

The Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt, by Hilary Stewart.
Toronto and Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987.

Hilary Stewart's new book is based upon an actual journal kept by a maritime fur trader, John Jewitt, during his two-year captivity among the Yuquot. It was originally published in 1815 and has long been regarded by researchers of the Northwest coast as an important historical record of the social and economic life of the Yuquot at the height of the maritime fur trade. Jewitt, as a slave to the Yuquot chief, Macquinna, had a unique opportunity to observe the seasonal and daily activities of his household. His observations of their subsistence practices, traditional trade, and warfare reveal a society with a sophisticated fishing technology as well as extensive trade networks and political alliances. Such insights have been important to scholars in reconstructing the prehistory of a flourishing Northwest coast people before the advent of the sea otter trade.

As well as its historical contribution, the narrative is also an exciting story of danger and intrigue. It was a popular adventure story when first published and to date there have been over twenty editions in print. None, however, has been as well annotated or illustrated as this edition. Hilary Stewart has written several informative books on the peoples of the Northwest coast by combining research in archaeology, ethnology, and botany with extensive illustrations of their material culture. This visual format has had great public appeal, and in the same fashion she has produced this new edition of John Jewitt's narrative in the hope that readers today will enjoy the story as much as did those of two centuries ago.

The author has divided the book into three parts. The first, *Beginnings*, sets the stage for the narrative itself by introducing the history of the region at the time of Jewitt's captivity. Included are speculations on Jewitt's personality as well as on the cause of Macquinna's attack on the trading vessel.

The second part consists of the *Narrative* itself. Here the footnotes enhance the text by adding information of the material culture, subsistence practices, and social organization of the Yuquot as known through ethnographic records. In some cases a footnote is added to correct Jewitt's misunderstanding of Yuquot behaviour as well as geography and local marine and plant life.

The last part, *Endings*, is a short summary of Jewitt's life after his return to civilization. It includes details of his subsequent marriage, the literary successes of his narrative, which spawned both a play and song, and his commitment to peddling his books from town to town. As an added interest

the author has included the oral history of the Yuquot that tells of Macquinna's activities after Jewitt had been rescued.

Throughout her book Hilary Stewart has added maps, historical documents, and personal letters written by Jewitt and his family. Included in this edition is a list of related readings and a comprehensive index.

One reservation I have about this book is that the author fails to place the narrative within the context of the literature of its day. Jewitt's narrative was part of the "captive genre" that had vast appeal to the public of the early nineteenth century. The narrative was in fact a joint collaboration between Jewitt and his publisher, Richard Alsop, who helped to embellish the journal in order to appeal to popular readership. Hilary Stewart notes this embellishment in her footnotes but maintains that the narrative is an authentic account of Yuquot life. Some scholars would not agree and point to the many aspects of the narrative that are inconsistent with other historical sources, as well as later ethnographic research. This, they believe, is a product of the narrative's role as a popular literature.

Hilary Stewart hopes Jewitt's narrative will provide additional insight into the history of British Columbia's indigenous people. She missed, however, a golden opportunity to educate the public about the biases in historical material. She is right in stating that "research is such a hoot," but it is more of a hoot when one makes explicit some of the difficulties that may be presented by the historical records themselves, thus providing even more insight into the history of indigenous people, for it permits some understanding of the European view of them.

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Sappers: The Royal Engineers in British Columbia, by Beth Hill. Ganges, B.C.: Horsdal and Schubart, 1987. Pp. 182; illus.; maps; index.

Few British Columbians, and probably fewer Canadians, appreciate the impact of a small body of Royal Engineers of the early colonial life of this province. In this charming book Beth Hill sets out to describe the work they did in the formative years of the mainland colony and, by liberal use of the diaries and letters of the engineers themselves, she succeeds in giving a first-rate, lively, and interesting account of this remarkable body of men.

The first small group of Royal Engineers came out to help determine the boundary between Canada and the United States. They arrived at Esquimalt in the summer of 1858 when the Fraser River gold rush was