

back fly leaves of this book, makes me nervous, because it is a guide for the curiosity seeker as well as the serious traveller. We know that some individuals in this society, troubled by internal pressures and resentments they do not understand, take positive pleasure in inflicting wilful damage on property considered as public treasure or heritage. We also know of the foolish element of the public which paints names and dates in large letters on spots of interest. Many of these rocks are in remote regions, and therefore doubly vulnerable. Nevertheless, for those who value them and wish to understand more, Mr. Meade has recorded for all time these carvings *in situ* and as they now are — eroded only by wave or wind, unspoiled by vandalism. All 83 plates preserve for us this record of human activity, and to those who care and respect the past, this book is the most definitive and interesting guide.

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A History of Victoria 1842-1970, by Harry Gregson. Victoria: The Victoria Observer Publishing Co. Ltd. 1970. 246 pp. \$10.00.

Urban history is a broad and currently popular field, but with little agreement as to how it should be handled. While many argue that all urban development is essentially similar and that some form of model or theory is necessary to give meaning and understanding, others insist that every city is a distinct entity that should be studied by itself. This debate has continued for over 20 years, but for all practical purposes anyone writing about the city can proceed as he sees fit.

Harry Gregson, *A History of Victoria 1842-1970* is a traditional urban biography. It is not concerned with the process of urbanization, nor with the way that Victoria's development differed from that of other Canadian cities. Rather it is aimed primarily at a local audience. In a relaxed, chatty, anecdotal way it attempts to capture the highlights of the city's development from the time that James Douglas first viewed the area in 1842 up to the construction of the latest shopping centre and super market. Most of it is based on existing secondary literature, reinforced with material from newspapers, trade directories, diaries and interviews, but it is not footnoted. Although it sketches the entire history of the city, it concentrates on Victoria's development prior to World War I.

On the basis of the task that the author has set for himself the final

results are rather disappointing. There are a number of thoughtful, suggestive passages — whether on social distinctions in early 20th century Victoria, the influence of the civil service in shaping Victoria's character, the speculative frenzy of 1912, the rivalry with Vancouver and Seattle, or the nature of the tourist city of the 1950's and 1960's. Yet such material is overwhelmed by the abundance of detail that pours out page after page on the lives of prominent Victorians, their homes and their careers.

Chapter 5 "A Stormy Decade" is representative of the strength and weaknesses of the entire book. It treats the depressed years from 1871 to 1881 when the excitement which greeted British Columbia's joining of Confederation in 1871 turned to the disillusionment of the late 1870's. Not only did prosperity fail to materialize, but the city's population dropped from 7,900 to 6,000. Of this twelve page chapter approximately two pages attempt to explain Victoria's difficulties during these years. But the remainder concerns itself with the homes and activities of various local figures. Thus we learn that

Other notable homes built in the early 1870's were the Charles home at 1038 Fort Street (north side, west of Cook). It was on an acre of land. Wm. Charles was a senior Hudson's Bay Company official. Avalon Villa fronting on Beacon Hill Park was built in 1870 by Peter John Leech, who discovered the Leechtown gold. Peter Leech could have operated a travel agency without ever consulting a map. Before coming here with the Royal Engineers in 1858 he had served in the Crimean War and with General Charles Gordon in Khartoum. He then surveyed northern British Columbia, and on one trip was reduced to making soup out of a dogskin coat, being saved from starvation only by the arrival of some Kispiox Indians.

He laid out the Bella Coola townsite, managed a Hudson's Bay store and became city engineer of Victoria. About \$100,000 in gold was taken from the Leech River which is named after him. Leech was one of the lucky few to get a bride from the brideship *Tynemouth*. Mary MacDonald was one of four sisters in the ship and Mrs. Leech became well known as the organist in the Reverend Cridge's Reformed Episcopal Church.

By Chapter 15 we have moved from the 1870's to the early 1900's and to a consideration of "Tourism — The New Industry". But although the time span and topic have changed, the nature and scope of the writing are consistent.

Francis Barnard, it will be recalled, founded Barnard's Express services which monopolized freight and passenger services during the Cariboo gold rush when freight on a ton of merchandise from Victoria to the Cariboo was \$825. His son Harry was the typical businessman-politician of the era. He owned property all over town and his brother-in-law, J. Mara, was the most

powerful man on the Mainland, politically and financially. He was interested in mines and initiated transport companies in Kamloops and Revelstoke. Mara lived with his brother-in-law on part of the "Duvals" estate on Rockland Avenue, his address being 750 Pemberton and the Mara home and coachhouse still stand at the rear of "Duvals," both converted into apartments. Harry Barnard's friends included the Rithets, Dunsmuirs, Pooleys, Wards, Trutches, Kers, Macdonalds (senator), Creases, Turners and others whose connections embraced everyone worth knowing from San Francisco to Victoria and Vancouver to Ottawa and London.

This kind of material spills out haphazardly throughout the book. Undoubtedly it will be of interest to the knowledgeable Victorian, but for anyone not intimately familiar with the city and its prominent families the sheer volume of detail on a host of businessmen, politicians, ministers, and military officers makes for tedious, wearisome reading. All in all this study does not break any new ground in urban history, but it does contain a vast amount of information on Victoria. One can only hope that if the book is later revised the author will give it the time, care, and discrimination that it deserves. Maybe then the outsider too can share his affection for Victoria.

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