

not with each document, thus necessitating constant flipping back and forth. There is a two and a half page preface but no introduction, no attempt at a general overview of the human history of the Rockies as a background to the documents. Explanations are provided with some documents, but sometimes these are inadequate. The note with the excerpt from Milton's and Cheadle's narrative of their trip across the Yellowhead Pass simply states, "By the 1860s travel across the Athabasca Pass had declined. . . ." There is no mention of the Hudson's Bay Company's reorganization of its transportation system and the abandonment of its transmountain brigade system as the reason for the decline in traffic on the Athabasca Pass, the company's most regularly used route. One suspects a lack of original research (apparently none in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives) and a less than full understanding of events prior to the arrival of the CPR to account for the inadequate background information and, also, the omission of certain documents. Never previously published, the colourful description of the first documented crossing of the Yellowhead Pass and the detailed report of the first telegraph survey of that route might be expected to be included. However, neither James McMillan's 1825 explorations guided by the legendary Tête Jaune nor John Rae's 1864 expedition are even noted.

The editor claims that the documents were "selected to entertain." Regrettably, especially because of the editor's obvious love for his subject, some of their entertainment value and historical significance have been lost in this volume.

Parks Canada

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Ocean/Paper/Stone: The Catalogue of an exhibition of printed objects which chronicle more than a century of literary publishing in British Columbia, compiled by Robert Bringhurst. Vancouver: William Hoffer, 1984.

The exhibition documented in this catalogue was held at Vancouver's M. C. Duthie Gallery in April/May 1984. But Bringhurst's book is far more than a catalogue: an elegant design makes it an example of fine printing in its own right; it is a descriptive bibliography of remarkable thoroughness (documenting typefaces, designers, bindings, papers and press runs); it gives capsule histories (often anecdotal) of over sixty

imprints and of nearly forty periodicals published in British Columbia since the arrival of the first printing press in 1856. It also lists some twenty publishers and thirty literary periodicals not represented in the exhibition.

Relatively invisible since its publication (perhaps because of its occasional origins), *Ocean/Paper/Stone* should be in the library of anyone interested in B.C. studies. Pulled from the reference shelf, it provides a handy list of evocative trivia: first ethnographic publication (a *Dictionary of Indian Tongues*, 1862), first literary publication (*Sawney's Letters: or Cariboo Rhymes*, 1866, by the Scots prospector James Anderson), first work of fiction (*Three Letters of Credit and Other Stories*, 1894, by Arthur Hodgins Scaife), or first literary work by a woman (Lily Alice Lefevre, *The Lion's Gate and Other Verses*, 1895). As cultural history, the book provides a startling sense of how thoroughly early literary publishing was tied up with religion and the church; it suggests how anti-Oriental racist tracts masqueraded as literature in the 1920s; it remembers Fr. Adrien-Gabriel Morice setting his own type and doing his own printing in three languages, 500 kilometres from the nearest post office; it emphasizes repeatedly how talented typographers and designers subtly shape a community's sense of itself.

Literate and literary in its own right, Bringhurst's text is perhaps most valuable — certainly most entertaining — when it allows itself a gnomic and puckish suggestion about cultural definition. Charles Morriss he salutes for his extraordinary contribution to book publishing in British Columbia, but of his text face, Baskerville (which you are at the moment reading), he can only lament: "an eighteenth-century rationalist letter well suited to period books about the European exploration and colonization of this coast, but wholly out of keeping with the spirit of twentieth-century literature" (pp. 22-23). Minor books by young B.C. writers may be published in the home province, Bringhurst notes, "but important books by these writers . . . are published in the East" (p. 13). Tucked into Bringhurst's account of the Vancouver Public Library's very limited publication activity is this shrewd comment: "Clearly some poets should study botany (and fewer, perhaps, should study mere literature)" (p. 73). Those writers most continuously in touch with botany, the native poets and storytellers, Bringhurst recognizes "are the standard, or the shadow of the standard, against which our impudent immigrant literature must stand. They are what remains to us of the ahistorical culture, a

culture of ridges and valleys instead of fads, of season and place instead of time" (pp. 15-16).

This combination of polish and passion makes Bringhurst's book the best literary history of British Columbia available (not a crowded field, to be sure). "It is a poet's business," he writes, "to say for his people where they have come from and why they are where they are. It is also his business to root with language, himself and his people into the world." Although he sees these aims, in an immigrant culture such as British Columbia's, to be "generally at odds," Bringhurst's delicate fusion of ocean, paper and stone makes his book a fine exception.

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