

Warriors of the North Pacific, by Charles Lillard. Victoria, Sono Nis Press, 1984. Pp. 280. \$16.95.

Charles Lillard's *Warriors of the North Pacific* is a book with a mission. Lillard, who has contributed a number of articles and books on the Pacific Northwest, is convinced that historians have seriously misinterpreted the historic role of missionaries in the Pacific Northwest, particularly in the late nineteenth century, and has offered an edited volume of missionary accounts in an attempt to re-establish the reputation of these often maligned men of God. The clergy's records provide, he suggests, "the only eyewitness accounts of indigenous Indian life as the people travelled those horrendous last miles of their way from prehistory into the twentieth century." Other records, by journalists, government agents, ethnologists, travellers and historians, are flawed, Lillard argues, in that the authors did not live with the natives as long, or maintain as close contact, as did the missionaries.

Warriors consists of republished missionary memoirs and diaries, long out of print, that are filled with detailed descriptions of the native peoples of the Northwest Coast. "The North-West Coast," written by Rev. J. S. Green, recounts the American missionary's work in the region just north of Vancouver Island in 1826. The Methodist Thomas Crosby's "Among the An-ko-me-nums," released in 1907, describes his work at Nanaimo. The third selection, "Ancient Warriors of the North Pacific," is Charles Harrison's account of his work for the Church Missionary Society with the Haida, first published in 1925. The final entry consists of Bishop William Ridley's "Snapshots from the North Pacific," which covers his journeys among the natives in the Skeena, Stikine and Atlin districts between 1880 and 1900.

The four selections are rich in ethnohistorical detail and offer repeated evidence of the great attention paid by missionaries to the native societies they endeavoured to change. Lillard has selected missionary accounts which offer direct and extended commentaries on native societies and indicate the clergy's growing concern with the negative effects of the arrival of white men. It is here that the volume makes its most useful contribution. Lillard admits to some heavy-handed editorial decisions. None of the selections is included in its entirety. Major sections not related to mission work or, in several instances, covering areas outside the Pacific Northwest have been deleted. In the case of Ridley's contribution, two short articles were added to the original text to expand the story into

the headwaters of the Yukon River. Such major excisions from the original are sure to leave some readers uneasy. He does, however, provide a full description of his editorial imperatives and makes very clear his emphasis on missionary impressions of native people.

Though Lillard's primary purpose is to take these valuable manuscripts off the rare-book shelves and make them available again to a broad audience, there is an underlying historiographical motive behind the collection. In his introduction, the editor argues that historians have misread the role of missionaries in the changing condition of the native peoples of the Northwest Coast. In an interesting and far-ranging critique of work of Robin Fisher (*Contact and Conflict*) and Jean Usher (*William Duncan of Metlakatla*), Lillard boldly suggests that the historians have it all wrong.

Fisher's argument that "The missionaries demanded even more far-reaching transformation than the settlers and they pushed it more aggressively than any other group of whites" is dismissed as sophistic. Lillard comments that the work of Fisher and Usher demonstrates "an enviable dexterity when handling facts, though the way they fondle them is embarrassing." Usher's study of William Duncan is singled out for special criticism of its "near-complete lack of historical objectivity." These are strong words!

Unfortunately, there is little to back them up. Lillard lets the missionary accounts stand alone, suggesting that the common themes of native deprivation and missionary concern emerge strongly enough to convince the reader of his point. It is not enough. The introductions to the four selections are abnormally short, consisting of little more than thumb-nail sketches of the authors' lives and missionary careers. Annotations have been kept to the barest minimum. The result is that readers are on their own, without the much needed context, character assessments or supporting information necessary to assess the documents properly.

The net result is rather unfortunate. Lillard has issued a strongly worded challenge to historians, attacking both their analysis and intentions, without providing a substantial analysis of his own. It does not mean he is on the wrong track. Robin Fisher's description of the settlement frontier, in which, as Lillard points out, he generalizes from the experience of the lower mainland and Vancouver Island for the entire province, is probably in need of revision. The Northwest Coast is, as Lillard suggests, a good place to start. Similarly, his critique of Usher's analysis of William Duncan appears to have some merit. But he has gone

too far, rejecting historical analysis and arguing that we must return to the original documents to get a true sense of the personalities and events of this very traumatic time. *Warriors of the North Pacific* provides both an interesting example of the strength and importance of these often inaccessible missionary memoirs and an indication of the weakness inherent in allowing such documents to stand alone. Charles Lillard asks the right questions, and the missionary accounts republished here hold great potential for those in search of the answers, but his decision to forgo his own analysis, coupled with an as yet unsubstantiated rejection of existing historical scholarship, leaves a rather unsatisfying book.

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The War Against the Seals: A History of the North American Seal Fishery, by Briton Cooper Busch. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985.

This book has a curious title. It is meant to convey the sense that man prepared himself to engage in the seal fishery with almost the same, often ritual, preparation that he reserved for war. What this book does — and it does it extremely well — is to document the history of the activity of seal hunting. Many readers will find this sufficient reason to read and enjoy this book.

As an analytic history of seal hunting in North American waters this book is unfortunately a failure. First, *The War Against the Seals* suffers from the fact that the Atlantic and Pacific seal fisheries are almost entirely unrelated, and the book's fragmentary nature is not helped by a separate section on hunting out of Boston. Both the Gulf of St. Lawrence harp seal fishery and the North Pacific fur seal hunt are covered from the first major exploitations to the present. The whole is an uneasy combination. Second, and most important, the author misses, or fails to develop, the major themes which make the history of the seal hunts of such contemporary interest: the complicated interrelatedness between the biology, the business and economics of sealing, and the broad politico-legal (and moral) issues raised.

Although the bibliography and preface contain reference to the biology of the seals, no use is made of this scientific evidence — notwithstanding the misleading claim on the dust jacket, itself wholly unworthy of a