

staffer Charlie Smith, who is a distinguished journalist, investigative reporter, and analyst by any standard. John Master's "Stupidville," dealing with the 1994 Robson Street Riot, is an intelligent piece of writing and is in marked contrast to the *Straight's* coverage of the Gastown riots about twenty years earlier. The "Green Shadow," by Andrew Struthers, earns comparison with columns by Mordecai Richler. He describes his arrest and subsequent trial during a Clayoquot protest. While he is asleep in his underwear the police suddenly arrive.

I sat up. Right in front of me a Zodiac hit the beach. Five cops in bright red survival suits spilled out. Still groggy from sleep, I ran into the bush wearing only my underpants.

I had imagined the scene of my arrest very differently. Back in town, I'd pictured it this away:

me and the police would talk it over, then they'd nod and slap the cuffs on me in a matter of fact way. Since I'd arrived at the camp, a second fantasy had eclipsed the first. In it, I was dragged from under the bumper of a logging truck while cameras rolled and loggers cursed and my eco-buddies sang "One Tin Soldier" in the background. But this was like nothing I'd ever imagined. I was being chased through the bush in my underpants, and not a camera in sight.

As I marvelled at the difference between fantasy and reality, I noticed Pierre, the local cop, coming through the trees. He was tracking me, just like a Mountie in some old movie. Then I thought, "Hey ... he really *is* a Mountie. And I'm his man!" I was trapped in the dark underbelly of the Canadian Dream.

*Fur Traders from New England:
The Boston Men in the North Pacific, 1787-1800*

Briton C. Busch and Barry M. Gough, Editors

Spokane: Clark, 1997. Northwest Historical Series 18.

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BY JAMES P. DELGADO, *Vancouver Maritime Museum*

The maritime fur trade was the first European commercial incursion into British Columbia's waters. Beginning in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the trade opened the Northwest Coast of North America to a Pacific Rim and Atlantic economic system. It also had a profound and lasting impact on the region's Native inhabitants, who were active partners in the trade.

The maritime fur trade of the Northwest Coast has been the subject of a number of works in both the United States and Canada, most recently James R. Gibson's *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods* (1992) and Richard Somerset Mackie's *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific, 1793-1843* (1997).

In *Fur Traders from New England: The Boston Men in the North Pacific*,

1787-1800, editors Briton C. Busch and Barry M. Gough have annotated and presented one of the first histories of the trade, written by mariner William Dane Phelps just a few decades after the events he recorded. Phelps's authorship of the account is for the first time affirmed by Busch, a scholar who has worked with two other Phelps manuscripts.

The account, exceedingly rare, was originally entitled "Some of the Early Men of the North-West Coast, by Webfoot" and was anonymously published in March and April of 1869 in the Boston *Commercial Bulletin*. The newspaper account was copied by hand and placed in the hands of historian Hubert Howe Bancroft sometime between 1869 and 1872, and today it resides in the collections of the Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley. The manuscript played a significant role in the historiography of the maritime fur trade and was drawn from heavily by historians Bancroft, R.S. Kuykendall, and Morison. It is, as editors Busch and Gough attest, "among the great texts of American maritime enterprise" (9). It is also a significant work and a necessary addition to the library of any Northwest scholar.

Following the voyages of Cook and Vancouver, the coast north of the Columbia River was in large measure abandoned by Britain. American traders, many of them hailing from Boston and surrounding Massachusetts ports, dominated the maritime fur trade in these waters – so much so that the Chinook trade term for Americans was "Boston Men." The listing of vessels engaged in the trade on the Coast, assembled by William Sturgis and James Gilchrist Swan (and reproduced in this volume as appendices), also attest to the predominance of Boston. It was not until after 1825, and the concerted

efforts of the Hudson's Bay Company, that American domination of the coastal trade was broken.

As the editors note in their introduction, the story of these American maritime fur traders, their voyages and commercial transactions as well as their adventures and misadventures, was kept in logs and journals that were business documents that "contained precious secrets of trade advantages and corporate alliances" (11). It was not until after the trade had closed that Phelps, as one of the trade's first historians, could borrow the logs and journals of the Boston men and write his pioneering account. What makes Phelps's account all the more important to later historians is that the journals that he drew from in writing his history either have not survived or not found their way into a public library or archive.

Phelps's history is a nationalistic one that offers little context for the activities of the Boston men in relation to the Russian or English fur traders. Nor does it, as one would expect, offer much on the relationship between the traders and the First Nations, particularly the often heavy-handed methods employed by some of the former to induce "favourable" terms in their commercial transactions with the latter. It is, however, an essential, nearly contemporary account that has until now not been available in book form. Professors Busch and Gough, both accomplished maritime scholars with considerable experience in the editing and annotation of manuscripts, have done the profession a favour both in making Phelps's account available to a wider audience and in placing it, through a cogent, well researched, and well written introduction and carefully selected appendices, into a historiographical context.