

EDITORIAL

AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL, *BC Studies* features innovative articles from scholars in a range of disciplines bearing on many aspects of British Columbia. Recent issues have included material on East Kootenay land reclamation, West Kootenay midwifery, multiple-use forestry, Japanese internment, gay ski week at Whistler, urban homelessness, the use of Dane-zaa oral history in the courts, Jewish religiosity, First Nations food and medicinal plants, and shellfish aquaculture. Indeed, the tastes and flavours of our regular fare are almost as varied as the restaurants on Vancouver's Commercial Drive with – we hope – something for everyone's tastes.

For dessert, perhaps, we also offer topical special issues. Recent volumes have included *Ethnobotany in British Columbia* (Autumn 2013), *The Great War* (Summer 2014), and *Barkerville* (Spring 2015), all of them guest edited by leading scholars. Unusually, this issue is sandwiched between two special issues: *Barkerville* and *These Outer Shores* (Autumn 2015), a much-anticipated collection of essays on the archaeology of the exposed outer coastline of British Columbia, guest edited by Alan McMillan and Iain McKechnie.

True to form, this regular issue offers a selection, or should we say a topical feast, of filling and diverse items from many parts of the province. Caroline Grego sets the table with "Maybe National Park: Consultation, Conservation, and Conflict in the Okanagan-Similkameen." This article concerns the negotiations, which started in 2002 and continue in 2015, for a national park reserve (a precondition to a fully fledged national park) in the southern Okanagan region. The proposed South Okanagan-Lower Similkameen reserve has two parts: (1) a northern component, encompassing the existing Vaseux-Bighorn National Wildlife Area and the Vaseux Lake Migratory Bird Sanctuary, both within the traditional territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) people and (2) a separate southern component, the South Okanagan Grasslands Protected Area, within the traditional territory of the Lower Similkameen Indian Band. In a nicely turned article, Grego considers the needs, debates, and discussions of the stakeholders involved: the members and communities of the Okanagan Nation Alliance; officials from Parks Canada; local, regional, and national politicians; and articulate groups of hikers, naturalists, ecologists, conservationists, environmentalists, ranchers, orchardists, vintners, hunters, and operators of all-terrain vehicles. A century ago, government officials might simply have drawn arbitrary lines on the

map for a national park in this region, but top-down edicts are no longer possible in the early twenty-first century at the southern edge of a densely populated valley and on land inhabited, claimed, and used by diverse First Nations and settler interests.

Our movable feast continues with John Dunbabin's "Haro or Rosario? Maps, Navigation, and the Anglo-American Northwest Water Boundary Dispute, 1846-72." Dunbabin considers the conflict that arose from an ambiguous clause in the 1846 Oregon Treaty, which stipulated that the land border along the 49th parallel would simply follow "the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island" once it reached salt water. But there is a wide channel on each side of the San Juan archipelago. The British insisted that Rosario Strait was the main channel; the Americans wanted Haro Strait. Both offered customary and legal arguments for their choice. At stake was a cluster of 172 islands, the principal of which are San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez. Following a fracas known as the Pig War in 1859, the San Juan dispute was sent to arbitration by the German emperor Kaiser Wilhelm I, who in 1872 decided in favour of the American position. After painstaking research encompassing a great range of original documentary and cartographic sources (surveys, maps, correspondence, reminiscences, and memoirs) brought as evidence to the complex negotiations, Dunbabin notes that the dispute was "framed by cartography, with arguments cast in terms of maps, surveys of the channels involved, and considerations of their navigability, to an extent unparalleled in other Anglo-American boundary issues." The result was the extension, in 1872, of American territory to the southern edge of what was then known as the Gulf of Georgia. Tellingly, the British and American negotiators, and the later arbitrators, saw no need to consult or include the Indigenous population in their talks – a common tendency that saw the territories of the Straits Salish divided arbitrarily between the rival Imperial powers.

Next up is Gordon Lyall's "From Imbroglia to Pig War," which deals with representations of the San Juan Island dispute – the changing interpretations placed by subsequent generations on the lengthy military standoff between British and American forces. Drawing on a selection of British, Canadian, and American writing about the San Juan dispute, Lyall identifies four phases in historical writing and argues that changing interpretations "broadly reflect[ed] the political concerns and historical fashions of each period." So, for example, writing in the 1960s and 1970s reflected the concerns of the Vietnam War era in emphasizing the peaceful resolution of the dispute. The most recent phase aims to

redress the erasure of Indigenous history before, during, and after the 1872 decision. San Juan Island National Historical Park, which maintains the historical parks at American Camp and British Camp, now emphasizes the Aboriginal inhabitation of the island by the Samish Indian Nation and the larger Lummi Nation.

Moving back to British Columbia and into the twentieth century, Ron Verzuh offers the remarkable story of “Blaylock’s Bomb.” Verzuh’s account of “How a Small BC City Helped Create the World’s First Weapon of Mass Destruction” is built around the impressive personality of Selwyn Blaylock (1879-1945), the Quebec-born and McGill-educated president of the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company of Canada. By the 1920s, CMSC operated the largest non-ferrous metallurgical plant in the world at Trail, British Columbia. Verzuh follows Blaylock’s transformation of this operation into a site that produced half of the vital zinc and lead required in British armaments manufacture and became a major component of the Canadian war effort. As a leading captain of industry, Blaylock ran subsidiaries in British Columbia that produced tungsten (used in armour-piercing shells) and mercury (used in bomb detonators). Described by a colleague as a “brilliant chemist, a practical inventor, and an astute executive,” Blaylock initiated a top-secret, and at times cloak and dagger, wartime enterprise known as Project 9 (P9) to produce heavy water at Trail as part of the broader Allied effort to build the atomic bomb. Verzuh reveals this extraordinary story here for the first time.

Finally, we offer George Abbott’s “The Precarious Politics of Shifting Direction: The Introduction of a Harmonized Sales Tax in British Columbia and Ontario.” Abbott asks why the harmonized sales tax (HST) survived in Ontario but not in British Columbia after its 2009 introduction in both provinces. In British Columbia, the Liberal government of Gordon Campbell had been reluctant to scrap the PST (provincial sales tax) and the GST (goods and services tax) in favour of the HST, and, as late as April 2009, a finance ministry official denounced the HST as a “real and perceived shift in tax burden from business to individuals.” Faced with declining tax revenues as the economic recession deepened, however, Campbell’s newly re-elected government suddenly introduced the tax late in 2009. This produced a public uproar and accusations of a “tax grab.” Some saw a hidden election agenda in Campbell’s about-face, and others deplored the shift of the tax burden from firms to citizens. Vaughan Palmer of the *Vancouver Sun* called what followed “a grassroots rebellion of unprecedented proportions.” After a public referendum,

made possible by British Columbia's Recall and Initiative Act, British Columbia abandoned the HST in 2013. Drawing on provincial finance policy and touching on the work of political scientists John Kingdon, Deborah Stone, and Richard Rose, Abbott guides us nimbly through contemporary theories of taxation and what he calls "The Acronyms of Acrimony: RST, VAT, PST, GST, MST, and HST." In the end, British Columbia's recall option – which Ontario did not possess – was the critical difference between the experiences of the two provinces. "In Ontario," Abbott concludes, "the HST remains intact; in British Columbia, the HST is gone if not forgotten, its demise a consequence of a populist rebellion."

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We are delighted that former *BC Studies* editor Jean Barman has won the Sir John A. Macdonald Prize, which is awarded annually to the non-fiction work of Canadian history judged to have made the most significant contribution to an understanding of the Canadian past, for her book *French Canadians, Furs, and Indigenous Women in the Making of the Pacific Northwest* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2014). Congratulations, Jean!

Richard Mackie and Graeme Wynn