

supplemented with additional photos by other photographers. With the approach of the centenary of the Klondike gold rush, this book deserves to be widely read.

University of British Columbia

JULIE CRUIKSHANK

Roaring Days: Rossland's Mines and the History of British Columbia, by Jeremy Mouat. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995. xvii, 236 pp. Maps, photos. \$39.95 cloth.

The title notwithstanding, there wasn't much roaring in Rossland even in its glory days at the turn of the century. Grumble rather than roar seems to be a more apt metaphor for what goes on between these covers. For the subject is constraint not disorder, the coming to terms with the rules, disappointments and muted pleasures of a conventional social order rather than any orgasmic casting off of its strictures. Indeed, there is something about both the analysis that makes Rossland seem surprisingly structured and disciplined, not just by those usual Canadian suspects — law and order — but also by inner self-imposed codes that effectively marked boundaries on mental maps and governed behaviour — notions of race, manliness and womanliness, and presumably childhood, concepts of property, the corporation, capitalism and the nation. The neat line of storefronts marching down the wide mainstreet; the rigidly posed photographs of workers or celebrants; in their own way these artifacts also show a town lined up, organized, settled. Rossland did not burst into life in some ludic carnivalesque eruption of alternative communitarianism; rather it slipped quietly into the harness of toil, domesticity, ascribed places in a social and economic hierarchy and differentiated citizenship, and that is what this book is about.

The pleasure in reading *Roaring Days* comes not from its striking thesis, synthetic power or its intellectual architecture, but rather from its details. This is a book for the connoisseur of the footnote. The topical chapters are models of spare, stripped down monographic discipline. Exploration, transportation, company promotion, industrial relations, labour organization, social structure, corporate consolidation, and stagnation are briskly and succinctly addressed. The footnotes, by contrast, present a riot of information gathered up in Mouat's wide-ranging research expedition. In the fine print in the

back pages thoughts stray to and linger on such things as the sociology and technology of gold rushes, the symbolism of postage stamps, company promoters in fiction, the letters of labour spies, fist-fights at a businessmen's banquet, the early career of Mackenzie King and his rival Roger Clute, transvestite miners, the technology of concentrating refractory ores, "guinea pigs" (titled company directors), and the *Diggin's Orgy*.

However the front of the book is as orderly, well behaved, and right thinking as church — a topic not much discussed. Rossland seems not so much a place with people in it (such as Anthony Wallace's *Rockdale*) as it is a professional historian's switchboard where connections can be made. Mouat's eye falls upon a subject — gender roles or class formation, for example — and promptly lines are drawn out from Rossland to an international literature on the selected subject. In the end Rossland is not much more than a collection of such scholarly filaments. People pass through making observations — from labour mediators to chorus girls. The census and the newspapers are duly mined. And everything gets neatly piled and fenced in with footnote pickets. The the place itself and the people in it — with the possible exception of of the stage priest, Father Pat — remain elusive.

In fact the focus on Rossland becomes blurred in other ways. At times Rossland refers to a specific place; at other times to a phenomenon; Rossland becomes a metaphor for the pattern of economic and social development in the Kootenays. Time shifts as well; sometimes it stands still in 1897-1902; at other points time is free to drift forward and backward from the 1850's to the 1920's. Worker's organizations and the sometimes baroque political and ideological disputes that convulsed them snap sharply into focus; the work, homelife and social intercourse of miners and other citizens of Rossland are shadows in the background. Precision and impressionism cohabit without being fully reconciled.

With a few minor adjustments on the margins Rossland could be anywhere in non-metropolitan British Columbia — that seems to be Mouat's point. Rossland's relationship to British Columbia history is that of a miniature replica to the whole. And the footnotes seem to be saying that it was much like other places. Western exceptionalism takes another hit. After a pleasant summer's read of Mouat's book one wonders whether Rossland roared more loudly then under the rule of respectable working class and bourgeois propriety or now under the tourist's giddy gaze?