BOOK REVIEWS

British Columbia Almanac

Mark Forsythe

Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2000. 213 pp. Illus., maps. $23.95 paper.

By Anne Moon
Victoria

British Columbia Almanac is a paperback potpourri of fact, fables, and feelings that owe their genesis to a weekday CBC Radio One show called *Almanac*, which serves most of British Columbia. Mark Forsythe, the amiable host of *Almanac*, CBC's lunchtime show, has put together the "best of show" in a delightful, quotable book. For twenty years *Almanac* has entertained, informed, aggravated, amused, and enlightened British Columbia. Best of all, it has set up a sort of wireless party line so that its listeners can add their stories to the mix of words and music beamed from Vancouver.

Forsythe has picked the best of those stories, stirred them with items from regular contributors, and added an eclectic mixture of such tidbits as jam recipes, bear beware tips, and big tree sightings, all of which are organized seasonally. So we meet the birds of spring, explore summertime trails, savour fall fair goodies, and share hints for cutting Christmas trees. It's rich with BC flavour – and not just in the salmon recipes. Herman Bosman tells how he went hang gliding with an eagle; Clarence Hall calmly discusses the cougar attack he survived in Bella Coola; and Nancy Yamamura recalls the "degrading, traumatic" time in the Second World War when her Japanese family was interned. Forsythe describes his own adventure. Stuck in the studio with a door that wouldn't open he had to go on air with a bursting bladder. This situation was made worse by the fact that he could not avoid looking at the yellow ribbons with which his heartless colleagues had thoughtfully adorned the studio window.

The beauty of a book such as this is that you can dip into it anywhere and find a treat, rather like bobbing for apples. Writing for radio brings out the poet in us. You can hear the ecstasy in Victoria's Jacob Malthouse as he describes surfing off Sombrio Beach: "I paddle out towards the reef ... ready to dance in paradise." There are lists galore: best BC books; best BC movies; best web sites; the top ten scientific achievements in British Columbia.

Because the stories are written for radio they have an informal, conversational tone, which fits with their often intimate style. Who could fail to be moved by Pamela Kent's story of reluctantly immigrating to Canada with her husband Gordon? "As if this country hasn't given us enough, Gord

has a Canadian heart beating in his chest," she reveals after fifty happy years here. Her husband had a heart transplant in 1996. Judy Doyle offers a wide-eyed account of how she immigrated to Canada on the same plane as Prince Charles and got the twenty-one-gun salute and RCMP welcome as she sauntered down the same red carpet. There's a long-ago tale of Mah Bon Quen, who left his gruelling mining job in 1909 to set up the first Chinese-owned business in Prince Rupert and who fathered some of the first Chinese children born in Canada. We also meet Peter Wing, who became North America's first Chinese mayor when he was elected in Kamloops in 1966.

As a bonus, proceeds from *British Columbia Almanac* go to the BC Children's Hospital Foundation.

The Way We Were: B.C.'s Amazing Journey to the Millennium

Staff of the *Province*

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 2000. 148 pp. Illus. $21.95 paper.

By Mark Forsythe
CBC *Almanac*

Trying to determine what is going on in the world by reading newspapers is like trying to tell the time by watching the second hand of a clock.
Ben Hecht, American screenwriter, director, and novelist

What if you gleaned a century's worth of memorable moments from those newspapers? Vancouver's *Province* newspaper staff did just that – minus the screaming headlines – for *The Way We Were: BC's Amazing Journey to the Millennium*. From first contact through the gold rush, boom and bust economic cycles, politics, cultural diversification: what a ride it's been.

The pictures here tell a powerful story. The Wah Chong family poses in front of its Chinese laundry; daughter Jennie becomes the first Asian to attend school in Vancouver in 1884. Two years later grim-faced city fathers conduct municipal business from a tent with a city hall sign nailed to its peak after fire devoured 1,000 buildings in forty-five minutes, leaving twenty dead. A 1912 women's tug-of-war team on Vancouver Island, decked out in long skirts, hats, and broad grins, almost pulls an unseen opponent into the picture frame. Amused young men observing from the sidelines will soon travel to Europe for the "war that would end all wars." *The Way We Were* feels like a family photo album, the personal is never far removed from the larger events (in Canada and the world)

that shape our times; wrapped around these images are hundreds of BC facts and trivia:

- 1907: a meal in Prince Rupert costs 25 cents.
- 1910: a speeding ticket costs ten dollars (for travelling at the blinding speed of twelve miles per hour).
- 1911: British Columbia's population reaches 392,480.
- 1930: Charles Lindbergh gives the first Vancouver airport a failing grade. The city decides to spend $600,000 to acquire land at Sea Island.
- 1921: males earn $23.87 per week, females $14.30.
- 1931: a syndicate buys British Properties from West Vancouver for forty-seven dollars per hectare.
- 1939: the Lions Gate bridge opens with a twenty-five-cent toll. Sixty years later, tolls on Lower Mainland crossings just might return.

The heart and soul of a community is often reflected in the editorial pages of its newspapers. *Province* letters to the editor were as pithy in 1905 as they are now, whether commenting on inadequate postal service, youth reform, missing sidewalks, or the number of brothels. A variation on the Sunday shopping debate erupted in 1905.

> It is reported that the majority of our city council resolved to request the Provincial Government to so revise the city charter as to give them the power to make a city bylaw to punish paper boys for selling newspapers on Sunday. Why stop at the paper boys?Why not punish other desecrators of the Sabbath? Only last Sunday I saw and heard a dog barking at a crow, and a young fellow, evidently its owner, whistled as boldly as any good well-thinking body would have done on a week day. Surely, if we are to enjoy our boasted religious liberty, these desecrations of the Sabbath must be stopped.
>
> Signed: Puritan

The development of the camera paralleled British Columbia's evolution; the lens captured a spirit of adventure, discovery, and shenanigans. An 1896 photo of an enormous tree with loggers perched on it turns out to be a hoax crafted for the benefit of Seattle lumbermen. British Columbia grows bigger trees was the claim; it appears that size mattered at the turn of the nineteenth as much as it does at the turn of the twentieth century. A classic BC Archives photo of two freight wagons crawling along a hot, dusty Cariboo Road near Spences Bridge shows how the gold rush opened the door to the Interior. It's 1867, Royal Engineers have blasted through rock walls to get miners and supplies into the gold fields; the task of taming a formidable landscape has begun.

We can almost see ourselves in some of these photos: the family barn-raising in Cloverdale, student protesters in 1922 demanding UBC's Point Grey campus get built once and for all. A 1925 Stanley Cup win by the Victoria Cougars reminds us how a young province embraced sports; an Ogopogo sighting by a school principal in 1925 foreshadows a summer ritual. The sight of Terry Fox pushing himself across sun-baked pavement still inspires. "Everyday history" is what project editor Ros Guggi and her team were striving for: they achieved that. This book leaves one wanting more, including an index.

Historical Atlas of British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest: Maps of Exploration

Derek Hayes

Vancouver: Cavendish Books, 1999. 208 pp. Illus., maps. $49.95 cloth.

BY PETER H. WOOD
Duke University

HISTORICAL ATLASES RESEMBLE art exhibits. They draw together numerous images in suggestive new patterns or familiar old ways, and they provide written commentary in the form of extensive interpretation or minimal references. They focus on a narrow subject and brief period or they follow a theme across broad sweeps of time and space. They offer careful viewers a whole array of visual and intellectual connections and insights, confirming or challenging prior expectations. And, at best, the creator of a good atlas, like the curator of a fine exhibit, draws in a wide audience with varied interests, backgrounds, and attention spans. These patrons are fascinated, surprised, and engaged, and they leave wanting to return and venture through the display again. "There was so much there," they say; "I simply couldn't take it all in on the first visit."

Interested readers will make more than one visit to Derek Hayes's *Historical Atlas of British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest*, which takes as its subject the complex region of Alaska, Yukon Territory, British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon, or "roughly the area that remained unknown on the maps of the world until the late eighteenth century" (8). Readers are greeted at the start by an apt quote from George Bowering: "Geography writes history on the northwest coast of America" (2), and the entire book represents an extensive proof of that theorem. Some atlases use chapters to designate sections, just as some art exhibits employ different rooms to display specific themes or cover separate periods. But if this atlas were a map exhibition, it would fill one vast hall, for Hayes discusses and illustrates over 130 subjects, one after another, sometimes several to a page, without any decisive breaks. His topics begin with the cartographic speculations that preceded the eighteenth-century Pacific voyages of Vitus Bering, James Cook, and George Vancouver, and they end with the Alaska boundary settlement of 1903 and completion of the Canadian Northern Railway in 1915.

It has been nearly 120 years since Hubert Howe Bancroft published his *History of the Northwest Coast* (1884) and more than sixty years since the appearance of Henry R. Wagner's *Cartography of the Northwest Coast to the Year 1800* (1937). Scores of useful primary and secondary sources have appeared since then, and many are cited in the book's ample bibliography. Hayes has used recent scholarship in composing his succinct and informative entries. Moreover, he has selected each image in terms of its historical significance, visual interest, and narrative value, reminding us that in the end "the choice is ultimately a personal

one, tempered by availability" (7). The end result is a varied and informative array of illustrations from well over 300 historical maps (180 in colour) plus an assortment of additional photographs and engravings.

This affordable book introduces us to scores of maps – large and small, famous and obscure – and puts them into fascinating context. We learn which Russian charts Cook carried with him and why David Thompson's maps were so accurate. We see several of the rare maps laid out by First Peoples, such as the schematic outline of the Continental Divide, provided by the Blackfoot chief, Ackomokki, to a Hudson's Bay Company surveyor in 1801. We also see the fantastical side that is an integral part of exploration: early editions of *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) by Jonathan Swift included a careful map that located his land of Brobdingnag off the Northwest Coast, just beyond the equally mythical Straits of Anian.

On the one hand, this is not the kind of cartographic survey, complete with detailed references for each map, that appears in classic studies of other regions, such as the recently revised third edition of William P. Cumming's *The Southeast in Early Maps* (1998). Nor, on the other hand, does this book offer the demanding, expensive, and tremendously useful maps that modern cartographers create to shed fresh light on historical issues and developments. For that one must turn to works such as the impressive *Historical Atlas of Canada* (which, strangely, Hayes does not cite). But volumes like this one help provide the groundwork for more specialized studies. Helen Hornbeck Tanner edited her intriguing international *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* in 1987. Perhaps someone is now at work on a similar border-spanning volume for the First Nations of the Northwest Coast.

Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island

Daniel W. Clayton

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000. 330 pp. Illus., maps. $85 cloth, $29.95 paper.

By Richard White
Stanford University

Islands of Truth is an important, imaginative, and provocative book that sails in the long wake of Michel Foucault and Edward Said. Daniel Clayton is less interested in what really happened in the imperial encounter between the British and the Nuu-cha-nulth peoples of Vancouver Island than in the variety of truths about the encounter constructed from experience and ideology. The power to narrate – "to sustain some truths about land and people and to denigrate and marginalize others – is a constitutive feature of Western dominance."

Clayton takes these normal postcolonial concerns and adds a sensitivity

to space and scale that is not at all typical of postcolonial studies. Clayton's claim is that Vancouver Island and places like it "are both products of the West and places with specific and irreducible identities" (xii). These irreducible identities are local and have been hatched "at the intersection of European and Native perceptions of the other" (63). Vancouver Island is thus both an example of a "globalization of Western interest" and "the geographically and historically diverse emergence of colonial relations and performance of colonial practice" (240). In making his case Clayton marries empirical research and methodological reflexiveness. It is sometimes rather too harmonious a marriage because Clayton's empirical research more often than not confirms rather than disrupts his theoretical assumptions. He makes passing reference to the tendency to get "too much theoretical mileage out of colonial complexes," but he doesn't often attempt to roll back that theoretical odometer.

Clayton organizes his narrative around three constitutive events: Cook's arrival at Nootka Sound; commercial interchanges between Native peoples and Western traders, and, finally, the imperial apportioning of territory that leads to the creation of actual colonies on the Northwest Coast. In each case an imperial structure and disciplinary practices limit and contain the range of permissible meanings involved in complicated processes of contact.

In a revealing, if not wholly original exercise, Clayton pursues "methodically reflexive" readings of Cook's journals to understand the derivation of historical facts and the construction of historical truths. He compares the various journals of the expedition, the official published account of Cook's journey, and various oral accounts of Native peoples. The result is not just a predictable rejection of the official journal's projection of Cook's scientific humanitarianism: bringing friendship and trade to peoples in distant corners of the world and returning with an objective account of distant lands and peoples because Clayton also takes on Mary Louise Pratt's account of travel narratives in *Imperial Eyes* (1992). Cook's crew was too diverse ("aristocratic, bourgeois, and clerical"), their world of a British ship too particular and strange, and the peoples they encountered too immediate and particular to allow an easy reduction of their goals to the propagation of an imperial view of the world. They were, Clayton contends, eager enough to bring Native peoples within an aesthetic and taxonomic field of vision, but the Northwest Coast was less orderable and "more aesthetically excessive than critics such as Pratt suggest" (38).

Unlike Cook, traders were not Enlightenment figures suitable for reflexive readings; they yield "itinerate geographies." Traders were in competition with each other and the information they produced as designed to deceive as well as reveal. They created "an imaginative space stocked with commercial desire and cultural derision" (77). What made this trade imperial was that traders explicitly conceptualized their local exchanges on the Northwest Coast as part of a global set of transactions, and thought that their knowledge of the scale of their enterprise gave them advantages that made them superior to Native peoples.

Still, this is a world where Native peoples mattered very much and Clayton analyzes Native rivalries, violence, and ambitions in some detail.

The result is somewhat discordant. Clayton's discussion begins with the kind of flat, ethnographic statements that he objects to in his discussion Cook. Everybody, even postcolonialists, has to place authority somewhere, and ethnography provides Clayton with his base. He is not uncritical of ethnographic conclusions, but the basis for his interrogation of white historical sources is the ethnographic construct of "chiefly relations of power" (112). The end result of this is a credible and interesting history of how "the contact process was influenced by chiefly relations of power and prestige, competition and collaboration" (129), but it is a qualitatively different kind of analysis than that which precedes or follows it. Clayton visibly struggles in the text to retain a critical agency for Native peoples while giving a dominant role to the "logic of capital." The discussion is probably the least satisfactory in the book – sometimes abstract, sometimes reified, sometimes vague and confusing(153-154). In it Clayton echoes Robin Fisher (*Contact and Conflict* [1977, 1992] more than he lets on and masks their overlap by attacking him a little too vociferously.

In his final section, Clayton draws back from the messiness of the negotiations and violence of actual trade and contact to "an imperial geography that deflated the materiality and physicality of the contact process" (161). This was largely the work of abstraction, and abbreviation as the more complicated, intimate, and negotiated knowledge of explorers and traders yielded to imperial equations. The ledger and the map became tools of power. It is one of Clayton's major points that "distance is both an enabling an a constraining variable in power/knowledge relationships at both an imaginative and imperial level" (240).

First Spain and Great Britain, and then the United States and Great Britain, abstracted out sometimes odd, but under the rules pertinent, facts to buttress claims to territories. Each power appealed to aspects of the Law of Nations most favorable to themselves, but the categories of "private trade and national honour, profit and imperial right, monopoly and sovereignty" that organized the patterns of debate were mutually intelligible (189). As the scale and level of abstraction increased, the presence of Native peoples, so critical to the earlier discourses of discovery and commerce, became more and more attenuated. The "embodied world of apprehension, fear, and mistakes" survived only as European ideas of "civilization, sovereignty, and empire."

Britain's triumph in the confrontation of Nootka in Clayton's analysis laid the groundwork for formal colonialism, but it was not the thing itself. That would come with the Oregon Treaty and the settlement of the region by American and British immigrants, and for this George Vancouver was critical. Vancouver, from whom the island would take its name, created the geography of the island as an abstraction apart from trading sites, points of contact, Native habitations, and territories. Clayton, engaged in a second debate with Robin Fisher, is intent on making Vancouver complicit in colonialism, but debating Vancouver's complicity masks a more fundamental disagreement between Clayton and Fisher. Fisher is less interested in denying colonialism than in complicating it. He locates its origins as much in cooperation between imperialists and Native peoples as in conflict. Clayton wants to distance

imperialism, to make it the "insidious" (195) work of abstraction and power operating at a distance. Vancouver's survey was part of a claim to "know the world as geometric totality and represent it accurately." It allowed the "accumulation of both power and knowledge" at a central place (203). Clayton rightly notes that Vancouver's survey was as much about renaming and the search for "*safe* anchorages, *deep* harbours and *fertile* tracts of land" as it was about angles, depths, and distance.

Clayton's argument, however, doesn't go to the heart of Fisher's position, nor does it necessarily establish the connection between geography and empire. Vancouver's survey was not sufficient for empire, and it may not even have been necessary. Vancouver, of course, surveyed and named other places such as Puget Sound that did not become part of the British Empire. In dealing with the imperial dispute between the United States and Great Britain over Oregon, Clayton more tentatively asserts that modern nation state "needed to be given its own distinctive state – it needed to be mapped." Mapping, in the case of the United States, however, tended to come after not before the annexation of territory (210).

With the Oregon Treaty, Vancouver Island moved relatively quickly into the colonial realm, the object of settler fantasies of wealth waiting in the wilderness and dismissal of the rights and permanent presence of Native peoples as holders of the land. When in the 1860s Native people were relegated to small reserves, they were not, Clayton makes clear, "dispossessed by international treaties or maps" but instead by "a colonial apparatus of power." The book ends with an assertion that this colonial project interlocked with the imperial fashioning that Clayton has described.

Clayton sees the history of Vancouver Island as very much part of Edward Said's loss of locality to the outsider, and casts current struggles of Native peoples within an attempt to restore land and locality. In making this local story a particular variation within this "intrinsic feature of Western imperialism," he depends very much on Native peoples. But Clayton's very postcolonial unwillingness to engage them on the same grounds as he does imperialists can make the particularity seem vague and inchoate compared to a fuller, embodied, and more powerful imperialism.

The Frontier World of Edgar Dewdney
Brian Titley

Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999. 171 pp. Illus. $75 cloth.

Long Day's Journey: The Steamboat and Stagecoach Era in the Northern West
Carlos Arnaldo Schwantes

Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999. 408 pp. Illus., maps. US$60 cloth.

By Patrick Dunae
Malaspina University College

Brian Titley, a historian and professor of education at the University of Lethbridge, has written an authoritative and revealing biography of a figure that is not well known in British Columbia. This is a stylish, edgy study: it crackles with energy, twinkles with wry humour. "Biography is akin to necromancy," Titley writes, "We exhume the bodies of the dead – skulldiggery, if you like – and breathe life into them. But we cannot question them, and our reconstruction hinges largely on the fragments they leave behind, whether deliberately or accidentally" (viii). The author of several major studies on colonialism, racism, and Aboriginal administration in western Canada, Titley knew where to look in the National Archives of Canada, the British Columbia Archives, the Glenbow, and other repositories for the documentary fragments of Edgar Dewdney.

Edgar Dewdney was lieutenant-governor of British Columbia from 1892 to 1897. Before that he was federal minister of the interior (1888-92), lieutenant-governor and commissioner of Indian affairs for the North-West Territories (1880-88), and Conservative MP for Yale (1872-80). He also represented the District of Kootenay in the colonial Legislature of British Columbia (1868-70).

Dewdney was a qualified surveyor and engineer when, in 1859, he came to British Columbia from England at the age of twenty-four. He assisted Moody and the Royal Engineers in laying out the townsite of New Westminster; he helped with the construction of the Cariboo Road; and he blazed and built a strategic trail to the goldfields at Wild Horse Creek. Having surveyed and constructed many other key routes, he has been called the father of road making in British Columbia.

The Frontier World of Edgar Dewdney is an important book, one that makes a significant contribution to our understanding of British Columbia and the prairie west. It is notable not only for its snappy style and impressive scholarship, but also for the author's stance with respect to his subject. "I do not consider Dewdney a great man or a nation builder. Rather, I see him as a type – a representative

of that class of adventurer who saw in the western frontier an unprecedented opportunity for self-aggrandizement" (ix).

Titley doesn't like this type of character and he certainly doesn't like Edgar Dewdney. Indeed, he is contemptuous of Dewdney and nearly everything Dewdney did or represented. Consider, for example, his remarks on Dewdney's decision to stand as member of Parliament for Yale in 1872: "Neither ranching nor mining had made him rich, and he faced an uncertain future of successive surveying contracts. What he really wanted was a sinecure – a well-placed government appointment with a steady income that would allow him to speculate in business ventures as he saw fit. He believed that politics might lead to such arrangements"(26). As it turned out, Dewdney did fairly well for himself financially by speculating in land around Regina and mines near Rossland. And he succeeded in becoming "viceroy" of British Columbia, "a position with a good salary, social prestige and not too much work" (102). But Dewdney was never as blatantly venal or as cynically corrupt as were many of his contemporaries. John H. Turner, who was premier during Dewdney's stint in Cary Castle, and Edward G. Prior (premier, 1902-03; lieutenant-governor, 1919-20) spring to mind. (They must be quaking in their graves, praying that Titley doesn't turn his "skulldiggery" searchlights on them!)

Titley dislikes Dewdney not simply because he was a political opportunist. He dislikes Dewdney's patronizing attitudes towards Native peoples on the Pacific slope, the coercive policies he administered as Indian commissioner on the prairies, and the insipid way he conducted himself as minister of the interior ("no statesman-like vision, no spark of originality, no independent thought" [142]). Most of all, he dislikes Dewdney because he subscribed to, and apparently benefited from, the "loose moral code of frontier capitalism" (85).

The author's disdain for Dewdney is evident in assessments of seemingly innocuous traits, such as Dewdney's abiding love of the wilderness in British Columbia. "Grand, savage, untamable old nature!" Dewdney rhapsodized during a vice-regal excursion up the Coast in 1893: "Man with all his inventions and scientific means of overcoming obstacles would have a poor chance of asserting himself in these parts." Titley comments: "A fine tribute from one whose early career had been spent carving trails through the wilderness" (124). The very last sentences of this scarifying biography also resonate with derision and disdain: "It is no small irony that the main thoroughfare in Regina is called Dewdney Avenue. Could it be a deliberate tribute to the shady moral code of frontier capitalism with which the West was won?" (143).

In British Columbia, Dewdney is commemorated by several place names, including a community, a mountain, two peaks, a couple of flats, a creek, and an island. His name is also associated with the Dewdney Trunk Road, an old highway that extends east from Pitt Meadows into the Fraser Valley. The road runs parallel to the Fraser River and close to the American border. South of the line, as Carlos Schwantes explains in *Long Day's Journey*, frontier capitalists developed an extensive transportation network using steamboats and stage-coaches.

Schwantes is professor of history and director of the Institute for Pacific

Northwest Studies at the University of Idaho. This book is a companion volume to his *Railroad Signatures of the Pacific Northwest* (1993). In *Signatures*, Schwantes demonstrated how railways affected regional development in the late nineteenth century. In *Long Day's Journey*, he looks at an earlier era and shows how a sparse population, scanty capital investments, and a difficult terrain determined the success or failure of regional steamboat and stagecoach enterprises in the "northern West" (i.e., Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming).

Schwantes is less critical than Titley in describing the frontier world of the northern west and the non-Native entrepreneurs who sought to dominate it. Moreover, he takes a rather benign view of the transportation networks maintained by the steamboat pilots and the Concorde stagecoach drivers (who revelled in such titles as "kings of the river" and "knights of the rein"). For example, Titley argues that Dewdney's trail from New Westminster was "more than a conduit of trade ... it was also a line of contact to a remote corner of the colony so that the state could assert its control" (18). While acknowledging how roads and rivers facilitated the activities of American troops, census officials, and postal workers, Schwantes says relatively little about attempts by the state to exert political or cultural hegemony in the northern west.

Schwantes is also more sanguine than is Titley in his overall assessment of this historical period. In the concluding sentences of his book he says simply that the "steamboat and stagecoach era was a distinctive age, with its peculiar definition of time and distance and the odd juxtaposition of frontier travel with the travail of a long day's journey" (370). This is not to say that Schwantes's book is cursory or facile. Indeed, this is an instance in which good looks may be deceiving. This looks like a coffee-table book; nearly every one of its 400 glossy pages is adorned with a beautifully reproduced colour or black-and-white illustration. And it feels like a coffee-table book; the dust jacket, cover boards, and paper stock are heavy, and it is presented in a modified folio format. But make no mistake; this is a formidable piece of scholarship. It includes eight pages of endnotes and fourteen pages of "Suggestions for Further Reading." The bibliography is authoritative and comprehensive, and includes many works relating to the history of transportation in this province. *Long Day's Journey* is a tour de force.

The Lord's Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia

Vincent J. McNally

Edmonton: University of Alberta Press and Western Canadian Publishers, 2000. 443 pp. Illus., maps. $34.95 paper.

BY KEVIN BELIVEAU
University of British Columbia

THE RELIGIOUS AND CHURCH history of British Columbia remains largely untapped and untold. This neglect has caused us to fail to recognize the connections and themes that link local histories to larger denominational and social movements around the world. What we are left with are often very reactionary, simplistic perspectives examining only the "shadows" of denominational history and painting a picture of religious history that is terribly marginalized rather than connected to a much larger series of stories about the spiritual and religious themes of Canadian and, indeed, human history. Add to this the reality that most scholars are no longer fluent in denominational jargon or sensitive to religious themes at work in Canadian history, and it is no wonder that this story remains untapped and untold.

In Vincent J. McNally's *The Lord's Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia* not only is part of this history finally being told, but it is also being told with sensitivity. A far cry from A.G. Morice's simplistic *A History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia* (1906) and the triumphalist *Cross in the Wilderness* (1960) by Kay Cronin, McNally approaches the largest and most influential Roman Catholic religious order in British Columbia's history with a critical eye. He reveals and deconstructs both the "rugged individualism" of legend and the "shadows" of Oblate history.

McNally outlines, both chronologically and geographically, the history of this religious order from its ultramontane roots in revolutionary France through the early days of colonial British Columbia and Vancouver Island. He explains the eventual emphasis on missionary work and gives a contemporary chronology of recent developments among both European and First Nations congregations. All of this is accomplished with some reference to the pivotal roles played by religious orders of women, various First Nations communities, and the activities of both the Roman Catholic hierarchy and ordinary priests working in various locations across the province. Rivalry between the Oblates and secular clergy in Vancouver is put in context, thus explaining much of the tensions and strains that have plagued the Roman Catholic community in Vancouver for decades.

At several points McNally provides a fascinating, though incomplete,

explanation of the Oblate motivation to evangelize First Nations communities. He often refers to the Oblates' "repressively Jansenistic spirituality" (153), "obsession with pelvic morality" (153), and "authoritarian personality type" (166). This explanation, I believe, moves away from his stated desire to focus his critique upon social and institutional systems and, instead, moves dangerously close to merely pathologizing the "accused" and, thereby, trivializing the experience of the "victims" of Euro-Canadian attempts to assimilate First Nations communities. Were he to maintain his focus on the institutional level, McNally might have further explained the cult of Jansenism and placed it within its proper context – the development of Christian heresies and Roman Catholicism. Instead, he reduces it to pelvic concerns and psychological personality types!

Furthermore, a number of aspects of this history are not treated. An explanation of Oblate activity along the Coast and on Vancouver Island in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is not balanced by a similar explanation of activities in the Interior of British Columbia or of the period after the Second World War. McNally's research inadvertently indicates, once again, the seeming irrelevance of religion to British Columbians in the Interior and in the second half of the twentieth century. We now know that this was not, and is not, the case. In keeping with his "critical" premise, McNally might have given space to the voices of First Nations peoples and to *their* perceptions of the Oblates through time and in different regions. Perhaps its most significant drawback, McNally's research silences their voices and thereby juxtaposes "Oblate activity" with seeming "Aboriginal passivity."

The Lord's Distant Vineyard goes a long way towards telling part of the story of religion in British Columbia. Its significance to readers is not only its accessible presentation of the history of the largest Roman Catholic religious order in the Pacific Northwest. The book also contributes to the making of a complete history of the Roman Catholic Church in British Columbia – one that is sensitive and critical and, therefore, generally palatable to religious and secular audiences alike.

Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years

Joy Parr

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. 368 pp. Illus. $21.95 paper.

BY DOUG OWRAM
University of Alberta

JOY PARR INTRODUCES her book by referring to it as "a series of relatively distinct, chronologically ordered essays which explore modern material culture." This is a warning to the reader that this is an eclectic and somewhat difficult book grouped around the theme of domestic goods after the war. The simple notion of domestic goods, everyday appliances, and furniture contains within it a complex interplay of themes: between modernist design and pragmatism, consumer choice and government policy, gender differences and the implications for these goods, Canadian sensibilities and international currents of taste and production – to name just a few.

If the range of subjects is complex, so too is the era Parr chose for her study. The years after 1945 saw several forces converge upon the poor consumer. First, the consumer was out of practice and desperate to spend. Years of depression and war had meant that first there was no money and then no goods. Second, the very market in which the consumer had to act was disrupted. The war had led government and consumer alike to set aside the normal market forces in favour of a command economy directed at the war effort. The transition from this world to a more normal economic structure was difficult and uncertain, albeit eventually successful. As this was occurring domestic goods became fraught with even more symbolism and importance than usual. The emphasis on family, which has been termed "the cult of domesticity," had a major impact on both the economics and meaning of domestic goods for the decade or so after the war's end. Third, long-run economic prosperity meant that the context within which the consumer made decisions was continually changing. What was a luxury in 1945 was seen to be a necessity in 1960. What was extravagance one year might be routine a few years later.

Given these complexities, it is perhaps not surprising to say that the book's strength is in its parts rather than in some seamless thesis or conclusion. Individual discussions are fascinating. Parr is the first historian to really look at the modernist movement as it applied to post-war Canadian goods. The debate between aesthetic purity and pragmatic design tells us much about high culture and mass market. Likewise, The evolution of maple furniture (a wood that many have bought but few really love) gives us a microcosm of the line between tradition and modernism within a Canadian context. She also raises a number of issues about consumer habits and marketers plans. Housewives did not always behave as marketers wanted or predicted.

For all these strengths the absence of a conclusive argument is unsettling, at least to someone trying to assess the book in a few hundred words. There are two themes that come close to serving as an overarching thesis. One is a challenge to the notion that domestic goods will automatically reflect consumer tastes. Given the implications of everything from post-war economic regulation to the gaps between producer assumptions about women and women's actual needs, Parr argues, the assumption of consumer sovereignty is facile. This is hard to argue with at one level. The immediate post-war years were certainly not examples of the marketplace in full and unfettered operation. Even by the 1950s, as post-war regulations eased, domestic goods tended to be oligopolistic rather than shining examples of Adam Smith's competitive market.

Yet there is another, albeit implicit, argument that appears and reappears and that seems somewhat contradictory. In the introduction Parr raises a comparison between Canada and Sweden ("another small northern nation") and wonders why our approach to domestic goods took a different road. Throughout the work she returns to this theme and muses as to why Canadians did not choose high-quality well engineered products over mass produced goods being sold on the basis of novelty and change – what she terms the Volvo versus Ford debate. In the end, she implies a certain disjunction between the goods and the consumer.

In the end, though, the answer is simply that the consumer did not want to pay for the refrigerator equivalent of a Volvo. Nor, it might be argued, was this an irrational decision. In a world where the standard of living was going up year after year it made some economic sense to buy what you could afford now and await the great North American promise that, in a few years, you would be able to "trade-up." This would imply that the consumer was actually doing what s/he wanted. This is reinforced by the discussion around automatic dryers as well as the more general conclusion that Canadian domestic consumption was "characteristically subdued"; that is, relative to what was going on south of the border. By the later 1950s automatic dryers were being pushed in Canada with some force. Yet Parr argues that consumers were attached to their clotheslines. Even a decade later a large majority of Canadian homes did not have dryers. In this resistance she spots a noticeable difference to the American pattern and thus gives us an example of the somewhat more conservative approach to consumption in Canada – a theme that echoes throughout other studies. The author uses this argument to differentiate Canadians from Americans. Yet this, too, reinforces the notion of consumer sovereignty. The companies used all the same advertising techniques and pricing efforts. Until the Canadian consumer was ready, however, push led to resistance. In other words, manipulation can only take a company so far – something Ford would learn with the Edsel. In the broad sense the general consumer is sovereign even if individual consumers are not.

The implication, then, is that Canadian consumers ended up with American goods because, whatever differences existed in timing, Canada was North American in its attitudes towards consumption. This had been the case long before the 1950s when Canadians used balloon construction to give cheap and rapidly built houses

to a growing population. Canadians chose suburbs over European cities and single detached houses over apartments. Domestic goods were based on the same principles, and one wouldn't expect anything else. Canadians, both men and women, preferred Fords to Volvos, and that is what they got.

The Sommers Scandal: The Felling of Trees and Tree Lords

Betty O'Keefe and Ian Macdonald

Surrey: Heritage House, 1999. 192 pp. Illus. $16.95 paper.

By David Mitchell
Simon Fraser University

British Columbia's politics have often seemed synonymous with scandal. Not only have the colourful cast of characters who have played prominent roles in provincial politics seemed unusually prone to quarrels, mishaps, and conflicts of interest, but the local press has demonstrated a penchant for exaggeration and hyperbole. Of course, not every indiscretion or misdemeanor committed by an elected representative constitutes an actual scandal. However, in recent years, an increasingly aggressive news media have tended to describe such recurring behaviour as "scandalous."

Nevertheless, British Columbia does have the misfortune of being the home of a few bona fide political scandals that have significantly shaped the tone and rhetoric of public discourse in the province. Perhaps the most significant such event occurred almost half a century ago and is known as the Sommers Affair. Robert Sommers was minister of lands and forests in the Social Credit government of W.A.C. Bennett. In 1958, after a lengthy and sensational trial, he was found guilty of conspiracy and accepting bribes, becoming the first minister of the Crown in the history of the British Commonwealth to serve a prison term.

Surprisingly, *The Sommers Scandal: The Felling of Trees and Tree Lords* is the first book-length account of this important incident in British Columbia's history. And for this, the authors, Betty O'Keefe and Ian Macdonald, deserve thanks. They provide a useful chronology of the events leading up to the charges against Sommers and place the entire affair within the context of British Columbia's forest policy. Above all, it is a good, suspenseful story. Among the book's strengths is the recounting of the drama of the trial leading to the conviction that would eventually send Sommers to jail. Written in a lively style and based upon newspaper reports and interviews with key participants after the fact, there is no better available summary of the proceedings of this important legal case.

The authors have synthesized an impressive volume of research; however, the lack of documentation poses a problem. Written for a popular audience, the book fails to provide

specific references to sources for verification of details or fact. This is particularly worrying because of the apparent conjecture and inaccuracies found in some portions of the book. These are particularly evident in the authors' recounting of the history of party politics in British Columbia. For instance, when Vancouver lawyer Leslie Peterson became a Social Credit candidate late in 1955, we are told that he was seen as "the future leader of the party." In fact, such speculation would have been more than a decade premature. And CCF MLA Rand Harding is referred to as "Ron" Harding. These are examples of small but irritating errors that highlight concerns about the lack of documentation in this book.

The Sommers Scandal does explore a number of the more important questions surrounding this case, such as: how could Sommers be found guilty of accepting bribes in the awarding of a forest licence to a company when no one in it was found guilty of offering him money or benefits? The book does not, however, adequately explain how such a serious political scandal failed to adversely affect the government of the day. Premier W.A.C. Bennett never seemed touched by the affair, and his Social Credit Party was re-elected both in its midst and aftermath. The authors are hardly sympathetic to the old Socreds, but their continuing triumphs at the polls seem a mystery in this account.

The authors conclude that this important scandal ultimately had little or no effect on forest policy in British Columbia. Such an unqualified judgment seems to ignore the political reality that future forest ministers would become much more cautious about involving themselves directly in the awarding of forest licences. The scandal also hardened the Socreds, making them a much more careful and combative political force. In fact, it is possible to argue that the Sommers Affair may actually help explain how and why W.A.C. Bennett would become British Columbia's longest-serving premier.

Pepper in Our Eyes: The APEC Affair

Wedley Pue, editor

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000. 241 pp. $39.95 cloth.

By Pat Marchak
University of British Columbia

In November 1997 Vancouver was the venue for a meeting of the heads of state representing the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies. Though the meeting was intended to deal with trade issues, by far the major story it generated was about the tactics the RCMP used against student protesters. This story was soon augmented by evidence that the federal government had exerted pressure on the RCMP to act in accordance with political, rather than legal, requirements for crowd control.

Subsequently, the RCMP Public Complaints Commission (PCC) launched an inquiry amidst continuing public outcry. The chair of the first panel of inquiry, Gerald Morin, resigned following gross interference with the panel's conduct by the chair of the PCC. A second inquiry was chaired by a single judge, and the final word is yet to be delivered.

Examination of these issues by Wesley Pue and other contributors to this collection of essays is timely and helpful. The central argument throughout the essays is that the conduct of the police and government before, during, and following the APEC summit fundamentally violated the Canadian constitution and citizens' rights. As Pue states in the opening essay: "If [the students'] allegations are borne out by the slow grind of evidentiary processes, we will be forced to conclude that the RCMP were deployed by the government of the day for political, not law enforcement, purposes" (9). He argues that no functioning democracy can tolerate that arrangement.

Margot Young; Andrew Irvine; Donald J. Sorochan, QC; Philip C. Stenning; and Nelson Wiseman add information on, and insights into, the relationship between free speech and democracy, the nature of political interference, the evolution of the PCC legislation, and the history of the relationship between the federal government and the RCMP. A feisty little essay by Joel Bakan on the evils of the neoliberal agenda interrupts the sober legal analysis. Constable Gil Puder (to whose memory the book is dedicated) adds a critical insider's view of police responses to political pressures. Karen Busby explains why the students had to seek federal government funding to mount their case.

Terry Milewski was the focus of attention throughout the opening sessions of the police enquiry, less because of his media reports than because of the prime minister's reactions to them. His contribution to this volume is rigorous and frank, the centrepiece of the book. Immediately following his discussion of the way the government attempted to silence him, the first chair of the panel of inquiry, Gerald Morin, reflects on the reasons for his resignation. Though both stories have been widely reported, their telling by the central protagonists reignites one's dismay with the politicians and the RCMP. However, the final assessment is less bleak than the interim politics. The judge resigned, but the media made the reasons public and there was a public reaction to government interference. The reporter was attacked by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the RCMP, and a craven CBC bureaucracy took Milewski off the story, but eventually the CBC ombudsman, Marcel Pepin, investigated and cleared the reporter. Indeed, he went further than merely clearing Milewski, he condemned the PMO, the CBC, and others for claims they had made. In the end, the government and the RCMP came out of the affair peppered (if one may dare to pun) with bad publicity for their stupid and inept attempts to control the students and then dismiss the complaints.

The last three chapters, by Obiora Chinedu Okafor, Arnab Guha, and Jane Kelsey, respectively, consider the global context for the APEC meeting in Vancouver. Here the issues that motivated the student protesters are examined by opponents of the new right agenda, with particular attention being given to the willingness of its

advocates and political leaders to support dictators whose compliance with the corporate agenda rests on the repression, and often oppression, of their own populations – Suharto, of course, being at the forefront during the Vancouver meeting.

The book is somewhat repetitive regarding the APEC events and even more so regarding the law, but since each writer adds a new interpretation, this fault is not deadly. There is some unevenness in tone between the more academic arguments and the more polemical arguments, but, on balance, this is a good set of essays worth reading.

The Politics of Resentment: British Columbia Regionalism and Canadian Unity

Philip Resnick

Vancouver: UBC Press for Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2000.
172 pp. $34.95 cloth.

By Stéphane Lévesque
Universities of Western Ontario

Prolific political scientist Philip Resnick has ambitiously sought to conceptualize British Columbia as a "region-province" and to study its role in the Canadian unity debate. Although he set out to make a comparative analysis of British Columbia regionalism and Québec nationalism, Resnick found that the abundant material on British Columbia required an exclusive emphasis on that province. This is mildly disappointing to a Québécois such as me but still good news for all those interested in the past, present, and future political lives of British Columbians. Indeed, *The Politics of Resentment* is one of the first books to examine the insufficiently appreciated role that British Columbia has played in Canadian political debates in the last forty years or so.

Divided into six chapters, the book begins with an overview of British Columbia as a particular region of Canada as historians, social scientists, politicians, and writers have understood the matter. In later chapters, Resnick constructs an analytical framework – not very well defined – to examine the political views of BC premiers and other politicians (Chapter 2), from W.A.C. Bennett to Glen Clark; the views of various British Columbia opinion makers, business spokepersons, consultants, journalists, academics, and others (Chapter 3); and, finally, the comments of British Columbians during the British Columbia Unity Panel hearings of 1997 (Chapter 4). In Chapter 5, Resnick presents his own construction of BC regionalism. He concludes that, in the minds of British Columbians, there resides a feeling of hurt, of betrayal, of unfair treatment in the Federation, and this he calls the "politics of resentment" (p. 119). For him, resentment is the result not only

of past actions – or neglect – on the part of the federal government, but also of an envy of Québec's position. That "other" distinct region-province has largely monopolized Canadian politics since the 1960s. In the last chapter, Resnick adopts a position on Québec nationalism that, ironically, has grown in popularity in English Canada since the 1995 referendum. He engages in a series of hypothetical answers to the question: "What if ... Québec separates?"

Resnick's analysis of British Columbia regionalism is likely to attract considerable attention from social scientists on the West Coast. The *Politics of Resentment* not only offers a discussion on Canadian unity as seen from the Pacific, but it also dares to ask what makes British Columbia such a distinct, unique place in Canada – a place that Robin Fisher believes historians have not yet adequately defined. For Resnick, British Columbia is "a pluralistic, multifaceted society that does not lend itself to easy generalizations" (p. 19). Yet, he thinks of British Columbia as a "region-province" in Canada characterized by geographic location, specific economy, population inflow, and new patterns of integration into the larger global economy. British Columbia's distinctiveness makes its residents feel they have a distinct regional identity and problems that are not well understood in Ottawa. Resnick is quick to add, on the other hand, that, unlike Québec nationalism, this distinctiveness remains compatible with pan-Canadian nationalism and unity. In other words, "region" and "nation" have for him very different places in the collective imaginings of British Columbians than they do in the collective imaginings of Québécois.

Unfortunately, Resnick's suggestion of rethinking the symbolic makeup of Canada on the basis of province, region-province, and nation-province (for Québec) falls short. If the Canadian Federation is de facto regionally divided and governed, then Resnick offers no clear explanation of how and why some provinces would deserve the status of "region-province" instead of "province." More important, Resnick's construction is caught between Scylla and Charybdis. On one side, one has the negative attitudes of British Columbia towards Québec's special status and powers in the Federation, an arrangement likely to incite region-provinces to also ask for more powers and recognition – something Resnick rejects. On the other side, all other "provinces" will surely oppose particular status or power for region-provinces because this would go against the sacred dogma of the equality of provinces and against English Canada's "territorial conception of federalism," to use Will Kymlicka's expression. In the end, it is uncertain what British Columbia would gain by being officially a "region-province."

Resnick's work has value, offering an unexpected approach to BC politics and Canadian unity. His view of British Columbia's distinctiveness should have a healthy effect on those who write and make BC history and politics. Yet, in the present circumstances, his (re)-construction of Canadian federalism lacks clarity and applicability.

The Guru's Gift: An Ethnography Exploring Gender Equality with North American Sikh Women

Cynthia Mahmood and Stacy Brady

Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 2000.
123 pp. Illus. US$19.95 paper.

BY ANITA PARHAR
University of British Columbia

THE *GURU'S GIFT* is a valuable contribution to the limited scholarly literature on the topic of women and Sikhism in the Diaspora, including British Columbia, and it is particularly relevant as it includes the voices of marginalized women. Mahmood and Brady interview thirteen amritdhari (baptized) women in their late twenties, living in Canada and the United States, in an attempt to gain an understanding of what it means to be a Sikh woman. The authors' focus solely on amritdhari women enables the study to provide insight into the lived realities of Sikh women. As W.H. McLeod notes in *Who Is a Sikh?* (1989), the question of who is a Sikh is contentious and does not exclude those who are non-baptized. In *The Guru's Gift*, the authors explore notions of identity and gender equality from the perspectives of baptized Sikh women.

Mahmood and Brady find that all of the women associate being Sikh with having the right to equal status and equal power. To the women, being Sikh means following the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib and conforming to the "religious codes of conduct and beliefs of Khalsa" (27). The teachings of the Ten Gurus, espoused by the Guru Granth Sahib, reject inequality based on gender. As one woman states: "I think that what makes me unique as a Sikh woman is the equality in the religion ... It is a very free religion and it's not strict in terms of women not being able to do this or that and having to stay in the household" (36). One reason why each woman chooses to "live as a Sikh" involves the belief that there exists a scriptural basis for justice and gender equality.

In Chapter 1 Mahmood and Brady provide a brief introduction to each of the Sikh women who participated in the study. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4 the authors explore the notion of equality in Sikh scripture as interpreted by the women. Rich narratives that describe the realities and experiences of the women indicate incongruities between religious ideals, religious practices, and Punjabi cultural practices. In daily life, each woman encounters deeply rooted essentialist notions of womanhood and women's roles in society. The negative and patriarchal beliefs and attitudes of Punjabi men and women prevent Sikh women from realizing equality in many religious practices, such as the singing of hymns, the fanning of the Guru Granth Sahib ji, and the serving of food in the Gurudwara. The women also describe instances in which they challenge beliefs, attitudes, and practices of family members and friends because they are inconsistent with the teachings of the gurus.

Examination of the nature of gender equality from the perspectives and lived realities of thirteen baptized Sikh women is one of *The Guru's Gift*'s strengths, for it enables scholars, students, and educators to get a glimpse of these women's worlds. However, this approach is also one of the book's weaknesses, for Mahmood and Brady do not contextualize their findings in relation to the literature within the discipline of religious studies. As a result, they fail to provide a critical examination of the notion of equality within Sikh scripture and do not discuss the latter's possible misogynistic tendencies. By focusing on interpretations that only affirm positive images of women, Mahmood and Brady offer a one-sided view. This criticism is similar to one that can be made of N.K. Singh's *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent* (1993). Anyone reading *The Guru's Gift* without applying a critical lens may get the false impression that Sikh religious culture is monolithic, that religious practices are void of issues of "politics," and that the Sikh faith is traditionally "profeminist."

As feminist scholars often indicate, there is no one theory that fully explains the nature and causes of women's subordination to men. Implying, as do Mahmood and Brady, that greater adherence to the teachings of the Ten Gurus will afford women equality is presumptuous. Many of the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib may indeed afford women greater equality, but a broader approach and multidimensional analysis must be conducted before one can make general claims to equality.

Gilean Douglas: Writing Nature, Finding Home

Andrea Lebowitz and Gillian Milton

Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1999. 227 pp. Illus. $21.95 paper.

By Sue Wheeler
Hornby Island

Gilean Douglas was an emblem of her time and place. Born in 1900, she almost lived the century out. Her fierce independence, ambition, and dedication to her goals were a foreshadowing of what women, through feminism, would reach for in later decades. Born to privilege in Toronto, she embraced the challenges and solitude of a life in the bush in British Columbia, predating the back-to-the-land movement by decades. Writing was Douglas's life-long passion, and she went about it with gusto, chronicling her travels and her unusual life in nature through weekly columns in Vancouver and Victoria newspapers and for the readers of over 200 magazines. At the time of her death in 1993, she was compiling and revising articles written as recently as the year before.

Andrea Lebowitz and Gillian Milton, in *Gilean Douglas: Writing Nature, Finding Home*, present a

portrait of this remarkable woman through Douglas's own writings, interspersed with sections that place these writings in the context of her life and times. They have done a good job of selecting and commenting upon texts, thus showing the range of Douglas's interests, the closeness of her observations, and the progress of her personal devlopment.

Douglas was an only child and an orphan by sixteen. Much of her life was spent searching for a home and for someone to love her unquestioningly. It is Lebowitz and Milton's premise that, after four failed marriages, writing and nature gave Douglas the home she sought.

In 1939, Douglas, dealing with personal health and financial problems (both of which would dog her all her life), visited her lover at his cabin on the Coquihalla River. In Douglas' words: "Always in the back of my mind was the desire for that one perfect place where I could feel fulfilled and truly at home. I found it. I knew I had – the moment I entered the mountain-fenced valley and saw the silvery shake roof of a cabin trying to peer at me over the fireweed and salmonberry brush" (75). (This excerpt is typical of her writing: lively, well crafted, and full of immediacy: it takes you there.) It was love at first sight. She buys the cabin and makes a life for herself there. These experiences form the heart of the book as well as the heart of Douglas's life. We get a vivid picture of what such a life would have been like in backwoods British Columbia in the 1940s. Douglas repairs the cabin, establishes a garden, hauls her provisions by backpack from a spur railroad line reached by a long uphill hike through the bush after a swing across the rushing river on a minimal, homemade cable car. She loves the fourteen-hour workdays, the lumber she fashions herself from slabs she splits off cedar logs with a froe, the peace and isolation of the snowed-in winters.

When the cabin burned down in 1947, Douglas had no choice but to move on. With her fourth husband, she moved to Cortes Island in 1949. Once again, the marriage failed, but the union with nature and place lasted. Douglas began a way of life typical of communities and homesteads all along the coast. Accessible from Whaletown only by exposed water or by several miles of forested trails, her home at Channel Rock became her refuge and her inspiration. As she had been in the Coast Mountains, she was a close observer of animals, plants, the weather, and the seasons. She truly lived *with* them, and she conveyed this cohabitation in her writing. She took numerous trips on the Columbia Coast Mission ships to remote upcoast settlements and wrote of the lives lived there. She also became, in her seventies, a director on the Comox-Strathcona Regional Board, working to control development and to preserve nature through local planning.

Lebowitz and Milton are to be thanked for including in the book so many photographs of Douglas at different stages in her life and of the places she loved. The book is declared at the outset to be "a sampler of some of the best writings of Gilean Douglas" as well as "a biographical introduction to a fascinating woman" (8). I imagine many readers will be inspired to consult the bibliography and read more.