photos, centring on the life and activities of Mr. Low's father, the Chinese community leader Low Sue.

A book of this kind helps all of us, whether from Cumberland or not, fix in our minds such things as the location of the two Chinese streets and the importance of schooling and the way it is now remembered. These and other pieces of information supply a framework for future research.

Two things struck me. The first was a reminder of the presence that a few leaders could and did have in the lives of community members in a Chinese settlement of 1,000 or so, as Cumberland's was in the early decades of this century. Low Sue is bound to be the centrepiece of his son's memoirs. But there can be little doubt that he and a few others — and organizations like the Chinese Freemasons — were the organizing posts for community activities. A second was the statement that Chinese girls began to attend schools only about the time of World War I. Why was this so? The preference given to sons' education by Chinese parents is well known. But why did girls' education become acceptable at that particular time? The instant answer of China-oriented Chinese would probably be the 1911 Revolution in China. What other answers, Canadian-made, might there have been?

The formal Chinese history of Cumberland — or, better, the multi-ethnic history of Cumberland — awaits the hand (or hands) of persons with the appropriate academic skills and determination. May its writing begin soon, while there are still persons of Mr. Low's generation available and interested in contributing to it.

University of British Columbia

EDGAR WICKBERG

Brotherhood to Nationhood: George Manuel and the Making of the Modern Indian Movement, by Peter McFarlane. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1993. 328 pp. Illus. \$18.95 paper.

George Manuel (1921-1989) ranks among the leading half-dozen modern aboriginal political figures in British Columbia. His standing is even higher outside the province. After emerging as an Interior spokesperson in the 1960s, he went on to Ottawa and led the National Indian Brotherhood during its crucial formative period in the early 1970s. In 1975 he became the first president of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, in which role he brought hope and help to first peoples elsewhere, most notably in Scandinavia and Latin America. In 1977 he came back to British Columbia and served several terms as leader of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC). Obviously Manuel merits a serious biography. McFarlane's book does not provide it.

Factual errors range from the silly to the serious. Manuel travels "500 miles north" from Chase to "Athelmer" rather than 160 miles east to Athalmer (p. 40). Diefenbaker becomes Prime Minister in 1967 (p. 53). The province is said to issue Indian fishing licences (p. 247). George Clutesi, one of the most prominent of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth, becomes a Sechelt (218). The 1978 UBCIC annual assembly had "eight hundred delegates" (p. 252), even though each of the province's 199 Indian bands was entitled to only one delegate, and many bands no longer supported the organization.

McFarlane is unaware that "Nuu-Chah-Nulth" is the current and proper name for the people formerly known as the Nootka, that they are one of the most populous tribal nations in the province, and that they live on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council, consisting of thirteen member communities, provided important early opposition to Manuel and the UBCIC.

McFarlane dismisses the Tribal Council as consisting of only “three Vancouver Island and coastal bands” (p. 256), and remains unaware that it was in fact the Nuu-Chah-Nulth who hosted the important founding assembly of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples in 1976 — held in Port Alberni, not in Nanaimo as McFarlane implies (pp. 217-18).

At first it might appear that McFarlane has been taken in by those whom he interviewed. Of the more than thirty persons he spoke with, all but several were Manuel’s relatives, friends, allies, advisers, or employees. One of the exceptions is Manuel’s opponent Bill Wilson, whose views are dismissed. McFarlane takes little substance or insight from the more knowledgeable of his sources (Doug Sanders and Marie Smallface-Marule, for example) and instead allows his book to serve as an unchecked vehicle for the more partisan of Manuel’s disciples to attempt to settle old scores and create new myths. The result is exemplified in the treatment of Manuel’s relations with Andrew Paull and Fred Walchli.

Prior to Manuel, Paull (1892-1959) was the best known Indian politician active in the Interior. Even though Manuel was ultimately more effective, and famous, some of Manuel’s followers have always wished to believe he was Paull’s chosen successor. Without citing any sources, McFarlane perpetuates this myth, stating that “When Andy Paull was in the interior, he . . . began stopping to visit George Manuel in Chase” (p. 49) and that “Paull was . . . impressed with George Manuel’s leadership potential and he soon began to invite him along on his tours of the interior” (p. 50).

Both statements are false. In my own research I have found no evidence that the two men ever met. Members of Paull’s family vehemently deny that Paull even knew of Manuel, as does Frank Calder, who often travelled with Paull. Moreover, when I interviewed him in 1980, Manuel himself told me that he had never actually met Paull.

Central to the myth-making about Manuel in British Columbia is the claim that he created a successful Indian “people’s movement” after his return to the province in 1976. With Manuel’s son Bob as his source, McFarlane tells us:

Manuel signalled this approach when he arrived back in BC and went out to lunch with the regional director of Indian Affairs, Fred Walchli. He told Walchli point-blank that he intended to start a peoples’ [sic] movement that would have “a consistent ideology of struggle” against

the government. Walchli was equally frank. "It will be my job then," he said, "to fight you every step of the way." When the lunch was finished, two men shook hands and began a five-year battle. (p. 242)

When informed of McFarlane's account, Walchli responded:

That never happened. We never had that kind of discussion. In the first meeting that we had after he came back we discussed implementing the 1976 consultation policy and setting up the Secretariat. The disagreement between us came only later, when it became apparent that George wouldn't agree that tribal councils should be part of the process. And I never had lunch with him. (Personal communication, 6 July, 1994)

Evidence in the minutes and records of the Secretariat, a device by which Manuel's UBCIC could meet formally with federal officials, supports Walchli's account. During the first year or so relations were harmonious. Only as Manuel resisted demands from the growing numbers of tribal councils (notably that of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth) for inclusion in the Secretariat did relations become strained.

Manuel never fully understood the forces underlying the political reawakening of the tribal nations in this province. The Union declined steadily in support and influence during and after his leadership. The Union did play a substantial role in mobilizing Indian opposition to the new Canadian Constitution, but the political momentum among British Columbia Indians remained focused at the tribal level.

Manuel did not create any new Indian people's movement in British Columbia, despite McFarlane's sustained attempt (embodied in the title of the book) to demonstrate that he did so. If there was any new Indian movement in the province, it was led by those who viewed traditional tribal nations as the source of identity and legitimacy, and who rejected Indian bands, upon which the Union was based, as creations of the *Indian Act* and creatures of the Department of Indian Affairs.

More generally, McFarlane consults little of the literature dealing with the organizations and issues in which Manuel was involved, either in British Columbia or beyond. His use of the material he does consult is partial and highly selective, thus demonstrating his willing partnership with his interview sources.

The book has one positive feature. It does provide some frank insight not previously available into Manuel the man, especially into

his handling of the competing demands of political fame and family life. Yet here, again, the most insightful and understanding sources remain largely muted.

The harm that may come from this book is only in part that some may take it seriously. The real danger is that those who see it for what it is may as a result take George Manuel less seriously than he deserves.

The University of British Columbia

PAUL TENNANT

Out of the Interior: The Lost Country, by Harold Rhenisch. Vancouver: Cacanadadada Press, 1993. 208 pp. \$12.95 paper.

This collection of poem-stories from the Okanagan maintains a thesis apparently contradictory to its local and personal colour: "There is only one history." Harold Rhenisch, compiler of *Six Poets of British Columbia* (1980), and author of four previous collections of poems, claims that history must be written as global and that each human is implicated in the life of each other living thing. Hence the obvious if unpredictable intertext (Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa* 1938) and its subtle direction to read the political economy of Kenyan coffee plantations against the colonialism of a Keremeos orchard. Hence the linking of the economies of Coast and Interior, of the cultures of Germany and Canada, of the disciplines of war and apple-growing, of the ecologies of orchard and ocean, of the circulation systems of tractors and trees, of the syntax of Canada and the United States.

But, as this web of connections implies, Rhenisch speaks frequently about history just because he distrusts history of the textbook variety, with its continuum of predictable cause and effect. His history dances out of his own interior, shaped by the fluid archives of memory and feeling. In part, the book is Rhenisch's autobiography, a memoir of days young and easy under the apple boughs, and of following his father out of grace.

Ordered in nine sections carrying grandly abstract titles, the story line follows the tragedy of his father's lost dream of a new Eden in the Okanagan. But these "chapters" are composed of short short stories or prose poems; (some of only a few sentences/most one to three pages) with more specific and shifting titles and focuses. Some stories apparently transcribe directly the anecdotes (repeated over coffee cups and

beer bottles) which make up the Okanagan's literature. Another "story" consists entirely of a *list* of the machines, large and small, essential to the art of apple-farming.

Hence there are many forms and at least two levels of history budding in this book. One is the satisfying detail of the orchard economy, a subject little written into British Columbia literature. The other is the lyric of compounds and mixed metaphors and variations of light that write history as verbal impressionism. This level of meaning is subtly but insistently associated with the poet's mother, otherwise barely visible in the story of a son's struggle with and against father. History, then, is built of "unknown land" and "survive[s] . . . [here] in unfinished, unassimilated and unorchestrated forms."

In a piece titled "Waiting for the Women," Rhenisch remembers the return of the robins to the orchards each spring, the season "when the sun was made of water." The windfall of apples, "white-fleshed, red-skinned, perfectly preserved under the snow," suddenly thawed "in the new yellow sunlight." He recalls the male robins drunk on the "bubbling and fermenting" remnants of a previous season's harvest. Suddenly, he ends the piece . . . that is, he opens up the closure, with this discovery: "Then the females would flare back and it would be spring, and the light would look like it was pressed out of sap." The audacious choice of the verb "flare" is just right to suggest the suppressed adolescent sexuality (and its implicit warning) in the experience. Meanwhile, the cumulative syntax, based on a series of "and-" clauses, counters the poetic flare with a vernacular deliberateness. Consistent with the most persistent image-pattern in the book, the discovery turns on a metaphor of light ("would look like it was pressed out of sap"). This at once plodding and perceptive simile evokes surely the harvest when cider is pressed from the ripe apples, but now he imagines *pressing* the sap itself, the life blood of the tree itself, to find its essence.

This bit of comment has, in one sense, little place in a review of a biography and autobiography in a journal whose roots are in B.C. history. But it seems to me crucial to get at the kind of history which Rhenisch is after: it is history as filtered through the bewilderment of a child; it is history apprehended rather than *understood*: often, when thought is lost (p. 93) or "there was nothing to think about," the evident but intangible light illuminates an obscured history. Mixed metaphors of light write a way to an overlapping, compounded, multi-sensory history. Maybe that's how you get at a history that doesn't make sense:

Today it is less of a world, and its people, true to themselves and their place, and their history of trapping, ranching and Empire, are out of place — denied the very time in which they live. Time here is an old time. It once prevailed throughout British Columbia, but is now found only in silted mountain pockets.

University of British Columbia

LAURIE RICOU

Houses for All: The Struggle for Social Housing in Vancouver, 1919-50, by Jill Wade. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994. xiv, 250 pp. \$24.95 paper; \$45.95 cloth.

Jill Wade ably demonstrates the validity of her closing sentence: "the history of housing activism in Vancouver is one to remember and celebrate." For, in a text which is readable and urbane yet packed as tightly with information as people were in the 1940s Vancouver housing stock, she reconstructs a highly instructive local history that reprises a significant episode in post-war transatlantic culture. The weft and weave of volunteer, professional and municipal, provincial and federal organizations that she deftly discloses and reconnects add considerably to the literature on regional Canadian politics from the Armistice to the Korean War, as it does to that on urban geography, sociology, and architectural history. In particular, Wade's socio-political explication of public housing developments on the west coast compares with N. Glendinning and S. Mathesius's broader study of the British high rise public housing published in 1994.

Wade also deserves plaudits for insisting on the primacy of detailed information upon which she presents reliable analyses and convincing historical interpretation. She draws upon a comprehensive range of sources from national, provincial, and city archives, nicely balanced by the more vital if diffuse record of journalistic report and individual reminiscence. Thus she corrects such entrenched conventional wisdom as D. Holdsworth's romanticized picture of Vancouver housing; which was largely derived, in company with much other architectural historical writing, from scrutiny of middle or upper class conditions. Not far from the Garden Suburb, Queen Anne-cum-Arts and Crafts structure of the west side lay a rickety and, thanks to the Depression, increasingly deprived fabric of tenements, boarding houses, cabins, shacks, and even hobo-camps. Their spectral presence in the urban

landscape is proven through Wade's wide and meticulous research, injected with added reality by her judicious selection of illustrations.

Among these images of social deprivation and official action are several that bring forward the chief characters in Wade's work. One is the inanimate but inescapable physical scene manifesting, say, the panoramas of the Wartime Housing Limited subdivision erected for the North Vancouver shipyards or the agrarian Richmond site of Burkeville built for the Boeing plant on Sea Island. Another is the people active in forging reform, from the artist B.C. Binning standing in front of his innovative flat-roofed low-cost Modern post-and-beam West Vancouver house to the demobilized veterans marching through downtown Vancouver intent upon securing the old Hotel Vancouver as temporary accommodation. Wade also presents such other important movers as Helena Gutteridge, the idealistic city councillor determined to see the provision of inexpensive public housing, and Leonard Marsh, the Beveridge-trained sociologist who compiled the Federal Advisory Committee on Reconstruction Report IV on Housing and, once on the faculty of the University of British Columbia, the 1950 project for rehabilitating the Strathcona area that would be realized partly in the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation McLean Park Complex.

Equally effective is the account Wade offers of the events at the national level. There, as elsewhere, elected officials evidently shared the instinctive fear of intervention harboured by bureaucrats. In adopting a commercially anchored *laissez-faire* approach to the social trauma of the 1930s, they allowed the lobbying of the finance industry to emasculate both the Dominion and National Housing Acts. This tendency was lessened in the post-war era when the recent experience of national mobilization, central planning and the application of technology enjoined a broader political consensus for public spending on social infrastructure. Indeed, Wade's assiduous retrieval of the politics of politics brings excellent material to the understanding of the confluence of polity and Modernist architectural ethos in this period. And, as indicated, students of society, from its familial to financial aspects, will discover much of value.

Finally, Wade is to be commended for maintaining an appropriate historical focus. She avoids over-extended forays into the complex history of European and North American housing policy and design while still pointing the reader to relevant material. Similarly, she does not delve too deeply into allied cultural movements, with the possible exception of the Art-in Living Group which, with Binning, among its

members promoted in 1945 a Modernist planned neighbourhood to replace the blighted east side. Moreover, she displays a refreshing courage in incorporating some polemic in her summation, especially remarking on the power of local activism.

University of British Columbia

RHODRI WINDSOR LISCOMBE