WRITING RELIGION INTO THE HISTORY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA:

A Review Essay

By Gail Edwards

Catalysts and Watchdogs: BC's Men of God, 1836-1871
Joan Weir.
Victoria: Sono Nis, 1995. 116 pp. Illus. $14.95 paper.

God's Little Ships: A History of the Columbia Coast Mission
Michael L. Hadley.
Madeira Park: Harbour, 1995. 308 pp. Illus. $28.95 cloth.

No Better Land:
The 1860 Diaries of the Anglican Colonial Bishop George Hills
Roberta L. Bagshaw, ed.
Victoria: Sono Nis, 1996. 307 pp. $21.95 paper.

Confronted with the religious beliefs that motivated Christian missionary activity, many Canadian historians seem to echo the famous comment of an eighteenth-century Anglican bishop to John Wesley, founder of Methodism: "Sir, the pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost is a horrid thing — a very horrid thing."[1] Living in a secular age, we are faintly embarrassed by the notion of religious experience and describe religious enthusiasm with the distaste of the Augustan rationalist. In so far as church and religious history have been incorporated into Canadian historical research, the emphasis has been placed on understanding church-state relations and on the place of religion in intellectual history. The ways in which religious beliefs shaped social and cultural identity are less well documented, and serious examinations of the dynamics of personal belief and social structures in the activities of missionaries are even more scarce. Few Canadian historians have applied discourse analysis to missionary narratives to tease out issues of theology and personal spirituality. Instead, missionary activity is either placed within broad frameworks of colonial conquest or relegated to the backwaters of denominational history.

The absence of a serious consideration of religious experience as a category of analysis is particularly acute in British Columbia history. In part, this may be due to the popular perception that BC is now, and thus has always been, predominantly secular and that religion, therefore, has had a minor role to play in its development. A reader would look in vain in the index of Margaret Ormsby's history of the province for evidence of reli-

[1] Quoted in Ronald A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950; repr., Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 450.

gious activity. More recent authors of general histories, notably George Woodcock and George Bowering, mention missionary activity only to dismiss it as the efforts of corrosively destructive colonializing God-botherers. On the other hand, religious histories of the province, for the most part, have been triumphant accounts of the progress and growth of particular denominations, written from within by interested amateurs.

Three recent histories of missionary activity, written for the general reader, attempt to address this imbalance in BC history by reinserting religious activity into frameworks of social history, with varying degrees of success. Joan Weir's *Catalysts and Watchdogs: BC's Men of God, 1836-1871* examines the early history of church development in nineteenth-century BC. Although Weir never explicitly defines the "Men of God" in her study, it quickly becomes apparent that her exclusive interest is in Anglican missionaries, for she sees them as leaders in the new colony and as "the only available brake, counter-balance, mentor or sounding-board" (p. 12). Weir clearly subscribes to the "great-men" theory of history, describing missionary activities as triumphalist narratives of progress impeded only by personality conflicts and the challenges posed by the remoteness of the colony. Her over-determined insistence on the influence of Anglican missionaries on the political and social life of the colony leads her to patronizingly dismiss the Roman Catholic Oblate missionaries as having a restricted sphere of influence.

Weir's understanding of the broader currents of nineteenth-century religious history seems superficial. She displays a lack of sensitivity to doctrinal difference and to the forms of worship practised by different sects. For example, in her analysis of the conflict between Herbert Beaver, Anglican chaplain at Fort Vancouver, and John McLoughlin, chief factor of the fort, she twice states that McLoughlin conducted a mass himself — an impossibility for a Roman Catholic layperson (p.27 and p. 32). Her brief description of the differences within Anglicanism between the Tractarians and the Evangelicals does not address the tensions in the Church of England in the wake of the Oxford Movement, which strained relations between missionary groups. For Weir, it would seem that the precise nature of the insult of being called a "Puseyite" has no particular historical or theological significance (p. 45). Similarly, Weir's unsympathetic portrait of George Hills, the first bishop of the Anglican diocese of Columbia, reduces conflict between the Tractarian Hills and the Evangelical dean of the cathedral, Edward Cridge, to a personality difference.

Perhaps the most serious flaw, however, is Weir's uncritical acceptance of historical narratives that position Native peoples as unsophisticated and inherently cruel, as evidenced in her discussion of William Duncan's activities at Metlakatla and the Methodist Thomas Crosby's work at the Crosby Home for Native girls. She neither recognizes nor challenges the racialized assumptions of White superiority that her primary sources articulate. Overall, while Weir attempts to connect religious impulse to surrounding societal patterns, her lack of critical analysis produces a work not far removed from denominational hagiography.

The reluctance to critically engage with the primary sources also plagues Roberta Bagshaw in *No Better Land: The 1860 Diaries of the Anglican*

Colonial Bishop George Hills. She states that her research was influenced "by a desire to find a place for Hills' voice in the discussion of the colonial period" (p. 12). The diary is a rich addition to the primary source literature. Hills was expected to make regular reports to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which was supporting the new diocese, and the diary clearly acted as an aide-mémoire for his report. Hills records his first impressions as he met with the colonial society of Victoria and travelled into the Cariboo with his missionaries in the first year of his episcopacy.

Bagshaw's introduction provides an overview of Hills's career and describes the various English societies under whose auspices Anglican missionaries were supported. The postscript directly addresses what she calls the pervasive negative image of Hills and, in part, seems to respond to the unflattering portrait drawn by Joan Weir. By placing the Hills-Cridge dispute within the context of Hills's first-generation Tractarian views on apostolic succession and episcopal authority, Bagshaw clearly identifies how theological belief can inform personal action, and, in so doing, she expands the Hills-Cridge controversy beyond anything that can be reduced to a simplistic personality conflict.

However, Bagshaw's overall methodological approach to the diary is frustrating. The decision to exclude footnotes means that the general reader is given no help to identify the significance of Hills's commentary on events. For example, only a reader familiar with Anglican liturgy would recognize that Hills's language in the diary is frequently shaped by the collects of the Book of Common Prayer. A careful exegesis of the diary would have identified the ways that Hills structures his narratives within the tradition of missionary literature. Comparisons between the manuscript diary transcribed by Bagshaw and the printed diary that appeared in the 1860 annual report of the Columbia Mission would have provided further evidence of the shaping of the record for a specific audience as well as of Hills's use of the diary as a first draft of a public document intended to raise funds and to promote support for the activities of the diocese. This lack of a rigorous critical framework means that, ultimately, Bagshaw fails in her stated goal of locating Hills within his historical context.

George Hills was responsible for instituting Anglican ecclesiastical structures and supervising and promoting missionary activities in the new colony. His diary makes clear the tensions between his desire to recreate English patterns of worship and the challenges posed by an evolving and rapidly changing society that rejected the idea of an established church. Michael Hadley, in *God's Little Ships: A History of the Columbia Coast Mission*, shows that the tensions between conservatism and social change were not easily resolved in subsequent Anglican missionary activities in BC.

The Columbia Coast Mission (CCM) was formed in 1904 to provide pastoral and medical care to remote communities on the BC Coast through a fleet of mission ships that stopped at logging camps and Native villages, and on-land mission hospitals and clinics. Supported by grants from the dioceses of British Columbia and New Westminster as well as from private fundraising, the mission adapted and evolved in the face of shifting demographics and new communication

and transportation technologies until 1982, when the decision was made to terminate missionary activities.

From its inception, the work of the CCM was guided by the strong personal beliefs (and personality) of its founder, John Antle. Hadley argues that Antle's commitment to the social gospel movement shaped the mission's stress on "church Service over Church services" (p. x) and, at times, placed the mission in direct conflict with the bishops who provided it with financial support. The social gospel movement, with its emphasis on the application of Christian solutions to social problems, was widely influential in the early years of the twentieth century in Canada among liberal Methodists and Presbyterians. The Anglican Church in Canada was significantly less influenced by the theology of social gospel, which raises unresolved questions about doctrinal differences between Antle and the dioceses that supported the mission. Certainly Hadley seems to indicate that the CCM never enjoyed the unqualified support that the Methodists gave to their west coast marine missions.

Hadley repeatedly states that the worship conducted by CCM missionaries was essentially non-sectarian, reflecting both Antle's impatience with doctrine and the diverse religious affiliations of the communities served by the ships. However, the photographs reproduced in *God's Little Ships* make it clear that services were led by missionaries in cassock, surplice, and stole — the distinctive vestments of an Anglican priest of the time. Equally, the form of worship structured by the Book of Common Prayer was distinctively Anglican. Whether those served by the CCM mission ships saw the enterprise as non-sectarian is never made clear.

Hadley's enigmatic comment that "except for Native peoples, neither Antle nor Greene was particularly interested in winning members for the Church of England" (p. 41) raises further questions about the idea of a non-sectarian missionary impulse. Were Native people excluded from non-sectarian worship due to a lack of acceptable prior religious commitment? Were they particularly in need of conversion to Anglicanism? Throughout the book, Hadley is relatively uncritical of the frameworks of paternalistic and colonial belief that shaped interactions between the CCM missionaries and Native communities. Hadley presents evidence that the CCM did not necessarily support the actions of the federal government in its attempts to outlaw the potlatch, but he fails to identify the racialized narratives of progressive White ways that shaped the mission's reports and the provision of health and pastoral care to Native communities. He is even less critical of the rigorous gender discrimination practised by the CCM missionaries, practices that he describes as devolving from a "characteristically male cast of mind" (p. 104). The interaction of religious beliefs and social systems that created and maintained the exclusive male world of the Columbia Coast Mission are seen by Hadley as natural and commonsensical rather than as an expression of the unequal relations of power that also informed Native-White missionary relations.

What is now needed in BC history is a reintegration of religious and missionary history into the broader constructs of social and cultural history through an examination of the ways in which religious beliefs shape and are shaped by social and cultural identity. What did it mean to be an

Anglican or a Methodist in nineteenth-century BC — socially, politically, culturally? Were there indeed differences in leadership strategies between Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops, and how were these differences manifested in the social relations of power that governed colonial society? Moving beyond sectarian histories of missionary activity might elucidate the differences between and among denominational strategies for evangelization and provide the basis for a broader understanding of the missionary impetus in the context of colonial and imperial BC. Closer attention to particular missionary discourses, and to the ways in which missionaries articulated their understanding of work and personal belief, would allow a more nuanced reading of the inter-section of religious activity and British imperial hegemony represented by a prayer for more missionaries printed in the 1894 *Official Report of the Missionary Conference of the Anglican Communion*: "Defer not; delay not; send especially labourers into all the heathen parts of our own British Empire."

Bowering's BC: A Swashbuckling History

George Bowering.
Viking: Toronto: 1996. 416 pp. Illus. $32 cloth.

By Allan Smith, *University of British Columbia*

This is a very funny book. Written in a chatty, accessible way and full of splendid anecdotes — my favourite remains the tale of W.A.C. Bennett's antic attempt to celebrate his financial rectitude by sending a flaming arrow into a barge filled with the province's paid-off (and gasoline-soaked) bonds — it breaks new ground concerning the familiar subject of BC looniness. From its reading of Amor de Cosmos's career to its fun with "the Zalm" this book deepens and extends our sense of BC as a terminally (pun intended) zany place full of politicos who act — and sometimes look — as though they ought to be "wearing big red putty noses" (p. 153).

Bowering's BC is also a very serious book. Bowering wants to introduce what he clearly expects will be a non-specialist readership to a number of points, and he hammers those points home with zeal and energy. The most basic point concerns the nature of written history itself. Not completely committed to the postmodern idea that the history historians produce is reducible to a set of contested accounts (taking this up in an unqualified way would prevent him from claiming any authority for his own version of events), he nonetheless makes clear his belief in the "constructed," "ideological" character of much of that history and in its involvement in the processes by which dominant groups and orthodoxies maintain their influence.

That belief certainly underpins his impatience with what he sees as the way the work of some of his most prominent predecessors helped to marginalize whole ranges of BC experience. Margaret Ormsby's view of the

area was, he says, essentially Eurocentric (p. 37), a disability her "one sentence" (p. 286) on the Japanese evacuation did nothing to mitigate. W. Kaye Lamb is presented as unable to countenance any reading of the past not resting on grounds of the most narrowly empirical sort (p. 406). The book's indictment of "old" approaches to the writing of history is plainest in its relentless critique of traditional history's treatment of First Nations peoples. What Bowering sees as the arbitrariness of the distinction between the "hard" evidence favoured by the historians responsible for that work and the "truth"-yielding capacities of myth and story is much insisted upon. Efforts to make up for past historians' neglect of the First Nations by assuring them a place at the centre of this volume are prominent. Some of this activity involves beating a dead horse: Bowering's rebalancing of the record has, in large part, been made possible by the extensive body of work on the First Nations (some of it done under the influence of Ormsby and Lamb) in existence before he himself put pen to paper. Nor does he completely avoid the sort of trap he has sprung on others; despite his use of Mourning Dove and other First Nations commentators, it is his authorial presence that dominates these sections of the book. But these difficulties don't diminish the narrative's impact. Bowering's debt to earlier work is discharged by the clever way that work is used. Tendencies towards the appropriation of voice are limited and benign. The account finally rendered (it includes Asian as well as First Nations peoples) is capacious and accommodating.

Concern to avoid the gaps and absences characteristic of "old" work also leads to a large dose of working-class history. There is a poignant account of Ginger Goodwin's proletarian martyrdom (pp. 248-49), and the story of Vancouver labour militancy during the 1930s is powerfully told (pp. 273-76). Women don't do quite so well. Bowering recognizes their absence from most earlier accounts and tries to give them a place in his (he records the birth of BC's first Eurobaby [a girl], notes the 1871 arrival of Emily Carr, acknowledges the presence of the Suffragettes, and summarizes the careers of Helen Gregory McGill and Helena Gutteridge), but it is clear that he has been handicapped by the fact that work on women in BC is still in an early stage. Receiving more attention — not surprisingly, given Bowering's own estimable contribution to the province's cultural/intellectual life — is culture. Different forms of that phenomenon are discussed — baseball's status as a Bowering favourite is especially evident; but it is mostly the fine, performing, and creative arts that come in for scrutiny.

Writing gets a close look — yielding a surprisingly favourable verdict on M. Allerdale Grainger (pp. 215-16) — with poetry (particularly as influenced by the Black Mountain School) given a special place (pp. 320-21) and Sheila Watson's *The Double Hook* singled out as nothing less than the novel most admired by Canada's "innovative poets and fiction writers" (p. 314). Painting and music also receive attention, but architecture — oddly, given the imagination with which its BC practitioners have explored the links among place, form, and materials — does not. Space and place themselves, though, are not ignored. Bowering, like many others, sees British Columbians' strong sense of mountain, sea, and valley — and of

their position on the Pacific coast — as a central element in their peculiar feeling of community and identity. Where, he says, easterners think about space and location in east-west terms, British Columbians think about them in north-south terms — a point made fresh and interesting through a quite suggestive comparison of how British Columbians understand maps and directions with how easterners do so (pp. 21-22).

In the end, the sober side of Bowering's funny book prevails. Its deeply felt critique of the way historical writing works to foreground, mask, and privilege certainly stays in the mind. The reach and inclusiveness of its determinedly wide-ranging narrative make a powerful impression. And — more unexpectedly, perhaps — it is the serious dimension of the laugh-eliciting sequences that gives them force and power. Building their ludic subversion of authority and pretence on careful attention to the flawed and imperfect in human behaviour, those sequences depend for their effect on the exploitation of an understanding of the human predicament to which notions of the tragic and absurd are central. Consistently working to enlarge and deepen the reader's sense of the human experience in BC, this richly variegated, highly personal confection will be viewed with a sceptical eye by those who think that proper history should be served straight up. Everyone else, though, will be able to read it with profit, interest, and pleasure.

Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-65

Allan Pritchard, ed.

Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996. 320 pp. Illus. $65.00 cloth. $24.95 paper.

By Daniel Clayton. *University of St Andrews, Scotland*

Edmund Verney (1838-1910) was from an English aristocratic family steeped in naval tradition and Liberal politics. Typical of upper-class men of his generation, he joined the Royal Navy as a boy and was expected to serve his country overseas and climb the military ranks before settling on the family estate with a suitable wife and applying his worldly wisdom to domestic politics and philanthropic causes. Verney had visited much of the world (including India during the revolt of 1857-58) before he reached Vancouver Island in 1862 to command HMS *Grappler*, a British gunboat, and the intimate letters to his father collected in this volume are a provocative addition to the archive on colonial British Columbia. Verney's correspondence is diligently introduced and annotated by Allan Pritchard, a Professor Emeritus of English.

Verney worked in many corners of the Northwest Coast, and his letters are crammed with vivid descriptions of people and places as well as intriguing observations about colonial politics and missionary work. More fully, however, this volume is about the tribulations of Victorian imperial sentiment in a British colonial setting. Verney was perplexed by the course of

colonialism in BC. He imagined that the British Empire was tied together by the bonds of "[ethnic and political] union, religion and loyalty, God and our Queen" and expected colonial officials to have "a high honourable tone," but he was disappointed by what he found in Britain's Northern Pacific colonies (p. 103 and p. 246). The colonial capital of Victoria, he complained, housed "a most odious fraternity" of people who were imbued with American values; there was "great animosity" between the colonists of Vancouver Island and those of mainland BC; Hudson's Bay Company personnel dominated the colonial government and were "mean, petty, slovenly" officials; and Governor James Douglas was "a great drag on the place" and needed to "raise ... [his] excellence in religion, in morals, in dinners, servants, gardens, houses, dress, manners and customs" (pp. 65-76).

Such remarks should not be pigeonholed as the quaint or irreverent musings of a privileged Englishman, for, in trying to make sense of the Northwest Coast and represent it to his father, Verney got hold of some of the basic facets and predicaments of colonial development and pointed to the broader disjunctures between imperial philosophy and colonial reality that beset the British Empire at this time. He assessed personalities and classified places in terms of a grand — almost ethereal — model of colonial society and his own standards of propriety, and his views were not altogether negative. He doted on the fledgling communities of the Cowichan and Comox Valleys because he figured that they were putting down solid agrarian roots, and he was impressed by the industrial spirit of the miners, settlers, and engineers of the Fraser Canyon. Yet he sensed that these farming districts would not survive unless larger markets could be found and that BC needed to invest massively in infrastructure if it was to benefit fully from its natural resources. Here were small patches of ancient and modern Britain — but in a hostile environment and a disjointed colonial space. Verney correctly judged that such patches were too scattered to encourage the full reproduction of British society in the Cordillera.

Verney's bewilderment at the colonial formation of the region was compounded by feelings of physical disorientation. "Nature works on a grand scale in these parts," he wrote of the mainland. "The eye becomes deceived as to size. A pebbly beach turns out when approached to be a mass of boulders, a few young firs a forest of full-grown pines;" and Native people appeared like "Lilliputian imp[s]" against "immense ... picturesque sights" (p. 156). Verney drew on the representational conventions of the picturesque to describe nature, perhaps in order to domesticate BC's menacing otherness and to familiarize the land for his father by giving it a European aesthetic texture. He noted that he was more interested in the country than the people, and he declared that "the improvement and cultivation of the former must depend upon the amount of improvement and cultivation bestowed on the latter" (p. 94). In other words, colonists had become lost in the forest and needed the finery of British technology and culture to put things in perspective. Verney had what theorists of colonialism call an imperial gaze, which constructs land as an object of appropriation, people as colonial subjects, and Natives as ethnological specimens.

Verney began to realize that in "out-of-the way part[s] of the world" (p. 189) such as BC, new identities and local agendas were emerging that threatened to shatter his model of colonialism and his conception of empire. The valuable, if now well-theorized, insight in his letters is that colonial variation — or imperial deviation — was not simply a political or ideological affair that could be fixed by loyal governors, more representative institutions, or the emigration of more Britons. If colonial officials had dirty hands, and if colonists did not think of Britain as often as they should, it was because they were tackling difficult and discrepant lands. This engagement with land was a basic medium of social change in colonial societies. Verney's letters also contain ample material with which to engage the recent critical literature on colonialism in a BC context — especially Homi Bhabha's argument that imperial ideas and messages become unstable and hybridized when they hit colonial spaces. Verney did not have the time or the cultural inclination to reflect on colonial experience as analytically as do these colonial theorists, but he would have understood much of what they are saying. And I suspect he would have approved of their dress, if not of their manners and customs.

Politics, Policy, and Government in British Columbia

R.K. Carty, ed.

Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996. 381 pp. $65.00 cloth, $26.95 paper.

By Stephen Tomblin, *Memorial University of Newfoundland*

THIS EDITED BOOK OF ESSAYS deals with how BC politics is changing in response to new socio-economic and political forces. BC's rich and complex political system is dissected and analyzed from a number of different perspectives. Indeed, the great strength of this impressive work is the diversity of approaches that it offers to the reader interested in BC politics.

The book itself is organized into four sections. Part one offers a compelling analysis of the province's political culture, political economy, and the history of struggle over key federal-provincial and Native issues. Even though the book presents an odd mix of themes, in an important way this prepares the reader for what comes later. In an impressive analysis of the ever-changing political landscape, Donald Blake highlights the impact of old embedded memories and experiences on the way both citizens and political actors respond to political issues in the 1990s. Michael Howlett and Keith Brownsey deal with the changing nature of the province's political economy and the political realities and dynamics associated with a service-based rather than a resource-based economy. The chapter by Edwin Black provides the reader with an informative and comprehensive overview of federal-provincial relations. In writing about BC in the 1990s, Black grapples with some of the key policy issues that have added to the province's reputation as

a "spoilt child." Paul Tennant's thorough analysis of the history of the Native land claim issue is timely and significant, and he does a good job probing the history of struggle over the question of Aboriginal title.

Part two deals with themes associated with the political stage. In "The Politics of Polarization," Donald Blake examines the BC party system over recent decades and highlights the many political realignments that have taken place. Norman Ruff provides a first-rate overview of the province's legislative traditions and then deals with the issue of reform and with whether there is a need for new systems of representation in the 1990s. Linda Erickson's chapter on women and politics clearly demonstrates that, while BC was the first province in Canada to elect a woman premier, equality of the sexes has still not been achieved. It raises further questions about the need for new institutions and processes. The chapter by Barbara McLintock and Gerry Kristianson focuses on the political role of the media and addresses several themes and issues that are important for understanding why there have been so many political realignments in the province. This chapter also helps to explain recent calls for reform in the way people are represented.

The third section examines the institutional aspect of provincial government. Terence Morley's thought-provoking analysis of the role of the premier and cabinet questions old assumptions about executive power and the extent to which premiers are held in check by other political actors. This account also provides a brief summary of the different leadership styles, from the time of W.A.C. Bennett right up to the time of Glen Clark. BC's provincial bureaucracy is the subject of Norman Ruff's insightful analysis, which is an important contribution to the literature. The final chapter by Terence Morley provides the reader with a rich and well-researched analysis of the justice system.

The fourth section of the volume deals with patterns of public policy. Gerry Kristianson provides important insights into how lobbying has changed over the years, and he also raises a number of interesting questions about democracy in BC. Brian Scarfe's chapter on the province's finance and fiscal policy offers a fascinating analysis. The province's complex system of social policy and the forces that shape it are the themes explored in Michael Prince's impressive chapter. While George Hoberg offers a number of critical insights in his chapter on forest policy, Kathryn Harrison's work on environmental politics is an equally impressive contribution to the literature. The final chapter, by Richard Sigurdson, deals with the issue of whether the NDP is any different from other, more pragmatic, parties. This is a topic that has attracted much scholarly attention in the past, and this detailed analysis of many of the themes raised in the book provides a great ending.

The volume under review is a welcome addition to the study of government and politics in BC. One of the book's great strengths is that all of the chapters are important and that the reader is exposed to a number of different issues and themes. This group of writers did an excellent job in probing the province's changing political terrain in the 1990s, and these timely contributions to our understanding of BC politics should help to generate new interest in the topic.

A Measure of Defiance

Mike Harcourt with Wayne Skene.
Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1996. 223 pp. $29.95 cloth.

By Daniel Gawthrop, *Vancouver*

ONE YEAR AGO, THE FIRST book written about the Mike Harcourt NDP government was met by some of BC's leading journalists with less than glowing reviews. *Highwire Act: Power, Pragmatism and the Harcourt Legacy* struck Peter C. Newman as "pseudo-academic" and Stephen Hume as "pedestrian." Brian Kieran objected to its "media conspiracy theories," while *Financial Post* reporter Keith Damsell called it a classic case of "an authorial Stockholm Syndrome" taking effect.

As the author of *Highwire Act*, I can honestly say I was prepared for such a response. Because the book challenged the unexamined biases of the media's political coverage, it was bound to infuriate a pundit like Kieran, whose own bellicose brand of "agenda journalism" had come under heavy fire in its pages. Perhaps more surprising is the extent to which Harcourt echoes my argument in his recently published memoirs. Apart from quoting or paraphrasing several passages from my book, *A Measure of Defiance* goes much further than does *Highwire Act* in criticizing the media's troubled relationship to the NDP. Harcourt's premise is that the NDP's achievements in its first term far outweighed its weaknesses but that the media's deep-rooted antipathy towards democratic socialism obscured the party's record while downplaying its leader's contribution as a conciliator.

Moderate politics and a consensus-building style did serve Harcourt well at Vancouver city hall in the 1980s, when council was divided between the Harry Rankin-led Committee of Progressive Electors (COPE) and the right-wing, developer-friendly Non Partisan Association (NPA). True to his word, the young mayor displayed his conservative side by crossing a picket line during a municipal strike but pleased the Left by opposing such Socred "megaprojects" as Expo 86 and SkyTrain.

Harcourt's moderate pragmatism also made him politically suspect among fellow New Democrats. As recently as the summer of 1984, he was touted by the federal Liberals under then Prime Minister John Turner. After his 1987 coronation as NDP leader, the party's table officers blocked his appointment of the provincial secretary. Meanwhile, some of the "older, well-meaning ideologues" — or "hardrocks" — criticized him for failing to engage in partisan name-calling in the legislature (p. 58). Harcourt does not shy away from dismissing such critics throughout the book, but he is reluctant to step on party toes by naming names. He is less reticent when it comes to the media. Unlike the desperately posing Bill VanderZalm, Harcourt is not out to scapegoat reporters for all his woes. He accepts, for example, at least part of the blame for his handling of the Charlottetown Accord debate. He also acknowledges the unwarranted optimism of his pre-election debt-reduction strategy and the folly of his

"chairman-of-the-board" approach to decision-making before the dramatic Cabinet shuffle of 1993.

Harcourt's point is that BC's major media outlets underplayed genuine NDP achievements in health care, the environment, labour relations, and job creation while, with petty vindictiveness, frequently overplaying the party's mistakes. He remembers, for example, returning reporters' phone calls from Victoria while in Brussels, where he was addressing the European Parliament in an attempt to defend the Clayoquot Sound decision and so avoid an international boycott of BC lumber. "The Big Story on their minds was not how BC was faring in the turbulent international environmental and trade waters," he recalls. "It was whether I thought Robyn Allan, the head of the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, had too many demerit points on her driver's license, and whether this should disqualify her from her position" (p. 107).

In a chapter devoted entirely to the media, "The Scrum of the Earth," Harcourt offers a thoughtful critique of what he calls "testosterone politics": a model of leadership in which cruelty is valued above decency and aides and ministers are sacrificed for the sake of a "good story." Interestingly, he draws from a broad variety of American sources to condemn the Victoria press gallery. Among others, he quotes the *Columbia Journalism Review*, the *New Yorker*'s Janet Malcom and Adam Gopnik, Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman's *Manufacturing Consent*, William Greider's *The Betrayal of Democracy*, Paul Weaver's *News and the Culture of Lying*, and James Fallows's *Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy* in order to demonstrate how blatantly slanted coverage can discourage well-meaning citizens from running for office. "Their logic reverberated like a Kafka novel," says Harcourt, in reference to the *Vancouver Sun*'s coverage of the Nanaimo "Bingogate" affair. "You are openly condemned by them, but they claim you are not. You want to set the record straight — clear your name — but they refuse to print your defence" (p. 169).

A Measure of Defiance was inspired as much by a sense of injustice surrounding Harcourt's resignation as by any pride he may have felt for his many achievements. The fact he released this book within a year of leaving office — while events surrounding his departure remain fresh — suggests that his need to "set the record straight" outweighed whatever benefit his story may have gained from retrospect. Nonetheless, Harcourt and co-author Wayne Skene have produced the most constructive, well-written, self-critical, and humourous book of memoirs yet written by a former BC premier. Sadly, there have been only two.

In the Context of its Time: A History of Woodlands

Val Adolph.
Victoria: Ministry of Social Services, Government of British Columbia, 1996. Illus. 149 pp. $10 paper.

Memories of Woodlands,

Collected and edited by Val Adolph.
Victoria: Ministry of Social Services, Government of British Columbia, 1996. Illus. 142 pp. $10 paper.

By Gerald E. Thomson, *University of British Columbia*

IN TWO VERY DIFFERENT BOOKS Val Adolph, former head of the Woodlands and Riverview Volunteers Association, chronicles the history of an important British Columbia institution. Woodlands School was the site of BC's first permanent asylum for the mentally afflicted and was designated as a training school for retarded children in 1950. In 1878 the original asylum opened in New Westminster as a virtual jail for the mentally ill. By 1897 the institution had greatly expanded but was still overcrowded and was renamed the Public Hospital for the Insane (PHI). Greater medical involvement led to an expansion in 1905, when work began on Colony Farm in Coquitlam, a working dairy farm. Woodlands, or PHI, was first put forward as a training school for retarded children in 1922 by Dr. Louis Sauriol but was not designated as such until after Essondale, renamed Riverview Mental Hospital in the 1960s, became the chief provincial hospital for the adult mentally ill. Colony Farm was subsequently designated as a secure facility for the criminally insane, being renamed Forensic Psychiatric Services.

The two books span Woodlands' dualistic past. The information in *In the Context of Its Time* adds greatly to our rather scant knowledge concerning the evolution of mental health services within the public institutions of BC. The history of PHI/Woodlands was governed by larger historical contexts at work within society, and Adolph seems not to have recognized the evolving stages, from pure incarceration, to social segregation through mental hygiene, to rehabilitation or training, and, finally, to the current process of deinstitutionalization through community living. Today's deinstitutionalization, within which Woodlands' closure is occurring, is complemented by the earlier mental hygiene movement, which sought to segregate the mentally ill from society by placing them in large institutions. Dr. James Gordon Mackay, Assistant Medical Superintendent of PHI in 1907, was a leading figure in the provincial sterilization movement. Dr. H.C. Steeves, Medical Superintendent of PHI after 1920, was convinced feeble-mindedness was a genetically inherited disorder in 70 per cent of all the patients he saw at PHI. The history of mental hygiene in BC's school and medical systems, and of mental health services in general, still awaits comprehensive treatment.

Memories of Woodlands covers the time period when Woodlands was a training school for mentally retarded children. As a former summer employee of Woodlands School in the 1970s, I found the reminiscences of the staff to be very accurate and enjoyable. The passages capture the feeling of the hospital as a personable and congenial place. In a very persuasive manner, Adolph has managed to show how staff and patients made the institution more than a mere custodial hospital. To outsiders — all those who have neither worked nor lived in such places — this knowledge may be somewhat of a revelation, as it is common to view such institutions as oppressive places of incarceration. Adolph has been extremely successful in collecting a variety of remembrances about recreational/vocational programs such as the "work gangs" and seasonal events such as Christmas concerts, summer camp, and the annual carnival day parade on the grounds. This book evokes the hospital as a home for both staff and patients over the years.

Both books provide interesting reading. While *In the Context of Our Time* does not directly address the contexts that actively shaped the institutional care of the mentally ill and retarded in BC, it does contain a wealth of detail about the evolution of PHI and Woodlands School. *Memories of Woodlands* brings Woodlands to life in a very personal manner.

I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People

Arthur J. Ray.

Toronto: Lester, 1996. 398 pp. Illus., maps. $45.00 cloth.

By Bruce Rigsby, *The University of Queensland*

As I prepared my review, a colleague e-mailed to say that she and her husband were going to Canada later in the year and to ask me if I could send them copies of my course reading lists on Canadian indigenous topics. I replied and recommended Skip Ray's new book as the first item they should read for orientation and background. It is unfortunate that there is no truly comparable single-volume Australian counterpart.

Ray criticizes the evolutionist, assimilationist, and salvage ethnography assumptions of past anthropological and historical work, and he focuses on the creative, often future-orientated engagement of Native peoples first with the British and French colonizing powers and trading companies, then with self-governing colonies, and later with the provinces and federal government of Canada. He draws together extensive research on Native involvement in the fur trade across the country in pre- and post-Confederation times, in prairie buffalo hunting, in cattle-raising and farming, and in goldmining and the industrial salmon fishery of BC. He scripts a panoply of Native groups and players. Some (e.g., the Huron and the Beothuk) have left the stage; others

(e.g., the League Iroquois peoples, the Ojibwa, and the Cree) remain on stage; and some new actors (e.g., the Métis) came of age during the nineteenth century. We first hear Native voices through interpreters, then, in recent decades, they come to speak for themselves in a range of venues, not the least of which are the courts.

A prominent theme throughout is the struggle for the recognition of existing and continuing Native property rights in the land and its resources under indigenous law and custom, not as the creations and gifts of the sovereign Crown or parliaments and not at their whims. In the earliest period, the Crown negotiated treaties with near-equals, but, as the military balance changed and fortunes shifted, non-Native negotiators hardened, skimped on their terms, and sought to appear to give substantial benefits but at cheap cost (e.g., the Robinson treaties of 1850, which addressed Ojibwa claims; the Douglas treaties of 1850-54 on Vancouver Island, which facilitated European settlement). Ironically, these have provided the basis for recognizing some continuing Native rights. The Calder Case (1973) opened the door for further court actions and instigated the federal claims process; a number of regional agreements (e.g., James Bay [1975], Inuvialuit [1984], Nunavut [1992], and Nisgha [1996]) have followed. The Baker Lake Case (1979) resulted in the recognition of common law Aboriginal possessory title but did not halt mining operations. The Delgamuukw action, brought by the Gitksan and Witsuwit'en hereditary chiefs, received an anomalous, reactionary decision in the BC Supreme Court in *1991*. This decision was partially overturned by the BC Court of Appeal in 1993 and will shortly be heard by the Supreme Court of Canada, trilateral negotiations amongst the Gitksan and Witsuwit'en, BC, and the federal government having led to nought. In the light of the Mabo No. 2 decision, where the High Court of Australia found in 1992 for common law recognition of continuing Native title based on indigenous law and custom (where not extinguished by the Crown or adverse acts), I expect that Delgamuukw will see the issue resolved in Canada. The tide will not be turned.

The book lives up to its subtitle as an illustrated history. There are sixteen pages of magnificent colour plates in four lots placed equidistant throughout the text. They include portraits of notable persons and groups, events and activities, photographs of artefacts, and contemporary Native art. There are dozens of black-and-white photographs of the same as well as reproductions of historic drawings and documents. There are five maps specially drawn for the text and five reproductions of historic maps and portions of maps. These coordinated illustrations enhance the attractive printed text and give the reader other views into what Native life was and is like.

The book is written for a general readership in clear, expressive prose uninterrupted by notes and conventional scholarly apparatus. There is a five-page bibliography of selected books, and a twenty-two-page index is a great aid to readers. This is a superbly presented and reasonably priced book. Its visual, tactile, and intellectual pleasures are many; it is a book to enjoy with one's eyes and hands, heart and mind. I salute the author for his considerable achievement.