

This is most striking in the later chapters of the work dealing with the 1960s and 1970s. For example, Anderson argues that Chinatown was able to survive the slum-clearing efforts of the 1960s only after “a new image of Chinatown was forged by a non-Chinese reform lobby in Vancouver sympathetic in outlook to the Trudeau government” (p. 210). It seems likely that this reform lobby would not have been mobilized, or for that matter the Trudeau government would not have adopted a more sympathetic attitude towards “Chinatown,” without the efforts of the residents of Chinatown-Strathcona to forestall urban renewal at the expense of their community. Nor would it have occurred without the efforts of Chinese Canadians over the preceding one hundred years to participate on equal terms within government institutions. One also suspects that appeals from Parliament had very little influence on the decision of the CTV television network to apologize for the racist portrayal of Chinese Canadians in W-5’s 1979 “Campus Giveaway” program. Both the parliamentary resolution, and the apology, took place after Chinese Canadians across Canada achieved an unprecedented level of mobilization and organization, and had begun to discuss boycotting the program’s sponsors.

Thus in the end, Anderson’s work points to the need to incorporate non-Euro-Canadian sources and activities into British Columbia’s historical record. *Vancouver’s Chinatown* has gone a long way in moving the study of the history of racism in British Columbia from examinations of Anglo-European attitudes to consideration of Anglo-European activities, but it has not gone far enough in recognizing that others, including the “Chinese” people of British Columbia, have also been actors within our history.

*University of British Columbia*

TIMOTHY J. STANLEY

*British Columbia Local Histories: A Bibliography*, eds. Linda L. Hale and Jean Barman. Victoria: British Columbia Heritage Trust, 1991. 196 pp. \$20.00 loose-leaf binder.

At first glance no one could be critical of this bibliography of 1,044 local histories of British Columbia communities. And this is not a phantom bibliography. Every listing is publicly accessible; no item was included “unless it could be physically located where it could be consulted by the general public.” (n.p.) The body of the bibliography is an alphabetical

list by author, but it also offers three indexes: by place (both particular communities and ten geographical regions), by author, and by title. The bibliography is packaged in an easy-to-use loose-leaf binder, and, according to the promotional flyer, British Columbia Heritage Trust has donated it to “principal libraries” across British Columbia.

While the editors and Heritage Trust deserve much praise, a more careful examination reveals some problems with this bibliography. In particular, the editors do not give a clear definition of just what comprises local history and what distinguishes it from urban history. In the Introduction the editors state that local histories are about the province’s outlying “communities,” and “most focus on a particular population centre but others have as their organizing principle a geographical area framed by a valley, body of water, trail or even a park.” The editors add that the contributions of people from these communities have been obscured by the focus on the cities of Victoria, Nanaimo, New Westminster, and Vancouver.

The implication is that local histories are, or should be, distinct from histories of the urban areas, yet over two dozen of the listings pertain to the province’s metropolitan communities. To add to the confusion, the bibliography includes such works as *Distant Neighbors*, Norbert MacDonald’s scholarly, 250-page comparison of Vancouver and Seattle. One has to question the conceptual framework of a bibliography that puts MacDonald’s work in the same list as two-page centennial pamphlet on Fort Yale. MacDonald’s work is urban history, a subdivision of scholarly history, written by a trained academic for an audience interested in analytical questions with a metropolitan perspective. In his work he draws some general, comparative conclusions about the development of Vancouver and Seattle, which stress the differences between the cities despite their geographical, climatic, and economic similarities.

What needs to be made more clear in the Introduction is that local history is popular history — that is, of the people, and often of the people of the community under examination. The size of the community is not the most important variable. Local history implies the search for the particular, the familiar, and the unique. More often than not they are labours of love and stress pride of place. As the editors note, local histories are rarely critical, especially of the people of the community. Familiarity does not often breed contempt, and local historians tend to shy away from unpleasant or controversial subjects. In Sally Carswell’s praiseworthy *The Story of Lions Gate Hospital*, which unfortunately is not included in this bibliography, she ignores both the abortion controversy and labour disputes, both of which have been prominent in that hospital’s history.

In general, local histories are written by people who have not been trained in data gathering and analysis. They tend to be anecdotal and narrative, and they rarely provide any large context for their stories. Many rely on folk wisdom, and the worst are a long list of names and a hodgepodge of significant and insignificant events. They often lack source citations, bibliographies, even pagination. Quite correctly, the editors caution that local histories are often more useful to scholars for the perceptions they offer, rather than for their factual accuracy or interpretive insights.

With endnotes, appendices, and an index, *Lions Gate Hospital* is an exception among local histories. More typical is J. Rodger Burnes, *Echoes of the Ferries: A History of the North Vancouver Ferry Service*. This book (which is also missing from the bibliography) lists no publisher or publication date, and half of its pages — which fortunately are numbered — are printed upside down. The book opens with the comment that “it has been well reported by others that the first ferry to operate between the north and south sides of Burrard Inlet was by a row boat. The writer can not vouch for this. So let us assume that this was correct.” (p. 1) At least *Echoes* is full of wonderful ferry stories.

This bibliography is a useful collection of works that are often ignored by professional historians. But more effort should have been made with the Introduction, which lacks a clear conceptual framework. The Introduction also lacks page numbers, which is taking identification with one’s subject a little too far.

Capilano College

ROBERT A. CAMPBELL