

sioners said to them. For example, they did not understand the concept of "cede" or "surrender," nor did they understand the idea of measuring land by the square mile. In addition, the commissioners did not deal with oral culture properly when they asked the tribal leaders to sign the treaty. According to the elders' recollections, the commissioners had already written X's on the treaty document and asked the elders simply to touch the pen to them to acknowledge the signature. After signing the treaty, the practice of favouritism by Indian agents resulted in the unequal treatment of Native people with regard to the distribution of government aid as well as to White ranchers further encroaching upon reserve land. Today the elders still bitterly and vividly recall these experiences.

*The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7* serves its original intent well, giving readers a First Nations perspective on the treaty-making process. Chapters in Parts 2 and 3 also provide scholarly interpretations of the treaty. The problem with these

chapters, however, is that they include many redundancies and fail to use important historical documents. In addition, Chapters 4 and 5, which analyze the effect of Treaty 7, should have examined the impact of implementing the Indian Act, the Dominion Lands Act, 1872; the North-West Territories Act, 1886; and the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement, 1930. This would have been especially helpful to readers because some elders mention that the conflicts between the treaty and these acts affected the lives of the Treaty 7 Nations. The North-West Territories Act and the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement, for example, had a grave impact on the rights of the Treaty 7 Nations. They are currently challenging these acts in court. In spite of these problems, this book makes readers aware of the importance of listening to First Nations voices in order to gain a more balanced understanding of the history of Indian/non-Indian relations in Canada and the origins of current legal disputes.

### *On the North Trail: The Treaty 8 Diary of O.C. Edwards*

David Leonard and Beverly Whalen, editors

Edmonton: Historical Society of Alberta, 1998. 122 pp.

Illus., maps. \$19.95 paper

By Melinda Marie Jetté  
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**I**N THE SUMMER OF 1900, the federal government sent a third commission to the District of Athabaska to secure additional treaty adhesions and scrip arrangements under the provisions of Treaty 8. Headed

by James Ansdell Macrae, inspector of Indian agencies, the commission of 1900 also included Dr. Oliver Cromwell Edwards. *On the North Trail* is O.C. Edwards' diary of the commission's travels in the Athabaska

country. Here published for the first time, Edwards' diary is the only existing detailed account of the expedition. Editors David Leonard and Beverly Whalen note that *On the North Trail* is comparable to Charles Mair's diary of the 1899 Half-Breed Commission, which was published in 1908 under the title *Through the MacKenzie Basin*. If Edwards lacks some of Mair's literary flair, the doctor does provide the particulars on peoples, places, and conditions not recorded by Mair.

Leonard and Whalen have done their best to remain faithful to the spirit of the original manuscript, which is housed at the Glenbow-Alberta Museum and Archives. In the brief but informative introduction to the diary, the editors place the document in its historical context, provide an overview of the journal, and introduce readers to the main protagonist, Dr. O.C. Edwards (1850-1915). The inclusion of Dr. Edwards in the 1900 party stemmed from the government's traditional treaty responsibility to provide medical care for Aboriginal peoples. Edwards was a native of Ottawa, a member of a wealthy liberal family, and husband to the well-known feminist Henrietta Muir Edwards. In 1900 he was fifty years old and had spent several long periods working in private practice at Qu'Appelle and Regina as well as in the service of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) in the Treaty 4 region.

In the diary, Edwards devotes considerable space to descriptions of the daily grind of travelling. Edwards comments on socio-economic realities, especially regarding the shift from a barter system to a cash economy that accompanied the Hudson's Bay Company's loss of its trade monopoly and the penetration of industrial

capitalism into northwestern Alberta. He also remarks on the daily life and work patterns of the local inhabitants. Throughout, Edwards evinces the patronizing racial attitudes of an Anglo-Canadian civil servant. What is perhaps most striking is the limited information in the diary as to discussions with Native and Métis peoples about treaty and scrip agreements, which raises the question of how much communication actually took place between Macrae and local communities.

Drawing on a wealth of knowledge of the Peace River Country, Leonard and Whalen have produced a readable 120-page volume that will be of interest to professional historians as well as to the general public. The published text includes detailed footnotes on the local history of the Athabaska region and the numerous personalities O.C. Edwards met in his travels. For readers and researchers wishing to supplement their knowledge of the region, Leonard and Whalen also provide a series of useful bibliographic citations.

Another notable strength of this published diary is the editors' decision to combine the textual and the visual. By including a large selection of photographs taken by Edwards during the expedition, Leonard and Whalen complement Edwards' commentary on arduous overland travel, local personalities, and socio-economic conditions. The photographs include landscape scenes, snapshots of life on the trail, and individual portraits, some of which are drawn from the Glenbow archival collections. Many of the pictures also represent Native and Métis people (especially women) who are far less prominent in his narrative.

If the editors' attention to detailed historical and photographic research

is laudable, their lack of attention to geography should be noted. *On the North Trail* contains five maps, all of which apparently date from the period. These maps are either too small, making them difficult to decipher, or they are of questionable value to the reader. A modern, high-quality map showing the commission's route would

have provided a better geographical perspective on Edwards' narrative. Nevertheless, this is but a minor critique given the overall quality of the editing and presentation of the document, which makes an important contribution to the history of north-western Alberta.

*Researching the Indian Land Question in BC: An Introduction to Research Strategies and Archival Research for Band Researchers*

Leigh Ogston, editor

Vancouver: Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1998. N.p. Illus. (500-342 Water St., Vancouver, v6B 1B6)

By Ken Favrholt

*Secwepemc Museum and Archives, Kamloops*

**A**LTHOUGH DIRECTED AT BAND researchers, this recent publication is of general interest and use to anyone studying First Nations history, land claims, or related topics. The editor claims this work is just a starting point, but it is much more than that. There are a few other publications of a similar nature, but *Researching the Indian Land Question in BC*, produced by the resource staff of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), is likely the most comprehensive and readable book of its kind for both novices and experienced researchers. Actually a manual, the book is well laid out in twenty-six discrete chapters on various themes around the general topic of Indian land research, which is further divided into many subsections. A selection of illustrations highlights different sections.

This resource takes for granted a fair knowledge of the history of British Columbia as it relates to First Nations, but each chapter is helpful, containing relevant definitions, lists of documents and useful Web sites, and chronologies of significant dates relating to different topics, thus providing hooks into specific areas of research. Chapter 1 defines archival research and how to begin to research, including how to make contact with sources of information. Chapter 2 provides an alphabetical survey of the major repositories for research materials from the band level to tribal council offices to archives, libraries, and museums, including foreign (mainly American) repositories. Unfortunately, a few notable sources, such as the British Library, are missing. Addresses for bands need to be obtained elsewhere (the British Columbia Ministry of Aboriginal