

Book Reviews

As Wise as Serpents: Five Women and an Organization That Changed British Columbia, 1883-1939, by Lyn Gough. Victoria: Swan Lake Publishing, 1988.

Speaking to the 1899 annual provincial convention of the British Columbia Women's Christian Temperance Union, Maria Grant exhorted her listeners to heed the biblical injunction to be "as wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (p. 73) in the pursuit of their central and interconnected goals of prohibition and woman suffrage. A sixteen-year veteran of the movement, Grant spoke with both the acumen of an experienced campaigner and the fervour of a missionary recruiter. Like her principal subjects, the leading lights of the British Columbia WCTU, Lyn Gough was also imbued with a sense of mission. Dissatisfied with the neglect of the WCTU in "our history books" Gough decided to right this omission, a task which was made all the more compelling by her assertion that the WCTU "dominated the life and times of the province for several decades and left its indelible imprint on our laws and social customs" (p. ix). The result is an historical account of the B.C. WCTU presented in the context of the reform careers of five prominent Victoria women: Maria Pollard Grant, Helen Grant, Cecilia McNaughton Spofford, Margaret Townsend Jenkins, and Emma Lazenby Spencer.

Gough's approach to her subject is indicated by her decision to use for a title a portion of Maria Grant's reference to Matthew 10:16, in which Jesus directed the apostles to go "forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." Similarly, the author set out in apparently uncharted and possibly hostile territory. Armed with primary source materials, principally the WCTU yearbooks, statutes and journals of the Legislative Assembly and newspaper accounts of specific events, Gough slogged her way through fifty-six years of day-to-day happenings. The product of her explorations is a chronological narrative which describes some aspects of the WCTU's involvement in the provincial prohibition and female franchise campaigns and touches

on several of the related interests of members, including a curfew law for juveniles, matrons for female correctional facilities, the banning of cigarette smoking by minors, an aged women's home, and the creation of a juvenile court. Greater coverage is accorded those issues of particular concern to the five stellar members of the Victoria branches whose lives were intertwined with the heyday of the WCTU. Thus, considerable attention is devoted to Maria Grant's role in promoting woman suffrage, Emma Spencer's dedication to a Victoria refuge home for unwed mothers and former prostitutes, Cecilia Spofford's mission shelter for single transient men in the capital, Margaret Jenkins's twenty-year tenure on the Victoria school board, and Helen Grant's selfless service to each of these causes.

While the author is to be commended for her tenacity in ploughing through the substantial body of primary sources available on this topic, this reader cannot help wishing that Gough had forsaken her outmoded, isolationist, and often tediously detailed narrative approach in favour of a more interpretative perspective. The activities of the B.C. WCTU are not set in the reform context of which they were an integral part. The women's reform movement, the social gospel movement and the urban reform campaigns of the turn of the century, for example, largely escape notice. A similar fate befalls current scholarship in social and feminist history. The author's disinclination to pursue even a narrow definition of the relevant secondary literature has deprived her of the opportunity to analyze her subject in light of the questions and theories proposed by other writers interested in Canadian temperance organizations. One searches in vain for references to old standard works such as Ruth Spence's *Prohibition in Canada* or the short but directly relevant *Historical Sketch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union of British Columbia 1883-1953*, by Lydia Macpherson. Albert Hiebert's 1969 thesis, "Prohibition in British Columbia," similarly remained unnoticed. Familiarity with Wendy Mitchison's interesting analysis of the organization of the national WCTU and Nancy Sheehan's comparative studies of the Alberta and Saskatchewan WCTUs would have suggested worthwhile avenues for exploring the British Columbia situation and may have encouraged the author to clarify the relationship between the B.C. WCTU and other B.C. women's organizations.

Unfortunately, *As Wise as Serpents* falls short of the author's goal to reinstate the B.C. WCTU into its rightful place in the province's history. Gough failed to substantiate her claim that the WCTU "dominated the life" of the province. Rather, the association was an important influence among several, particularly in the last decade of the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth centuries. The B.C. WCTU could be profitably

re-examined in this broader context. In addition, students interested in topics such as the role of élites, group dynamics, familial connections among reformers, education and problem solving, evangelism, maternal feminism, and the pursuit of power will find the B.C. WCTU of interest.

University of British Columbia

LINDA L. HALE

The Vagabond Fleet, by Peter Murray. Victoria: Sono Nis, 1988. Pp. 260.

The story behind the North Pacific sealing schooners — the vagabond fleet — is complicated, and it has taken all Peter Murray's skills as a journalist to describe the several decades of international bickering, human greed and animal suffering which characterized this brief period of history. By and large, Murray has written a very readable book, which includes some good yarns about sealers and the ships they sailed in; despite some reservations, I recommend it. Thirty years ago, as a young scientist participating in yet another international study of fur seals, I would have appreciated much of the historical material which has been brought to light.

The early maritime traders collected a small number of fur seals from Indians living on the outer coast of British Columbia. However, it was not until the mid-1850s, when independent traders located trading establishments along the west coast of Vancouver Island, that the real interest in a pelagic harvest of fur seals began. To encourage Indian hunters, the early traders took the men and their canoes out to the sealing grounds, and returned them to their villages. The first pelts were taken to Victoria in 1864; by 1876 there were nine sealing vessels sailing out of Victoria, and this number increased until the end of the nineteenth century.

This early pelagic sealing marked the beginning of a commercial venture which had near-disastrous results. There was no harvest control and, to make matters worse, the majority of seals killed at sea were pregnant females. Pelagic hunting, combined with a land-based harvest on the breeding grounds, achieved the inevitable: by 1911, when an international treaty was finally reached between the United States, Great Britain (for Canada), Russia and Japan, the seal population had been reduced to about 10 percent of its former size.

Murray's book, although very readable, is a struggle for the serious historian or scientist. To achieve readability, tables and figures are sacrificed, and footnotes are rarely used. There are frequent references to statistics: harvest information, population trends, quotas, numbers of

ships, numbers of men employed, and income figures. Such data would have been easier dealt with, by the reader at least, in tabular form. There are instances of statistical discrepancies and duplication which could have been avoided by using tables: at one point Canada has forty-nine sealing ships in 1894, but later in the text fifty-five are reported for the same year; the 1896 and 1897 catch statistics are reported twice.

Murray's greatest sin, however, is his insistence on the sparing and arbitrary use of footnotes. As an example, he notes there was a "resurgence of otter along the west coast" in 1897. Historical trends in sea otter populations interest me, and I would like to pursue this observation. Not only is there no footnote; there is no title in the bibliography to provide me with a clue where to look.

Murray stresses in the preface that this book is not an anti-sealing book; that is probably so, yet his biases show. He emphasizes that Canadians were the villains in this unhappy period of sealing, but throughout the book there is abundant evidence to indicate that Canadian sealers shared in the killing with their American shipmates; and the final period of over-harvesting was aggravated by the late-arriving Japanese. In his enthusiasm to find fault with the British, Murray ignores some of his own evidence: an 1894 count of 20,000 dead pups on rookery beaches is recorded as "mute testimony" supporting the American claim that pelagic hunting was killing large numbers of nursing females, thus causing death by starvation for their pups; this, despite the claim by a British scientist that all pup mortality could not be blamed on starvation and, finally, recognition from American scientists that hookworm was killing about 45 percent of the pups.

As well, several inconsistencies and errors mar the text. One of the regulations set by the Arbitration Tribunal of 1893 was a five-year prohibition of pelagic sealing in waters north of 35° N latitude, between 1 May and 31 July. This regulation was enforced, yet the *Dora Seward* took 100 seals off Long Beach after leaving Victoria on 21 June 1896. Two issues are worth questioning (but were not): Why were seals taken after the 1 May closure? Why were such large numbers of seals still found off Vancouver Island during late June?

The errors are more disturbing. Sealers always insisted that the majority of seals killed at sea were saved before the bodies sank. Murray passes this off as a predictable claim which sealers would make to protect their industry; at one point he calculates that six out of seven seals sank before being retrieved by the sealers. I checked my field notes for 1958 and found that during May, when we killed 228 seals off Vancouver Island, 215

animals were recovered and we lost 13, for a recovery of 94 percent — very similar to the sealers' claim seventy-five years earlier. Later, Murray argues that fish provide only a small part of the fur seal's diet. Food habits of fur seals have been studied repeatedly, and it is well established that fish comprise over 90 percent of the total annual diet.

The era of uncontrolled pelagic killing of fur seals was a black period by any standard. Canadian shipowners, skippers, and hunters contributed their share to this sorry picture. Murray tells us about it, but he is not content that we see the blackness of it all; he wants it blacker than black. By emphasizing Canadian and British villainy, he diverts attention from the outcome which — late though it was — was not too late. The international agreement of 1911 was a first for maritime nations seeking to protect a common marine resource and, not only a first, it worked. With protection, seal numbers quickly recovered from the alarming low of 1911 to the near-normal levels of today; a victory for the seals (and the biologists), and for the politicians and lawyers who thrashed out the final international agreement.

The Vagabond Fleet includes colour plates of marine paintings by Maurice Chadwick. Chadwick's splendid illustrations provide the reader with a graphic reminder of both the old sealing schooners and the changing moods of the west coast: from a howling nor'wester to the fog-shrouded hills of a calm anchorage.

South Pender Island, B.C.

DAVID J. SPALDING

Whalers No More: A History of Whaling on the West Coast, by William Arnold Hagelund. Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1987. Pp. iv, 211; illus., maps, diagrams. \$24.95.

On The Northwest: Commercial Whaling in the Pacific Northwest, 1790-1967, by Robert Lloyd Webb. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988. Pp. xxi, 425; 71 b/w photos, line drawings, maps. \$29.95.

The whaling industry off the British Columbia coast has finally found almost simultaneously not just one but two historians for a story not widely known, even in the province. Since one is a popular history and the other a research monograph, they nicely complement each other.

The heart of Captain Hagelund's volume is an account of his season in 1941 as a green 17-year-old seaman on a steam whale hunter off British Columbia's Queen Charlotte Islands. It's a lively piece catching all the echoes of those times — the desperate search for a job, the lack of proper gear even to adequate clothing, the tough conditions, the stingy employers, the appalling lack of safety. Yet, too, it has a rather romantic and more universal note — the excitement of the chase, the wonder of the sea, and that unquenchable optimism of youth so celebrated by another seafaring writer, Joseph Conrad.

Hagelund's trip to the whaling grounds took place on board the Norwegian-built steam whaler *Brown*, one of the fleet of the Consolidated Whaling Corporation, based in Victoria's Inner Harbour, where the ships were a familiar part of the winter landscape. His whaling was from one of the two stations in the Queen Charlotte Islands — Naden Harbour on the northwest tip of Graham Island at the northern end of the Queen Charlottes — but he also called in at Rose Harbour, the other station on Kunghit Island at the southern extremity of the island group.

His detailed descriptions, supplemented by diagrams, of the whale catcher, the Foyn gun and harpoon, and the process of catching and bringing in the huge mammals, as well as similar descriptions and diagrams of the whaling stations and the methods of rendering down the carcasses, are based on first-hand observation and constitute one of the most valuable parts of the book. Useful too are his appendices with lists of the whale catching fleet, the whaling companies, and the catches by year.

However interesting Hagelund's personal experiences are, they are too brief to make a full-length book — comprising in fact less than a quarter of the text — so he has supplemented them with a popular history of Pacific Coast whaling companies. In the second part of the volume, Hagelund sets out to tell a history of the twentieth-century industry through interviews. "The whaling industry in its glory years," he argues, "was mainly a story of the men who made it: the full-time gunners and pilots and the entrepreneurs who provided the crucial management." So it is to the survivors of those days that he turns, mostly to those connected with the successive Victoria companies that terminated with his own employers, the Consolidated Whaling Corporation. But the accident of surviving to be interviewed, of course, determines the author's sources. In spite of his dictum, cited above, on the relative importance of gunners and pilots, two of his liveliest interviews are with marine engineers, Charlie Watson of the whale catchers and Harry Osselson of the tender *Gray*. But he does interview whaler captain "Dode" MacPherson, and narrates the life of captain

William Heater through his grandson Allan, a contemporary of Hagelund and himself a master mariner.

The book's account of the entrepreneurs in the industry is much less immediate than that of the men who manned the ships. The founder of the Victoria whaling enterprise, G. W. Sprott Balcom, was bought out of the whaling business in 1910 by Mackenzie and Mann, the Canadian Northern magnates, and was dead by 1925. So Hagelund's account comes from Balcom's son Lawrence, who was too young to have participated fully in the family enterprise. Likewise with Balcom's partner, captain William Grant, an almost legendary seaman and well-known Victoria figure at the turn of the century — that interview is with Jim Goodwin, who knew Grant only by sight through his father who was in towboating in Grant's time. The same kind of interview is also used to trace the activities of the most prominent whaling entrepreneur of Victoria, William Schupp. Here Hagelund has access to company records through Schupp's grandson, William Lagen, but Lagen's interview mostly recounts his own experiences as a boy travelling with his father and mother to an Alaska whaling station which the father managed for Schupp. For more direct memories of the Victoria Whaling Company he cannot turn to the late Alfus Garcin, general manager for two decades before its windup in 1947, but just to his son. William Mackenzie and Donald Mann, whaling company operators from 1910 to 1915, are simply mentioned. Presumably, as heads of a railway-based conglomerate, they do not qualify as whaling entrepreneurs.

The last whaling venture on the B.C. coast is much closer in time. Western Whaling operated from its Coal Harbour station at the northern end of Vancouver Island from 1948 to 1969. So Hagelund is able to interview both Hector Cowie, the general manager for most of the time, and Arnie Borgn, a Norwegian whaling captain brought in to deal with problems caused by Western Whaling's shortage of experienced men.

Hagelund's work illustrates one problem of using oral sources. What do you do with the product of interviews — keep each one together to increase the impact of individual narratives, or divide each up and group the treatment of a single subject by different interviewees? Hagelund, though not consistently, opts for the first. The result is a set of stimulating portraits but also a good deal of repetition.

The monograph by Webb has a different balance from Hagelund's work. As we have seen, Hagelund begins his detailed narration, as befits an oral history, at the very limit of living memory in 1905, when Scott Balcom and William Grant began their whaling company. But Webb

reaches 1905 only at the halfway point in his 300-page text, a fact that neatly illustrates the overlap of the two volumes.

Webb's book is a research history beginning with pre-commercial whaling by those Nootkan peoples of the west coast of Vancouver Island and the adjoining Washington state coast who were whalers at the time of the first European contacts. For Webb, the historical record begins with eighteenth-century explorations. The names of Bering, Perez, and especially James Cook appear in the unfamiliar context of contemporary comments on whales and whaling. Webb even offers a novel analysis of the Nootka Sound crisis, the first clash on the coast of European powers in the 1790s, documenting his claim that it was partly about the perceived whaling potential of the area. He then shows what happened when the whaling grounds of the North Pacific came within the orbit of a commercial industry expanding world-wide from its North Atlantic base.

Webb covers in some detail the era of sailing ship whalers à la Herman Melville, who came to the North Pacific as catches diminished in the southern part of that ocean. Most revealing to a modern reader is the incredible waste from the high proportion of whales "lost" after being harpooned and either killed or wounded. Closer to home, he reviews the largely unsuccessful efforts to establish local whaling ventures in colonial and early provincial British Columbia. Only those changes in technology that produced the harpoon gun, the steam whaler, and the Rissmüller patented method of rendering down whale carcasses made a successful industry possible after 1900.

The second half of Webb's text covers that twentieth-century industry which operated from shore stations in British Columbia, Alaska, and Washington state from its beginnings in 1904-05 to its closure in 1967. This is, of course, going over the same events as Hagelund. Webb's approach is, however, a scholarly one — he makes good use of his extensive bibliography of documents, reports, and secondary works to present a more elaborate picture of the interaction of government policy, corporate organization, changing market conditions, and altered social attitudes.

It would, nevertheless, be unfair to say that Webb's portrait, more nuanced as it may be, is more compelling than Hagelund's — in fact, in all the scholarly striving something of the colour of the industry is lost. A balanced judgement might praise Hagelund for flavour, Webb for fact — or, could we say, Hagelund for sizzle, Webb for steak (whale meat, naturally!).

The Other Side of Silence: A Life of Ethel Wilson, by Mary McAlpine.
Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1988. Pp. 224; illus.

It is appropriate — though I suspect accidental — that *The Other Side of Silence* appeared in the year of Ethel Wilson's centenary. The fact reminds us, however, that a hundred years after her birth she is still a sadly neglected novelist. For the past decade and a half, ever since I began teaching an undergraduate course in Canadian fiction, I have assigned *Swamp Angel* as required reading, and the response has always been the same. At the beginning of each session, most of the students have not heard of Ethel Wilson, but almost all react with enthusiasm to the subtlety, delicacy, and rich humanity of the book. A recurrent question is: "Why didn't someone tell me about her before?"

The Other Side of Silence is a good popular biography, and if it helps to make its subject better known, and her works more widely read, it will have achieved a worthy purpose. Mary McAlpine, though a generation younger, was a close friend of Wilson for the last thirty years of the novelist's life, and her book is clearly a labour of love. It is informal, chatty, anecdotal; McAlpine writes enthusiastically and endearingly, with a rather chirpy journalistic wit. The book begins with a touching, hitherto unpublished short story written by Wilson for the biographer and her daughter (the novelist's godchild), and it tends to be a very personal account, close in some respects to memoir.

This biography will probably please the general reading public in search of a lively account of the personal life of a very human writer. More academically minded readers, however, are likely to have reservations. Personally, since *The Innocent Traveller* reveals Wilson as passionately interested in (and amused at) her family history, I was expecting more investigation of her ancestors and the variety of her Methodist inheritance, but McAlpine is content for the most part with selective summaries of the work of previous researchers. While she is indebted to Barbara Wyld for the Burslem background, Charles Armytage for facts about her English schooling, and (though somewhat skimpily) Irene Howard on the Malkin family in Vancouver, one still has to turn to these scholars for information not reproduced here. (Delay in publication may be partly responsible, since Sister Beverley Mitchell, in her ECW "Canadian Writers and Their Works" study, reported the book completed as early as 1981, but this does not excuse the deficiency.)

Other details, often minor in themselves, give the book a somewhat amateurish air. The index is faulty, and a few small errors of fact (like

assigning Girton College to Oxford instead of Cambridge) have been allowed to slip through. Those who wish to follow in her researching footsteps will find McAlpine's notes infuriatingly incomplete (compare, for instance, the decidedly fuller documentation in Howard's article in *Essays on Canadian Writing*, no. 23). It would have been so easy to provide inconspicuous dates and other references for those who need them. Even general readers will encounter places where the going is less than smooth. Characters sometimes enter and disappear from the text with startling abruptness; the various members of the Wilson family, for instance, are difficult to disentangle when they are first introduced.

Of course, Ethel Wilson was, as McAlpine notes, an unusually private writer, and any biographer is therefore confronted with a problem. What makes Wilson interesting from a literary point of view is so often far removed from her "social" life (which she shows distinct signs of finding tiresome herself). McAlpine seems more comfortable with "Mrs. Wallace Wilson," doctor's wife, hostess, and prominent Vancouverite; the novelist Ethel Wilson is observed, recorded, but never fully explained. Nonetheless, *The Other Side of Silence* is a welcome first step in the biographical exploration of one of British Columbia's — and Canada's — most polished and elegant writers. However, despite certain eulogies I have encountered, it is a long way from being definitive.

University of Toronto

W. J. KEITH

Chinatowns: Towns Within Cities in Canada, by David Chuenyan Lai.
Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988. Pp. xvi, 347.
Figures, tables, illus. \$29.95.

Most Canadians think of themselves as tolerant people, and Canada as a nation where multiculturalism is a keyword for tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding. Few Canadians, of course, would argue that they are perfect, but on any international scale they believe the country would receive an above average grade. While this book does not completely destroy this roseate view, it does cause the reader to reassess Canada's record. Canadians have in fact been both bigoted and prejudiced, so much so that for decades our laws encoded racial discrimination and ingrained in many citizens unsavoury sentiments that could be aroused easily. Given rising concerns about off-shore investment — especially from Asia — in

British Columbia, this study of more than a century long relationship with Chinese immigrants is timely.

Chinatowns is more than a history of distinct neighbourhoods in select Canadian cities; it is a detailed, thoroughly documented, and comprehensive urban history of Canada's Chinatowns. The volume analyzes the transformation of the physical and cultural landscapes of Chinatowns from 1858 to 1988, tracing their origins, locations, viability, and socio-economic changes. The study begins with an important section that examines Chinese immigration to Canada and the changing demographic characteristics of Chinese Canadians. *Chinatowns* also contains brief but comprehensive histories of Chinatowns in New Westminster, Barkerville, Nanaimo, Cumberland, Vancouver, Moose Jaw, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal.

Professor Lai's book develops a thesis that explains various stages in the development of Canadian Chinatowns, running from a "budding" stage, to "blooming," to "withering," and culminating in either "extinction" or "rehabilitation." "Like a living organism," Lai writes, "an Old Chinatown is constantly evolving and being transformed. Although Old Chinatowns change in different ways and at varying rates, they tend to follow a common pattern in their course of development" (p. 4). Lai's stage-development model is then applied to an in-depth study of Victoria's Chinatown, a section that comprises more than one-third of the volume. While more can certainly be written about other Chinatowns across Canada, the author's analysis of Victoria is as close to a definitive history as possible. This should come as no surprise since Professor Lai's work is based on more than two decades of research and detailed surveys.

Chinatowns is an important book — it provides rich details regarding an element of our cities that until now was misunderstood and usually ignored. Lai has provided much new information and has placed the Chinatown experience into a broad context. In so doing his study is far more than an analysis of Chinatowns themselves. It is, in fact, an engaging piece of Canada's ethnic history; the sections on the history of Chinese immigration to Canada provide an overview of the demographic changes in Canada's population of ethnic Chinese, including regional origins, from the period of free entry (1858-84) to the period of selective entry (since 1948). Unfortunately, Lai's study reads more like a text book than the compelling monograph the subject matter deserves, and *Chinatowns* will probably be utilized more in university courses than by the general public. Nonetheless, the book's dry tone can and must be overcome since it is

certainly time to come to grips with a continuing and important element of our urban experience.

University of British Columbia

ALAN F. J. ARTIBISE

The Gumboot Navy: Memories of the Fishermen's Reserve, by Carol Popp. Lantzville, B.C.: Oolichan Books, 1988. Pp. 160; illus. \$24.95.

While Carol Popp exaggerates by suggesting the Fishermen's Reserve was the "main sea going defence" (p. 11) of Canada's Pacific coast during World War II, she has performed a useful service in collecting the memories of the men who served in this unique branch of the Royal Canadian Navy. Most of the men who served in the Fishermen's Reserve were peace time fishermen, were familiar with the fishing craft that had been turned into patrol vessels, and knew the straits, narrows, and bays of coastal British Columbia. They were an independent lot and unaccustomed to naval discipline, but that was a problem mainly for the parade ground of the training camp. Retrospectively, the fishermen were amused by inexperienced officers of the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve who got seasick or who, unaware of local tidal conditions, told them to take up the slack in tie lines. The fishermen wisely ignored such orders. It was with resentment, however, that fishermen recalled a skipper who was so intent on obeying orders that he refused to go off course to try to rescue some downed fliers.

On naval duty the fishermen encountered the same dangers — heavy seas, thick fogs, difficult radio communications, and inadequate charts — they knew in peace time. As naval personnel they faced the additional hazard of a daily rum ration, but despite many tales of drunken escapades and embarrassments, liquor never seems to have interfered with duty! The Fishermen's Reserve was chiefly engaged in coast guard work such as search and rescue, the transport of military personnel and supplies into remote bases, patrols and mine sweeping, and the examination of passing ships. Members of the Fishermen's Reserve never positively sighted an enemy vessel; had they done so they would have had little chance. As one man reported:

All we had on board were three Enfield rifles and a stripped Lewis gun, and they had the goddamn nerve to send us out there to investigate submarine scares. They didn't even know if we could get away or would have been blown up. I guess they figured we were expendable. (p. 62)

The closest the Fishermen's Reserve got to an "enemy" was in December 1941, when they helped round up the Japanese fishing fleet. Ms. Popp correctly describes the Japanese fishermen as "so-called 'enemy aliens'" but does not explain that only British subjects by birth or naturalization could get fishing licences. Moreover, she repeats the common error of referring to the removal of the Japanese from the coast as internment. In fact, only about 800 Japanese were formally interned or incarcerated for specific causes. Nevertheless, the extracts from interviews on the Japanese reveal the dichotomy of feeling in British Columbia after Pearl Harbor. As one informant remembered:

Now these dear old Japanese people . . . there was no way that they would do any harm to anybody. They were the salt of the earth those old people. But there was an element . . . some of the sons and grandsons . . . who went to Japan and took training, came back here, and even had the gall to wear their little navy hats on their boat while they were fishing. Those were the ones that the authorities were frantically afraid of, so in the panic of it all they took everybody and sent them away. (p. 70)

In the brief introduction to this volume Ms. Popp explains that it is "not . . . a book of history but a collection of memories" (p. 10). She lightly sketches the history of the Fishermen's Reserve but does not go beyond the account in G. N. Tucker's official history, *The Naval Service of Canada*. Her research consisted chiefly of interviewing an unspecified number of men who served with the Fishermen's Reserve, transcribing her tape recordings, and assembling segments (usually about a paragraph in length) under a variety of headings such as "Duty and Patrol," "Combined Operations," and "Yarns from Here and There." The rationale for including snippets under one heading or another is not always clear. One incident about an accident in which a man lost an eye appears with only minor variations in two different sections. The short introductions accompanying a few chapters are too brief to be very informative. For example, in the introduction to "Combined Operations" she provides no real explanation for the formation of this commando training programme or for its disbandment.

Ms. Popp has rescued the story of The Gumboot Navy — so called because of its footwear, which was more practical on small boats than standard naval boots — but it is regrettable that she did not expand her archival research beyond some sample patrol reports and accounts of some of the vessels used by the Fishermen's Reserve fleet. Her book would also be more useful if she had provided a list of the men she interviewed. While *The Gumboot Navy* will disappoint professional historians, Ms. Popp

should be complimented for preserving these stories and presenting them for the enjoyment of the men of the Fishermen's Reserve, their families and friends, and those who like seafaring yarns.

University of Victoria

PATRICIA E. ROY

Researcher's Guide to British Columbia: Nineteenth Century Directories, A Bibliography & Index, edited by John S. Lutz, compiled by George Young. Victoria: Public History Group, University of Victoria, 1988.

The editors of *Researcher's Guide to British Columbia* open the introduction with a quote from Charles Lamb, who in 1833 said directories were in the "catalogue of books which are no books," (p. 1) and thus were impossible to read. Initially I empathized; of the 162 pages in this "directory to directories" (p. 2) only 27 are text. The index consumes the rest. Yet this guide is not only a useful research tool but also an interesting book.

The *Researcher's Guide* is the first publication of the University of Victoria's Public History Group. The guide's purpose is to make more accessible nineteenth-century directories — those lists of "residents, their occupations and addresses, and classified lists of businesses, trades and professions. . . ." (p. 1) In the introductory first part, Lutz and Young argue that directories "are one of the richest and most accessible sources of historical information and yet one of the least used" (p. 1).

As "the handbooks of merchant capital" (p. 3), the directories had as their main purpose the making of money for their publishers (from sales, rentals and advertising). Yet a directory also served as a "valuable advertising medium" (p. 4) for a community. The publisher of Victoria's first directory in 1860 concluded that the appearance of his work was a mark of Victoria's "sufficient importance" (p. 4). For historians, directories help reveal "changing market structures and commercial connections" (p. 3). For example, the *Guide's* editors note that "five of the first of the first six directories listed" (p. 3) were printed in San Francisco, and most of the advertising in them was American. While the correct number seems to be four (p. 17), the point is that directories reflected British Columbia's initial trade ties with California. A Canadian national directory did not list B.C. until the 1890s. The editors conclude that for the early years of British Columbia, directories "provide the best available indices of economic growth and diversification up to the Canada Census of 1881" (p. 9).

As for the reliability of directories, they accept the conventional wisdom that those "continuously published by larger companies tend to be the

most reliable" (p. 6). Working primarily from American and British examples, the editors warn that directories often have a variety of class, racial, and gender biases. Like any source, they should be used with others, such as manuscript census, tax assessments, and voters' lists.

The second part of the *Researcher's Guide* is a chronological bibliography of directories published between 1860 and 1900. The termination date seems particularly artificial since the subject matter is business. A date more aligned to the business cycle, say 1912 or 1915, would have been more appropriate. The introduction claims that readers will find "over 140 directories" (p. 2). In reality, only 75 are named because three of the listings are serial directories published over many years. In length they range from eight pages (*Cubery's visitor's guide to Victoria*, 1875) to 2,800 pages (*Dominion of Canada business directory*, 1890-91). As well as the publisher and date, each citation notes the editor, number of pages and, most important, location for the directory. Only about twenty institutions across North America hold the relevant directories. Fortunately, however, most are available in British Columbia in the original, film or fiche.

The principal weakness of the bibliography is the lack of annotations for the entries. While the editors have included the full subtitles of the directories, they are only marginally helpful. For example, *The British Columbia directory* of 1883 describes itself as "containing a large amount of statistical and descriptive information respecting the Pacific province of the Dominion of Canada" (p. 20). The editors would have been wiser to provide a shortened title for each directory and a brief, critical description of its contents. A great deal of work went into this book, and the omission of informative annotations stands out prominently.

The bulk of the guide, over 140 pages, is a subject and place index for the directories. For larger centres such as Vancouver, the index offers a variety of subject categories including banks in 1889 and trade unions in 1896. For smaller communities, the main categories are "occupations," "credit ratings," and the ubiquitous "general." Most of the subjects and places are cross-indexed, which makes searching more convenient.

The *Researcher's Guide to British Columbia* contains much practical information about finding and using directories. At the same time, it offers a thoughtful analysis about their historical function and their strength and weaknesses as sources. Even for those who do not intend to use directories in their work, this guide is worth reading.