

Although Reksten admits that the lack of documentation makes her “a shadowy figure” (p. 112), Joan may be the most interesting of the Dunsmuirs. She was noted for her business acumen and was as stubborn as any Dunsmuir in dealing with miners’ unions. But, as a wealthy widow her main interest was “acquiring for her daughters the best husbands Dunsmuir dollars could buy” (p. 119). Some of the older girls had made reasonable matches locally before their father became so wealthy. The younger girls were less fortunate; one married into the peerage, but the best entry for most of them to British society was through marriage to impecunious military officers. No marriage seems to have been very happy. The younger daughters spent wildly and invested unwisely. Several died in impoverished circumstances. Like their aunts, most of the eight daughters of James showed an uncanny ability to choose poor husbands and to live extravagantly. English and European country houses, extended visits to Monte Carlo, a Parisian fashion house, Hollywood, and Tallulah Bankhead are part of their story. One brother was little better. Robin, the eldest son, was of the same mold as his uncle Alex; he lacked discipline and loved alcohol. James Jr., better known as “Boy,” was stolid like his father but died in the sinking of the *Lusitania* when he was only twenty-one.

Reksten scoured the archives for Dunsmuir material, interviewed some who knew the younger Dunsmuirs, and found some telling pictures. The book incidentally throws some light on the corporate and political side of the Dunsmuirs, but it is not an analysis of their industrial empire or of provincial politics. *The Dunsmuir Saga* is a lively account that will appeal especially to those who enjoy reading about the high living of the *nouveau riche*. Reksten does not explicitly say so, but the book has a moral: money cannot buy happiness. One would be as sorry for the Dunsmuirs as for their coal miners were it not that they were largely responsible for their own misfortunes.

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The Forbidden City Within Victoria, by David Chuenyan Lai. Victoria: Orca Book Publishers, 1991. xiii, 191 pp. Illus., photos, maps. \$12.95 paper.

David Chuenyan Lai’s name is well known to the readers of this journal and to anyone with an analytical interest in the Chinatowns of North American cities. His *Chinatowns: Towns Within Cities in Canada* (1988) is the best known and broadest in scope of his several writings. He is also

known as the ultimate authority on Victoria's Chinatown and, in his non-academic mode, an activist who has had much to do with its rehabilitation.

The Forbidden City is a popular piece. It addresses non-specialist and non-Chinese readers who are curious about Victoria's Chinatown. Lai assumes most non-Chinese readers harbour a sense of mystery about Chinatown — an assumption not necessarily always valid for those under the age of forty. The author's attitude is friendly and reassuring: mysteries can be explained. Some are creations of popular imagination and lore; others exist but with a different meaning than what readers might presume.

More than anything, this is the book to take on a walking tour of Victoria's Chinatown — almost like having the expert himself with you. But in this case, the expert's footnotes are there, drawn from the archives of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), the City Archives and real estate records. Thus, one learns about sites and buildings and acquires miscellaneous information by browsing through this volume.

Besides its value as a guidebook, this informal, popular work has its reference value. The bibliography and footnotes are informative, and the appendices conveniently lay out what is known about the Chinese hospital, public school, and cemetery. Over 100 photos and drawings add documentation and interest.

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