

on the shore.¹ It is one thing to describe the power of European weapons and assume that the newcomers had the upper hand, but the Pacific peoples did not always play dead when the whites produced their big guns. All of the excessive firepower of *Resolution* and *Discovery*, which Gough details as representative of British naval superiority from the outset, was of no help whatever to James Cook as he was hacked to pieces on the rocky shoreline of Kealakekua Bay. There was another side to this story, and Gough begins by suggesting that he will tell it. The Admiralty papers are touted as possibly the last unused major documentary source on "Northwest Coast Indian life in the nineteenth century" (p. xv), and on the first page Gough states that his "objective has been to get as close to the historic interface of white and native societies as possible, and to describe and assess how each responded to the other" (p. xiii). In fact, throughout the book there is very little sense of how and why the Indians responded. Consistent with the old imperial history, the natives do not act but rather react to the actions of Europeans. The northwest coast Indians' own motivations and priorities are not examined in any detail. It is not sufficient to name Indian groups and individuals and to offer a general description of their culture. One would like to know about their notions of warfare, their views on crime and punishment, and the reasons why they sometimes resisted and sometimes did not. After describing the Cowichan affair, in which James Douglas led an armed force to capture and summarily execute an Indian who had attacked an English settler, Gough observes that "for reasons unknown, the natives did not regard the capture, trial and punishment with the same measure of acceptance as the authorities" (p. 66). Presumably those reasons had to do with the Indians' view of the invasion of their territory, and with a whole set of different cultural attitudes towards revenge and compensation. Although one must be careful about analyzing other cultures, some conclusions could be drawn in this case. Certainly to attempt what is difficult is better than raising the reader's expectations and then backing off. To the extent that they are used here, the Admiralty papers are a revealing source on the views of navy men but not on northwest coast Indian life. For in the end, *Gunboat Frontier* tells only one side of the story. While it details the attitudes and actions of the Royal Navy, it does not take the reader across to the other side of the frontier.

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¹ K. R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall: A New South Sea Islands History from First Settlement to Colonial Rule* (Sydney and London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984).

False Creek: History, Images, and Research Sources, by Robert K. Burkinshaw. Vancouver: City of Vancouver Archives, Occasional Paper no. 2, 1984. Pp. iv, 81; maps and photographs.

False Creek has possibly the most varied history of any district in the city of Vancouver. While the West End has seen an evolution from the large and gracious homes of the well-to-do, through deteriorating multiple family dwellings, to its present forest of high-rise apartment blocks, its function has always been primarily residential. Similarly, despite dramatic alterations in appearance, downtown's essential role remains commercial. False Creek, in contrast, has changed from a quiet waterway surrounded by forest, to the location of heavy industry, to "a filthy ditch in the centre of the city," and now to the site of B.C. Place, innovative housing and the lively Granville Island. Thus False Creek is a fitting subject for the second occasional paper¹ produced by the City of Vancouver Archives.

In *False Creek: History, Images, and Research Sources*, Robert K. Burkinshaw has drawn on the rich photograph, map and documentary collections of the City Archives to produce a handsomely illustrated volume. The well-chosen and generally well-reproduced pictures and historic maps could almost stand by themselves. Mr. Burkinshaw brings attention to changing ideas about False Creek by showing sketches of some of the more grandiose schemes for the area including a plan initially devised by the CPR in the 1880s and adapted by the Vancouver Harbour Commission in the late 1910s to build deep-sea docking facilities at Kitsilano. To illustrate a contrary idea, the filling in of the Creek, as proposed by several civic politicians in the early 1950s, he reprints campaign advertisements.

The text has many strengths but is less satisfying. It clearly and concisely outlines some of the tangled aspects of False Creek's history such as the city's long quarrel with the CPR over the Kitsilano fixed trestle and the complex question of foreshore ownership. Although Mr. Burkinshaw wisely eschewed the temptation to tell the whole story of False Creek and focused on what he considered to be the major developments in and around the Creek, his choice of emphasis is eclectic. For example, he relates, in comparative detail, the observations of explorers and records of early European activities in the area, but his only mention of the Kitsilano Indian Reserve is a passing reference to its establishment in 1871.

¹ William McKee, "Portholes and Pilings: A Retrospective Look at the Development of Vancouver Harbour up to 1933." City of Vancouver Archives, *Occasional Papers*, No. 1 (1978).

He does not explain how Indian title was extinguished in 1913 or how the property became the site of a RCAF base during World War II and, eventually, Vanier Park. Equally striking is the limited reference to ship-building activity on the Creek, especially during World War I, when Coughlan's Shipyard, for example, had over 7,000 employees. Even more surprising is the short shrift given to the machine shops, small manufacturers and wholesalers who operated on the shores of False Creek and on Granville Island. Indeed, Granville Island almost merits an equivalent volume of its own. Mr. Burkinshaw provides no more than tantalizing hints of how the Harbour Commission reclaimed and developed the Island (1916-23) as a compact industrial site or how, in the 1970s, the Island emerged as the home of a public market, theatres and trendy restaurants. Indeed, the text for the chapter covering 1969-83 — surely a decade and a half during which False Creek underwent more dramatic changes than in any comparable period in its history — is only a disappointing page and a half long, and the photographs do not reveal the whole picture.

Nevertheless, as a handsome pictorial record and brief textual explanation of the previous incarnations of False Creek, this volume is a welcome addition to the historiography of Vancouver; its elaborate notes and bibliography, as intended, offer a helpful guide to further research. The City of Vancouver Archives is to be commended for sharing its rich historical resources with a public wider than those who have the pleasure and opportunity of regular visits to its splendid Vanier Park location at the entrance to False Creek.

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