

Book Reviews

Indian Petroglyphs of the Pacific Northwest, by Beth and Ray Hill. Saanichton, Hancock House, 1974. Pp. 314, illus. \$19.95.

Indian Petroglyphs of the Pacific Northwest will likely have a popularity that should be a source of satisfaction to its authors and its publishers, but in the opinion of this reviewer it is also destined to leave a trail of disappointed readers, for the interests of serious students of rock art are not met by the study in the present form.

The Hills and Hancock House have given us a substantial volume, the major portion of which is a roster of petroglyph sites from Puget Sound and coastal British Columbia. There are chapters on Northwest Coast culture and religion, a chapter on petroglyphs of the Lower Columbia, and one on the petroglyphs of Alaska that is written by Michael Stephen Kennedy. Two concluding chapters are primarily interpretive. Appendices (for some reason referred to as "addenda") present summary site lists with the official site designation where these are known, and extracts from provincial and state legislation related to protection of rock art.

As the introductory chapters and appended material are not central to the purposes of the volume, little will be said about them here. Informed readers will recognize the shortcomings of the very brief and selective discussion of Northwest Coast culture, while others will find their desire for background information better served by consulting the much larger, more balanced picture provided by Philip Drucker's *Cultures of the North Pacific Coast*. The chapter on religion is potentially of somewhat more use, as there is no general summary available of Northwest Coast religion and as one of the authors' main themes is that the carvings must be considered in a religious context. Regrettably, this summary is produced in the mode of an anthropology of a generation or two ago — making as it does many implicit generalizations through recounting examples of what may well be locally specific practices.

Both appendices are worthwhile additions, although legislative protec-

tion for the petroglyphs might have been better presented had the Hills chosen to discuss the question rather than simply tack on portions of the provincial and state Acts. It would also have been helpful to have had site listings alphabetically and numerically by designation code and alphabetically by common name instead of as a list that seems simply to follow the order of presentation in the book.

Taken together, the interpretive chapters are a reasonably good start on the problem of petroglyph analysis even though the authors operate mainly at the common-sense or intuitive level. Data problems will make the application of more rigorous analytical devices difficult for some time to come, as the rest of this review takes pains to point out. Meanwhile, the two people who have seen and thought about more Northwest Coast petroglyphs than anyone else alive have given us some tentative conclusions about style distribution and petroglyph function that are well worth considering.

Anyone who is moved to make use of the descriptive material that makes up the bulk of this volume will soon learn, however, that inadequate reporting renders it useless for anything except, perhaps, the formation of more hypotheses. The pity is that with a little extra awareness and effort the study could have fulfilled what its dustjacket predicts and become a "classic in its own time".

To be truly useful as a descriptive work, the following standards of reporting should have been adhered to:

1. For each site or cluster of sites there should be a location map, such as those provided on pages 59, 91, 125, 182 and 189. With the aid of a good set of charts it would be possible to locate with reasonable accuracy most of the sites for which no map location is given — but the Hills could have done the job for us. In some cases even the written location description is too inexact to plot (e.g., p. 161, a site on "Return Channel").
2. There should be a scale sketch map of the site area showing the location of the petroglyph panel or panels and their spatial relation to natural or other cultural features. Reasonably good examples are provided by several of the Venn Passage sites on pages 191 to 203. Bad examples include Dean River (p. 178), which has no scale and some unexplained numerals between the numbered panels; and Moore Islands (p. 182), which, when the map is compared with the general site photograph on the facing page, is clearly out of scale. The bewildering wealth of carvings on Chrome Island (pp. 124-129), Thorsen

Creek (pp. 168-172), and Douglas Channel (pp. 184-187) would be less confusing to a reader armed with a plan of panel locations.

3. If the site map cannot conveniently be produced in a scale that will show the individual figures or elements, then a sketch plan or reasonably distortion-free photograph should be presented for each panel or cluster. There are good examples for the Clo-oose Blowhole site (pp. 72-73) and site GcTo 9 (p. 203), although in neither case is the scale indicated and only for the second site is there what could be called a site map.
4. Each figure or detached element should be illustrated to scale by rubbing, measured drawing or undistorted photograph, and these should be keyed to the panel illustration or site map if it is not readily apparent what portion of the panel or site is being represented. At this level of reporting, the book is fairly strong in that there are a great many excellent rubbings and photographs. Yet, here too, the uneven quality of reporting very seriously weakens the study. A few examples will indicate the problems facing the serious user:
 - (a) No scale is provided for rubbings, photos, or sketches on pages 63, 64, 69, 82, 84, 86, 97, 117, 124 and 127 — just to start the list.
 - (b) Indistinct photos are published for some glyphs with no explanation offered as to why the more useful rubbings or measured drawings were not attempted — e.g., pages 55, 56, 86, 180, 197 and 204. Yeo Island's petroglyphs (p. 167) are described but not illustrated, although it is noted they were chalked for photography. There is reference to a rubbing of one of the Moore Island glyphs (p. 182) but it is not reproduced.
 - (c) Some glyphs at some sites have not been illustrated — e.g., Moore Island (p. 182), Venn Passage (p. 194), Pike Island (p. 196) and Parry Passage (pp. 211-213). For Pike Island it is noted that "the most interesting stones at this site are shown" (p. 196).
 - (d) There is sometimes difficulty in matching rubbings or photographs with panel drawings or site maps even where these are provided — e.g., Petroglyph Park (pp. 101-106), Nanaimo River (pp. 107-112) and Return Channel (pp. 165-166).

The model of description outlined above was at least in part subscribed to by the Hills, as a close examination of *Indian Petroglyphs* will disclose.

But if they were aware of what should have been the standard for recording each site, unfortunately the yardstick was applied too seldom to make the volume the useful and enduring compendium it could have been. Perhaps the authors and Hancock House will someday give us a more carefully and thoughtfully prepared edition. The petroglyphs deserve better than they received this time around.

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Making History: an Anthology of British Columbia, edited, published and distributed by Millicent A. Lindo, Victoria, B.C. Illustrated, pp. 235. \$10.00.

The past decade has seen the lessening of the adulation given to the so-called 'youth culture' and at the same time a revival of a sense of history. The latter may have arisen in part perhaps because the immediacy of 'youth culture' has brought few adequate responses to man's search for meaning. Immediacy is presumably less satisfying than a retrospective overview. As a result of this new feeling for the past Canadians — who are ever in search of their identity like Diogenes looking for the honest man — have suddenly discovered that they have a real history of their own, a unique and special thing that is neither British nor American. The older generation, so long neglected or disregarded, is suddenly found to possess something so essential to this national history and in the process what they have to say about themselves and their experiences are at last deemed to be significant.

The great difficulty is how to record these experiences in a manner that makes them available for later interpretation. Moreover, in the telling the human memory plays tricks and events acquire a special coloration. However, if one is attempting to understand what Peter Laslett so aptly calls 'the world we have lost', the special personal history recounted by the participant with the fine shades of meaning, the emphasis is as significant as light and shadow in a Turner painting. Clio is a capricious muse, but she is also tolerant of the vagaries of her votaries and the amateur is often more true in his allegiance than is the professional.

Making History is an anthology; its theme is British Columbia as seen by a number of elderly citizens who live in the province. They do not pretend to be scholars; for them history is art, not science, and hence the