

“prosperity” in ways that integrate ecology and economy. There is a pressing need for this on Canada’s West Coast, and in *Seeing the Ocean Through the Trees*, Ecotrust shows itself to be at the forefront of those engaged in the task. But as important as this volume is, it also usefully alerts us to the need to remain vigilant about whose “vision” and whose “voices” are heard in these efforts. Like the Ministry of Forest’s management plans did only a decade ago, our solutions – despite their laudable intentions – may just as problematically “disembed”

the environment from its local relations, such that distant experts are given more authority than those whose lives are most closely linked to the environments in question. Likewise, our language of “community” and the “local” may render us unable to think in terms of the complex “tangles” of difference found in British Columbia’s forest communities. Both through what it accomplishes and what it leaves out, *Seeing the Ocean Through the Trees* provides a valuable forum for debating the future of British Columbia’s coastal communities.

*Echoes of Empire:
Victoria and Its Remarkable Buildings*

Robin Ward

Madeira Park: Harbour, 1996. 362 pp. Illus. \$32.95 paper.

Exploring Victoria’s Architecture

Martin Segger and Douglas Franklin

336 pp. Illus., maps. \$31.95 paper.

By TERRY REKSTEN, *Victoria*

Robin Ward is best known for his weekly column in the *Vancouver Sun*, in which he explores Vancouver’s urban design. In *Echoes of Empire*, he turns his attention to Victoria, a city he describes as having the “most cohesive and best preserved” collection of nineteenth-century architecture in Canada.

Perhaps Ward intended, initially, to produce an architectural history of the city, tracing its different stages of development by examining and discussing surviving buildings. If so, he

was diverted by the richness of the material he encountered. “What a past – what people!” he exclaims.

Almost seventy buildings and sites are included, but they are used not as an opportunity to discuss changing styles and tastes but as a framework on which to construct a history of the city. And in spite of wildly shifting timelines and with biographical tidbits revealed over widely spaced sections, Ward has managed to produce an entertaining story of Victoria’s past and present.

However, *Echoes of Empire* disappoints on two levels. Based solely on previously published works (with the possible exception of something vaguely described as "source material at the British Columbia Archives and Records Service and the Vancouver Public Library"), the book contains nothing new. In addition, *Echoes of Empire* seems to have been written to a deadline so tight that it allowed no time for proofreading, copyediting, or fact-checking. How else to explain the curious insistence on spelling bachelor as "batchelor," even going so far as to alter the original and correct spelling in quoted material. And how else to account for a sentence such as, "[Moody] went down with the steamer *Pacific* in 1906 off Cape Flattery in 1875.?"

Then there are the puzzling inconsistencies. At one point, Amelia Douglas is described as "half-Cree, half-Irish" and then, four pages later, as "part Cree, part Jewish." The historical background included as part of the introduction demonstrates that Ward understands mainland British Columbia's evolution from separate colony in 1858, to union with Vancouver Island in 1866, to province of Canada in 1871. But the text takes liberties with the established chronology, describing the colonies as "united" in 1858 and referring to New Westminster in 1859 as "the provincial capital."

Further evidence of lack of care can be found in the illustrations. The image of the Empress Hotel is described as showing "the original 1908 elevation." That's true enough, but it also shows the additions of 1910 and 1912. According to another caption, the new Parliament Buildings "rose like a mirage of progress and prosperity," but the photograph shows the building

tipped at so alarming an angle it seems about to plunge below the turf of the legislative lawn.

Individually, none of the errors that bob up throughout the text is particularly grave. They suggest a certain breezy lack of attention to detail rather than a serious attempt to challenge the accepted historical record. But their effect is cumulative and, in the end, their presence becomes distracting.

Echoes of Empire does not add significantly to the historiography of British Columbia. But then, there is no suggestion that that was something Robin Ward set out to do. He seems to have had a very good time writing this book, and many readers will find his enthusiasm infectious, especially those readers for whom *Echoes of Empire* is an introduction to Victoria's history.

Victoria's buildings, both historic and modern, are the focus of *Exploring Victoria's Architecture* by Martin Segger and Douglas Franklin. The same team (Franklin takes the photographs; Segger writes the text) produced *Victoria: A Primer for Regional History in Architecture* (New York, American Life Foundation, 1979). While some of the material has been recycled, *Exploring Victoria's Architecture* is more than a re-working of the earlier book.

The original work described 100 buildings, most of which were built in the nineteenth century; *Exploring Victoria's Architecture* includes over 500 and also advances the time-frame to the 1990s. The biographical section has been extended from thirty, mostly Victorian-era, architects to include more than sixty, many of whom are still practising today.

An adjunct professor of Art History at the University of Victoria, and re-

cognized as an expert on Victoria's built heritage, Segger can be trusted with the physical description of buildings, and he has taken care to include a glossary in which architectural terms are defined. However, his attention lapses when it comes to bothersome factual details. The John Tod house, well known in Victoria as the city's oldest residence, appears as the John "Todd" house, allowing for confusion with the Todd family, whose homes are also included in the volume. The date of Francis Rattenbury's death is given as 1937, two years after his murder. An architect by the name of J.B. Pearse

appears in the biographical section, but the biography belongs to Benjamin William Pearse. An addition to the Empress is dated 1913, but one of the rooms it contains is said to have been added to the hotel a year earlier. Beach Drive appears as both Beach Drive and Marine Drive. And so on.

Exploring Victoria's Architecture has a serious purpose and seems destined to become a standard work of reference, as did Segger and Franklin's earlier book. It is, at its core, a collection of facts, and, like *Echoes of Empire*, its value is diminished by evidence that so many "facts" are open to question.

*Bridges of Light: Otto Landauer of
Leonard Frank Photos, 1945-1980*

Cyril E. Leonoff

Vancouver: Talon, 1997. 208 pp. Illus. \$39.95 cloth.

*Working Light: The Wandering Life of
Photographer Edith S. Watson*

Frances Rooney

Ottawa/Malvern, UK: Carlton University Press
and Images Publishing, 1996. 123 pp. Illus. \$35.95 paper.

By DUFF SUTHERLAND

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Working Light and *Bridges of Light* illustrate and illuminate the superb work of two pioneers of professional photography, Edith Watson and Otto Landauer. Taken together, they provide a visual sense of how the lives and work of Canadians have changed over the twentieth century. In *Working Light*, Frances Rooney examines the remarkable career of Edith S. Watson,

a New Englander and "new woman" of the turn of the century, who, beginning in the 1890s, undertook many trips over a period of thirty years to photograph the working people of Newfoundland and Canada. Watson and her long-time partner, the writer Victoria Hayward, came to earn their entire income from the photographs and accompanying stories they sold mostly to Canadian "literaries" and