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***The Pacific Province: A History of British Columbia***, edited by Hugh Johnston. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996. 352 pp. Maps. $26.95 paper.

*The Pacific Province* is the work of current and former faculty and graduate students from Simon Fraser University. Its editor, Hugh Johnston, reports that this new history of British Columbia is "a team project in the sense that, while the authorship of each chapter belongs to one or two people, the contributors as a group determined the general framework — a thematic approach within broad periods — and discussed, critiqued and suggested changes to each others' drafts."

The prototype in English for the genre of collaborative histories that are more than collections of discrete articles but less than a single, multi-authored text is the *Cambridge Modern History.* Lord Acton, who conceived and planned this text, also provided us with criteria by which we can judge the merits of such works. Acton told contributors: "Our purpose is to obtain

the best history of modern times that the published or unpublished sources of information admit . . . By the judicious division of labour we should be able . . . to bring home to every man the last document, and the ripest conclusions of international research . . . The result would amount to an ordinary volume . . . [that] would exhibit in the clearest light the vast difference between history, original and authentic, and history, antiquated and lower than [the] high-water mark of present learning."[1]

Implicit in Acton's prospectus was the notion that this "new" sort of history would replace "antiquated," single-author volumes for all except monographic works. *The Pacific Province* demonstrates well both the merits of Acton's new sort of book and, perhaps, why old-fashioned volumes still find a welcome place in the hands and on the shelves of most readers. In keeping with its distinguished predecessor, *The Pacific Province* is organized topically, with the topics presented, in turn, in chronological order. Unfortunately, Johnston's preface only lightly touches on what principles governed the group's "judicious division" of its labours. Nonetheless, the topical organization works well in the surprisingly large proportion of the book given over to the years leading up to the First World War.

Although not "an ordinary volume" in the commonsense way we might apply the term to a history of the province, *The Pacific Province* is, indeed, far more than the sum of its parts. Two overall strengths soon reveal themselves. Although all the authors put a strong personal stamp on their chapters, each also shows an authoritative grasp of the extensive work of other scholars. Students will find the thorough annotations a useful starting point as they embark on the term paper topics instructors will undoubtedly mine from the text.

The reach of each chapter is wide rather than narrow. Veronica Strong-Boag, for example, begins hers with a statement that emphasizes perhaps the most important single theme that runs through the volume: "British Columbia is a prosperous province, but it contains persistent fundamental inequalities based on class, race and gender." One of the great strengths of this book is the generous attention that all its authors give to how these variables have played themselves out in people's lives, both the lives of those whom it calls "the first British Columbians" and the lives of those from other cultures and races who arrived later.

R.L. Carlson opens the book with a useful summary of what archaeologists have concluded about the three periods into which they divide the province's prehistory. While the nature of archaeological evidence explains the generally static quality of what he describes, one wonders if employing the growing collection of oral evidence about First Nations history might lead to a more dynamic portrait, at least of the years immediately preceding the arrival of Europeans.

[1] John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, *First Baron Acton, Lectures on Modern History* (London: Macmillan, 1906), 315-18.

In the second section, Robin Fisher, J. L. Little, and Sharon Meen take us from the arrival of Juan Perez in 1774 up to the colony's union with Canada in 1871. Fisher succinctly summarizes his earlier research, showing that Native peoples played a decisive role in the early history of the province. Little's fine contribution regarding the organization and nature of governance in the colonial era shows the strong merits of extracting a complex topic for thorough treatment. Meen's chapter then presents a wide-ranging survey of social and economic development during these years.

The topical organization works particularly well for the three chapters that deal with the era from Confederation to the First World War. John Douglas Belshaw provides a "connecting theme" that enables us to understand the confusing (and, to most of us, boring) politics of the era: "The province's political elites invariably sought to resolve conflicts so that broader economic and political goals could be achieved in a setting of relative stability." Hugh Johnston's chapter shows how a growing economy provided very different rewards to its English-speaking majority, to its Asian and European workers, and to Native peoples, respectively. For the last named, he notes, there "was no ready way up from the bottom rung of the ladder." In perhaps the book's best example of the merits of specialist chapters, Allen Seager explains how the resource economy of the province mirrored the revolutionary changes taking place in the world economy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The topical format reveals its disadvantages in the three chapters that deal with the history of the province since the First World War. Veronica Strong-Boag's survey of the social history of the province in this century, with its welcome attention to children and family life, stands reasonably well by itself. However, the chapter on political patterns, written by Fisher and David Mitchell, and that on the economy, written by Mitchell and Belshaw, are the least successful of the book. In their fine biographies of Duff Pattullo and Cece Bennett, Fisher and Mitchell have already demonstrated their point that those who study provincial politics "have important things to say about British Columbia, its people, and how they lived their lives." Unlike the aforementioned chapters, both biographies also showed the enormous degree to which the "important things" in provincial politics interwove with and expressed people's economic and social concerns.

The preface to the first volume of the *Cambridge Modern History* explained that "politics, economics, and social life must remain the chief concern of this History; art and literature, except in their direct bearing on these subjects, are best treated in separate and special works."[2] Showing the persistence of this perspective, Douglas Cole treats the "cultural" history of the province from the eighteenth century to the present in a separate final

[2] A.W. Ward et al., *The Cambridge Modern History*. Vol. 1, *The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), vii-viii.

chapter. In his entirely engaging analysis of the "tensions of margin and centre, of provincial and cosmopolitan civilization" as a "major theme in the cultural development of British Columbia," Cole also demonstrates why we persist in taking pleasure in a well-written single narrative with a distinct voice.

Neither the *Cambridge Modern History* (in either its first or its second editions) nor *The Pacific Province* represents the triumph of the team approach over other approaches to history. On the whole, *The Pacific Province* does "bring home" the "ripest conclusions of international research." On the other hand, so also did their single-author predecessors. Each has contributed to our growing understanding of the history of British Columbia, and all may be read for benefit as well as pleasure.

*University of British Columbia* NEIL SUTHERLAND

*The Pacific Province* is a product of ten scholars from the field of British Columbian history or related disciplines. The team approach has its pros and cons. The division of labour not only allows a much shorter completion time but also makes possible a greater specialization in both subject matter and methodology. Such variety, in turn, better reflects the multifaceted nature of a maturing historical discipline. Against these advantages must be weighed the difficulties of ten people with differing writing styles and perspectives trying to develop an integrated narrative. *The Pacific Province* illustrates both the strengths and some of the weaknesses of the team approach, but, on balance, British Columbia, which has traditionally led the way in provincial/regional syntheses, has again been well served by its historians.

The study does not attempt a thesis and its significance does not lie in its recurring theme of Pacific influence. Most important is its portrayal of recent historical research, the impact of which can be observed by comparing it with previous provincial histories. The authors have attempted an inclusive and balanced portrayal of the people of British Columbia. Native peoples are placed front and centre in most chapters through to the Great War, and the analysis suggests a considerable shedding of European ethnocentric attitudes. They have also tried to be sensitive to gender. An index in which male names outnumber female by about four to one both suggests progress and continuing deficiencies in the field of BC history.

The authors have attempted a judicious balancing of chronology and theme. Archaeologist Roy Carlson leads off with a survey of 10,000 years of pre-history, leading up to the immediate ancestry of individual Native groups. He explains the jargon and classifications of his discipline with grace and clarity. His chapter merges smoothly with Robin Fisher's mature and lucid treatment of European-Native contacts and the development

of the fur trade to 1849. This is followed by Jack Little's chapter, "The Foundations of Government."

Here is the most serious discontinuity in the work. Without an introduction to the gold rush and the population patterns that it created, or even a map of the areas under discussion, the reader is unprepared to absorb Little's sophisticated analysis. The irony is that all of these are supplied in Sharon Meen's "Colonial Society and Economy," which immediately follows. A simple juxtaposition of the chapters would not only render Little more comprehensible, but his narrative of the confederation movement would blend neatly with John Belshaw's analysis of British Columbian politics to 1916.

Belshaw's study, which links political factions to economic interests and finds other plausible patterns as British Columbia's political culture "grew closer to the political culture of eastern Canada," serves as a viable introduction to a section of the volume in which the population and economy are each given separate chapters. Hugh Johnson's delineation of Natives, English-speaking settlers, and Asiatic communities has a freshness and specificity that sustains the reader's interest despite the heavy dose of statistics. Alan Seager's chapter on the resource economy is strong on both local patterns of development and the national context.

Robin Fisher and David Mitchell confidently analyze the "distinctive rhythms" of British Columbian politics since 1916, while suggesting that their "volatility" not be exaggerated. Belshaw and Mitchell's attempt to analyze the economy for the same period seems to reflect a less mature research base, as one is left with a murky picture of the province's industrial role in Canada's war effort and the whys and wherefores of its failure to consolidate advances at the war's end. In this penultimate section, Veronica Strong-Boag's chapter on society, inserted between politics and the economy, analyzes lifestyle changes in the modern province — treating population changes, education, health, social programs, consumer developments, and recreation. The concluding section reinforces our picture of peoples' lives, as Doug Cole interprets the cultural history of the province since the arrival of the Europeans and concludes with a brief statement concerning the Native tradition. These innovative chapters reveal another minor faux pas in overlapping sections on recreation. Surprisingly, both authors, in describing British Columbians' recreational pursuits from gardening to opera, have virtually nothing to say about hunting and angling — pursuits that offered British Columbian residents, both urban and rural, a greater variety of opportunities than were available anywhere else in the world.

*University of New Brunswick* ERNEST R. FORBES

*For Honor or Destiny: The Anglo-American Crisis over the Oregon Territory*, by Donald Rakestraw. New York: Peter Lang, 1995. xii, 240 pp. Illus. US$44.95 cloth.

In the years prior to 1846, the Northwest Coast — an isolated region scarcely populated by non-Native peoples — was for the second time in less than a century the unlikely flashpoint that brought far-distant powers to the brink of war. At issue was the boundary between British and American claims in the "Oregon Country." While President James Polk blustered that he would have "54'40 or Fight," Great Britain talked of sending a powerful fleet to ensure its imperial hold on the region. The Oregon boundary dispute was settled peacefully, largely because neither side truly believed the territory worth fighting over. The resulting treaty delineated British Columbia's most critical boundary; indeed, without it there might not even have been a *British* Columbia. Despite its significance, though, the Oregon boundary dispute has largely been ignored by BC's historians, leaving it to their colleagues south of the border to produce the most substantial work on the topic.

This most recent analysis is no exception. *For Honor or Destiny: The Anglo-American Crisis over the Oregon Territory*, by Donald Rakestraw, began its life as a doctoral thesis completed at the University of Alabama. Published as part of an American University Studies series, Rakestraw's book covers much the same ground as did that of his countryman Frederick Merk some decades ago. By making extensive use of new primary material, Rakestraw is able to present a fresh, succinct, and well-written chronological narrative of the events leading up to the Oregon Treaty of 1846.

Rakestraw begins by describing the "seeds of controversy" in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which left Britain and the United States advancing conflicting claims to, while agreeing to joint occupation and use of, the territory. The subsequent chapters give a detailed description of the progress of the dispute, focusing on the politics behind the two governments' respective positions and the various diplomatic conferences on the issue. The half-decade prior to the Oregon Treaty receives the most attention, and Rakestraw at times gets bogged down in day-to-day events.

Rakestraw shows that the issue was left to drift dangerously, escalating until Britain and the US almost inadvertently found themselves close to war. The irony of the situation was that neither side valued Oregon for itself, at least certainly not enough to go to war over. However, and this is Rakestraw's main argument, Oregon became transformed into an issue that pitted notions of American "destiny" against notions of British "honor." In the US, Oregon was incorporated within the rhetoric of expansion and "manifest destiny"; this irresistible force met an immovable object in British imperial honour, which even Lord Aberdeen, the chronically pacific foreign secretary, defined as "a substantial property." Fortunately for both sides,

the war scare of 1845-46 was defused, as cooler heads prevailed, and the Oregon Treaty was signed just as the US was turning its attention to larger conquests involving Mexico.

Without explicitly saying so, Rakestraw underscores the point that this dispute was settled far away from Oregon itself, by politicians and diplomats who had never seen the region. Rakestraw's study is largely a diplomatic history; he works within the "realist" tradition and adopts a geopolitical perspective. London and Washington are the venues of action (and repositories of primary sources). From reading his acknowldgments it seems possible that, like the diplomats who decided the dispute, Rakestraw himself never visited the Northwest.

By taking such a global perspective, Rakestraw gives too little attention to the situation on the ground in Oregon. He argues that the influx of American settlers played a crucial role in the dispute, and he makes tantalizing suggestions about the establishment of territorial governments in the region, noting that they received support from both American and British/Canadian settlers. He also recognizes the crucial role played by the Hudson's Bay Company in the region and alludes to the beginnings of the demonization of the company by American settlers (a motif that would persist in Oregon historiography for decades). However, much of this treatment is based on secondary sources and remains suggestive rather than in-depth. Indeed, Rakestraw could easily have devoted a whole chapter to the evolving situation within the Oregon Country. Did American settlers exert any real pressure north of the Columbia, given that they remained almost exclusively south of the river and, according to Merk, did not expect to gain possession of the other side? What were the relations between the American and British/Canadian settlers — and, in turn, between these communities and the region's Native peoples — particularly in light of the emergence of local government? How, in the end, did the Oregon dispute and settlement play out within Oregon itself?

Rakestraw is no doubt correct in asserting that the Oregon boundary was decided by diplomats and politicians representing far-distant powers. And in clearly delineating the geopolitical forces behind the Oregon dispute, *For Honor or Destiny* makes a significant contribution to the history of BC and the Pacific Northwest. But what made the Oregon boundary a reality was the occupation of the respective sides of the border by non-Native people under different political jurisdictions. This determined that one side would remain American and the other British, while also shaping the contours of the respective history of each. Perhaps historians closer to the ground might best tackle this topic.

*University College of the Fraser Valley* CHAD REIMER

*Prophecy of the Swan: The Upper Peace River Fur Trade of 1794-1823*, by David V. Burley, J. Scott Hamilton, and Knut Fladmark. 234 pp. Vancouver: UBC Press 1996. Maps., illus. $65 cloth.

*Delayed Frontier: The Peace River Country to 1909*, by David W. Leonard. Calgary: Detselig 1995. 256 pp. Illus. $29.95.

The combination of these two books provides a much needed explanation as to why British Columbian scholars have all but ignored the Peace River country and its history. It is certainly not for a lack of evidence, human drama, or relevance. Rather, *Prophecy of the Swan* and *Delayed Frontier* demonstrate that the forces that opened up the Peace provided only fleeting contact with the people, places, and perspectives on the other side of the Rocky Mountains. Simply stated, the links to the land-based fur trade of the Hudson Bay territory and to the homesteaders arriving from northwestern Alberta were more significant and deeply felt in the Peace than were the westward connections to New Caledonia and British Columbia. Until recently, British Columbian scholars have reciprocated by choosing to believe that everything that mattered in the province was west of the Rocky Mountains.

Admittedly, difficulties exist when dealing with the Peace country. Documentary evidence is scattered through the Hudson's Bay Company archives, the Provincial Archives of Alberta, and the British Columbia Archives and Records Service, amongst many locations. Other sources are in even more challenging environs.

*Prophecy of the Swan* is the work of three archaeologists who have placed the findings and conclusions from their digs along the Peace River into the historical context of the fur trade during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Overtly interdisciplinary in its focus, this book verifies Fort St John's claim to being the oldest non-Native settlement in British Columbia and documents the aggressive competitiveness of the fur trade in the years preceding the 1821 amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company.

The greatest accomplishment of this book is its ability to fill in some of the gaps that exist in the documentary record. The digs "unearthed" previously unknown post locations, clarified the nature of the trade in the region, and provided convincing indications that by 1822-23 the Peace had effectively been trapped out. A second contribution is the inclusion of journals providing a daily record from two of the posts along the Peace River. Detailing the nature of work and life at an Interior post, these journals are potential gold mines for anyone interested in the fur trade. Finally, in depicting the painstaking effort involved in archaeological work, the authors provide important insight into the methods of a discipline that can offer historians a great deal of useful and previously unaccessible data.

*Delayed Frontier* not only covers some of the same historical ground but brings the story of the Peace region forward to 1909. David Leonard of the Provincial Archives of Alberta incorporates a generous collection of photographs, maps, diaries, and letters in his reconstruction of the opening of the region from the pre-fur trade era to the era of the early twentieth-century homesteaders. Organized thematically, Leonard's book explores the treaty processes, Aboriginal peoples and cultures, missionary work, the fur trade, agriculture, and the so-called settlement frontier. Culled from fourteen separate archives across Canada, Leonard's extensive research documents the lengthy ties stretching from the Peace Country across the Canadian Prairies and beyond. In so doing, he makes it abundantly clear that to understand the Peace and its history, one must view it as an extension of the Prairies and, thus, as an anomaly within British Columbian scholarship.

Leonard's greatest success is his ability to populate the history of the Peace, both on the Albertan and British Columbian sides, with human beings. While the region is well supplied with "characters," such as Twelve-Foot Davis, the real essence of the history are the Aboriginal peoples who called the region home and the travellers, Klondikers, and homesteaders who discovered the Peace on their way to somewhere else. Some of the newcomers stayed while others pressed on to return later or never again. The accounts they left, or the observations they inspired in others, often serve to provide near poetic reflection on why the Peace, in concert with the symbolism of its name, was so alluring to so many.

Although these books succeed on different levels, both raise some minor concerns. The wedding between archaeology and history in *Prophecy of the Swan* is, at times, a bit bumpy. For example, the authors acknowledge that the archaeological digs recover the relics that reflect the non-Native side of the Peace River trade, but we are still some distance from a full appreciation of the Aboriginal view of the newcomers to the Peace. There is evidence of a fairly uncritical acceptance of the entirety of fur-trade literature; Peter Newman is used in concert with Arthur Ray without any indication that the latter is much more authoritative than is the former. For his part, Leonard tends to fall down on organizational grounds. His thematic approach is sometimes repetitive and baldly unchronological. Although the themes hang together, one often has the sense of continually passing over familiar ground. Leonard is also too fond of undigested and lengthy quotations, which create the impression that the work is a compilation of compelling primary sources.

Beyond these specific concerns, *Prophecy of the Swan* and *Delayed Frontier* are both rather conservative when it comes to asking questions. The authors were evidently content to record what happened and then offer some fairly unadventuresome conclusions. Neither author was prepared to ask or answer the question as to why scholars should be interested in or even care about

the history of the Peace. What can we learn that is special or particular about the Peace from either its archaeology or its later human history? Undoubtedly, there are hints here but certainly no consistent effort to theorize or to ask this question. While the two books provide a valuable service in detailing the outlines of the history and some of the resources to be plumbed, a great deal remains to be pursued.

These two books deserve the attention of British Columbian scholars because, collectively, they put to rest a number of misconceptions and simple falsehoods that continually resurface in the telling of our history. Indeed, it could be argued that they put the scholarly community on notice that it is no longer acceptable to overlook the late eighteenth-century roots of non-Native settlement in the Peace, just as it is no longer acceptable to claim there were no treaties in British Columbia. They also deserve attention for what they did not aspire to, for this indicates how we must, as individuals and as a community of scholars, writers, and readers of British Columbian history, continue to press forward and ask penetrating questions rather than merely being satisfied with recording what allegedly occurred.

*University of Northern British Columbia* JON SWAINGER

***Chilkoot Trail: Heritage Route to the Klondike,*** by David Neufeld and Frank Norris. Ottawa: Parks Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, and Whitehorse: Lost Moose, 1996. 182 pp. Illus., Maps. $24.95 paper.

***Gold Rush: Reliving the Klondike Adventure in Canada's North,*** by Ian and Sally Wilson. West Vancouver: Gordon Soules, 1996. 246 pp. Illus. $16.95 paper.

In 1992 I hiked the Chilkoot Trail with a group of teenagers. To prepare myself for this hike I spent many hours in the gym getting my body in shape and many more hours in the library searching for information about the trail and its history. While there was plenty to read about the gold rush, there was very little information available about the trail itself — and a singular lack of photographs (other than glossy pictures of the scenery). The best information I could find was a brochure and map for the use of hikers distributed in Skagway by the United States National Parks Service.

*Chilkoot Trail* is the book I looked for in 1992! It is a collaborative effort between David Neufeld, a Parks Canada historian and ranger, and Frank Norris, a ranger and historian at Alaska's Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. Both men have spent many years as park rangers, regularly hiking the trail. Neufeld and Norris begin with a detailed account of the land itself. They describe the trail, which is fifty kilometres long and rises approximately 1,080 metres over this distance. The authors give a clear

picture of what to expect at every level of the trail as you hike from the coastal rain forest up through the high alpine and down to the boreal forest.

Next the authors tell the story of the Tlinglit peoples, who have lived in the area for centuries, trading with other First Nations of the Interior and the Coast. Each of the five routes the Tlinglit used to conduct trade across the mountains — including the Chilkoot, White, and Chilkat Passes — was controlled by a different clan. When the miners arrived, the Raven Clan, which controlled the Chilkoot Trail, quickly adapted their skills to the packing business, carrying thousands of pounds of goods over the trail for the gold seekers.

In July 1897, almost a year after the discovery of gold in the Yukon by George Carmack, Skookum Jim, and Dawson Charlie, the steamship *Excelsior* arrived in San Francisco with a "score of Yukon miners and hundreds of kilograms of gold." The news spread like wildfire. Much of this book tells the tale of thousands of people and their "stampede through the Chilkoot," seeking adventure and gold. The authors also tell us something about politics and justice in the gold-rush years as well as the saga of building the White Pass and Yukon Railways. They close with an interesting chapter on the trail in the twentieth century and the influence of tourists on the area.

The book can be read from beginning to end or dipped into and sampled in an idle moment or two. It is illustrated throughout with an outstanding collection of photographs, some taken from archives and libraries in both Canada and the United States and some from the present day. The authors make extensive use of first-hand accounts recorded in diaries, letters, and reports of the people who travelled the trail (including gold seekers, ministers, missionaries, salesmen, the Northwest Mounted Police, adventurers, and tourists) both in the 1890s and in the 1960s and '70s. This comprehensive story of the trail to the gold fields of the Yukon will be a valuable tool for the serious student as well as for the armchair traveller looking for an entertaining account of the search for gold and adventure. The book will delight all who have hiked the trail and all who wish to hike the trail, either in reality or only in dreams.

While *Chilkoot Trail* was the book I really needed in 1992, *Gold Rush* would have added to my enjoyment of the trail. In this twentieth-century adventure story, Ian and Sally Wilson describe how they travelled the trails the gold seekers used, "reliving the Klondike adventure in Canada's North." The first route the travellers tried was the Stikine Trail from Telegraph Creek to Teslin Lake, travelling on horseback with pack ponies. Gold seekers using this trail went by steamer from Wrangell, Alaska, up the Stikine River to Telegraph Creek and then overland to Teslin Lake. What they found was a very ill-defined trail, black flies, three rushing rivers to cross, bears, swamps, bogs, and almost impenetrable bush. The Wilsons use their own experience to describe the hardships that the gold seekers in

all likelihood faced on this trail. Most of the miners turned back and went on to use the Chilkoot Trail, as did the Wilsons 100 years later.

To my disappointment, the Wilsons deal very briefly with their hike over the Chilkoot Pass. The next four chapters tell about building a scow similar to those used by the miners and rowing and sailing it down Lake Laberge and the Yukon River to Dawson City. There they spent several winter months in a primitive log cabin before setting out to the gold fields to try their hands at gold mining, 1890s fashion.

While I am not an aficionado of adventure/travel stories, I did find this one interesting. Having recently travelled the stretch from Lake Laberge to Dawson City by car, I tried to imagine what it would have been like to do it as did the gold seekers. I picnicked at the site where the Wilsons launched their scow. I stood high on the hill and looked down on Five Fingers Rapids. I traipsed around Dawson City in the spring. I sailed on the Yukon River on a ferry boat. While I saw the places where the gold rush occurred, I found it difficult to put myself in the shoes of the men and women of the 1890s as they experienced the difficulties and hardships of the long trek to the gold fields and the Yukon winter.

Even though it takes place 100 years later, the Wilsons' account gives a genuine sense of the miners' experiences. I concluded that the lure of gold and the desire for adventure must have been incredibly strong for them to tolerate such conditions.

*Vancouver* JANET SUTHERLAND

*Making Vancouver: Class, Status, and Social Boundaries, 1863-1913*, by Robert A. J. McDonald. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996. 336 pp. Illus., maps. $49.95 cloth, $24.95 paper.

There have been popular histories of Vancouver, and many specialized studies of aspects of the place, but *Making Vancouver, 1863-1913* is the first attempt to present a broad and tolerably comprehensive social history of the city as it emerged out of a mill town to become, by the First World War, British Columbia's metropolis. More than this, by considering the whole social formation rather than a particular group of people, *Making Vancouver* sketches out something of the larger society that was modernizing British Columbia, and does so on the basis of long archival investigations and fairly eclectic theorizing. It is, therefore, a book to be read and analyzed attentively.

McDonald holds that a Marxian analysis of class, useful as it is, can only partially explain Vancouver's society. Drawing on Max Weber and the American sociologist Seymour Lipset, he invokes the concept of status — criteria of mutual regard and prestige acquired through ascription rather

than economic achievement — to fill in some of the gaps. Bonds of status, he thinks, underlay ethnic affiliations and disparagements, racial categorizations, and the ability of some of relatively modest means to join the ranks of the elite. Overall, he argues that class identity was clearest among the elite, and that among the rest boundaries of status, particularly that between 'citizens' and others, 'constituted a division that for much of the prewar boom period more fundamentally structured Vancouver society than the boundary separating capital from labour.'

The case is developed approximately as follows: The mill town society that preceded the CPR was dominated by a company clique of respectable families, and fractured by occupational status, ethnicity, and race. It was segregated and hierarchical, but class was only one axis of separation. Then, with the CPR came an immigrant British society bent on replicating its ways and excluding others. The new elite was relatively unchallenged; resistance was diffused by the geographical mobility of labour and a widespread sense of opportunity. The depression of the early 1890s weakened the hand of local businessmen and strengthened the larger companies, notably the CPR and its affiliates. At the same time, a middling class of small businessmen and some workers became increasingly critical of monopoly capital. They, however, were 'citizens' and in this sense were aligned with the elite. Below them were transient workers and ethnic and racial minorities, all (from the citizens' point of view) outside the social consensus. With prosperity that began in the late 1890s came the surge of investment in the resource industries and in transportation that consolidated Vancouver's pivotal position in the provincial resource economy. Labour became more unionized and militant. Capital protected itself, forming the Employers' Association of Vancouver, and arguing for open immigration and for exclusive control of the workplace. Vancouver politics increasingly polarized along class lines. At the same time, the Vancouver land boom generated a speculative fever that extended to the working class, in so doing strengthening the myth that progress was accessible to all and somewhat diffusing class tensions. The clearest class was the elite, united by British background, family values, and, increasingly, the clubs and recreations appropriate to their station. While not every one who was wealthy enjoyed high social status, and some, who were anything but wealthy, did (by virtue of education and 'breeding'), status and class converged in the elite and enabled them to mobilize in their own interest more effectively than any other stratum of Vancouver's society. Among the middling group, class identities were less clear, blurred by strong family values, ethnicity, antipathy to Asians and transients, and, to a lesser extent, by neighbourhood and fraternal associations. Asians, transients, Natives, and, for a time, Italians were all marginalized others, living as minorities outside the predominant society, a state McDonald attributes primarily to status.

McDonald's analysis is much more intricate than this summary suggests, and somewhat unemphasized because he refuses to identity one principal axis of social differentiation. Acknowledging the importance of a Marxian analysis of class, he holds that class was crosscut in early Vancouver by ethnicity, race, and many more subtle indicators of status. Beyond the elite, he thinks that the boundaries imposed by status were often sharper and more confining than those imposed by class. While I have many quibbles with McDonald's analysis — I think, for example, that his discussion of the boundary between the civilized and others would have been far more pointed had he read more of the post-colonial literature, that his treatment of ethnicity wants an analysis of the cultural loss and symbolic reifications associated with transplanted immigrant societies, that the concept of status may be asked to do too much work, and that his analysis would have come into sharper focus had the social geography of the early city been more explored — I think his main arguments are sound, and that he has described a substantial portion of early-modern BC society more comprehensively than anyone else.

In the background are the questions raised by Mark Leier and his critics (including Robert McDonald) in the last issue of *BC Studies* (no. 111, autumn, 1996) about the salience of a Marxian analysis of class. Leier holds that class interests are fundamental, other social divisions secondary and, as such, frequently manipulated by capital. Impressively as Leier has put his case, I remain skeptical. It would be relatively easy, I think, to show that class boundaries, and those associated with a cultural discourse about the locus of civilization and savagery, with patriarchy, and with ethnicity, all have different origins. If class can split racial or gendered identities, so race or gender can split class identities. Native people in BC were exploited by capital, but probably were more oppressed by a pervasive cultural discourse that defined them as savages. Such oppressions are fundamental enough for the people involved. In any event, Robert McDonald has advanced an impressive body of evidence and arguments about early Vancouver society. *Making Vancouver* is a complex and very considerable analysis. If, as Leier suggests, BC historiography should be more argumentative, more preoccupied with issues of power, then Robert McDonald's remarkable book suggests some of the directions for a long and fruitful discussion.

*University of British Columbia* COLE HARRIS

*A Thousand Blunders: The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and Northern British Columbia*, by Frank Leonard. Vancouver: UBC Press 1996. ix, 344 pp. Illus., maps. $49.95 cloth, $24.95 paper.

Railways do not seem terribly important in northern British Columbia these days. Few travellers use the passenger rail service in the region; roads and airplanes seem far more significant in the commercial and social life of the North. The trains still run — from the Rockies to the Pacific Ocean and from Vancouver to the northeast corner of the province — but they have lost much of their symbolic and cultural significance. Early in this century, railways held the key to the economic future of British Columbia and were ruthlessly promoted by dozens of speculators and their political friends. Most of the schemes, founded on dreams of instant wealth and uninformed by the financial and geographical realities of the mountainous province, deserved their quick demise. Others lingered, sustained by the fanciful dreams of communities that saw themselves as the next Calgary or, at least, the next Kamloops. A few of the railways were actually built.

One such icon of early twentieth-century boosterism was the Grand Trunk Pacific, a grandiose, transcontinental project designed to rival the Canadian Pacific Railway. In this important work, Frank Leonard examines the regional impact of the Grand Trunk Pacific and provides a thorough and insightful investigation of the relationship between the Grand Trunk and the people and communities of the north-central part of the province. In adopting the regional approach, he does not lose sight of the broader context within which the railway operated, and he offers a succinct summary of the political and financial difficulties that plagued the Grand Trunk Pacific from its inception. The net result is a fine piece of regional history — informed by broader developments but appropriately sensitive to the impact of this major initiative on the people and landscape of the region. Perhaps most significantly, Leonard provides a superb account of the interplay between region and company, documenting how one influenced the other, often to their mutual disadvantage.

*A Thousand Blunders* is an unusual "railway book" in that it eschews the standard "great-man" and "hard-worker" approach. Leonard outlines the struggle to promote the Grand Trunk Pacific as "the" railway through central British Columbia and, in two concise chapters, provides a very useful account of the construction process and labour relations along the line. He then expands the study to focus on the relationship between railway construction and townsite development in Prince Rupert, Prince George, and Hazelton — the latter providing a particularly interesting account of how company officials failed to act in their best interests. A useful chapter on the acquisition of Indian lands is an important contribution to the understanding of contemporary Aboriginal protests and claims. The book concludes with a study of Grand Trunk Pacific operations during the First World War and

a discussion of the collapse of the Grand Trunk Pacific and its absorption into Canadian National Railways. The book is, overall, a fascinating account of how the "road of a thousand wonders" became the road of a "thousand blunders."

Leonard's work is an excellent example of how professional historical analysis can improve our understanding of community and regional history. While he does offer an overriding analysis of how the many errors, miscalculations, and, on occasion, spiteful actions by company employees contributed to the failure of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, his major contribution lies in his analysis of the relationship between the railway and community and regional development. In Prince Rupert, the company's activities were "ultimately self-defeating" and created conflict with the very people the Grand Trunk Pacific needed in order to thrive. The firm did better in Prince George but did not fully exploit the opportunity to capitalize on the revenue potential from land sales. In the Hazelton area, corporate myopia brought the railway into direct conflict with local mining concerns — the very organizations whose trade might have made the Grand Trunk Pacific more profitable.

Frank Leonard's serious and detailed study is an important addition to the history of the Grand Trunk Pacific and the province and, in particular, to the understanding of northern British Columbia. The book would, one suspects, have made a more substantial impact on the region had the author and the press avoided the standard "academic" approach to the subject and prepared a volume with a sharper eye to its potential market. This is actually a well-written book and, by contemporary academic standards, very accessible; a useful series of maps and well-selected photographs add to the attractiveness of the volume. One suspects, however, that many general readers will be deterred by the introductory historiographical discussion — a useful contribution (for scholars) but one that could well have been relegated to a less prominent place in the book. Studies like *A Thousand Blunders* have the potential to make a marked impact on the region's understanding of itself; it is to be hoped that the preparation of future volumes of this nature takes the non-academic audience more into account. Leonard's work deserves a large regional and professional audience.

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KEN COATES

*Our Tellings: Interior Salish Stories of the Nlha7kápmx People*, compiled and edited by Darwin Hanna and Mamie Henry. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995. 217 pp. Illus. $25.95 paper.

*Our Tellings: Interior Stories of the Nlha7kápmx People* is a collection of oral narratives compiled and edited by Darwin Hanna and Mamie Henry. The book includes a foreword by Wendy Wickwire, an afterword by the Cook's Ferry Band Council, an orthographic key, a key to tape translations and transcriptions, a glossary of Nlha7kápmx words, and a bibliography.

The Nlha7kápmx, one of five groups of Interior Salish in British Columbia, live along the Fraser and Thompson Rivers and in the Nicola Valley. Darwin Hanna is a Nlha7kápmx from the Lytton Band and holds a law degree from the University of British Columbia. Mamie Henry is also a Nlha7kápmx from the Lytton Band. She is an elder and a teacher of language and cultural studies at the Mestanta Technological Institute at Lytton. The storytellers are Mildred Mitchell, Walter Issac, Annie York, Louie Phillips, Herb Manuel, Mandy Brown, Hilda Austin, Mary Williams, Anthony Joe, Mabel Joe, Tom George, Peter Bob, Bill Walkem, Nathan Spinks, Bert Seymour, Phil Acar, Rosie Skuki, Christine Bobb, Edna Malloway, and Fred, Bea, and Buddy Hanna.

Some of the stories were related in the Nlha7kápmx language and translated, others were recorded in English and are presented verbatim. The phonemic writing system used to transcribe the stories was designed and put into use by Randy Bouchard and Mamie Henry in the 1970s. The language has forty-five sounds. It uses eighteen letters of the English alphabet and the number seven. The remaining symbols are obtained by the use of an acute accent, an apostrophe, or an underline along with the English alphabet symbols. The Spuzzum dialect was used. Another group of Nlha7kápmx, living in the Nicola Valley, use the International Phonetic System.

Among the Nlha7kápmx there are two types of narrative, sptakwelh and spilaxam. The sptakwelh are "creation stories," which take place in the mythological age when all creatures were human and the transformers walked the land. The transformers, like Coyote, had special powers that they used to shape the world as we know it today. The spilaxam, or "non-creation stories," give the history and cultural teachings of the Nlha7kápmx. They include narratives about the first explorers and missionaries and about contemporary life.

The editors state that the purpose of the collection is to "take charge of our own cultural revitalization" and to teach the listeners about "nature, respect, and morality." There is, of course, much more depth to the stories. The stories teach, entertain, train, inform, dramatize, historicize, and present a worldview and a cultural context. They underpin values and beliefs. They

correct. They offer unique points of view for non-Nlha7kápmx people who care to read and study them.

One of the major strengths of the book is that it records the stories verbatim. It is difficult to express the profound importance of a collection of stories that expresses the Nlha7kápmx voice in the mother tongue or even in the Nlha7kápmx dialect of English. Being Nlha7kápmx I have heard this dialect all my life. As I know many of the storytellers I can almost hear their voices, with their musical tones and dramatic stops. I can almost see the gestures, actions, and facial expressions. When I read the stories I am sitting with the elders at the kitchen table, learning, being entertained, finding my place in my own society, among my own people.

Some of the elders are gone now, and all I have of them is maybe a memory of seeing them laughing and talking together at a gathering, shaking hands at a funeral, teasing them at a knitting class, watching two women link arms and dance to the beat of a drum. For the contemporary Nlha7kápmx there is never enough time to do all the things we want to. I would have appreciated more time to learn from the elders. Now I can, through their stories.

My one regret is that the Nlha7kápmx versions of the stories were excluded. I would have liked to see the English and Nlha7kápmx versions side by side so that I could have had the opportunity to gain language knowledge, to extend my vocabulary, to compare dialects, to get a sense of how certain elders speak the language of my mother, father, and grandmother.

*Our Tellings* is a wonderful book for anyone to read, but I also believe it should be used as a textbook in all learning institutions where Nlha7kápmx is taught.

*University of British Columbia* SHIRLEY STERLING

*Co-operation, Conflict and Consensus: BC Central and the Credit Union Movement to 1994*, by Ian MacPherson. Vancouver: BC Central Credit Union, 1995. 291 pp. Illus. $39.95 cloth, $29.95 paper. (Credit Union Central of British Columbia, 1441 Creekside Drive, Vancouver, BC, V6J 4S7)

Ian MacPherson, an active participant in the credit union movement, has written this history relying on archival material gathered by BC Central Credit Union and drawing on his own knowledge and that of associates whose experiences complement or pre-date his own. One of the strengths of this work is the firm historical context into which each phase of the development has been placed. Geographic factors are considered as well as the cultural and economic conditions that gave rise to the movement, and

which, in changing, have forced change on it. But the human interest is not neglected. Many of the people involved are profiled, both saints and sinners.

In defining co-operation the author, noting that credit unions are financial co-operatives, describes an ideology that affirms faith in human nature, that believes people can democratically control their own economic affairs and share profits on the basis of participation. Co-operatives and credit unions should support social goals and, through federated structures, attempt to reshape the entire economy. This clearly is an ideology the author supports. The credit union movement, much of it based on the mortgage market, has shown enormous growth and considerable success, but the record reveals many difficulties in adhering to the principles the author espouses.

Given the diversity of British Columbia it is not surprising that the credit unions, which began during the depression years of the 1930s, sprang up independently and were organized by divergent groups, not all of which have been able to act in concert. There has been some question about the role of BC Central, well positioned to give leadership but subject to demands for grass-roots control. The growth has meant that volunteers have been replaced by professionals, some of whom have pursued a "business ethic," and a large number of members have joined for the advantages offered, with little inclination to accept the responsibilities of membership. As British Columbia credit unions became a significant economic force, the provincial government established regulations to protect the members, a move that MacPherson accepts as necessary but that he acknowledges makes them "more like banks." He decries the infusion of partisan politics into credit unions, as occurred at VanCity, since he believes that co-operative principles can be accepted by people of any political ideology. Nevertheless, that credit union, with its board dominated by NDP members, is one that takes social goals seriously.

MacPherson supports the extension of federated structures to national and international levels, and he suggests that credit unions can play a role in offsetting the power of transnational corporations. Consumer co-operatives and co-operative banking developed in Europe as a reaction to the industrialization that drove people from their villages to become slave labour in factory towns. As we see people replaced in banks, offices, and factories by computerized machinery, it is difficult to be as optimistic as is the author about the role credit unions can play in ameliorating hardship. If the history of the industrial revolution provides any insight, there is a long struggle ahead before the benefits of the current revolution are widely and evenly shared — a struggle that will have to be fought on many fronts. Perhaps a few idealists in the credit union movement is a start.

*Vancouver* MORAG MACLACHLAN