

*Beyond the City Limits:  
Rural History in British Columbia.*

R.W. Sandwell, editor

Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999. 293 pp. Illus., maps. \$27.95 paper.

By Margaret Conrad  
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A BOOK ON RURAL British Columbia written thirty years ago would have been very different from this one. At best, it would have focused on European settlement and resource development outside of Vancouver and Victoria, and chronicled the displacement of Natives in the province within the framework of urbanization, industrialization, and progress. These essays, grouped under the headings of power, land, and gender, benefit from a generation of work in social history and a postmodern scepticism that calls into question any and all assumptions. They also testify to another happy historiographical development in recent years: the return of the narrative or at least lucid prose. While the rural sometimes gets lost in the dazzling array of topics and methodological approaches represented here, this book is often fun to read and serves as a delightful sampler of what happened “beyond the city limits” in British Columbia.

In her introduction, Ruth Sandwell surveys recent scholarly developments in the field of rural history; explores its relationship to local history, Aboriginal history, and approaches to the land; and acknowledges the contribution of educational history to the understanding of rural British Columbia. Anticipating criticism of the slippery definition of “rural” informing this volume – the inclusion of Kamloops, Williams Lake, and Prince George – Sandwell suggests

that we are still dealing with most of the territory outside of Victoria and Vancouver. Sandwell argues that the category is a useful one because it offers an alternative point of entry on British Columbia’s past; provides a different angle of vision on class, race, and gender; and ultimately brings into focus a world where things are sometimes done differently.

One thing is certain: the new methodological approaches employed in this volume disrupt the “seamless web of history” – and nowhere more so than in the section dealing with power relations. Thus, while John Lutz analyzes the process by which the Lekwammen of southern Vancouver Island were unsettled and reconstructed as “Songhees” by Euro-Canadians, Bruce Stadfeld takes Lutz to task for employing an approach that discounts Native agency, highlighting the point that Natives in British Columbia see their ancestors as resilient heroes of power struggles rather than as passive victims. Even that sturdy staple of Canadian history, the tariff, yields new insights when viewed from a rural West Coast perspective. In his examination of the tariff question from 1871 to 1874, Daniel Marshall reveals that farmers in British Columbia were, rather untypically in the larger Canadian context, strong protectionists and sufficiently powerful – agriculture was the second largest employer in the province at this time – to shape party politics around the

issue. Brian Low's deconstruction of the processes involved in producing *Lessons in Living*, a National Film Board project about revitalizing rural communities through cooperative effort (shot in Lantzville in 1944), shows that it was really a carefully orchestrated propaganda effort designed to create an expert-led society in which small communities and rural schooling were endangered species.

The "land," like "power," is broadly defined in this volume, and it includes animals and insects as well as homesteads and cattle ranges. In her detailed examination of the land records for Salt Spring Island between 1859 and 1891, Ruth Sandwell reveals that a significant proportion of settlers were more interested in the advantages offered by deferred payment in the pre-emption process than in the improvement and purchase of their property. This finding points to the importance of exploring the social values of late nineteenth-century settlers, which is a major focus of Ken Favrholt's study of the transition from ranching to farming and back to ranching in the dry-belt area around Kamloops from 1860 to 1960. He concludes that profit accumulation was only one of many variables – attitudes towards the land, technological change, public policy, and personal background being others – which motivated homesteaders. In his engaging discussion of cougars and the men and women who hunted them, Richard Mackie documents not only a significant chapter in the rural human history of British Columbia – by the turn of the twentieth century many rural districts had a resident cougar hunter – but also the impact of changing land-use patterns on the size of the cougar population. David Dendy explores the – largely futile – efforts of orchardists to eradicate the codling moth, which migrated to British Columbia

along with people in the late 1800s. Arguing that the persistence of the codling moth proves that humans are anything but masters of creation, he makes a timely plea for historians to see people as part of, rather than separate from, the natural environment.

Five essays explore gender and rural society. Drawing upon an impressive array of sources, Jean Barman brings into view the surprisingly large number of "invisible" Aboriginal women and their mixed-race daughters who participated in the resettlement process. Barman finds that mixed-race families were often the first settlers in rural areas of British Columbia and that they shared a demographic profile with their White neighbours. In tracking the fate of children of mixed-race families, Barman notes that sons tended to be marginalized in the public world of paid labour, while daughters, hidden in the household, were often complicit in rendering themselves invisible. Less hidden but, until recently, little studied, the bachelor society of the BC backwoods in the mid-nineteenth century is subject to a sophisticated analysis by Adele Perry, who focuses on the ways in which it ran counter to the patriarchal, middle-class assumptions about masculinity. In his examination of Kamloops and its outlying agricultural areas in the late nineteenth century, John Belshaw discovers significant differences in household patterns between town and country and uses the courtship of Annie McQueen, detailed in letters to her mother, to highlight his findings. Fascinating personal letters between a prostitute and her pimp permits David Peterson del Mar to provide the context for a 1940 Prince George court case relating to prostitution in a small town setting, undermining any notions of innocence and virtue associated with rural life. Finally, Tony Arruda's discussion, based

on interviews, of job prospects among young people growing up in the rapidly expanding community of Williams Lake between 1945 and 1975 reveals a gendered work experience similar to that found elsewhere in the industrialized world: young men had their pick of jobs in millwork, logging, truck-driving, and ranching and often abandoned school to earn money, while young women, even in the baby-boom generation, were confined primarily to work in part-time and service jobs.

The essays published here range too widely to enable one to draw hard conclusions about the history of rural life in British Columbia, other than to say that it is a fertile area for further study.

Indeed, most of the essays in this volume draw more upon the insights and methodologies developed in social and environmental history than upon approaches exclusive to rural history. Nevertheless, the findings are revealing, sometimes even surprising, especially with respect to the diversity of Native experiences and the relationship of people to the land. If subsequent research efforts "beyond the city limits" are as well executed as are those depicted in this sampling – the fact that many of the contributors are doctoral students or recent graduates bodes well – then the history of British Columbia and Canada will be the richer for it.

*Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada  
from the Great War to the Age of Television*

Neil Sutherland

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997. 327 pp. Illus. \$21.95 paper.

By André Turmel  
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**T**HE FIRST CHAPTER of *Growing Up* opens up with a quotation from novelist Gabrielle Roy:

The place to which you go back to listen to the wind you heard in your childhood – that is your homeland, which is also the place where you have a grave to tend. Though I choose to live in Québec partly because of the love for it which my mother passed on to me, now it is my turn to come to Manitoba to tend her grave. And to listen to the wind of my childhood." (3)

This quotation probably summarizes best the intentions and the project of the author as well as the tone of the book: to listen to the winds of childhood. Neil Sutherland's well known and recognized first book, *Children in English Canadian Society*, described the origins and development of the child-centered agenda of the reformers at the turn of the century, which explained the implementation of a set of social policies to cope with the problems confronting children in the context of industrialization and urbanization. *Growing Up* has an objective that differs considerably from the first: