

*Past Reflections:  
Essays on the Hudson's Bay Company in the  
Southern Puget Sound Region*

Drew W. Crooks, Foreword by Jerry Eckrom

Tacoma: Printed Privately, 2001, 118 pp., Illus. US\$17.00 paper  
(Fort Nisqually Foundation, 5400 North Pearl Street,  
Tacoma, Washington, 98401)

BY BRUCE M. WATSON

*Vancouver Community College*

**D**REW CROOKS is one of a small but dedicated group of historically minded individuals south of the forty-ninth parallel determined to keep alive memories of the Hudson's Bay Company's role in the development of Euro-American life in that area. Unfortunately, much visible evidence has already been lost to neglect and the elements. With the sites of Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) posts Okanagan, Colville, Nez Percés, and Hall under water; with Boise washed away; and with George (Astoria) built over, few sites remain. The minor post sites of Umpqua, Flathead/Connah, and Saleesh, as well as the more important Spokane, remain as open fields. Running counter to this trend, Fort Vancouver has been rebuilt and has become a vibrant tourist and research centre. Often overlooked is Fort Nisqually, a centre from 1832 to 1869 for the mainly agricultural activities of the HBC and its subsidiary, the Puget Sound Agriculture Company. (A recreated site at Tacoma's Point Defiance Park has assured public visibility since 1940.) Crooks, an HBC-ophile and now in charge of the Lacey Museum, has taken twelve of his post-1988 essays

and compiled them in one publication, the profits from which go to the Fort Nisqually Foundation to support the restoration of Dr. William Tolmie's home to its 1855 appearance.

This compilation is not meant to be a scholarly treatise. The titles of the first three essays ("An Eventful Life: Pierre Charles in the Pacific Northwest," "Diverse Peoples of the Hudson's Bay Company," "Shipwreck, Captivity and Rescue: The *Georgiana* Expedition to the Queen Charlotte Islands") give some indication of the scope of the papers in this volume. They range from biographies to descriptive vignettes and present an interesting glimpse into an era both before and after the border was drawn.

Of value to the historian are the several biographies of servants who retired, married, and stayed in the area. They reveal a hint of the dynamics of adjustment engaged in by retired HBC servants, their Aboriginal or mixed-descent wives, and their American counterparts. They also present a glimpse into their roles in the Aboriginal resistance to the American settlers in the War of 1855-56 as well as into how they fared (either as mixed-descent or White) with the Donation Land

Claims, the system of apportioning land to American settlers. Another essay on the ten years of uneasiness between the settlers and the retired HBC servants reveals an interesting comparison with conditions north of the border. The remainder of the essays reveal a complexity of interactions and are a reminder that British Columbia's history does not stop at the forty-ninth parallel. Of further value are the extensive endnotes, many of which are drawn from local American sources.

The general mood and tenor of the essays is summed up in the preface in a quotation of one descendant, Cecelia Carpenter: "When the British had come, they had stated their goals of fur gathering and farming, had given the Indian people protection from their enemies, had offered them employment and, as single men, had married their daughters. A bond had been formed." The book is worth the price. Besides, it supports a worthy

*Citizens' Hall:  
Making Local Democracy Work*

Andre Carrel

Toronto: Between the Lines, 2001, 176 pp. \$19.95 paper

ANNE EDWARDS

*Moyie, BC*

cause.

In *Citizens' Hall: Making Local Democracy Work*, Carrel lays out his proposal for establishing municipal charters – or constitutions – that recognize that government legitimacy resides in citizens rather than in other governments. He starts by considering the well known state of municipal government in Canada, where local government is the creature of a provincial government. Carrel laments the inherent colonialism involved in this situation, which ensures that, although citizens may have rights, they have no power. This is not a new lament, but Carrel approaches it from many angles. He argues that because municipal governments are structured to carry out the will of provincial gov-

ernments they are non-democratic. They are not so much governments as administrative arms of the province, unable to respond to citizens in a democratic fashion.

In fact, in British Columbia, local governments can behave democratically only if they brave the daunting Local Government Act. Carrel's example is Rossland, a community of about 4,000 in the West Kootenays, where he served as municipal administrator. There he and the team he centred brought Rossland a constitutional bylaw (bylaw no. 1728, entitled "A bylaw to regulate the use of referenda and elector initiatives in local government matters"), that gave citizens the right to challenge any proposed bylaw, put it to referendum,