

A Half Century of Writing on Vancouver's History*

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At the time of Vancouver's Golden Jubilee, Walter N. Sage, a historian at the University of British Columbia, wrote a historical sketch, "Vancouver: The Rise of a City," in the *Dalhousie Review*.¹ This article, published in distant Halifax, was probably the first attempt by a professional historian to present an overview of the city's history. So new was Vancouver that Sage wrote of "old timers" who remembered the first clearings, and so imbued was he by their spirit of optimism that, despite the Depression, he suggested the city was "preparing for another boom." He also noted the "small but growing City Archives." Sage may have planned to write a large-scale study himself. In 1932-33 the Canadian Club of Vancouver granted him \$250 to collect and copy material for a history of Vancouver.² The resulting six bound volumes of typescripts demonstrate the physical impediments to historical research before the easy availability of copying machines, the lack then of accessible manuscript sources and, especially, the narrow focus of historical interest. The collection includes extracts from *British Columbia Magazine*, circa 1911, biographies from R. E. Gosnell's *History of British Columbia* and newspaper stories about anti-Asian disturbances of 1886-87 and 1907.

In the meantime, the indefatigable Major J. S. Matthews, the more or less self-appointed city archivist, began collecting and interpreting selected

* I wish to thank the editors of this volume, Jean Barman and Robert McDonald, for their helpful suggestions. However, I am wholly responsible for any sins of omission and for all judgements on the literature.

¹ Vol. XVII (April 1937), pp. 49-54. In 1946 Sage took the city's story up to that date. Though noting the "sterner days" of Wars and Depression, his outlook was still optimistic. For example, his few paragraphs on the Depression referred to grain exports and the new city hall but not to demonstrations of the unemployed. Indeed, he concluded by suggesting that "if Vancouverites will only look back on the sixty years of progress since 1886 they can look towards the future with calmness and confidence." W. N. Sage, "Vancouver: 60 Years of Progress," *Journal of Commerce Year Book* 13 (1946): 97-115.

² A set of the volumes was deposited in the Library of the University of British Columbia. The W. N. Sage Papers in the Special Collections Division of that Library provide information on the origins of the volumes.

fragments of Vancouver's history. While Matthews' many publications are most kindly described as antiquarian miscellanies, the opinionated major did make Vancouver residents realize they had a history worth preserving.

If Sage could see Vancouver in 1986, its physical expansion might not startle him; the growth of its historiography undoubtedly would. Indeed, the Centennial will be marked by the publication of an assortment of neighbourhood and specialized studies, a major bibliographical guide compiled by Linda Hale and published by the Vancouver Historical Society,³ and, of course, this volume. Despite the apparent proliferation of material, it is safe to say that no aspect of Vancouver's history has been completely and systematically examined and that many subjects remain virtually unexplored.

Until the late 1950s, academic interest in Vancouver's history was limited even though *The British Columbia Historical Quarterly* (*BCHQ*), founded in 1937, provided scholars with an attractive place in which to publish their findings. Significantly, except for articles by its editor and provincial archivist, W. Kaye Lamb, on trans-Pacific shipping and a complementary study of the Trans-Pacific Mail service to Australia by a columnist for *Harbour and Shipping*, most writers on Vancouver subjects concentrated on the pre-railway era. For example, Judge F. W. Howay, at one time the province's leading historian, contributed several articles to the *BCHQ* on economic and social developments on Burrard Inlet in the 1860s and 1870s.⁴ Younger scholars were similarly fascinated by the pioneer era.⁵ One M.A. graduate even wrote on newspapers published in Vancouver before the arrival of the CPR!

The fading of the *BCHQ* in the 1950s paradoxically paralleled a rising interest in British Columbia history as epitomized by the publication in

³ Linda Hale, comp., *Vancouver Centennial Bibliography*, 4 vols. (Vancouver: Vancouver Historical Society, 1986).

⁴ Lamb, "Empress Odyssey: A History of the Canadian Pacific Service to the Orient, 1913-1945," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* [hereafter *BCHQ*] 11 (January 1948): 1-78, "Empress to the Orient," *BCHQ* 4 (January 1940): 29-56 and *BCHQ* 4 (April 1940): 79-110 and "The Pioneer Days of the Trans-Pacific Service," *BCHQ* 1 (July 1937): 143-64; J. H. Hamilton, "The All-Red Route, 1893-1958: A History of the Trans-Pacific Mail Service between British Columbia, Australia and New Zealand," *BCHQ* 20 (January-April 1956): 1-126; Howay, "Coal Mining on Burrard Inlet," *BCHQ* 4 (January 1940): 1-20, "Early Settlement on Burrard Inlet," *BCHQ* 1 (April 1937): 101-14 and "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," *BCHQ* 1 (January 1937): 1-20.

⁵ For example, Helen R. Boutillier, "Vancouver's Earliest Days," *BCHQ* 10 (April 1946): 151-70; Bessie Lamb, "From 'Tickler' to 'Telegram': Notes on Early Vancouver Newspapers," *BCHQ* 12 (July 1945): 175-99.

1958 of a provincial centennial volume, *British Columbia: A History* by Margaret A. Ormsby.⁶ Ormsby's stage was the entire province but in a few paragraphs she vividly depicted the development of Vancouver as a metropolis. While Ormsby was familiar with Maurice Careless's now classic article on metropolitanism and the literature from which it developed,⁷ she was not the first to apply metropolitan themes to Vancouver. Indeed, Sage, who is chiefly recorded in Canadian historiography as an early proponent of the frontier thesis,⁸ implicitly accepted metropolitanism in his Vancouver article. Since then, despite its complexities and inexactness,⁹ or more likely because of them, and because of its adaptability to the whiggish idea of the city getting bigger and better, metropolitanism has provided historians of Vancouver with a convenient, if not always rigorous, theme.

A good example of the subsumption of the concept is *Vancouver: From Milltown to Metropolis*,¹⁰ whose author, Alan Morley, extensively quoted Ormsby's comments on Vancouver's metropolitan role. In a sense, Morley also serves as a bridge between the preoccupation with pioneers and a growing interest in the city's later years. Morley, a journalist, first demonstrated his interest in Vancouver's history in a series of pioneer stories published in 1940 in the *Vancouver Sun*; fully a third of his book deals with the years before incorporation. It is tempting to dismiss Morley's work as a chronicle of "facts" and anecdotes, but a careful reading reveals that Morley is telling the story of Vancouver "flowering into a metropolis" (p. 189).

In 1970, about a year after the publication of a second edition of Morley's book, another Vancouver writer, Eric Nicol, contributed *Vancouver*¹¹ to "The Romance of Canadian Cities Series." Nicol, a highly acclaimed humorist and essayist, strains to sustain humour throughout Vancouver's history. Like Morley, his approach is anecdotal; he develops his stories more fully but presents less information, and he lacks the in-

⁶ Toronto: Macmillan, 1958. A revised edition was published in 1971.

⁷ "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History," *Canadian Historical Review* [hereafter *CHR*] 35 (March 1954): 1-21.

⁸ "Some Aspects of the Frontier in Canadian History," Canadian Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1928, pp. 62-72.

⁹ See Donald F. Davis, "The 'Metropolitan Thesis' and the Writing of Canadian Urban History," *Urban History Review* [hereafter *UHR*] XIV (October 1985): 95-113.

¹⁰ *Vancouver*: Mitchell Press, 1969 (second edition). The first edition was published in 1961.

¹¹ New York: Doubleday, 1970.

sightful observations about the nature of the city's growth that occasionally appear in Morley's work. The books do complement each other: Morley focuses on economic and political matters; Nicol is more interested in the kind of social history commonly known as manners. More informative than either Morley or Nicol is *The Vancouver Book*,¹² edited by Chuck Davis, which appeared in 1976. Somewhat of a cross between an encyclopedia and an almanac, its short essays touch on almost every aspect of activity within the city. Its sketches and maps of city neighbourhoods are especially valuable.

Recent histories have relied as much on illustrations as on prose. In *Vancouver's First Century*, Anne Kloppenborg and her former colleagues in the City's Social Planning Department produced a rich scrapbook of historical photographs.¹³ Another exceptionally handsome volume, *Vancouver: The Way It Was*,¹⁴ is remarkable for the detailed watercolour sketches of historic Vancouver scenes by its author, Michael Kluckner, and for its numerous well-chosen historical photographs. Organized by neighbourhoods and incidents, the text is fact-filled but somewhat disjointed.

Photographs are also a feature of *Vancouver: An Illustrated History*¹⁵ by Patricia E. Roy. Unfortunately, the captions, which were concocted in Toronto, are not always accurate. The main text, the first attempt at a book-length academic overview of the city's history, reflects the accessibility of Vancouver's abundant historical record and synthesizes a number of scholarly articles and theses, written mainly in the 1960s and 1970s. Though somewhat constrained by the format of "The History of Canadian Cities" series in which it appears, the volume explores Vancouver's metropolitan aspirations and achievements and its relations with the provincial government.

Roy's book was influenced by several articles on early Vancouver by Norbert MacDonald. The importance of the CPR in directing the city's early growth is extensively documented in "The Canadian Pacific Railway and Vancouver's Development to 1900."¹⁶ His earlier essay, "A Critical

¹² North Vancouver: J. J. Douglas, 1976.

¹³ Anne Kloppenborg et al., eds., *Vancouver's First Century: A City Album, 1860-1960* (Vancouver: J. J. Douglas, 1977). A second edition, carrying the subject up to 1985, was published in 1985.

¹⁴ Vancouver: Whitecap, 1984.

¹⁵ Toronto: James Lorimer, 1980.

¹⁶ *BC Studies* [hereafter *BCS*] 35 (Autumn 1977): 3-35. [Reprinted in W. P. Ward and R. A. J. McDonald, eds., *British Columbia: Historical Readings* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1981), pp. 396-425.]

Growth Cycle for Vancouver, 1900-1914," is a useful narrative follow-up.¹⁷ MacDonald came to his interest in Vancouver with the idea of comparing it with Seattle. An early result was a study of the responses of the two cities to the Klondike Gold Rush,¹⁸ but his most stimulating work is "Population Growth and Change in Seattle and Vancouver, 1880-1960."¹⁹

While Norbert MacDonald has delineated the general outlines of the city's early decades and raised some interesting comparative questions, his colleague, Robert A. J. McDonald, has intensively analyzed the city's early business elites and their role in developing the city. One of his first articles, "City-Building in the Canadian West: A Case Study of Economic Growth in Early Vancouver, 1886-1893,"²⁰ suggests that "the outline of Vancouver's role as a metropolitan centre for the resource economy of British Columbia was clearly discernible by 1893." Attributing this to what he calls internal factors, namely the "railroad and real estate interests," rather than to more outward-looking businessmen such as "wholesale merchants, lumbermen or salmon canners," McDonald emphasizes that "the growth-producing regional connections that later propelled Vancouver to metropolitan status were not yet the principal agents of city expansion" (p. 28). In a subsequent article, covering a broader time period and concentrating particularly on the changing relationships of Vancouver and Victoria,²¹ he has shown how, beginning in the 1890s, the expansion of the provincial economy and strengthening of continental rather than maritime ties led to "Vancouver's triumph over Victoria" (p. 39). The geographer, L. D. McCann, has explored the same theme in a more generalized and theoretically focused essay.²²

¹⁷ *BCS* 17 (Spring 1973): 26-42. The two articles have been revised and combined as "'C.P.R. Town': The City-Building Process in Vancouver, 1860-1914," in G. A. Stelter and A. F. J. Artibise, eds., *Shaping the Urban Landscape: Aspects of the Canadian City-Building Process* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982), pp. 382-412.

¹⁸ *CHR XLIX* (September 1968): 234-46.

¹⁹ *Pacific Historical Review* 39 (October 1970): 297-321. [Reprinted in J. Friesen and H. K. Ralston, eds., *Historical Essays on British Columbia* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976), pp. 201-27.] Also see his forthcoming *Distant Neighbors: A Comparative History of Seattle and Vancouver* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press).

²⁰ *BCS* 43 (Autumn 1979): 3-28.

²¹ "Victoria, Vancouver, and the Economic Development of British Columbia, 1886-1914," in A. F. J. Artibise, ed., *Town and City* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1981), pp. 31-55. [Reprinted in Ward and McDonald, *British Columbia*, pp. 369-95.]

²² "Urban Growth in a Staple Economy: The Emergence of Vancouver as a Regional Metropolis, 1886-1914," in L. J. Evenden, ed., *Vancouver: Western Metropolis* (Victoria: University of Victoria, 1978), pp. 17-41. This volume consists of a

Vancouver's dominance of its hinterland is also implicit in a variety of works on transportation such as histories of the Union Steamship Company and the Canadian Pacific's coastal fleet and an article on Premier Richard McBride's railway policies.²³ A very detailed study of John Hendry, a railway promoter and lumberman, illustrates the metropolitan ambitions of one Vancouver resident and sheds light on the relation between business and government in the early twentieth century,²⁴ a theme examined in several articles on the British Columbia Electric Railway Company that also provide some information about urban transportation.²⁵ Metropolitan ambitions were not confined to the white business community. As Paul Yee's studies of Chinese business records demonstrate, members of Vancouver's Chinese community also organized trade throughout the province.²⁶ Studies of individual companies and businessmen are still rare. Nevertheless, several locally based firms such as the forest giant MacMillan-Bloedel, Canadian Pacific Air Lines and Woodward's Department Stores have commissioned histories of themselves or their founders. To these, Donald Gutstein's *Vancouver, Ltd.*,²⁷ which is less sympathetic to business, offers some contrast.

The role of businessmen also appears in several studies of recreational facilities. William McKee has argued that the parks system that evolved

number of essays, mainly but not exclusively contemporary, on the general theme suggested by its title.

- ²³ Gerald Rushton, *Echoes of the Whistle: An Illustrated History of the Union Steamship Company* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1980); Norman R. Hacking and W. Kaye Lamb, *The Princess Story: A Century and a Half of West Coast Shipping* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1974); Patricia E. Roy, "Progress, Prosperity and Politics: The Railway Policies of Richard McBride," *BCS* 47 (Autumn 1980): 3-28.
- ²⁴ Phyllis Veazey, "John Hendry and the Vancouver, Westminster and Yukon Railway: 'It Would Put Us on Easy Street,'" *BCS* 59 (Autumn 1983): 44-63.
- ²⁵ Patricia E. Roy, "Regulating the British Columbia Electric Railway: The First Public Utilities Commission in B.C.," *BCS* 11 (Fall 1971): 3-20; "The Fine Art of Lobbying and Persuading: The Case of the B.C. Electric Railway," in David S. Macmillan, ed., *Canadian Business History: Selected Studies* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972), pp. 125-43; "Direct Management from Abroad: The Formative Years of the British Columbia Electric Railway," *Business History Review* 47 (Summer 1973): 239-59.
- ²⁶ In addition to the paper in this volume see "Business Devices from Two Worlds: The Chinese in Early Vancouver," *BCS* 62 (Summer 1984): 44-67.
- ²⁷ Donald MacKay, *Empire of Wood: the MacMillan Bloedel Story* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1982); Ronald A. Keith, *Bush Pilot with a Briefcase* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1972); Douglas E. Harker, *The Woodwards* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1976); Donald Gutstein, *Vancouver, Ltd.* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1975).

from 1886 to 1929 was "a product of local businessmen,"²⁸ while David Breen and Kenneth Coates have demonstrated the importance of businessmen in establishing the Pacific National Exhibition,²⁹ and Robert McDonald has used controversies relating to the uses of Stanley Park to explore class differences in Vancouver.³⁰

Nevertheless, historians have neither exhausted the possibilities of examining Vancouver's businesses and businessmen nor fully studied the history of organized labour. Since 1899, when the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council was founded, Vancouver has been the centre for much of the activity of organized labour in the province — a fact underscored, for example, in Stuart Jamieson's now classic essay, "Regional Factors in Industrial Conflict."³¹ Surprisingly, despite the availability of records, no one has written a full study of the Council, though it is mentioned in general studies of the labour movement in western Canada. A few unions have sponsored the writing of their own histories. One of the best is *That Long Distance Feeling: A History of the Telecommunications Union*, by Elaine Bernard.³² This book is especially valuable for its references to the effects of technological change on workers and on the place of women in the workplace. In "Union Maids: Organized Women Workers in Vancouver, 1900-1915,"³³ Star Rosenthal undertook a pioneer study of that long-ignored subject, women in the workforce. The marginality of that place is well demonstrated in Deborah Nilsen's essay on prostitution. The developing interest in women's studies has also led to the publication of several essays on women in organizations as diverse as the Waitresses' Union and the University Women's Club.³⁴

²⁸ "The Vancouver Park System, 1886-1929: A Product of Local Businessmen, *UHR* 3-78 (February 1979): 33-49.

²⁹ *Vancouver's Fair: An Administrative & Political History of the Pacific National Exhibition* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982).

³⁰ "'Holy Retreat' or 'Practical Breathing Spot'? : Class Perceptions of Vancouver's Stanley Park, 1910-1913," *CHR* LXV (June 1984): 127-53.

³¹ "Regional Factors in Industrial Conflict: The Case of British Columbia," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* XXXVIII (August 1962): 405-16. [Reprinted in Friesen and Ralston, *Historical Essays*, pp. 238-42 and Ward and McDonald, *British Columbia*, pp. 500-14.]

³² Vancouver: New Star, 1982.

³³ *BCS* 41 (Spring 1979): 36-55.

³⁴ Deborah Nilsen, "The 'Social Evil': Prostitution in Vancouver, 1900-1920," in Barbara Latham and Cathy Kess, eds., *In Her Own Right: Selected Essays in Women's History in British Columbia* (Victoria: Camosun College, 1980), pp. 205-28. Three other essays in the same volume are of interest: Marie Campbell, "Sexism in British Columbia Trade Unions," pp. 147-86; Susan Wade, "Helena Gutteridge: Votes for Women and Trade Unions," pp. 187-203; and Tami Adil-

Historians have focused characteristically on dramatic incidents such as the severe labour unrest around the time of the First World War³⁵ or the events that led to Mayor G. G. McGeer's reading of the Riot Act and the departure of the On-To-Ottawa-Trek in 1935. The "Red Scare," which McGeer exploited politically, also provides the background for R. C. McCandless' study of the waterfront strike of 1935. Unrest, of course, did not end in 1935. Good evidence of this may be found in Steve Brodie's recollections of the 1938 Sit Downers' Strike.³⁶

Closely related to labour unrest was the question of relief for the unemployed and others unable to provide for themselves. In "Public Welfare: Vancouver Style, 1910-1920,"³⁷ Diane Matters sketches the various resources available to the needy, including women and children, around the time of the First World War, while in "Vancouver: A 'Mecca' for the Unemployed,"³⁸ Patricia Roy shows how the city tried to cope with periodic influxes of unemployed men before 1930. Irene Howard's refreshing essay in this volume documents how left-wing women helped the unemployed men in the 1930s; Mary Patricia Powell has described how the more broadly based Local Council of Women showed support

man, "Evlyn Farris and the University Women's Club," pp. 147-66. See also Gillian Weiss, "The Brightest Women of Our Land: Vancouver Clubwomen, 1919-1928," in Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro, *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia* (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984), pp. 199-209, and, in the same volume, Marilyn Barber, "The Gentlewomen of Queen Mary's Coronation Hostel," pp. 141-58.

³⁵ Vancouver incidents are included in such general studies of labour in Western Canada as Paul Phillips, *No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in B.C.* (Vancouver: B.C. Federation of Labour, 1967); A. Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement, 1899-1919* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977); David J. Bercuson, *Fools and Wise Men: The Rise and Fall of the One Big Union* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978); and Martin Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour, 1880-1930* (Kingston: Queen's University, Industrial Relations Centre, 1968). One article that focuses mainly on Vancouver is Patricia E. Roy, "The British Columbia Electric Railway and Its Street Railway Employees: Paternalism in Labour Relations," *BCS* 16 (Winter 1972-73): 3-24.

³⁶ Ronald Liversedge, ed., *Recollections of the On To Ottawa Trek*, ed. by Victor Howard (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973); "Vancouver's 'Red Menace' of 1935: The Waterfront Situation," *BCS* 22 (Summer 1974): 56-70. Some of the strikers' own recollections may be found in ILWU Local 500 Pensioners, *Man Along the Shore: The Story of the Vancouver Waterfront* (Vancouver, 1975); Steve Brodie, *Bloody Sunday Vancouver — 1938* (Vancouver: Young Communist League, 1974).

³⁷ *Journal of Canadian Studies* 14 (Spring 1979): 3-15.

³⁸ Artibise, ed., *Town and City*, pp. 393-413.

for unemployed men while concentrating on the problems of unemployed women.³⁹

Although Vancouver had many difficulties in providing adequate social welfare services, Margaret Andrews has demonstrated early Vancouver's great pride in its public health program and great interest in public health matters during the Influenza Epidemic of 1918-19. A related study examines the patterns of practice of Vancouver doctors, 1886-1920.⁴⁰ Andrews is sympathetic to the medical profession. In contrast, in their essay in this volume, Veronica Strong-Boag and Kathryn McPherson contend that in obstetrical matters doctors did not always know best. Though writing from different points of view, all of these authors on medical subjects allude to a recurring theme in studies of Vancouver's history, namely the population's transient nature. Important as this basic theme is, few historians have systematically examined it.

Some of the documentation for such a study may well exist in the records of the Vancouver School Board. However, despite the importance of education and some of the Board's innovations, historians have given the schools relatively short shrift. Specific exceptions are "house" histories of the first fifty years of the high schools and of the University of British Columbia.⁴¹ Vancouver schools, however, receive more than passing mention in such provincial studies as F. H. Johnson's *History of Public Education in British Columbia*,⁴² Jean Barman's *Growing Up British in British Columbia: Boys in Private School*⁴³ and essays on public schooling by Timothy Dunn, on kindergartens by Gillian Weiss and on schools for juvenile delinquents by Diane Matters.⁴⁴ As well, a national survey,

³⁹ "A Response to the Depression: The Local Council of Women of Vancouver," in Latham and Kess, *In Her Own Right*, pp. 255-78.

⁴⁰ "The Best Advertisement a City Can Have: Public Health Services in Vancouver, 1886-1888," *UHR* XII (February 1984): 19-27; "Epidemic and Public Health: Influenza in Vancouver, 1918-1919," *BCS* 34 (Summer 1977): 21-44; "Medical Attendance in Vancouver, 1886-1920," *BCS* 40 (Winter 1978-79): 32-56.

⁴¹ [K. A. Waites, ed.] *The First Fifty Years: Vancouver High Schools, 1890-1940* [Vancouver: Vancouver Board of School Trustees, 1940]; H. T. Logan, *Tuum Est: A History of the University of British Columbia* (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia, 1958).

⁴² Vancouver: University of British Columbia Publications Centre, 1964.

⁴³ Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984.

⁴⁴ Timothy A. Dunn, "The Rise of Mass Public Schooling in British Columbia, 1900-1929," in J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones, eds., *Schooling and Society in Twentieth Century British Columbia* (Calgary: Detselig, 1980), pp. 23-51; Gillian Weiss, "An Essential Year for the Child: The Kindergarten in British Columbia," in Wilson and Jones, *Schooling and Society*, pp. 139-61; Diane L. Matters, "The Boys' Industrial School: Education for Juvenile Offenders," in Wilson and Jones,

Neil Sutherland's *Children in English-Canadian Society*, includes considerable Vancouver material.⁴⁵ Recently, Sutherland has turned his interests specifically to Vancouver. The charming essay in this volume is an early result.

With their emphasis on the everyday experiences of ordinary people, these recollections of childhood fit the current historical fashion of looking at working-class life.⁴⁶ In a fundamental article that is also important for its methodology, Eleanor Bartlett has constructed statistical series for Vancouver from 1900 to 1929 showing that "inflation often outweighed the benefits" of rapid growth for most working men (p. 60).⁴⁷ The fullest expression of interest in working-class life is the Centennial volume, *Working Lives*. This generously illustrated book includes brief notes on a variety of activities from childbirth to funerals, on occupations as diverse as canning salmon and banking, and on working-class organizations. Four analytical essays tie the sometimes eclectic vignettes together. Anecdotal evidence of working-class life in the first half of the twentieth century can be found in such volumes as Rolf Knight's *Along the #20 Line* and the *Sound Heritage* volume, *Opening Doors*, a collection of interviews with long-time residents of the East End, including Strathcona, Vancouver's immigrant neighbourhood.⁴⁸

Historical studies of Vancouver's ethnic communities, especially its highly visible Asian population, have often concentrated on specific incidents. For example, there are several books on the *Komagata Maru* incident of 1914,⁴⁹ which saw over 300 would-be Sikh immigrants denied entry to Canada, but study of the East Indian community has been the almost exclusive preserve of sociologists.⁵⁰ The East Asian community has

Schooling and Society, pp. 53-70; and Indiana Matters, "Sinners or Sinned Against?: Historical Aspects of Female Juvenile Delinquency in British Columbia," in Latham and Pazdro, *Not Just Pin Money*, pp. 265-77.

⁴⁵ Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976.

⁴⁶ The Working Lives Collective, *Working Lives: Vancouver, 1886-1986* (Vancouver: New Star, 1985).

⁴⁷ *BCS* 51 (Autumn 1981): 3-62.

⁴⁸ *Along the No. 20 Line: Reminiscences of the Vancouver Waterfront* (Vancouver: New Star, 1980); *Sound Heritage VIII* (Victoria: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1979).

⁴⁹ The best is Hugh Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979).

⁵⁰ Though now somewhat dated, a bibliographical essay by Norm Buchignani, "A Review of the Historical and Sociological Literature on East Indians in Canada," *Canadian Ethnic Studies IX* (1977): 86-108 is still useful. Despite its title, James G. Chadney, *The Sikhs of Vancouver* (New York: AMS Press, 1984) is largely a survey of the community in 1972-73.

received more attention because it is larger and older and because the Japanese presence, in particular, led to several incidents of international and national consequence. Since Canada's Chinese and Japanese communities before World War II were largely concentrated in the Vancouver area, general histories such as *From China to Canada*,⁵¹ edited by Edgar Wickberg, and Ken Adachi's *The Enemy That Never Was*⁵² inevitably include considerable Vancouver material.⁵³ Moreover, because the 1907 Anti-Asian Riot created an international incident, that particular subject has even attracted the attention of a Japanese scholar.⁵⁴ Vancouver's other ethnic communities, in contrast, have had a relatively low profile both in fact and in historiography. The native Indians, for example, are virtually non-existent in historical studies of Vancouver, though Rolf Knight's *Indians at Work*⁵⁵ offers a fleeting glimpse of them in various workplaces.

The distinctiveness of Vancouver's neighbourhoods is clearly revealed in two essays in this collection. From her analysis of school board election results and census data, Jean Barman suggests that while Vancouver had neighbourhoods with distinctive demographic characteristics, Vancouver voters, at least in the interwar years, demonstrated a sense of community that transcended local areas. Using descriptions of housing and the residents' comments, Deryck Holdsworth's essay reaches a similar conclusion.⁵⁶ While the homes of workingmen and of business and professional men might differ in size and architectural splendour and be in different neighbourhoods, the owners of "cottages" and "castles" shared

⁵¹ Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1982.

⁵² Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976.

⁵³ A comprehensive though now somewhat dated review of the literature on East Asians is Patricia E. Roy, "'White Canada Forever': Two Generations of Studies," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* XI (1979): 97-109.

⁵⁴ Masako Iino, "Japan's Response to the Vancouver Riot of 1907," *BCS* 60 (Winter 1983-84): 28-47.

⁵⁵ Vancouver: New Star, 1978. Despite its title, Irene Howard, *Vancouver's Svenskar: A History of the Swedish Community in Vancouver* (Vancouver: Vancouver Historical Society, 1970), focuses more on the province than on the city.

⁵⁶ Holdsworth has published several studies of housing styles: "House and Home in Vancouver: Images of West Coast Urbanism, 1886-1929," in G. A. Stelter and A. F. J. Artibise, eds., *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), pp. 186-211, and, with E. G. Mills, "The B. C. Mills Prefabricated System: The Emergence of Ready-Made Buildings in Western Canada," *Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History*, no. 14 (Ottawa: Canadian Historic Sites, 1975), pp. 127-69. Some of Vancouver's most interesting historic buildings are described in Harold Kalman, *Exploring Vancouver 2* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978).

both a "sense that they were part of a distinctive place" and a pride in home ownership. As John Weaver has shown, the tendency toward single family residential neighbourhoods was reinforced by zoning regulations and the business interests that influenced it.⁵⁷

Rapid population growth after World War II challenged the ideal of individual home ownership. The seriousness of the post-war housing shortage is vividly illustrated in Jill Wade's essay in this volume on the occupation of the "old" Hotel Vancouver, which led the federal government to develop new housing. Since the 1950s, as the demography of city residents changed and real estate prices rose sharply, the owner-occupied single family home has become less and less a feature of Vancouver's landscape. As yet, however, no historian has made any comprehensive study of this phenomenon.

Civic government is another subject that historians have not yet fully explored, although David Ricardo Williams' forthcoming biography of Gerry McGeer should go some way towards filling the gap.⁵⁸ Collectively, the existing historiography offers only an episodic view. Robert McDonald's thoughtful analysis of the role of business leaders in civic government indicates that before 1914, small rather than large businessmen — that is, contractors, real estate men and merchants rather than representatives of large corporations such as the CPR or the major mill owners — controlled civic government. His essay also notes the weakness of the urban reform movement but does not take the subject past 1914.⁵⁹ Indeed, civic politics from 1914 until the mid-1930s, when the paradox of the introduction of party politics at city hall stimulated the creation of the long dominant Non-Partisan movement, are largely an unknown subject. In her essay, "The CCF, NPA and Civic Change: Provincial Forces Behind Vancouver Politics, 1930-1940," Andrea Smith shows that in the 1930s provincial politicians rather than local businessmen dominated the NPA and abolished the ward system.⁶⁰

Despite its primary concern of examining models of party development at the municipal level, Fern Miller's study of civic political parties provides considerable useful material on local politics 1936-71 and on the

⁵⁷ "The Property Industry and Land Use Controls: The Vancouver Experience, 1910-1945," *Plan Canada* 19 (September-December 1979): 211-25. [Reprinted in Ward and McDonald, *British Columbia*, pp. 426-48.]

⁵⁸ Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1986.

⁵⁹ "The Business Elite and Municipal Politics in Vancouver," *UHR* XI (February 1983): 1-14.

⁶⁰ *BCS* 53 (Spring 1982): 45-65.

changing nature of the city.⁶¹ Paul Tennant's overview of "Vancouver Civic Politics, 1929-1980"⁶² does touch on the earlier period but deals chiefly with 1968-72, which Tennant describes as a turning point in civic politics because of the emergence of new parties, notably TEAM and COPE, and the appearance of professionals rather than businessmen as the majority on city council. Some of the aldermen who participated in much of this activity were unusually articulate and have published such relevant books as *Vancouver*,⁶³ by the geographer Walter Hardwick; *Vancouver Tomorrow: A Search for Greatness*⁶⁴ and *Cities, Citizens and Freeways*,⁶⁵ by the urban planners Warnett Kennedy and V. Setty Pendakur respectively; and *A Socialist Perspective for Vancouver*,⁶⁶ by Harry Rankin, a lawyer and founder of COPE, the left-wing civic political group.

Traditionally, historians looked at Vancouver subjects primarily for their own sake. Many institutions and organizations, for example, have published or encouraged the publication of their own histories. Most of them are primarily for the benefit of members but some, such as Peter Moogk's history of local defences⁶⁷ and R. H. Roy's history of the Seaforth Highlanders,⁶⁸ have more than parochial interest. Imaginative readers of the histories of such groups as the Vancouver Club, the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club and the Georgian Club can glean insight into the social lives of Vancouver's upper classes.⁶⁹ Similarly, a variety of books

⁶¹ "Vancouver Civic Political Parties: Developing a Model of Party-System Change and Stabilization," *BCS* 25 (Spring 1975): 3-31.

⁶² *BCS* 46 (Autumn 1980): 3-27. Useful supplements are two earlier articles of which Tennant was a co-author: with Robert Easton, "Vancouver Civic Party Leadership: Backgrounds, Attitudes and Non-Civic Party Affiliation," *BCS* 2 (Summer 1969): 19-29 and with David Zirnhelt, "The Emergence of Metropolitan Government in Greater Vancouver," *BCS* 15 (Autumn 1972): 3-28.

⁶³ Don Mills, Ontario: Collier-Macmillan, 1974.

⁶⁴ Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1975.

⁶⁵ Vancouver: Transportation Development Agency, 1972.

⁶⁶ Vancouver: Progress, 1974.

⁶⁷ Peter N. Moogk, *Vancouver Defended: A History of the Men and Guns of the Lower Mainland Defences, 1859-1949* (Surrey: Antonson, 1978).

⁶⁸ Reginald H. Roy, *The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, 1919-1965* (Vancouver: Seaforth Highlanders, 1969).

⁶⁹ Paul L. Bissley, *The History of the Vancouver Club* (Vancouver: Vancouver Club, 1971); G. A. Cran and Norm Hacking, *Annals of the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, 1903-1965* (Vancouver: Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, 1965); and Mrs. R. H. Tupper, *The History of the Georgian Club* (Vancouver, 1961).

such as Ivan Ackery's recollections of his life as a theatre manager and the history of the Vancouver Canucks help document popular culture.⁷⁰

More recently, as some of the studies already mentioned suggest and as some of the essays in this volume confirm, scholars have begun to take a more sophisticated approach and have examined Vancouver subjects in a broader comparative perspective or as case studies designed to test more universal theories. For example, in his essay in this volume, James Huzel, a demographic historian, uses local data to study the relationship between law, crime and society in Vancouver and to use Vancouver "as a test case within the extensive debate on the impact of economic condition on crime."

Finally, Robert McDonald's examination of the concept of class as it applied to working-class Vancouver before World War I pulls together two strands that have informed the historiography of Vancouver: learning more about Vancouver and using Vancouver as a case study. Yet McDonald does not abandon the framework that sees Vancouver as existing in metropolitan relationship with a hinterland. At the same time he draws on a historical literature that has investigated a number of themes such as ethnic relations, labour conflict, transiency, neighbourhood differences and the role of women. Most significantly, he challenges the conventional wisdom that Vancouver workers were unusually militant and radical. The existence of such a challenge suggests that the historiography of Vancouver is beginning to come of age. Perhaps some day a historian will qualify metropolitanism as a concept to interpret Vancouver's past. That, however, will be difficult to do until much more is known about all aspects of the city's history.

If W. N. Sage, the only historian to publish for Vancouver's Golden Jubilee, could see the variety of historical studies available for the Centennial, he would be surprised. He might be disappointed that his collection of typescript documents had been little used, but he should be pleased to see that the metropolitan concept was still popular. Though he might mourn the demise of the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, surely he would be cheered by the fact that a replacement journal, *BC Studies*, has published a number of articles on Vancouver since its founding in 1969 and is the vehicle for this Centennial collection. And he might even chuckle when he noticed that whereas he and his contemporaries concentrated on the pioneer era before the railway, few historians since have taken their studies past his time, the 1930s. The Centennial,

⁷⁰ Ivan Ackery, *Fifty Years on Theatre Row* (Vancouver: Hancock, 1980); Denny Boyd, *The Vancouver Canucks Story* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1973).

the resulting lively interest in writing neighbourhood histories, and the publication of a very practical guide to the writing of Vancouver's history⁷¹ may mean that we will not have to wait for a Sesquicentennial or rely only on political scientists for analyses of the rapidly changing city of the 1940s and beyond.

⁷¹ *Exploring Vancouver's Past: An Informal Guide to Researching Local and Family History* (Vancouver: Vancouver Centennial Commission, 1984).