

years ago on the Northwest Coast. He recognizes intriguing Northern and Southern similarities in the Middle Developmental Period of Northwest Coast prehistory. To some degree, perishable artifacts from Southern wet sites also demonstrate this trend of similarity to the north. The general continuity of the three regional variants seem very deep rooted, long lived, and well represented.

Coming to the end of his tour, Fladmark documents well the resulting Northwest Interior and Coast cultural complexity, having developed a "maximum utilization of their environment" (29). He then follows with the important consideration of "colliding cultures" (141) of the Euro-american contact period. He questions which culture "will be seen to have shown greater wisdom" (141). The reader is shown that the history of hundreds of generations of past Northwesters, as revealed by archaeology, "teaches us" (144) the invaluable wisdom developed during the past 12,000 + years and how we "must come to appreciate and protect the ancient past . . . as part of our collective heritage and a source of pride for the future" (145). Through his latest book, Knut Fladmark begins revealing the collective wisdom of hundreds of generations of past Northwest Elders for the present-day peoples.

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*Lights of the Inside Passage*, by Donald Graham. Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1986. Pp. 269; illus.

*Lights of the Inside Passage* is a passionately written, popular history of the lighthouses of British Columbia's Inside Passage — a stretch of water which extends some 900 kilometres from the Gulf Islands and Georgia Strait in the south to the Queen Charlotte Islands and Dixon Entrance in the north. This is Graham's second volume. His first, *Keepers of the Light*, dealt with lighthouses of the south coast of British Columbia and the west coast of Vancouver Island.

The author, himself a lightkeeper, has spent a decade on various west coast lights. He left his position as Saskatchewan's Cultural Conservation Co-ordinator in 1976, drawn in part, he admits, by the romance of lighthouses. While the realities of the lights have since tempered his youthful enthusiasm, Graham's writing abounds with emotion and sentimentality. He speaks of keepers "out on the lights, watching the Aurora run wild across another winter sky" or facing a winter gale hunkered down inside

“while logs crunch and grind on the rocks below and wind whines up the stovepipe like a violinist going up the E string.”

While on the lights Graham became aware of how little was known about those who had come before. He set out to bring to life the stories of these forgotten men and women. As he sorted through a century’s accumulation of faded letters, diaries, and files, he was shocked by what he read: “Sometimes as disaster and death piled so high, I pushed away from the table, angry and depressed, leaving as much venom on paper as ink.”

To overcome the reader’s disbelief as to what was endured, Graham decided to draw “heavily on the rich reserves of the keepers’ own experience.” He has documented twenty-one stations, beginning with the construction of the Active Pass light on Mayne Island in 1885 and concluding with Triple Island or “Little Alcatraz” built in 1921, forty-seven kilometres west of Prince Rupert. Unfortunately, the histories of six other northern lights were lost in the 1960s when a marine agent thoughtlessly ordered the burning of “outdated files.” The book’s final two chapters bring us to the present. They respectively describe the keepers’ long struggle to improve their wages and working conditions and the danger posed by lighthouse automation, which would render keepers obsolete and jeopardize the safety of mariners.

Because the book’s protagonists are for the most part a long-suffering lot, pitted as they were against the vagaries of insensitive government officials, remote storm-lashed outcroppings, poverty, isolation, and so forth, it is difficult to criticize the book without seeming somewhat callous. I am reminded in this regard of Stephen Potter’s advice in *Lifemanship*. He suggested that one could completely disarm a prospective critic by dedicating one’s book “To Phyllis, in the hope that one day God’s glorious gift of sight may be restored to her.”

I stand disarmed — at least as far as the lightkeepers are concerned. But not so for the book.

Paradoxically, its greatest strength, the generous use of anecdotal material, ultimately becomes its weakness. While the harsh experiences of the lightkeepers and their tales of misery touch and instruct us, we are left with a nagging doubt. Do Graham’s selections tell us the whole story? While some mention is made of keepers who found contentment on the lights, most, according to the author, suffered a terrible existence. Is this true? Or was it true only for some locations? Or was this wretchedness a byproduct of a particular era? The author confides: “Happy people do not make history.” I disagree. People make history regardless of their

emotional state. The historian's task is always to search out the truth, for truth is essential to history.

When Graham speaks of "the horrifying history of a forgotten people," of marine agents co-authoring "a long, dark chapter in Canadian history, inflicting hardships few Canadians could even contemplate," with Ottawa guaranteeing keepers a "life on the mudsill of society," the reader could be forgiven for thinking that not since the antebellum South has slavery been so fashionable. The truth is that while lightkeepers' wages *were* low and social benefits *were* non-existent, their lot was certainly no better or worse than most workers in turn-of-the-century Canada.

In 1889, The Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labour reported widespread exploitation in the manufacturing industry. In particular, it noted inadequate protection from belts, pulleys, and steam engines; crowded and unhealthy conditions; widespread child labour; frequent unemployment; lack of compensation for industrial accident victims; workers forced to eat at their work post; and lack of job security.

By not placing the lightkeepers' struggle within the larger context of Canadian labour history, Graham leaves the impression that somehow these "exiles" on the shores of British Columbia were singled out for inhumane treatment.

Having expressed my reservations about the book, I believe nonetheless that Donald Graham has achieved one of his stated purposes. He has made a strong case against automating the lights. I know the need to keep the lights staffed. I was raised on the west coast of Vancouver Island, and while at university I spent summers working at a number of lighthouses. The fishermen quoted in the book are right: "If men leave the lights other men will die."

Graham's book adds a useful chapter to the history of Canada's west coast. If, in addition, his work helps reverse the trend toward lighthouse automation, he will have rendered all mariners a great service.

Toronto

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*Gordon Shrum: An Autobiography*, with Peter Stursberg, edited by Clive Cocking. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986. Pp. xvi, 158.

This portrait is like Gordon Shrum: brisk, clear, forthright. Shrum loved doing; one could even say, "il aimait à faire faire" — he loved getting things done. Larry MacKenzie, UBC's President, 1944-1962, roundly