

*Mayne Island and the Outer Gulf Islands: A History*, by Marie Elliott.

This book is a labour of love. Most local histories are, and therein lies their greatest strength and greatest weakness. Marie Elliott effectively chronicles 120 years of Mayne Island's development from the original homesteads of German and British American settlers to the ferry lineups and tourism pressures of the 1980s. The telling is full of the "old stories," the arrival and departure of each founding family member, the heritage of each major building and farm, and, not surprisingly, the life of each sloop, steamer and ferry that has connected the island communities one with another and to the outside world. The text is clearly written based on sound archival and oral research and amply supplemented with detailed maps and excellent photographs of the island.

While there is enough detail to satisfy the local reader, it is not overwhelming. An analysis — albeit affectionate — of economy, society and recent politics attempts to place Mayne Island in the large context of British Columbia's historical development. One theme is central to the story — transportation. It was key to the Island's economic fortunes. Market agriculture, especially hothouse tomatoes, was the island's main industry until the 1950s, when the CPR introduced higher freight rates. The success of summer tourism hinged on frequent ferry service, as did the shipments of fish, cordwood, charcoal and spring daffodils. According to Elliott, by the 1950s the population of Mayne, North and South Pender and Saturna was shrinking, in part because of the end of a brief logging boom, but mainly because of the difficulties with ferry transportation for both people and produce.

The remoteness of island life, dictated by geography and compounded by poor service, gave shape to what Elliott calls an "egalitarian" society. Original settlers of a variety of backgrounds set a co-operative tone for island and inter-island living which British immigrants, settling after 1900, did not disrupt. Although in the twenties and thirties Mayne Island was the centre of British middle-class activities (tennis, teas and formal balls), British families were simply one more, not the predominant, element in an agrarian society. More convincing is Elliott's examination of the Japanese community's relationship to other islanders. By 1942 the Japanese represented one-third of the population and conducted approximately 50 percent of island commerce. Mayne Islanders rose to their defence during World War II, suggesting that white British Columbians were not uniformly prejudiced. In this analysis, responsibility for the

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-