blishment, and portrays a Peace River District harder hit by the Depression than most other parts of Canada. While one wishes that one had the whole of Storrs's text to read, this and its companion volume provide a rich evocation of a way of life and of an era not long gone but now completely disappeared.

First Son: Portraits by C.D. Hoy

Faith Moosang

Vancouver/North Vancouver: Aresenal Pulp/Presentation House, 1999. 159 pp. Illus. $27.95 paper.

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THE curvaceous lace-up boots worn by the unidentified elderly Chinese gentleman who is the subject of the photograph reproduced on the cover of Faith Moosang's volume *First Son: Portraits by CD Hoy* are compelling, as is the range of finery worn by Hoy's subjects: midi skirts secured by buttons and safety pins, fringed gloves, woolly chaps, suspenders, ornate buckles, cabled cardigans, pearl-buttoned blouses, silk umbrellas, embroidered wraps, gold pocket watches. In the background are the incidental and intentional, mass and hand-produced consumer goods – calendars, lithographs, and wrinkled drop cloths. These details, like the debris underfoot, pique curiosity. Access to goods signals the status or occupation of the subject(s), and we marvel at the means by which such items were acquired on remote frontiers. Quesnel-based photographer Chow Dong Hoy (1883-1973) adopted few commercially produced studio props, ubiquitous in urban studios, but the accoutrements Hoy included were significant: suspended

C.D.Hoy, self-portrait, P2064.

chrysanthemum-laden cloths and small tables set with books, potted plants, and clocks conveyed cultural messages such as good luck and longevity (133).

Hoy's subjects pose in pairs and triplets against backdrops hung in exterior settings "between the log wall of his store and his woodpile" or in simple interiors (135). More than one solitary and dignified male figure confronted the camera with hands spread wide upon his knees. This gesture emphasized confidence, as did the frontality derived from traditional Chinese portraiture (130). Hoy's portraits traverse the formality of imported portrait conventions and the casualness of incidental inclusions (128).

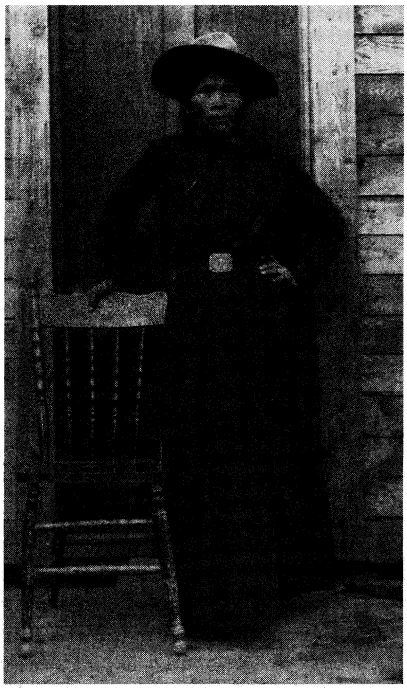
The eyes of Hoy's sitters, depicted in the ninety-seven photographs, commonly gaze directly at the lens and, less frequently, beyond. More unusual was an exchange of glances. In one portrait a young Indian boy stands gazing sideways at the distracted dreamer next to him (89). The closeness of the camera lends a false intimacy, and, in response to the profound silence of the photographic subject, Moosang retrieves fragments of their lives (108).

In combining a sophisticated textual analysis with oral accounts and biography, Moosang is concerned not only with Hoy as photographer, but also with rural existence. Too often photographic biography is confined to authorship, leaving the subjects of depiction and motives for the photograph unaddressed. Furthermore, documentary photographs that portrayed obvious signs of development – civic architecture, bridges, and industry – have been privileged in history. The former easily reinforces the myth of the frontier as an overwhelming environment conquered by the engineering feats of rugged individualists. Moosang's portrait analysis uncovers lives that conventional approaches have neglected. As she argues, Chinese labourers, who risked life and sacrificed family with their contribution to the provincial infrastructure and public works, often stood at the periphery when noteworthy moments, such as the pounding of the last spike, were commemorated (109). Predictably the camera focused upon the "top-hatted industrialist" who wielded the pick for the purpose of pomp and political opportunism. Inevitably these men, not the unidentified "sojourners," were etched into historical memory. Hoy's photographs, closely examined, afford a heterogeneous picture of those rendered invisible by grandiose narratives of westward expansionism.

While countless hours were spent in collecting 1,531 photographs at the Barkerville public archives, Moosang exceeded the limits of the archives and met with descendants, including the Hoy sisters, and interviewed residents of the region. Biographical data, assembled from friends, family, primary sources, and the unpublished manuscript entitled *C.D. Hoy: Life History, 1883–1973*, reconstitutes Hoy not as a hero but as a person integral to a local community of labourers and entrepreneurs, as a devoted father, and as being in service to the modern appetite for self-representation. Hoy arrived in Quesnel in 1911 and lived there until his death in 1973. His immigration history rings familiar: he arrived on the *Empress of China* from Guangdong in October 1902, his family name was registered as Hoy rather than Chow by an immigration official, he paid the $100 head tax to gain entry, he saved for his return to China to fulfil an arranged marriage to Lim Foon Hai in 1910, subsequently returning alone until able to sponsor her immigration in 1917 (111–2). Their first child was born in 1918. The Hoy family was blessed with ten daughters and two sons.

Hoy's varied labour history began with a job as houseboy at a monthly salary of five dollars. A six-day walk from Ashcroft initiated his journey to Quesnel, where he washed dishes at the Occidental Hotel and sent money home. By 1907 he operated a trading company (interacting in central Carrier dialect), and, eventually, he got to Barkerville, where he taught himself photography. By 1912 he was re-established as a shopkeeper and photographer in Quesnel. The keys to his success and longevity were diversification, adaptability, and the support of an extended family. By 1934, signs of his wealth and stability included the first stucco house built in Quesnel (122).

Moosang sought the genealogies of Hoy's subjects, speaking with those "who had some family connection to Quesnel in the 1910s and 1920s" and employing photographs to elicit memories from "at least 120 people ... looking for ancestors and old friends," including First Nations elders, elderly Chinese, and settler families (108). The photographs represent those "in a simple economy of farming, ranching, mining, and lumber jacking, supported by the industry of mothers, cooks, nurses, freight-carriers and store owners" (130). Portraits of Old George William with his wife, Annie William; Chief William Charleyboy with his wife, Elaine Charleyboy (Redstone); and Kong Shing Sing, a blacksmith, horseman, and freight-carrier expand our knowledge of Native and Chinese contributions to Interior ranch life (60, 61, 81). Apparently, Hoy's photographs were in demand during the Quesnel annual Dominion Day Stampede, when ranch-hands flocked to the town to compete on the rodeo circuit (136). These sitters, in their Sunday best, exude a sense of pride in their bond to agriculture, livestock, and the land. Moosang's approach succeeds because she investigates not only the man behind the lens, but also those who stood before it.



Mathilda Joe (Alexandria). Mathilda Joe, wife of the hereditary chief at Alexandria, was known as an excellent hunter who provided meat for the entire community at Alexandria. (P1631)

Moosang heard less about interracial antagonism than she did about respect and camaraderie between Natives, Chinese, and Caucasians (140). Democratic in how he portrayed Hoy, one elderly Quesnel resident confided that he "was our photographer and everyone went to him" (126). Hoy's collection may be "the largest extant and publicly accessible record of Interior native people" (150). As evidence of ethnic heterogeneity, and the casual interactions between the various ethnic groups in rural settings, the photographs explode standard assumptions about racial conflict in the west.