

evacuation and lost property rests, for the most part, with the federal government, not with Mayne Islanders.

If the social pattern of the Island diverges from traditional interpretation, the nature of local political concerns does not. The problems of transportation and the pressures of land development, familiar themes in the history of B.C.'s rural communities, receive thorough treatment in the final chapters. For anyone who has ever wondered about the politics of ferry scheduling these are worthwhile reading. Elliott documents the "cavalier" attitude of a provincial administration preoccupied with black-top. Nonetheless, in the early sixties the Social Credit government reluctantly agreed to take over ferry services. Once the islands become more accessible, conservationists battled developers in numerous government committees, culminating in the NDP creation of the Islands Trust. This unique local body continues to have substantial control over islands planning to this day.

*Mayne Island and the Outer Gulf Islands: A History* is a useful and informative book. While one wonders from the outset if Mayne (and not Saltspring), was the centre of Gulf Island activity, Elliott moves beyond affection and provides insight into the character of island life. Her book reveals that only recently has the parochial familiarity of the island world been disrupted by newcomers seeking vacation homes and retirement property. Historians should welcome this regional study as an opportunity to test the larger pattern of British Columbia history. Students of provincial politics should find the islands' struggle for local autonomy of particular interest. Gulf Island visitors and residents should consider this book a worthy companion for their next ferry trip.

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*Francis Rattenbury and British Columbia: Architecture and Challenge in the Imperial Age*, by Anthony A. Barrett and Rhodri Windsor Liscombe. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1983. Pp. 405; ill. 229.

Francis Mawson Rattenbury has been much written about, just as in his own lifetime he must have been much talked about. A young Yorkshire immigrant to Canada in 1892, at the age of 24 he captured public attention within a year by winning a North America wide competition to design the new British Columbia parliament buildings. During his ensuing 38-year career in the province he not only designed major build-

ings throughout British Columbia — in particular hotels, court houses, banks and numerous prestige residential commissions in Victoria and Vancouver — but also acted officially as architect first to the Canadian Pacific Railway and then to the Grand Trunk Pacific. The substantial earnings from these commissions were invested in large-scale land development and transportation companies. Rattenbury was a talented self publicist, often addressing his public on a wide range of topics through interviews and letters to the newspaper and later from the platform as a municipal politician. He eloquently defended himself in various judicial inquiries, usually relating to cost overruns on his large public commissions. However, toward the end of his life there was the divorce of his wife of many years in favour of a young divorcée, the crash of his financial empire, then social ostracism and retreat to southern England in 1930. Finally there followed his murder at the hands of his new wife's lover and her subsequent tragic suicide — all in a blaze of sensational reporting by the British press.

It has been the task of the authors to cut through the myth and fiction and establish a firmer footing for Rattenbury's architectural contribution to the built history of British Columbia. In doing so they build on previous work, in particular T. Reksten's biography, *Rattenbury* (Sono Nis, 1978), and Barrett's own previous collaboration with Sir Michael Havers, Q.C., and Peter Sharkland, *Tragedy in Three Voices, The Rattenbury Murder* (William Kirber, 1980).

Unlike Reksten, who used primarily public records concerning Rattenbury's architectural activities or the monographs and articles of others who have relied mainly on analyses of extant structures and construction documents, Barrett and Liscombe have drawn extensively on new evidence in the form of personal letters from Rattenbury, mainly to his mother and niece between 1893 and 1931. These were also used extensively in the first part of the earlier book by Barrett *et alia* on the murder.

It is a comment, however, on the very recent maturity of architectural history studies in British Columbia that ten years ago this Rattenbury study would have been so much more difficult to write. The authors were able to draw extensively on recent published work by Peter Cotton, H. Kalman, Alistair Kerr, L. K. Eaton, J. D. Freeman and T. Mills for comparative material in setting Rattenbury's work in a contemporary architectural context. The letters and a close scrutiny of the professional journals of the period establish a detailed and authoritative baseline for Rattenbury's career, his architectural commissions, his travels and to a lesser extent his financial dealings. The authors are sympathetic to the

fact that, like so much correspondence of "colonials" to home, Rattenbury's was quick to highlight his successes while glossing over the failures, and they have made good use of official documentary sources in order to compensate. What emerges is a tightly disciplined account of the architect's professional activities and a solid comparative analysis of Rattenbury's leadership as British Columbia's premier civic architect of well over a hundred commissions.

There are some shortcomings. While the book is expensively produced on archival paper, design, layout and organization are poor. Many of the black and white illustrations, both of plans and photographs, are barely legible. There are some annoying errors. For instance, the 1892 "Roursay Bros. & Co. building" is in fact the Ramsay Bros. & Co. candy factory. Rattenbury may indeed have supervised tenders for the Chinese School, but his former apprentice D. C. Frame was always credited with the design in the press and professional journals of the day. This latter point indicates one aspect of Rattenbury's career on which both the architect in his letters and the authors seem to remain silent; that is the structure and working of Rattenbury's office. We know, for instance, that at various times between 1897 and 1910 Rattenbury occupied offices in Victoria's Five Sisters building along with such other notable architects as Thomas Sorby, Sam Maclure, Thomas Hooper, C. E. Watkins, Douglas James and P. L. James. While Hooper and Rattenbury would attack each other openly on a number of issues, jobs were often shared among the others either informally or formally through design partnerships (such as the Government House commission shared by Maclure and Rattenbury). Rattenbury indeed stepped into the shoes of his older fellow Yorkshireman, Thomas Sorby, on becoming Western division architect for the CPR. Rattenbury provided additions to numerous Sorby-designed CPR stations and hotels (including the Hotel Vancouver) and subsumed into his own work much of Sorby's pioneering shingle-style design. This style rapidly became a hallmark of the entire "Five Sisters" group. Yet how did these office relationships work? Did the architects share a floating pool of draughtsmen? Was some tablework ever given out to other architects during slack times? Another question is whether or not Rattenbury's success was based entirely on his own self-promotion and design abilities. G. W. Taylor, in *Builders of British Columbia, An Industrial History* (Sono Nis, 1982), has suggested the existence of a Huddersfield, Bradford and Leeds consortium based on Yorkshire woollen industrialists' investments. These were channelled through the Yorkshire Guarantee and Securities Corporation, founded in Vancouver in 1890. Yorkshire money,

according to Taylor, controlled or had interests in B.C. Sugar Refineries, B.C. Electric, B.C. Telephone, B.C. Tramways, Vancouver Machine Works and also one of the largest blocks of Vancouver real estate. Many of these companies were Rattenbury clients. These are merely a few issues open for exploration as a result of Barrett and Liscombe's research.

With the firm demolition of such popular rumours that, for instance, Rattenbury stole the parliament buildings design from the English firm of his uncle (i.e., it was originally intended for a Maharajah's palace!), the way is open for further serious re-examination of Rattenbury's creative role in the formation of British Columbia's distinctive Edwardian west coast style. The 1901 Lyman Duff house, for instance, certainly demonstrates innovative brilliance. In other instances Rattenbury could be naively derivative. I am convinced, for instance, that Rattenbury's 1903/6 Revelstoke courthouse is an abbreviated version of H. T. Hare's Shoreditch Public Library published in the *Architectural Review* of 1893. Similarly, the Rattenbury shingle-style signature of steep gables either blind with a lancet vent or open with an indented gothic arch most likely derived from designs by Toronto architects Dennison and King published in the *Canadian Architect and Builder* in 1890.

In short, Barrett and Liscombe have contributed a founding architectural biography for cultural history research in British Columbia and thereby have established a standard which will challenge future scholars in this field.

Victoria

MARTIN SEGGER

*Gunboat Frontier: British Maritime Authority and Northwest Coast Indians, 1846-90*, by Barry M. Gough. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984. Pp. 287. \$27.95.

*Gunboat Frontier* is an account of how the Royal Navy was used to pacify the Indians of the northwest coast during the mid to late nineteenth century. The author argues that the ships and men of the navy were an important instrument of British colonial and Canadian policy, and that gunboats were frequently used on the coast, as on other imperial frontiers, to quell and control fractious natives. Naval force was initially employed to inflict retribution on the Indians for attacks on Europeans, but increasingly through the period of colonization naval officers were called upon to intervene in Indian matters. There were actions to suppress