Book Reviews

Pauline: A Biography of Pauline Johnson, by Betty Keller. Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 1981 [1982]. Pp. [v], 317; illus.; selected biblio; index. $19.95.

Pauline Johnson, known also as Tekahionwake or "The Mohawk Princess," was born in Brantford, Ontario in 1861 at Chiefswood, the residence of her Mohawk father, George Johnson, and her English Quaker mother, Emily Elliott. Her education befitted the daughter of a chief who sat in the Mohawk senate: tutored at home until the age of 14 by an English governess and her mother, then educated at Brantford Collegiate for two years. It was there that she cultivated her father's taste for costumes and pageantry — the parlour and study of Chiefswood were adorned with pictures of Napoleon and Bismarck — by performing in school plays. Seven years after leaving Brantford Collegiate she sold her first poem to *The Week*; during the next thirteen years she sold only thirteen more poems. She might have remained a minor, unprolific poet had former school friend Frank Yeigh not invited her to participate in a group poetry reading at the Young Men's Liberal Club of Ontario in Toronto in 1892. When she recited "A Cry from an Indian Wife," inspired by the Riel Rebellion of 1885, the audience "broke into wild applause." A week later Yeigh, acting as her manager, booked her into Toronto's Association Hall. Pauline Johnson's career as a professional recitalist and platform entertainer had begun.

Billed as "The Mohawk Princess" and dressed in a fringed buckskin dress with wampum belts and a Huron scalp hanging from her waist, she recited such poems as "The Song My Paddle Sings." Pauline Johnson travelled back and forth across Canada and the United States over the next sixteen years. Sometimes she was alone, but more frequently she toured with her partners, first the elocutionist, ventriloquist and impersonator Owen Smily, and then the "entertainer and monologist" J. Walter McRaye. She also travelled abroad. On her first trip to Great

Britain in 1894 she arranged for the publication of her book of poems, *The White Wampum*, by the Bodley Head, and with letters of introduction from such personages as Lord Aberdeen, W. F. Cockshutt and Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper she gave recitals at the social evenings of Lord Ripon, among others, and hob-nobbed with artists Sir Frederic Leighton and Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema. On her second trip, in 1906, under the patronage of Lord and Lady Strathcona she and McRaye performed at Steinway Hall as well as in the drawing rooms of London's Mayfair.

In 1909, after sixteen years of one-night stands in everything from community halls in Kootenay mining towns to fashionable London parlours, Pauline Johnson's performing career ended. Choosing Vancouver for her retirement she took an apartment in the city's West End and spent her time "writing, walking, entertaining, and then more writing." Besides providing stories for *The Boy's World* and *Mother's Magazine*, she combined the poems in *The White Wampum* and *Canadian Born* into *Flint and Feather*. Nor was she neglected by her distinguished patrons and friends during her last years. The Duke of Connaught visited her on his trip to British Columbia in 1912. Chief Joe Capilano, whom she had met in London in 1906, recounted his legends, which she put into story form. They first appeared in the Vancouver *Province* and then, in 1911, were combined under the title, *Legends of Vancouver*. When there was not enough money to live on from her writing and when she was suffering from cancer, funds were raised by the city's mayor, Charles Manley Douglas, the Women's Press Club, the Women's Canadian Club and her old patron Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper. Public interest in Pauline Johnson did not stop with her death in March 1913. The city's leading sculptor, Charles Marega, produced a monument to her memory. In 1922 it appeared alongside her ashes, which had already been inhumed, by special permission, at Stanley Park's Ferguson Point.

Betty Keller's *Pauline: A Biography of Pauline Johnson* is the first major work to appear on the life of the enigmatic "Mohawk Princess." Unaided by Johnson's manuscripts — they were destroyed shortly after Johnson's death by her sister — the task of reconstructing so peripatetic a life must have been difficult. Keller admirably establishes Johnson's performing circuits and gives much-needed attention to a little-written-of era in Canadian cultural history — the itinerant music hall entertainer. Yet in trying to enliven the central character, to make up for the lacuna of manuscript material which might have allowed the voice of Pauline Johnson to come through, Keller succumbs frequently to using inappropriate generalizations, citing reconstructed conversations and uncritically

accepting newspaper articles, memoirs and Johnson's own published reminiscences. Pauline Johnson's life might have been illuminated if more attention had been given to the public and to the patrons who responded so overwhelmingly to her work. What, for example, made people as diverse as the Canadian Governor-General and a Halifax bank clerk attend salon and opera house evenings to hear her recite? What about the poems and stories themselves? Keller gives them virtually no literary analysis or aesthetic judgement. Nor does she scrutinize their content or the source of their inspiration. How did her poems compare with those of her contemporaries, and why has interest in her work not been sustained? These and many more questions might have been asked.

I came away from the book with a much better idea of Pauline Johnson's travels, her stage partners and her lovers, but of Johnson herself, of the quality and the content of her poetry, of the force that motivated her to write her poems and to perform and of the milieu that enabled her to sustain a reputation on the platform for sixteen years, I am still uncertain. The subject must clearly emerge from a biography; Pauline Johnson does not live in *Pauline*.

University of British Columbia MARIA TIPPETT

The Forces Which Shaped Them, by Mary Ashworth. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1979. Pp. 238.

The main part of this book is a factual, non-emotional account of the problems encountered by native Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Doukhobors and East Indians in B.C. in obtaining an appropriate education for their children. It covers the years between 1858 and 1979.

Professor Ashworth has researched her topics thoroughly. Her material is presented through quotes from the journals and reports of the early missionaries, the minutes of school board meetings, editorials from newspapers and magazines, and interviews with adults who were children during the years under discussion. Relevant sections of Royal Commission reports, Immigration Acts, UNESCO monographs, Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, doctoral dissertations, books and unpublished research are also included.

The introduction by Rosemary Brown suggests that this historical survey is evidence that there was and continues to be a political plot to promote racism and to exploit minorities by denying their children an

education and by attempting to stamp out their languages. She says the survey "exposes racism as a deliberate political policy legislated by elected representatives and implemented by bureaucrats" (p. ii).

A more moderate approach is taken by Ashworth in the first five chapters, which deal with each minority group in historical sequence. The reader is allowed to absorb the facts with a minimum of interpretive comment. One gets a clear picture of the excessive zeal of the missionaries to Christianize the native Indians, the bungling inconsistencies of all levels of government in dealing with the education of the Chinese and the Doukhobors, the inordinate fear of the "Yellow Peril" and the anti-oriental legislation directed toward the Japanese, especially during World War II, and the fluctuating immigration policies which affected the Chinese, the Japanese and the East Indians. Two social issues are threaded through the narrative and force the reader to examine her/his own attitudes. The first is the unreasoning biases against people of a different colour, creed and lifestyle; the second is the self-interest and tension which surface in the workforce when jobs are at stake during an economic recession.

The final section of the book, titled *Afterwords*, summarizes the role that governments, professional organizations, schools, ethnic groups, parents, churches and politicians should have played, and should be playing, to control the forces which shape the lives of children. The question, "Who should speak for the children?" is examined. At this point, some of the objectivity of the book is lost. If there are weaknesses in the book they lie in the somewhat simplistic generalizations and remedies suggested for the protection of children. The plea, "Let the Indians control Indian education" (p. 53), sounds most reasonable but in actuality is a means of sweeping the problem under the rug. Experience in Third World countries has proven that without preparing people to become independent through patient, unobtrusive support from social and educational resources over a period of time, the result is a power struggle rather than an improvement in education. It would be well for those now in charge of the education of native children to heed the words of the late Chief Dan George: "We need specialized help in education . . . specialized help in the formative years . . . special courses in English. We need guidance counselling . . . " (p. 42).

Criticism is levelled at the refusal of some school boards in British Columbia to allow the showing to school children of the tape/slide show produced by the BCTF Task Force on Racism in British Columbia. This might be a way to acknowledge that a problem exists, but it is notori-

ously an ineffective way to change deep-rooted bigotry and social attitudes. The parallel that is drawn between this and the defensive driving course shown in secondary schools is a case in point. Showing tragic pictures of car accidents has not reduced appreciably the slaughter of teenagers on the highways of the province. Whatever the motive was for the suppression of the presentation by a few districts, it is doubtful that it was "the manipulation of the system by politicians and the community to enslave, exploit, or deprive individuals or groups of the rights and opportunities which education can make available to them" (p. iv).

A national policy regarding the education of Canadian children which is suggested (p. 213) would probably go the way of all such general statements as long as education continues to be a provincial responsibility. At present, it is impossible to agree on common basic textbooks to facilitate the learning of children who move from one national or provincial jurisdiction to another. With more and more educational decision-making being lodged with individual school districts, sound educational policies and practices based on the knowledge of all children and their needs, present and future, rather than sentiment and historical guilt, will have to be developed at the local level.

The growing practice of encouraging and teaching languages other than English in the schools is viewed as a step in the right direction to increase mutual understanding and to reduce racial tension. The recommendation by UNESCO that children receive their first instruction in their mother tongue and the development of bilingual-bicultural programs for ethnic minorities in the United States are cited policies and practices which should be adopted in British Columbia. This does not seem to be considered a right of all British Columbia children, as no mention is made of the children whose mother tongue is English and who are being enrolled by their parents in French Immersion Kindergarten and subsequent Primary classes. Although this is not mandatory, the practice is being promoted at the national and provincial level without reference to recent research which shows that it may not be beneficial to all children. Ashworth quotes only one piece of research published in 1972 by the originators of the concept. Are we in danger of creating a new minority? Perhaps more thought should be given to the quotation from *Admittance Restricted: The Child as a Citizen of Canada*, which heads *Afterwords* (p. 199):

> Children's dependency renders them uniquely vulnerable to becoming invisible casualties of institutions which assume that by responding to the needs

of adults, they simultaneously and adequately address the needs of the children who depend on adults.

The publication of this book coincided with the International Year of the Child. One of the goals of highlighting this particular year was to increase people's awareness of the status of children in Canada. *The Forces Which Shaped Them* has added greatly to the achievement of this goal through consciousness and conscience-raising directed toward the cruelties, inequities and inconsistencies that have existed in the past. An informed public is rarely an apathetic one — a condition which Professor Ashworth quite rightly deplores. She has provided enlightenment in a style that makes the lesson palatable.

This book should be read not just by those who have the responsibility of planning and implementing education programs but by all citizens who must make their voices heard in preventing future injustices to all children in social and educational systems in Canada.

University of Victoria JEAN DEY

The Yuquot Project. Vols. 1-3. William J. Folan and John Dewhirst, Project Editors. Vol. 1, 1980, 358 and viii pp., $15.00; vol. II, 1980, 193 pp., $11.25; vol. 3, 1981, 178 pp., $10.25. Volumes 39, 43 and 44 in History and Archaeology series, Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Ottawa. Numerous illustrations, paper.

These three volumes are not for the casual reader interested in the romance of archaeology. They contain instead the long-awaited descriptions of the excavations and stratigraphy, and most of the technical analyses of the items recovered from the 1966 excavations at Yuquot, the famous Nootkan Indian village at Friendly Cove on the outside edge of Vancouver Island. While prehistorians will be pleased with these publications, historians will probably be disappointed. The investigators went to Nootka to dig the Spanish military post of San Lorenzo de Nutka (1789-95) and Meares' factory (1788-95?), but found modern dwellings and a Catholic graveyard right where they wished to excavate. Rather than go home, they trenched the central portion of the midden mound and continued digging until reaching wet sand and gravel still containing a few beach-rolled artifacts some eighteen feet down. What this excavation provided was a sampling of tools and subsistence remains spanning the last 4,300 years. Only the thin top layer dates to the historic period.

Volume I, *The Indigenous Archaeology of Yuquot, a Nootkan Outside Village*, by John Dewhirst, provides the main integrative framework; the other volumes contain multiple technical analyses by fifteen other authors. One will find everything one always wanted to know about everything excavated at a coastal archaeological site (except for several important analyses presumably yet to come, such as fish and mammal bone identifications and frequencies). Artifacts, avian fauna, barnacles, beads, ceramics, geology, glassware, human osteology, lithology, molluscs, and tobacco pipes in all their frequencies, variations and distributions are all given. Everything is well described and well illustrated, and this report is the best ever to come out of Ottawa describing an archaeological project in British Columbia.

The presentation is well organized, straightforward and complete, and is not limited to pure description. Dewhirst summarizes the full set of "pre-archaeological" conceptions about Nootkan prehistory, and uses the archaeological evidence both to refute them and to present an excellent chronological summary. The only surprise is that Nootka whaling begins rather late in the sequence. Otherwise the archaeology is very much like that of those adjacent coastal regions also occupied by Wakashan speakers. With this publication another region of the province loses its status as *terra incognita*, available for any speculative reconstruction of coastal prehistory one wants to push, and becomes just another piece of the puzzle.

Simon Fraser University ROY L. CARLSON

Summer of Promise: Victoria 1864-1914, by Derek Pethick. Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1980. Pp. 191; illus.; $8.95, paper.

Summer of Promise is the sequel to the author's earlier book, *Victoria: The Fort* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1968), which carried Victoria's story from its founding as a Hudson's Bay Company post in 1843 to 1864, the year of two memorable events — the retirement of Sir James Douglas as governor and the dismantling of the palisades of the fort. In the best-written chapter of the present book, Pethick paints a nice overview of Victoria in 1864 by drawing on his earlier work. The subtitle of the first book was an obvious one; "Summer of Promise" is more elusive but exploits an 1864 *Colonist* editorial describing the colony "gradually gliding to a more serene season, the summer of our political maturity"

(p. 15). Between 1864 and the outbreak of the First World War, Pethick suggests, were "fifty years of peaceful progress, in which the city's spring time would pass into summer, and its buds of promise come to flower and fruit" (p. 16).

Because of the strictly chronological organization of all but the prologue and epilogue, "progress," as an advance forward in time, permeates the book. Yet, despite reports of such new material inventions as the telephone, electric light, phonograph, electric street railway, the automobile and airplane, one wonders if progress, as an improvement, is really the right notion for the whole of this half century of Victoria's history. Undoubtedly, as census statistics show, the city's population was growing throughout the period, but Victoria's relative importance declined after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885. As he carefully records the death of yet another pioneer, Pethick seems to sense that Victoria's days of glory were on the wane. Indeed, his moving conclusion, a comment on the outbreak of the 1914 war, that "someone had blundered," that Victorians could not count on their little world being secure, is a clear hint that the promise perceived in 1864 had not been entirely fulfilled.

Pethick has compiled this chronicle largely by reading through fifty years of the Victoria *Daily Colonist*. (Throughout, he uses the more familiar *Colonist,* even though the journal had "British" in its title until 1886). Unfortunately, he makes no real assessment of his source; he fails to note, for example, that for a time James Dunsmuir was its part owner and that surely influenced its editorial policy. Perhaps this is why Pethick is able to report several expansions or alterations to the facilities of the Union Club but never seems to mention the Victoria Trades and Labour Council — or any union, for that matter. The footnotes indicate a selective use of appropriate secondary sources, but Pethick rarely refers to the *Colonist*'s sometimes rivals, the *Standard* (1870-1889) and the *Daily Times* (1884-). Thus, the reader misses much of the thrust of editorial and political rivalries which were so much a part of the journalism of the time. Pethick recounts, for example, that in 1878 D. W. Higgins, the editor of the *Colonist*, was fined five shillings for assaulting a member of the *Standard*'s staff, but does not explain the cause of the altercation (p. 93) or the use of shillings rather than dollars.

Indeed, a fundamental weakness of the book, as of most chronicles, is a failure to explain events. Pethick faithfully records the appearance of new mayors — including the "bier baron," Charles Hayward, a funeral director (p. 121) — but never explains civic political issues. Similarly,

on several occasions Pethick reports that ratepayers rejected sewer bylaws (pp. 106, 121) but does not say why. Nor does he indicate why ratepayers finally approved the sewer in 1890 (p. 124). He records that by 1894 indoor plumbing was almost universal, an event which provides the occasion for one of his more tasteless puns, "(Where are they now, the old familiar faeces?)" (p. 132).

A good editor would have eliminated these self-indulgent puns and anachronistic attempts at humour such as references to the lack of television in the Driard Hotel (p. 72) or the absence of Pierre Berton at Craigellachie in 1885 (p. 110) and would have encouraged Pethick to develop the fine sense of humour he sometimes displays such as the account of the singing of the anthem, "O praise the Lord, all ye heathen," at the fashionable wedding of Martha Douglas, the daughter of Sir James (pp. 91-92), and a good editor would have eliminated the tedious repetition — it only seems that the provincial legislature annually defeated a female suffrage bill — and the curious hodgepodge of facts that a rigid application of the chronological approach to history can produce. For example:

> Early September [1875] saw the death of the S.S. *Beaver*'s most famous master, Captain W. H. McNeill, who was buried by Mr. [*sic*, Bishop] Cridge. New elections for the British Columbia Legislature were held, but De Cosmos was not among the candidates. Eight Sisters of Charity arrived from the East to staff the new hospital, a "wild steer while being driven up Yates Street broke away from its drivers," and water from Elk Lake first entered the homes of Victoria. (p. 83)

To be fair, Pethick did not set out to write a historical monograph but simply "to see these years through the eyes of those who lived them." He has deliberately made "frequent references to the larger national and international scenes . . . [which] . . . most often have been well to the fore of the average citizen's consciousness . . . [and to an] . . . occasional glance to trivial or even ludicrous elements in the passing show, for these, too, formed part of the total pattern of events" (p. 9). The picture Pethick effectively presents demonstrates that Victorian and Edwardian Victorians were remarkably well informed about outside events, whether they be the war between Russia and Turkey, 1877-78 (p. 91) or Lizzie Borden (p. 130); the construction of the Kiel Canal (p. 116) or literary gossip about Lord Byron (pp. 44-45).

Pethick's method of compiling history gives a flavour of the manners and mores of the times. His chronicle, for example, reminds readers of the importance of religion to the Victorian Victorian. "Vancouver Island

was not only part of the British Empire, it was part of Christendom," Pethick remarks (p. 17). His frequent references to church building (especially by Anglicans), his explanation of the Hills-Cridge affair (a schism within the local Anglican community which led to the formation of a Reformed Episcopalian congregation), his report of debates over the place of religion in the schools, and his mention of the *Colonist* questioning the New Testament and suggesting sermon topics all underscore his argument. Yet, while the Anglicans get the most space — an understandable consequence of their having twice as many adherents as any other denomination, according to a local census in 1886 (p. 111) — Pethick gives considerable attention to various spiritualists, though the census indicated only five members of that faith resided in the city, a number immediately questioned by Major James Fell, himself a spiritualist. Given the variety of seances, mediums and spooks that Pethick records, Fell was probably right.

Nevertheless, one suspects the author's own sense of the ludicrous may explain the inclusion of some references such as those to women in trousers or bloomers (pp. 20, 44, 110, 137) or smoking cigarettes (pp. 107, 118, 132) or his description of an American gathering, the "International Women's Congress" as the "storm troopers of the maladjusted" (p. 118). And, though he mentions two widely advertised patent medicines, Castoria and Cuticura, he refrains from further illustrations of the many large advertisements for patent medicines and devices which must have contributed to the *Colonist*'s revenues and whose persistence over the years suggests something of the level of medical sophistication of the times.

The selection process suggests that the unique was far more likely to be recorded than the routine event such as the earning of a living. For example, two prominent businessmen are mentioned. R. P. Rithet appears as mayor, as president of a fishing club and as the builder of "a large pier" (p. 124), and J. H. Turner is noted as mayor and premier, but nowhere does the book suggest their involvement — or that of anyone else — in the important salmon canning industry for which Victoria was long the commercial headquarters. Similarly, the Albion Iron Works — a major local manufacturer — appears only in a footnote (p. 181, n. 9) and then only because one of its managers imported a steam-driven car. Although Victoria at one time was home to many sawmills, the only mention of the lumber industry occurs in reference to the dismissal of Chinese employees by the Sayward Lumber Mill in 1894 (p. 130). Pethick apparently passed over the pages of the *Colonist*'s occasional

supplements on the local economy. Granted, such special issues generally belong to the genre of "booster" literature but, used with care, they can be an excellent source of information on the local economy.

In some respects, the book itself is a "gold mine" of information about Victoria, but it is an eclectic rather than a comprehensive study. Moreover, it is sometimes frustrating to use. There is a fair nominal index, but its coverage by subject is erratic. Thus one can easily find references to schools but not to sewers, to wages but not to water works. A number of well-chosen photographs and illustrations complement the text, but the captions are often thin and usually undated. Nevertheless, this is an interesting book which presents one man's selection of what one newspaper recorded of life in Victoria, 1864-1914. It offers some of the flavour of the times, indicates that Victoria was a lively place, makes light reading for friends of Victoria who are interested in the beginnings of some of its institutions and, above all, suggests a great many questions about Victoria's past. If some readers of this volume are enticed to investigate the causes and consequences of some of the events Pethick relates, the volume will have performed a useful service.

University of Victoria PATRICIA E. ROY

Forty Years' Journey: The Temperance Movement in British Columbia to 1900, by Harold Tuttle Allen. Victoria, B.C.: Privately Published, 1981 (Available from the author, 7850 Champlain Avenue, Vancouver, B.C.). Pp. 138; $8.00, paper.

Forty Years' Journey is a labour of love by a retired United Church of Canada minister and long-time devoted worker in the temperance and prohibition movements. He is not a professional historian, and readers of this book should not look for the treatment that a professional would give the topic. There are a number of typesetting errors throughout the volume, and the table on page 125 has a pair of transposed lines that are somewhat confusing. Although annoying, these minor faults do not obscure the information the author is purveying.

Mr. Allen has divided his book into two major divisions, "The Coast" and "The Interior," and chapters within these divisions feature headings such as "How Liquor Came to British Columbia," "The First Temperance Movement," "Women's Big Day," "Developments on the New Rail Route" and "Prohibition Plebiscite." The point at which the volume

ends, the refusal of the federal government to enact prohibition legislation after the 1898 plebiscite, is rather anti-climatic; 1918 might have given a more dramatic ending.

This book is a chronicle rather than an analysis of temperance endeavours, and those interested in the names of temperance workers in nineteenth-century B.C. will find an abundance of information here. However, lack of an index makes finding a particular name somewhat challenging.

The volume is sprinkled with humorous anecdotes such as that of the illiterate lady who sought to observe a Victoria Temperance League pledge made by her late husband. When questioned as to how her periodic inebriation could be reconciled with observance of the pledge she explained that she drank only whiskey, never the rum which she understood was the beverage her husband had agreed to abandon.

Forty Years' Journey could be a useful starting point for an analytical narrative of the temperance movement in B.C. in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

ROBERT J. MCCUE