

and violent in American popular culture of the nineteenth century; Malloy assesses this perception and finds that it unfairly colours the real nature of the trade as a mercantile venture plagued more by an uncertain market for trade goods among the Native peoples than by vessel seizure and attack.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part offers a historiographical review of the literature in the introduction, "In the Wake of the Boston Men," which is followed by Chapters 1 and 2, "Boston Trade on the Northwest Coast" and "Shipboard Society and Northwest Coast Indian Society," respectively. In Chapter 2, Malloy's long association with the maritime world (as a scholar, educator, and museum professional) enables her to provide the reader with an understanding of the nuances and realities of shipboard life, routine, discipline, and technology. She shows how these things influenced the sailors, their officers, and the people with whom they traded.

The second part of the book offers an encyclopaedic listing of American vessels engaged in the trade and a gazetteer of Native villages, landmarks, and trade centres. There are a few minor errors, such as the assertion that the Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Taku in 1811, fourteen years before it established any presence on the Coast. But these are quibbles and do not interfere with the value of the work. The second part, due to its sheer page count (63-204), dominates the book. It represents significant research and a considerable contribution to the historiography of the maritime fur trade, building on F.W. Howay's landmark *A List of Fur Trading Vessels in the Maritime Fur Trade, 1785-1825*, edited by Richard A. Pierce and republished by Limestone Press in 1973.

Malloy's insights, and the encyclopaedic nature of the book, make "Boston Men" a worthy addition to the literature and a must for the scholar's library.

Fraser Gold 1858!
The Founding of British Columbia

Netta Sterne

Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1998.
187 pp. Illus., maps. US\$19.95 paper.

By Daniel P. Marshall
University of British Columbia

AT LONG LAST a book has been written about the most cataclysmic event ever to have occurred in British Columbia's history – the Fraser River gold rush and the massive invasion of non-Native miners

(in excess of 30,000) into the traditional lands of First Nations peoples. As a descendant of Cornish miners who joined in the 1858 rush, I have always found it puzzling that the Fraser rush has received so little attention, con-

sidering that it led to the formation of a Crown colony on Canada's Pacific coast. What's even more perplexing, perhaps, is that we have waited for an American university press to publish this history, written by a journalist and former resident of Edinburgh who now makes her home in Vancouver. The two should be congratulated for recognizing the great importance of this event in the larger history of the Pacific Slope region. As is so often the case in British Columbia, it is new arrivals to our province, like Netta Sterne, who have seen what we ourselves have missed.

And yet, after reading *Fraser Gold 1858!* I can't help thinking that Sterne's book would have been improved immeasurably had she become more acquainted with the academic community in British Columbia. Sterne's manuscript, reviewed by an American professor of history, contains a number of factual errors that might easily have been spotted by others more familiar with the province's history. Certainly, too, there is a growing academic discourse on this side of the 49th parallel that could have been consulted, *BC Studies* being just one example.

Sterne's story is in the tradition of history writing that seeks to celebrate our colonial past by emphasizing European males to the exclusion of such forgotten groups as women, Asians, and First Nations peoples. Sterne's central question, one that has occupied all previous historians from H.H. Bancroft to Margaret Ormsby and Barry Gough, is: "How ... in the face of the gold rush 'invasion,' was British law to be established" (ix). Though Sterne conducted research in archival repositories of British Columbia, Washington, California, and Britain, a quick glance at the Select Bibliography suggests that a

number of key sources and institutions were not consulted. By far, published newspaper accounts, parliamentary papers, and colonial despatches constitute the majority of her primary source material, while unpublished letters, diaries, or latter-day reminiscences of "some who were there" were not utilized. Sterne's description of Governor James Douglas as "a man of impressive stature, great dignity, and legendary courage" (6) suggests the oftentimes pro-British portrayal of the Fraser River rush that has been the hallmark of histories on the subject written to date. The fact that most miners communicated with people, places, and the press south of the international divide means that the paper trail of those who were here is not to be found in British-oriented publications but in archives to the south. Sterne states, for instance, that "it would be interesting to know how the wealth gathered by the Indian miners affected their future." (74) Had she examined the voluminous collection of primary sources collected by Bancroft and deposited at the University of California at Berkeley, as opposed to the slim offerings of the California History Society and the California State Library, the answer, in large part, would have been discovered. And though the British Library was visited, the much more significant collections of the Public Record Office, Kew Gardens, were not.

First Nations peoples were the discoverers of gold in British Columbia, as noted by T.A. Rickard (*BC Historical Quarterly* 2:1), whose ground-breaking work was not consulted by the author. According to Rickard: "The discoveries of gold on the mainland, like the one made on Moresby Island [Queen Charlottes], must be credited to the Indians; it was they, and not any

canny Scot or enterprising American, that first found gold on the Thompson and Fraser Rivers, or first proceeded to gather it for the purposes of trade" (9). The wealth collected by First Nations benefited them greatly until their future was dramatically and deleteriously affected by the massive invasion of European and Euro-American miners who dispossessed them of their land and gold (Marshall, *Native Studies Review* 11:1).

If Sterne had cast her research net farther, or if she had given the California newspapers a more thorough reading, she would have discovered that Native and non-Native miners collided during the "Fraser River War," in which Native villages were torched and large numbers of First Nations people killed by military-like miners' militias in search of Native gold. Nowhere in Sterne's book, beyond the occasional transcriptions of Governor James Douglas's warnings to Britain of potential cataclysm, can the adverse effects of the gold rush on Native peoples be found. This is not surprising, perhaps, as *Fraser Gold 1858!* is a celebration of our colonial past – a self-justifying tradition made up of words that, 140 years later, continue to effectively whitewash an event that broke the back of full-scale Native resistance and precipitated the formation of Indian reserves in mainland British Columbia.

Sterne hoped to let "much of the story unfold through the words of some who were there at the time," during "one of the great stories of the century" (xi). It is indeed a great story, but, unfortunately, the words she has used are not those of British Columbia's First Nations. This, undoubtedly, must be the core reason that academics have not thus far written the history of the Fraser River gold rush, for to do so must be to overturn one of the great founding myths of Canada's westernmost province. Nevertheless, with so little written about this extraordinary event, Sterne's book offers a suitable primer for those interested in learning the basic chronology of the gold rush. With Bancroft, Ormsby, and others now out of print, Sterne's work will complement the general details of the rush provided by such historians as Jean Barman, George Woodcock, and so on.

As California continues to "celebrate" the 150th anniversary of its rush with a host of new revisionist publications by historians such as J.S. Holliday, Paula Mitchell Marks, and Malcolm Rohrbough, Canadian academics will follow suit with their own reassessment of the gold rushes of British Columbia. With the publication of Netta Sterne's *Fraser Gold 1858!* a significant base map has been provided that will point many readers towards useful clues that invite further research and discussion. For this, Sterne is to be congratulated.