# BOOK REVIEWS

## *Robert Davidson: Abstract Impulse*

Barbara Brotherton, Sheila Farr, John Haworth

Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013. 104 pp. $40.00 paper.

## *Storyteller: The Art of Roy Henry Vickers*

Roy Henry Vickers

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 2014. 240 pp. $49.95 cloth.

Rhys Edwards
*Vancouver*

Among the more curious phenomena within Northwest Coast contemporary art discourse is the disjunction between the careers of famed First Nations artists Robert Davidson and Roy Henry Vickers. Propitiously, the last year has marked the publication of survey books on each: *Robert Davidson: Abstract Impulse*, the Seattle Art Museum's catalogue for the major exhibition of the same name, and *Storyteller: The Art of Roy Henry Vickers*, which collects the entirety of Vickers's prints produced from 2003 to 2013 in a single volume.

Vickers and Davidson are at the absolute height of their careers and are masters of their respective crafts, both having been producing art for over four decades. Yet, despite their acknowledged contributions to Canadian culture (both are members of the Order of Canada and the Order of British Columbia) and their concurrent emergence in the rapid growth of the Northwest Coast Indigenous art market in the 1970s, Davidson commands far greater attention within critical art circles. His show at the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) (operated cojointly with the National Museum of the American Indian [NMAI] in New York) is only the latest in a long line of solo exhibitions at major institutions. By contrast, Vickers has yet to receive any sort of retrospective; and, while Davidson frequently appears in texts and exhibitions that commemorate or analyze the trajectory of First Nations art history, Vickers receives only the briefest of mentions, if any at all.

The disjunction between the two is particularly salient in the context of these new publications. *Abstract Impulse* features a variety of texts that strive to convey the significance of Davidson's latest works in both breadth and depth;

the directors of SAM and the NMAI introduce the artist, while essays by SAM curator of Native American art Barbara Brotherton and critic Sheila Farr explore the formal influences of Haida art on Davidson's practice as well as the broader historical context from which Davidson both emerges and distinguishes himself. John Haworth, the director of the New York branch of the NMAI, provides further analysis via an interview with the artist as well as discussion of selected works.

*Storyteller,* in comparison, lacks any form of dialogue. Oral historian and biographer Robert Budd and Eagle Aerie Gallery director Jennifer Steven both provide laudatory summaries of Vickers's character as an individual but have little to say about his practice. The thematic focus on Vickers's character continues into the bulk of the text itself, wherein Vickers discusses the subject of each of his works by way of personal anecdote. It is apparent that Vickers is much more comfortable describing himself in any number of roles – firefighter, fisher, family member, or, indeed, archetypal storyteller – rather than as an artist.

Therein lies the distinction and, partly, the reason for the disparity between the two artists: whereas *Storyteller* is the most recent in a series of books written by Vickers, all of which illuminate the author's personal narrative, *Abstract Impulse* emphasizes Davidson's creative self-interrogation and how it has contributed successfully to the revitalization of Haida culture. In his essay "Painting and the Social History of British Columbia," artist Robert Linsley argues that, by circulating notions of Indigenous storytelling and attachment to the land, Vickers participates in the same "mystification" of Indigenous culture that non-Native modernist painters (such as Jack Shadbolt and Emily Carr) circulated in their work and, as such, cannot be appreciated as representative of Native culture.

But this simplistic division – between rigorous creative practitioner and mass-market mascot – is not as clear-cut as these books might imply. For one thing, Linsley goes on to mention that Davidson himself participates in the same sort of mystification as does Vickers. In making objects that simultaneously serve a ceremonial function, yet appeal to collectors of fine art, Linsley argues that Davidson perpetuates the same marketing mores as does Vickers.

More important, Vickers's own contributions to the growth of the Indigenous art market (and, by extension, his role in the dissemination of First Nations culture), as well as his own formal development as an artist, have been largely ignored by critics and historians. In her contribution to *Abstract Impulse*, Barbara Brotherton notes that Davidson helped found the Coast Artists Guild in 1977; a footnote reveals, however, that it was Vickers who first served as the president of this organization. The significance of the guild, and Vickers's role in it, is more closely detailed by Karen Duffek in her essay "Value Added: The Northwest Coast Art Market since 1965." The guild was the first artist-run institution to advocate for quality control in the market, and it was Vickers who articulated the values of the guild in an essay for the catalogue that accompanied its first release of prints. Duffek also notes that the Eagle Aerie Gallery in Tofino – which was constructed exclusively for Vickers's work – was one of the first commercial galleries in British Columbia to promote art of its kind. As such, Vickers was instrumental in promoting the recognition of First Nations printmaking as a legitimate medium of creative expression and furthering the demand that it be treated as such by the market.

It is regrettable, then, that *Storyteller* does little to convey this significance; but then, any reference to the relationship between the market and Vickers's art – even if it were laudable in a historical or social context – would impinge upon the story Vickers wishes to tell.

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Linsley, Robert. 2011. "Painting and the Social History of British Columbia." In *Vancouver Anthology*, ed. Stan Douglas, 225-45. Vancouver: Talonbooks and the Or Gallery.

## *Canoe Crossings: Understanding the Craft That Helped Shape British Columbia*

Sanford Osler

Victoria: Heritage House, 2014.
159 pp. $19.95 paper.

Alan Hoover
*Royal British Columbia Museum*

A devoted canoeist, Sanford Osler has used his wide experience with many forms of paddle-craft to write a comprehensive and well informed review of canoeing and kayaking in British Columbia. His up-to-date and very readable presentation includes competitive and recreational canoeing and kayaking, dragon boat racing, Coast Salish canoe racing, contemporary First Nations canoe voyaging, lesser paddle sports using outrigger and marathon-style canoes and kayaks, and a discussion of how canoe and kayak manufacturing in British Columbia adapted to new materials and technologies.

Osler proposes that canoes played an important historical role in community building. He suggests that the Interior fur trade, with its dependence on birch-bark canoes crewed mostly by First Nations and Métis, was central to the establishment of British Columbia's political boundaries, and that without canoes to connect the widely distributed trading posts west of the Rockies, British Columbia would be a much smaller place with less expansive borders.

Canoes are also surprisingly prominent in more recent BC history. Osler argues that the popular sport of dragon boat racing, introduced by Hong Kong to Vancouver in 1986, helped develop connections between older Chinese settler populations and newer Asian immigrants to the Lower Mainland. Haida artist Bill Reid and his team carved and paddled a dugout canoe to Expo '86, a craft that inspired Reid's "Black Canoe" bronze sculpture that graces the foyer of the Canadian Embassy in Washington and for many years adorned the Canadian twenty-dollar bill. Also paddled to Expo '86 was a canoe from Bella Bella that, three years later, joined a flotilla of nine canoes to Seattle to celebrate the centennial of the founding of Washington State. Frank Brown, a major force in this project, invited all coastal First Nations to meet in 1993 in Bella Bella. Since then, Canadian and American First Nations canoes have travelled each year from all over the BC and Washington coasts and beyond to meet at some coastal location to celebrate Northwest Coast canoe culture. In 2013, approximately seventy canoes made the trip to Quinault on the outside coast of Washington State, and, in 2014, thirty-nine canoes made the arduous trek back to Bella Bella, twenty-one years after the original tribal journey. These events

are drug and alcohol free and celebrate First Nations cultural values, providing all participants, especially young people, with meaningful connections to traditional cultural values and practices. Osler develops the cultural role that canoeing has played in recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. In 1996, Gitxsan artist Roy Henry Vickers and an ex-RCMP officer named Ed Hall led three fibreglass replica canoes from Hazelton to Victoria, stopping at First Nations villages along the way to raise support for an addictions recovery centre and, for the RCMP, to apologize to First Nations for their role in the apprehension of children sent to residential boarding schools. This initial event, Vision Quest, gave rise to annual canoe journeys known as Pulling Together, featuring a number of First Nations, police forces, and other social agencies. In 2013, some sixty paddled craft of every variety from many different groups gathered in False Creek to open Truth and Reconciliation Week in Vancouver.

The connections between canoes and Canada and their symbolic value to Canadians have been explored in earlier publications, including James Raffan and Bert Horwood (editors), *Canexus: The Canoe in Canadian Culture* (Dundurn, 1988) and Raffan's *Bark, Skin and Cedar: Exploring the Canoe in Canadian Experience* (HarperCollins, 1999). Osler cites these books but adds a powerful West Coast element with his detailed presentation of recent developments here, especially the important role that canoes have played in building community support and addressing the ravages of the residential school experience and drug and alcohol addiction.

## *Wood Storms/Wild Canvas: The Art of Godfrey Stephens*

Gurdeep Stephens

Victoria: D&I Enterprises, 2014. 144 pp. $39.95 paper.

Maria Tippett
*Cambridge University*

In the introduction that the art critic Robert Amos has contributed to this pictorial biography, he tells us that Duncan-born Godfrey Stephens is "too busy and too self-centred to study the influences of art history or current events." This leaves Amos to conclude that Stephens's "designs are unique" (vii). And yet, as is revealed in the ensuing text of *Wood Storms/Wild Canvas: The Art of Godfrey Stephens*, authored by Stephens's niece Gurdeep Stephens, the artist was exposed to a number of styles and genres. For example, he was introduced to Northwest Coast First Nations carving when, as a child in the 1950s, he lived briefly with Chief Mungo Martin in Victoria. After leaving school "at around fourteen years of age," Stephens lived in Munich, Germany, from where he visited other European cities (2). In later adulthood he travelled to Bangkok and later to Mexico, among other places well beyond Canada's borders.

Even a cursory look at the beautifully reproduced illustrations in *Wood Storms/Wild Canvas* demonstrates that Stephens never lived in an artistic cocoon. Indeed, in this reviewer's mind, the sculptures that he has produced in wood and steel, and from found objects, along with the works on paper and canvas, are far from immune to external influences. For example, the teak carving *Bowlfrog* (2013) lies stylistically, if not materially, within the classical tradition of the First Nations

people. Stephens's mixed-media drawings and paintings – one is 4.9 metres long by 1.8 metres high – combine collage with the abstract expressionist and psychedelic art movements of the 1960s. And more recently we have the example of the artist's 4.6 metre high sculpture, *Nuka Mas* (2005), composed of recycled guns. It reminds us that, four years previously, the Mozambican sculptor Kestler had notably turned weapons into art when he created *Throne of Weapons* out of guns left over from the Mozambican Civil War.

There is nothing wrong with adapting the styles of other artists, or the traditions of other cultures, to one's own work. It is only so-called primitive or naïve artists who are generally exempt from such influences. But most artists grow within – or else reject – the traditions or styles within which they have been schooled. This is, in fact, what allows them to distinguish their work from that of other artists and to claim that what they produce is "unique." This is not what Stephens has done.

Even so, in the view of First Nations Nuu-chah-nulth carver Joe David, Stephens is "a true artist," and he goes further in calling him "a cultural and national treasure" (35). The author likewise suggests that Stephens's "turbulent life," along with his "massive body of work," justifies labelling him "our West-Coast Picasso" (4).

There is no doubt that Stephens is a prodigious worker. He has not only produced dozens of carvings and paintings but has also built boats like the twenty-ton, three-mast, junk-rigged schooner *S/N Chief Mungo II*. Nor has he failed to participate in social and political causes. Stephens's 5.5 metre-tall carving entitled *Weeping Cedar Woman* (1984) – his answer, perhaps, to Picasso's *Guernica* – supported the protests over the logging of Meares Island. Like Picasso, again, Stephens is a showman. The author tells us that "he once tried to see how many quality works he could produce in an evening over a bottle of wine" (5). He produced twenty-eight works.

But does a Bohemian lifestyle along with the publication of someone's work in a glossy coffee-table book make him or her an artist? In the end it is the work itself that counts. In this writer's view the jury is still out on the kind of achievement represented by Godfrey Stephens's artistic oeuvre.

## *Haida Gwaii: Islands of the People*

Dennis Horwood

Victoria: Heritage House, 2014.
264 pp. $19.95 paper.

## *Haida Eagle Treasures: Tsath Lanas History and Narratives*

Pansy Collison

Calgary: Brush Education, 2010.
244 pp. $25.95 paper.

Molly Clarkson
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On the face of it, the only feature that the two books under review share is their connection to Haida Gwaii, formerly the Queen Charlotte Islands. While Dennis Horwood's *Haida Gwaii: Islands of the People*, first published in 2000 and currently in its fourth edition, remains a classic guidebook for the uninitiated, Pansy Collison's *Haida Eagle Treasures: Tsath Lanas History and Narratives* (2010) offers a wholly different insight into the history and spirit of Haida culture and, consequently, the islands themselves.

*Haida Eagle Treasures* is a book that does not fit neatly into any genre or category. Described in the introduction as "a personal account of Haida history and culture" (22), the past and present history of the Haida Tsath Lanas clan is lovingly and intentionally told through three generations of Collison women's stories. The book is also, as the author herself points out, "the first of its kind to be told and written by a Haida woman" (22). The extensive literature on the Haida and their territory can be traced back to the early writings of missionaries, anthropologists, and geologists who came to the area in the nineteenth century; more contemporary works include Robert Bringhurst's *A Story as Sharp as a Knife* (1999) and Kathleen "Betty" Dalzell's remarkable historical trilogy (1989). However, with the exception of *Emerging from out of the Margins,* Dr. Frederick White's recent studies of Haida language, culture, and history (2014), Pansy Collison's work represents a decidedly noteworthy contribution to the literature on the "Misty Isles" and its peoples.

In spite of the single author listed on its front cover, *Haida Eagle Treasures* is a deeply collaborative work. Many members of Collison's family contributed in the form of drawings, poems, obituaries, and autobiographies. Most poignant, perhaps, is a chapter written by *Kaakuns*, mother of Collison, whose stories of cannery work and raising a family on Haida Gwaii are simply and eloquently delivered. Collison's long and distinguished career as a First Nations educator also permeates the book; meditations on the relationship between culture and education follow guides for classroom activities. In this book you will find family photographs interspersed with Haida stories and adapted plays, family recipes and instructions for sewing a button blanket and constructing a hide drum. For those fans of John Vaillant's *The Golden Spruce* there is an alternative telling of the experiences of the Haida community following the felling of *K'iid K'iyaas* (Old Tree) by a "crazed individual," Grant Hadwin. At times, the eclectic organization of this wide array of content is confusing – at the beginning of each chapter readers are left in suspense as they wait to discover what it is that they are reading. The abbreviated and direct style in which Collison writes can, at times, detract from otherwise compelling content. Overall, however, the book reads as a gift from someone who has intimately experienced and is proud to share her culture and history.

*Haida Gwaii: Islands of the People* stands in definite contrast to Collison's book. Written for prospective and current visitors to the archipelago, Kitimat resident Dennis Horwood provides an organized, helpful, and enjoyable account of his Haida Gwaii traipses that will no doubt whet the adventuring appetites of those who read it. Maps, botanical drawings, directions, accommodation details, and a whole slew of photographs accompany Horwood's friendly and information-packed narratives. Several biographies of Island residents, seafood recipes, and navigational warnings will give would-be visitors a taste of everyday life on the archipelago. A dedicated birder himself, Horwood at times indulges in pages of avian rhapsodies that are of only minor interest to those of us who can barely distinguish a crow from a raven. Birding enthusiasts, however, may wish to take note.

Individually, these books will lead aspiring travellers and curious armchair adventurers in entirely different directions. Without Horwood, you might not know that in wintertime the gas stations here close at 6:00 PM and that you can't get cell phone service in Tlell (except, that is, for that one field across

from the Misty Meadows campsite: stop by in the summer and take in the amusing sight of tourists wandering around, arms up, cell phones in the air!). Pansy Collison's book, in turn, may guide your perception of Haida Gwaii – if not your road trip itinerary – towards the more intangible elements of these beautiful islands and their people.

## *Picturing Transformation: Nexw Áyantsut*

Nancy Bleck, Katherine Dodds, and Chief Bill Williams

Vancouver: Figure 1 Publishing, 2013. 160 pp. $39.95 cloth.

Dorothy Kennedy
*Victoria*

*Picturing Transformation: Nexw Áyantsut* is the collaborative effort of a prize-winning photographer (Nancy Bleck), a writer (Katherine Dodds), and a Squamish Nation chief (Bill Williams). The 160-page coffee-table book documents the story of how a handful of like-minded people with an appreciation for nature grew into an environmental movement that harnessed the political power of the Squamish (Coast Salish) Nation to the strategic organizational abilities of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee. This group was led in spirit and in practice by a legendary BC mountaineer, the late John Clarke, and driven by the unfaltering Nancy Bleck to keep a forest northwest of the town of Squamish from being logged.

*Picturing Transformation* brings to mind anthropologist Wayne Suttles's 1981 paper entitled "Coast Salish Need for Wilderness," an exceptionally thoughtful piece that focuses on the religious beliefs of the Aboriginal people who are part of the Coast Salish continuum, which stretches from the northern end of Georgia Strait to the southern end of Puget Sound and includes the Squamish. I have often cited Suttles's paper and included it in my article on the types of conflict that can arise in Aboriginal land use disputes within the Coast Salish region when world views are not aligned (Kennedy 2002). In his paper Suttles cogently sets out how traditional Coast Salish social organization promoted individualism and a view of nature that is not so far from that espoused by the ecology movement. In addition, he dispels some myths about social and political organization, along with some romanticized notions about the Coast Salish peoples' relationship with nature. *Picturing Transformation* tells how committed environmentalists and a First Nations chief found enough in common to achieve their respective goals.

Forests had become the focus of Bleck's artistic inquiry in the mid-1990s, and, while she wandered the woods "listening to the land speaking" (38) and pondering concepts such as "wilderness" and "territory," Clarke dedicated his life to exploring the nameless peaks of the Coast Mountains and educating the public on the value of conservation. What both clearly recognized is that if people are to care about the land they need to experience it. Thus began their informal mission of having urban dwellers witness the wilderness that stood at the bounds of logging roads. In the summer of 1995, an area far up the Elaho River was deserving of such purposeful visitation. Chief Bill Williams of the Squamish Nation had noticed the activity of both the environmentalists and the loggers, and he appeared at the streamside Witness Project camp with his business card and the Squamish Nation's Declaration of Aboriginal Title in hand.

While the Squamish Nation may, in years to come, be one of British Columbia's biggest land developers, the ceremonial nature of Bleck's and Clarke's Witness Project spoke to Chief Bill Williams on other levels. Not only did the media-savvy chief seize the opportunity to assert Squamish Aboriginal title in the northern extent of the nation's territory – soon bolstered with the neologism *nexw áyantsut* – but he also drew upon Coast Salish tradition to localize and personalize the environmentalists' experience by including them in a Squamish witnessing ceremony. Chief Williams not only recognized that many of us share a fundamental need for wilderness (i.e., for places that may be far from human habitation but that are nonetheless essential to our survival) but he also effectively co-opted the enthusiasm of the environmentalists and incorporated it into his larger agenda. Ultimately, in 2005, the Squamish Nation signed an agreement with the Province of British Columbia recognizing such "Wild Spirit Places" as protected areas under the Squamish Nation's own land use plan.

Suttles (1981, 715) predicted that, in spite of changes that had already occurred in their beliefs and practices, Coast Salish people would maintain their "basic orientation towards the natural environment." *Picturing Transformation* shows that, though change continues to occur, the basic orientation remains.

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## *Xweliqwiya: The Life of a Stó:lō Matriarch*

Rena Point Bolton and Richard Daly

Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2013. 250 pp. $34.95 paper.

Leslie Robertson
*University of British Columbia*

Xweliqwiya is the name carried by Rena Point Bolton among the Steqó:ye Wolf People. It marks an indelible position in the Xwélmexw (Stó:lō) world, relating her to a particular geography, linking her to mythological narratives, oral histories, and ceremonial privileges. Like the ancestral name and the woman who carries it, this book *does* things in the world. Anthropologist and collaborator Richard Daly writes that Point Bolton's intention in publishing her life story is to "establish who she is in order to pass on her rights and obligations" and to "safeguard these rights and duties" (xlviii). *Xweliqwiya* stands alongside other published works initiated by First Nations tellers that are (increasingly) explicitly intended for circulation in local contexts, where, as family histories, they pass on teachings and pull together relatives, make claims to customary rights and privileges, and act as interventions, amending the public record and disrupting colonial representations.

A compelling theme of the politics surrounding silence and voice runs throughout this book: it refers both to

protocols for the circulation of Xwélmexw knowledge systems and to responses and strategies in the face of colonial violence. Rena Point Bolton and Richard Daly situate her story in relation to colonial structures that shape the experiential realities she narrates. As an activist who wove her "way into political life" (133), Point Bolton describes the reanimation of Xwélmexw artistic expressions (especially basket weaving) and chronicles her work with the Indian Arts and Crafts Society and the BC Indian Homemakers Society (about which there is much interesting detail). Her gendered history includes organized struggles around social welfare, pensions for elders, the politics of enfranchisement, and responses to illegal adoptions (140–45). But this is also a work about sacred geographies and smokehouse traditions that takes special care in describing the well debated "knowledge and healing procedures of Sxwóyxwey" (116).

Originally acquainted through their work on fisheries with the Alliance of Tribal Councils (1988), the authors shape a "knowledge in place" built from daily activities on the lands and waterways that are meaningful to Xwélmexw people. Richard Daly acts as Point Bolton's "speaker," a customary position formalized by her son Steven Point (x), the former lieutenant-governor of British Columbia. This role positions Daly within a particular ethical relationship in the Coast Salish world. His responsibility of "living into her story" (lii) is guided by what he calls "discussion-driven dialogue" (xl). As "Rena's text advisor," he placed her poems and richly annotated her story with detailed notes (on the page) that situate this work within broader literatures and historical and political contexts (xlvi). The book is well illustrated and includes family trees in addition to a glossary and pronunciation guide for Halq'emélem words.

Of great interest is the inclusion of "road maps" for Xwélmexw and "mainstream" readers. These maps reveal the often unseen protocols and intentionalities at work when there are double audiences. Thus, Xwélmexw readers are warned to be prepared not only for the visual conventions publishers use to represent stories but also for the mainstream notion that biographical works emphasize the individual rather than a familial constellation of persons (and all that this involves) (xlvii). In a dexterous act of cultural translation, Daly informs mainstream readers about the importance of demonstrating (and recognizing) matrilineal lines of descent within Xwélmexw society. Doing so establishes Point Bolton's family's claims "to the right to conduct and control a prominent healing ceremony" (xlviii–xlix) – claims that may be sanctioned and/or contested in Xwélmexw society.

Within the varied settings of Rena Point Bolton's life story, this book demonstrates the fascinating range and play of philosophical, intellectual, and esoteric forms of Xwélmexw knowledge.

## *From the Hands of a Weaver: Olympic Peninsula Basketry through Time*

Jacilee Wray, editor

Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012. 304 pp. $24.95 paper.

Nancy J. Turner
*University of Victoria*

This book tells the story of the many roles of basketry in the lives of the First Peoples of Washington's Olympic Peninsula and of the diverse styles and materials used by the weavers,

mainly women. Basketry is key to an entire way of life for Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast. Plant-based woven and coiled containers were, for millennia, fundamental to the harvesting, transport, cooking, and storage of foodstuffs. The roles of Indigenous baskets were transformed after the European newcomers arrived with their iron cookware, copper kettles, gunnysacks, and buckets. Although baskets have been employed in some households right up into the twenty-first century, they have largely shifted from utilitarian service to roles as curios and novelty items to their current status as exquisite and desirable objects of art. Their ceremonial, cultural, and spiritual roles persist to this day.

An edited volume, the book consists of ten chapters, each providing a different perspective on basketry. The editor, Jacilee Wray, will already be known to many *BC Studies* readers for editing *Native Peoples of the Olympic Peninsula: Who We Are* (2002). Wray's Introduction first describes the tribes and affiliations of the peoples whose basketry is featured. One of the most fascinating aspects of the story is the archaeological history of basketry, dating back some three thousand years or more. Equally captivating is the evidence embodied in oral history and in the baskets themselves of the borrowing of weaving techniques and trade and exchange of basket materials and finished baskets that was occurring over countless generations.

Wray herself authored the first two chapters: "The Weaver as Artist," and "Marketing Olympic Peninsula Basketry." The other chapters follow in a logical order, with five chapters focusing on the basketry traditions of particular cultural groups (Klallam, Twana, Quinault, Quileute and Hoh, and Makah), a sixth on basketry in the archaeological record (a chapter authored by "wet site" archaeobotanist Dale Croes, famous for his role in excavating and identifying the thousands of plant-based objects from the Ozette and Hoko River sites), and a seventh on two key basketry plants and their management through burning and harvesting protocols: beargrass, *Xerophyllum tenax* (Melianthaceae; not a true grass at all) and "sweetgrass," *Schoenoplectus pungens* (Cyperaceae; also not a true grass). The final chapter, and perhaps the most compelling, is about contemporary basketry, which is still flourishing today. This last chapter (along with two of the previous ones) is co-authored by a number of tribal weavers and artisans who contribute their own perspectives and sources of inspiration for their weaving. A particularly helpful addition to the book, just before the substantive bibliography and index, is a twenty-three-page listing of well known and skilled Olympic Peninsula basket weavers of the past (pre-1960s), with their names, dates of birth and death, tribal affiliations, and any known relatives. Finally, BC scholars will find occasional references to the Scia'new First Nation (Becher Bay Indian Band), a partially Klallam group whose territory is on Juan de Fuca Strait, west of Victoria.

*From the Hands of a Weaver* is informative and well written, and also beautifully illustrated with technical drawings, historical photographs, various types of baskets, and – most pleasing of all – photographs of many of the skilled weavers, shown with their own diverse and exquisite basketry. This book will be captivating to many readers of *BC Studies* interested in the anthropology and archaeology of Northwest Coast First Peoples.

## *John Scouler (c. 1804–1871) Scottish Naturalist: A Life, with Two Voyages*

E. Charles Nelson

Glasgow: Glasgow Natural History Society, 2014. 142 pp. £11.00 paper.

Ted Binnema
*University of Northern British Columbia*

Less celebrated than his friend David Douglas, John Scouler was nevertheless an important scientific traveller to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Nootka Sound, Haida Gwaii, and Observatory Inlet in 1825. Although Douglas has been the subject of several book-length biographies, Scouler has, until now, not received similar treatment. Thus, historians, anthropologists, and environmental scholars interested in the BC coast should welcome this book.

Scouler and Douglas both found themselves aboard the Hudson's Bay Company's *William and Ann* in July 1824, headed for the HBC's Fort Vancouver (present-day Vancouver, Washington). Douglas travelled on behalf of the Horticultural Society of London (now the Royal Horticultural Society), while Scouler had been engaged by the HBC as surgeon-scientist on the *William and Ann*. Both had been recommended to their respective employers by one of their professors at the University of Glasgow, the influential botanist William Jackson Hooker.

By the time he joined the HBC, the twenty-year-old Scouler (pronounced "schooler," according to Nelson) had added medical training in France to his studies of botany. Thus, he was attractive to the HBC, which sought a ship surgeon who could also serve as natural historian. As it turns out, Scouler did not stay with the HBC very long. By April 1826 he had returned to London and left the employ of the company.

Nelson's book – although interpretively timid – reveals that Scouler's short visit to the Northwest Coast was crucial to his entire career and reputation as a scientist. Hooker's important *Flora Boreali-Americana*, published between 1833 and 1840, drew upon Scouler's herbarium. Still, Nelson argues that Scouler has not yet received credit for all he collected (38). More controversial than his natural history collection were the human remains Scouler gathered. Scouler's ethnological collections (including remains of Inuit, Chinook, and Tsimshian people), which he willed to a museum of natural history in Paris, are still in that city. In 1840 and 1846, Scouler also published articles on the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast, who remain of interest to historians of ethnology.

Nelson contributes to our knowledge of Scouler's life before and after his time with the HBC. By the end of May 1826, Scouler was on another voyage – this time to India. Until now almost nothing was known about that trip. Nelson's dogged research adds some details to our knowledge. However, Scouler's contributions to science during those years were few and cannot have added much to his reputation.

In 1829, then, based primarily on his work on the west coast of North America, Scouler was appointed professor of mineralogy and natural history at Anderson University, and curator of the Andersonian Museum, in Glasgow. In 1834, he accepted a position in mineralogy and geology at the Royal Dublin Society. However, his career and publications in mineralogy, geology, and Irish and European botany were undistinguished. Furthermore, Scouler was unhappy at

the Royal Dublin Society. "A situation in the Dublin Society is anything but an agreeable one to a man of science who retains any feelings of self-respect," he once wrote (62). In 1854, when he was only fifty years old, he was placed on paid leave, owing to his poor health. Thereafter, he moved to Glasgow, where he served several scientific societies until his death. Although Scouler published in various fields (for his publications see pp. 83-86), his scientific contributions would probably be entirely forgotten today had it not been for his time on the Pacific coast.

Appendix 1 (pp. 87-118) consists of an edition of Scouler's journal kept from July 1824 to March 1826. The journal has been published previously, and, while the annotated version in Nelson's book is a welcome contribution, it is unfortunate that Nelson rendered the long, or medial, "s" as an italicized "f" (as in progre*f*s) instead of as an "s" throughout the journal. In sum, although Nelson could have pushed his analysis of the evidence much further, his carefully researched biography deserves a place in the research libraries and many of the personal libraries of the Pacific Northwest.

## *Enlightened Zeal: The Hudson's Bay Company and Scientific Networks, 1670–1870*

Ted Binnema

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014. 288 pp. $37.95 paper.

I.S. MacLaren
*University of Alberta*

*A Strange and Dangerous Voyage* (1633) was published by command of King Charles I after Thomas James (ca. 1593-1635) returned from over-wintering in James Bay. Dead by 1635, James had nothing to do with the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670, but his book influenced chemist, physicist, and natural philosopher Robert Boyle (1627-91), one of the founders of the Invisible College, which became the Royal Society of London in 1663. James collected enough meteorological and glaciological data while sailing for the merchants of Bristol that Boyle, in publishing his treatise on cryobiology, wrote that *New Experiments and Observations Touching Cold* (1665) "borrowed more observations [from James], then [*sic*] from those of any other Sea-man."[1] Ignoring Martin Frobisher's debacle with fool's gold taken home in 1576 from Frobisher Bay, James's data are the first collected in Rupert's Land and put to use by a metropolitan scientist. Because Boyle served on the first council of the HBC, they inaugurate the connection between the company and science. James's legacy would have provided Ted Binnema with a more germane template than does Sir Francis Bacon, but *Enlightened Zeal* is indubitably still a welcome, sturdy survey (in an age when few academics attempt to write one) of the networks that evolved between curious HBC men and metropolitan scientists whose understandings in London, and later Washington, Montreal, and Toronto, developed from collections/data sent from afar.

Contributions to the ongoing compilation of the great *Book of Nature* through reports of new scientific associations and new museums were constellated by studying the Transit of Venus, 3 June 1769, and the earth's

[1] Robert Boyle, *The Works of Robert Boyle*, ed. M. Hunter and E.B. Davis, 14 vols. (London and Brookfield, VT: Pickering and Chatto, 1999-2000), 4:221.

magnetic fields in the 1840s, both of which Binnema discusses ably, although, for the most part, he regards scientists and collectors as innocent agents and valued recorders; only occasionally does he probe beyond an unproblematic acceptance of their motives and actions. Efforts by Britain led science in most fields, and the determination (although not assented to until 1884) that the entire world would orient itself and its time of day in relation to Greenwich reminds us symbolically of Britain's imperial sway.

In a long introduction, Binnema explains that *Enlightened Zeal* studies not the big men of science but the collaborations that fed their big ideas – that is, quoting from *Science and Empire in the Atlantic World* (2008), the "intricate latticework" of connections that bound remote observers to central synthesizers of new knowledge. He argues persuasively that the HBC caught the wind of nineteenth-century times: "Never again did the company revert to the secrecy it had exhibited during the first hundred years of its existence" (75). A chronological study ensues comprehending not just HBC employees (fur trade rival Alexander Mackenzie is not excluded) but also explorers and travellers who found themselves in the monopoly's 3 million square miles, especially after 1821. So, for every Samuel Hearne, there is a David Douglas; for every George Barnston, John Rae, and Roderick McFarlane, there is a John Richardson, John Lefroy, and Robert Kennicott.

Why this is the case comes clear in Binnema's assertion that, for the company, sending samples and data to Britain or elsewhere in the English-speaking world and/or hosting scientists from the same place both resulted in published tributes that bolstered its monopolistic standing. By its charter, the HBC did not *have* to do this work, yet, Binnema convincingly shows, it invariably yielded good press for a monopoly that seemed always to have outspoken critics, especially when it needed to renew aspects of its charter or licence. Although he states his thesis too often, Binnema does not fail to deliver on it. To that extent, *Enlightened Zeal* succeeds and will abide.

In several important respects, however, the book proves not altogether satisfactory. As is correct, survey histories do not cite new findings from archival research; rather, their endnotes refer to published sources. However, in foregoing archives, surveys are obliged to cover publications thoroughly. *Enlightened Zeal* relies too heavily on too few sources (by E.E. Rich, John Galbraith, Doug Owram, and, particularly, Debra Lindsay), and fails to survey those that would have qualified or updated a number of its assertions. Its treatment of people is thus uneven: tired and repetitive (if extensive), thorough and considered, or incomplete.

Into the last category falls HBC explorer Thomas Simpson. His infamous detestation of people of mixed blood remains an assertion, but because the fact that he fathered mixed-blood children of his own goes unmentioned, a possible reason (i.e., shame) for his attitude goes unconsidered. Further, *Enlightened Zeal* should have delved into the recent discussion of the importance of the figure of Sir John Barrow, second secretary of the Admiralty, 1804-45. Also a member of the Royal Society of London, Raleigh (Royal Geographical), and several other societies, Barrow exerted a profound influence on northern exploration and, more than any other figure in the centuries under discussion, wedded the imperial ambitions of a nation to science and its hubristic claims of disinterestedness, objectivity, and philanthropy (matters of interest to Binnema's argument [294]). The

chapter about the Royal Navy's and the HBC's searches for a northwest passage should have considered the probability that Barrow penned the conclusion to Franklin's second land expedition's narrative, quoted by Binnema (142), as part of his steadfast campaign, waged in partnership with publisher John Murray, to assert the indivisibility of Britain's tri-colonic virtue: national honour, *noblesse oblige*, and scientific advancement.

Paul Kane also numbers in this category. Citing Kane's friend Professor Daniel Wilson (222), Binnema presents Kane as a scientist. Kane's field sketch and subsequent oil portrait of a Cree man are reproduced, but, with no ethnographic discussion of them, they seem merely illustrations. Kane was no scientist during his travels: presentation of him as such began when Wilson realized that his sketches, paintings, collection of artefacts, and "recollections" could both gain Kane membership in the Canadian Institute and help inform Wilson's own compendious work, *Prehistoric Man* (1862, 1865, 1876) (a work quoted [222] and cited [378n] but not found in Binnema's bibliography).

Understanding such a metamorphosis of Kane would have helped Binnema explain why the painter, unfamiliar with the discourses of science and the network between collectors and metropolitan scientists, did not properly provide to HBC inland governor George Simpson the tribute that others had learned was the quid pro quo for free passage through HBC territories. Binnema notes that, at the 1857 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Wilson reported on Kane's works. He fails to note that Kane accompanied Wilson to Montreal for those meetings, the first for the AAAS outside the United States, and that, as a result of a unanimously approved motion, he addressed the ethnology, statistics, and political economy subsection of the conference. Kane's oral presentation (his preferred mode of address) played a part at the very meeting that Binnema later avers "might have influenced [first secretary of the Smithsonian Institution] Joseph Henry's decision to approach [George] Simpson" (253) about securing the aid of the HBC in furnishing the decade-old body with collections – like Kane's – from northern North America. (Kane's collection, now in the Manitoba Museum, receives no discussion.) Like this matter, another that Binnema features prominently – Kane as a "national" figure for the expansionists of the 1850s – has also been discussed in publications not surveyed by him.

Readers with BC interests will enjoy Binnema's treatment of David Douglas, following on from Jack Nisbet's recent books and exhibition. David Thompson is also capably treated. No mention occurs of Samuel Black's confused fascination with geology while exploring the Finlay River in 1824. Geology, generally, and the rise of it in the 1830s with the discovery of deep time, reported by Charles Lyell in *Principles of Geology* (1830-33), was of almost no interest to HBC men or visitors, yet one cannot help but think that their network played a part in later discoveries in non-fur-rich parts of its domain – discoveries like the world's leadings sites for varieties of dinosaurs (Peace River country and the Alberta Badlands); and the best soft-tissue fossil site in the world, the Burgess Shale (Yoho National Park [discovered by the fourth secretary of the Smithsonian, Charles Walcott, in 1909], and Kootenay National Park [announced by the Royal Ontario Museum in February 2014]).

Surprises include HBC men's lack of interest in ethnology. Extensive collections were made of flora and fauna, and meteorology and climatology, but not manners and customs. (No discussion

occurs of artefact collections made for Europeans.) Why? Binnema quotes Bernard Rogan Ross's view that Native societies, seen as fast disappearing, seemed not to be worth attention (283–84). He does not mention the fear of going Native harboured by many marooned at the outposts of empire. Probably because science was thought to thrive on dispassionate observation rather than emotional involvement, nothing was regarded as more "civilized." Science could erect a barrier between civility and barbarity. But the barrier was porous. We know from *This Blessed Wilderness* (2001), Jean Murray Cole's edition of the letters of Archibald McDonald (not consulted by Binnema), that at least one trader thought HBC men "a set of selfish drones, incapable of entertaining liberal or correct notions of human life" (112). They were content to make Native people their drones by having them collect specimens. There was no question of sharing the fame available to collectors.

Finally, the valuable endnotes are, following the University of Toronto Press's practice, not indexed, but this renders a disservice to a book in which notes contain both citations and further discussion. Only in unindexed, discursive notes does the reader learn "that Alexander von Humboldt considered himself a 'scientific traveller,' not an explorer" (342), that – beguilingly – "explicit references to the link between [the] observation of nature and religious faith are few" (357), and that, in 1829, after building Fort Colville, John Work filed a report, including notes on "aboriginal peoples and geography of the district," in response to George Simpson's 1825 directive that he furnish a collection of "seeds plants Birds and quadrupids [*sic*] & mice & rats" (358). And one note contains a valuable set of references to studies of HBC libraries (311–12), but the entry in the index for libraries remains silent about it.

## *Historical GIS Research in Canada*

Jennifer Bonnell and Marcel Fortin, editors

Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2014. 342 pp. $39.95 paper.

Deryck Holdsworth
*Pennsylvania State University*

This is a wonderful collection of thirteen essays, nine co-authored (twenty-seven authors all told), written by historians, geographers, librarians, archivists, cartographers, environmental scientists, and an architect, many of them acknowledging by name the other research team members who contributed to their output. Readers are pointed to webpages where vast quantities of generated data and other facets of research output are publicly accessible. The large-format volume, printed on high-quality paper, is richly illustrated with 110 full-colour maps, graphs, and aerial photographs; the University of Calgary Press should be applauded for making this available for under forty dollars. Most essays are long enough to lay out the intents, disciplinary contexts, and interim conclusions of the ongoing research project as well as to reflect on problems encountered along the way. An effective eleven-page editors' introduction and a twenty-seven-page bibliography are strong bookends.

Over the past decade, an array of articles and books has offered samples that hint at the promise of utilizing geographical information system (GIS) software and other spatial data-management approaches to historical inquiry. Now a large enough research cluster to be labelled historical GIS (HGIS) (sometimes also labelled the digital

humanities or the spatial humanities), this perspective values spatio-temporal visualization as analytically central to narratives. This collection is a confident assertion of a promise realized.

Editors Jennifer Bonnell, a historian at McMaster University, and Marcel Fortin, a map and data librarian at the University of Toronto, successfully "showcase the range of possibilities when researchers use GIS to develop and enrich their analyses" (ix). The fascinating array of topics is spread across the country from west to east in ten essays plus three that are pan-Canadian in scope. They are written by graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and people occupying various other ranks of academia as well as government scientists. This is an appropriately Canadian volume, given the pioneer work in computer cartography, mapping, and systematic aerial photography conducted by various Canadian federal and provincial agencies over many decades. Big data for a big country, indeed, and now those data can be linked to many archival records through user-friendly geovisualization tools accessible in a laptop computer and Smartphone era.

The collection opens with a study of Victoria that visualizes, on a house-by-house level, the nineteenth-century transition from an Aboriginal and colonial town to a white city with a strong Chinese presence, effectively joining census and fire-insurance maps, and probing various conceptions of the racialized interactions of various groups. In the next chapter, georeferenced overlays of old maps on current Google Earth maps help to identify various iterations of the Welland Canal and the lost villages of the St. Lawrence Seaway project. Then the volume's editors trace the changing course of the Don River in Toronto, again using old maps scanned and georeferenced to trace the changing alignment of the river and simultaneously noting phases of industrialization and urbanization along the corridor through fire-insurance atlases. Still in Toronto, the pew rent books of Knox Presbyterian Church illuminate the changing residential locations of membership in the 1880s, with congregants from rich and less well off neighbourhoods possibly still being pew neighbours. Further east, samples at a variety of scales from a regional environmental history atlas of south-central Ontario calibrate changes in resource exploitation, identifying sites for saw and grist mills along the region's many waterways. Ottawa's urban forest is tracked over three-quarters of a century, specific canopies of street shade trees being traced from old air photos and ground-truthed with old photographs of neighbourhoods prior to urban renewal. Changes are attributed to a pendulum swing of attitudes from regarding trees as a nuisance to regarding them as healthy elements of urban life.

Three essays on Quebec continue the eastward sampler. Across the St. Lawrence River from Montreal, in the Mohawk community of Kahnawá:ke, an 1880s survey by the Department of Indian Affairs allows for a modern reconstruction of historical land use, showing which areas were in sugar bush or in cultivation and shedding light on the clash between oral knowledge of Indigenous irregular land parcels and the ultimately unsuccessful efforts to systematically subdivide the territory. St. Mary Street (now Notre-Dame East) in Montreal was an 1830s neighbourhood that burned in 1852, was rebuilt before being demolished to widen the street, and then again rebuilt; the multiscale "zoom" of HGIS is showcased from neighbourhood to street to property parcel and even to three-dimensional architectural re-imaging, aided by insurance maps, census

records, and builders "specs." Downriver, "the natural and cultural evolution" (182) of the St. Lawrence Estuary salt marsh reflects on a seventeen-year study of the shoreline of the Bay of Kamouraska, one that draws on maps dating back to 1781, early twentieth-century aerial photographs, and fieldwork. Then, as the one Maritimes example, the changing mix of forest and farms on Prince Edward Island across the entire twentieth century employs cadastral maps and aerial photography to demonstrate that the census of agriculture underreported the extent of "improved" land.

Three pan-Canadian chapters close the volume. Chinese head tax records are used to reconstruct immigration histories, generating a groundbreaking map of 460 distinct Canadian destinations (many on the Prairies), identifying many of the specific home villages in southern China, and also showing a sample of those home region origins in the Chinatown totals for five Canadian cities. The last two chapters are something of a throwback to routine choropleth maps that aggregate census data, always a problem with the shape of Canada. An essay on changing fuel use, from wood to coal and electricity and gas, is accompanied by a suite of simple line graphs, column data, and national-scale maps – not a new approach at all, though new to the author. The final essay, on the Canada Century Research Infrastructure project (paralleling similar big data projects in the United States and the United Kingdom), reads more like a report to a grant agency than something that would be of use to this book's audience, even though aggregate census microdata are certainly important and signal the potential scope of HGIS work. But the disconnect to people, streets, places of work, and places of worship – or to land, land cover, and landscape – that so many of the earlier essays promote, makes these last two awkward bedfellows. It is that capacity to zoom in and out across multiple scales, and across time, that is so loaded with promise.

## *Schooling in Transition: Readings in Canadian History of Education*

Sara Z. Burke and Patrice Milewski, editors

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012. 423 pp. $95.00 cloth; $49.95 paper.

Patrick A. Dunae
*Vancouver Island University*

This collection of essays is edited by Sara Burke, a historian, and Patrice Milewski, a sociologist and former elementary school teacher, both now at Laurentian University. The title, *Schooling in Transition*, reflects the editors' belief that public education is characterized "not by continuous progression, but by recurring contests over pedagogy, curriculum, and politics" (3). Thus, public education "now, as in the past, continues to be schooling in transition" (8). In this collection, the editors focus on enduring contests over "the changing role of the state in schooling, patterns of exclusion in public education based on class, race, gender, and language; provincial versus local control of education; the development of the teaching profession … and the ongoing struggle between traditional and child-centred models of schooling" (8).

The book is aimed at college and university students. It contains twenty-four previously published scholarly articles and is intended to provide

students with an overview of key themes in the academic history of public education in Canada. The articles are presented in twelve chapters, each of them with a brief thematic introduction and "Suggestions for Further Reading." Also helpful is an introductory essay, in which the editors provide some historiographical context for the articles. They suggest that the writing of education history in the past fifty years can be "conceptualized in terms of four broadly defined but overlapping stages: the traditional progressive approach of the 1950s and 1960s; the revisionism of the 1970s; the emphasis on factors of race, class, and gender of the 1980s; and by the 1990s, the turn toward diversity and multidisciplinarity" (3).

Several essays in this collection are pertinent to British Columbia. Eric W. Sager of the University of Victoria alludes to BC teachers in an essay, first published in 2007, entitled "Women Teachers in Canada, 1881-1901: Revisiting the 'Feminization' of an Occupation." Sager deploys quantitative and qualitative data to reassess the motivations and experiences of middle-class women who became teachers. Timothy J. Stanley of the University of Ottawa addresses the subject of discrimination and exclusion in his essay, first published in 1990, entitled "White Supremacy, Chinese Schooling, and School Segregation in Victoria: The Case of the Chinese Students' Strike, 1922-1923." Essays by three eminent educational historians, all now retired from UBC, are included in this reader. Jean Barman's "Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children" (ca. 1995) examines the consequences of compelling First Nations children to attend schools that were inadequately funded and run by denominational teachers with little or no pedagogical training. J. Donald Wilson's essay, first published in 1990, "'I Am Here to Help If You Need Me': British Columbia's Rural Teachers' Welfare Officer, 1928-1935," describes the work of the indomitable Lottie Bowron, who tried to ameliorate some of the dire conditions that novice female teachers endured in remote school districts and primitive schools. In "The Triumph of 'Formalism': Elementary Schooling in Vancouver from the 1920s to the 1960s," which first appeared in *BC Studies* in spring-summer 1986, Neil Sutherland explains why teachers, who were introduced to new theories of learning in teachers' colleges, persisted in following traditional modes of teaching in their classrooms. Also included is an essay first published in 1996 by Mona Gleason of UBC's Department of Educational Studies, entitled "Disciplining Children, Disciplining Parents: The Nature and Meaning of Advice to Canadian Parents, 1945-1955." Gleason argues that literature written by so-called experts in child development undermined the experiential knowledge of parents and teachers.

All of these articles have been reprinted in other edited collections, and several appear in a popular reader compiled by Barman, Sutherland, and Wilson entitled *Children, Teachers, and Schools in the History of British Columbia* (Calgary: Detselig, 1995). The essays were subsequently reprinted in the second edition of *Children, Teachers and Schools*, edited by Barman and Gleason, in 2003. Several articles presented here in *Schooling in Transition* were also included in Nancy Janovicek and Joy Parr, editors, *Histories of Canadian Children and Youth* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2003). Is there a demand and market for another packaged collection like this one?

Twenty years ago the field of educational history in Canada was booming. In British Columbia, all of

the universities and university-colleges had teacher-training programs with "foundations" courses on the history of education. Ten years ago, the scholarly discipline had diminished, but it still flourished in post-secondary institutions now classified as research and teaching universities. Today, foundations courses have been curtailed or eliminated in faculties of education; and, regrettably, history departments within arts and humanities and social sciences faculties do not offer undergraduate courses on the history of education. However, this collection of essays may signal a renaissance in historical studies in education in Canada; it may stimulate interest in, and promote debate about, the historical character of public schools in a new generation of undergraduate and postgraduate students. If so, *Schooling in Transition* is very encouraging.

The book contains a dozen historical photographs, including three from the BC Archives. Placed at the start of each chapter, the photographs provide a good visual element to *Schooling in Transition*'s topics and themes. But the image on the front cover is puzzling. It is reproduced courtesy of the Archives of Ontario, and the photo credit line reads: "Children walk to school [circa 1910]." It shows a group of schoolboys carrying satchels and lunch boxes walking down a country road. The boys have their backs to the reader – that is, they are walking away from us. What were they feeling about their situation when this photograph was taken? Were they looking forward to another stimulating day at school or were they resigned to impending classroom drudgery? It would be easier to speculate on these questions if we could see their faces. And where are the girls? A more inclusive and engaging cover image would have enhanced this publication. But in this case, the cliché about not judging a book by its cover is appropriate. The editors have selected judiciously from an extensive body of literature. These essays not only address major themes in the history of education but also relate to important issues in the wider fields of social, economic, and political history.

## *Salmonbellies vs. the World: The Story of the Most Famous Team in Lacrosse and Their Greatest Rivals*

W.B. MacDonald

Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, 2013. 240 pp. $34.95 cloth.

Eric Sager
*University of Victoria*

In this well researched, beautifully illustrated book W.B. MacDonald tells the story of the Salmonbellies from their founding to the present, and he does much more. He traces the evolution of lacrosse in the province, beginning with the migrants from eastern Canada who brought the sport to Victoria, Vancouver, and New Westminster in the 1880s. Lacrosse was then a recent adaptation of the ancient Aboriginal game. MacDonald does not linger over the origins of the sport but proceeds quickly to his chronicle of the players, the key games in Salmonbellies history, and the remarkable record of success on the part of New Westminster teams.

A genial and well informed raconteur, MacDonald has trolled through the newspapers to find a wealth of detail about players, games, and leagues. While at times the detail threatens to overwhelm the narrative, both general readers and academic historians can learn much from MacDonald's stories and images. The

sport was created, here as in Montreal, by a commercial and professional middle class: engineers, insurance agents, real estate agents, civil servants, accountants, and teachers. These gentlemen with their trim mustaches argued over the choice of umpire before playing on rough fields surrounded by stumps. At first they played a game of uncertain duration and flexible rules, and, at the conclusion of hostilities, they gathered at the Colonial Hotel for an evening of speeches and dinner. Even before working-class men began to play, the sport was violent and games were interrupted by the evacuation of the wounded and sometimes by the intervention of police. At times MacDonald's story reads like a commentary on a boxing match. Does Newsy Lalonde, who played both lacrosse and hockey, hold the record for number of teeth knocked out of opponents? Many spectators quit watching because "the slaughter was more than they could stand" (7). For the historian interested in violence in sport, there is plenty of material here.

Other well known themes in the history of sport appear, including the influence of railways, gambling, telegraphy, and the media. There is plenty of evidence pertaining to the long-running conflict between the amateur code and professionalism (in lacrosse amateurism was the early winner, when the professional league collapsed in 1924). Team sports always evolve, and the evolution of lacrosse can be tracked through the many rule changes that MacDonald records. Although there is no thorough analysis of the end of field lacrosse and the triumph of box lacrosse in the early 1930s, nevertheless the key influence of capitalist owners can be detected. The owners wanted a summer sport that could fill their expensive arenas when ice hockey was not being played, and so lacrosse moved indoors.

Historians of gender may be disappointed, and the reader will learn nothing about the rise of women's lacrosse in the province. The well-chosen illustrations tell us, however, that women were spectators from the beginning, and in 1922 feminine respectability did not prevent umbrella-wielding ladies from participating in the on-field riot at Queen's Park. Lacrosse was relatively popular a century ago (ten thousand spectators at Brockton Point in 1901!), and we are left to wonder why this fast-paced, very Canadian sport was overtaken by other team sports across the twentieth century. Such questions should not discourage prospective readers for this book is a welcome gift to lovers of sport history.

## *Rufus: The Life of the Canadian Journalist Who Interviewed Hitler*

Colin Castle

Vancouver: Granville Island Publishing, 2014. 304 pp. $19.95 paper.

Bruce Hodding
*Victoria*

Colin Castle has undertaken a labour of love. The retired schoolteacher spent four years researching, transcribing, and writing the story of newspaperman Lukin "Rufus" Johnston. The self-described "history buff" (xvii) married Val Johnston, the granddaughter of Rufus, and inherited the family treasures: thirty years of family letters, seventeen years of Rufus's personal diaries, and a reminiscence by Rufus's son Derek Johnston. The result is a thick tome that commemorates this remarkable man – *Rufus: The Life of the Canadian*

*Journalist Who Interviewed Hitler.*

Red-haired Rufus adopted his nickname after the ancient Anglo-Saxon king. He came to Canada from England in 1905, working his way across the country. In 1910, he engineered himself a job with the Vancouver *Daily Province* before moving on to the *Cowichan Leader* and subsequently to the Victoria *Colonist*. During this time he crossed paths with many influential people, including fellow newspaperman Hugh Savage, Premier Richard McBride, and writer and hunter Clive Phillipps-Wolley, who became one of three godparents to his son.

When the Great War broke out, Rufus did not immediately enlist because his wife was recovering from a serious operation. The next year he volunteered and was soon involved in many of the major battles fought by the Canadian Corps, including those at Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele, and Amiens. For a time he was, in turn, aide-de-camp to both General Arthur William Currie and General Sir Julian Byng, who later became governor general of Canada. Rufus was also tasked with taking future prime minister Winston Churchill out to "show him the sights" at Vimy Ridge (93). Castle has successfully captured in this work the extraordinary talent Rufus had for meeting and befriending important people.

After the war, Rufus returned to Vancouver and to his work as a journalist, helping to secure the early careers of two important BC writers: Bruce A. McKelvie and Bruce Hutchison. He also wrote a book about his home province, *Beyond the Rockies: 3000 Miles by Trail and Canoe through Little Known British Columbia* (1929), which is still used by BC historians. In the 1930s, Rufus went to work in Europe as a foreign correspondent for the Canadian Southam News Agency. In Germany he began to write articles about the dangers of the Nazis and was working on a book to be called *Germany Today* when his life was cut short in 1933. Following many attempts, he had finally arranged a meeting with Adolf Hitler. Rufus pressed the German chancellor on many tough issues, but, as he was leaving, Gestapo founder Hermann Göring hissed at him: "You're damned lucky to get out" (279). His words were portentous as Rufus filed his last report by phone but never made it back to England. He disappeared suspiciously while aboard ship, and his body was never found.

Ultimately, Castle needs to be credited with preserving the story of this extraordinary character, whose depths will surely be further plumbed. For example, a search of the archival collections of the famous people Rufus befriended could reveal additional information on his influential career. In addition, scholars will certainly want to put Rufus into some sort of larger historical context. Patrick A. Dunae's *Gentleman Emigrants: From the British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier* (1981) and J.F. Bosher's *Vancouver Island in the Empire* (2012) are two such sources that could frame Rufus's life and provide a greater interpretive perspective. In fact, Bosher references Rufus (211). Nonetheless, while further context would greatly augment Castle's labours, this book stands as a valuable asset for anyone interested in the military, newspaper, or general history of British Columbia in the early twentieth century.

## *Walhachin: Birth of a Legend*
Larry Jacobsen

Port Coquitlam: Larry G. Jacobsen, 2014. 200 pp. $35.00 cloth.

Dennis Oomen
*Penticton Museum and Archives*

Walhachin has a particular resonance for many British Columbians. Because of this, certain aspects of the Walhachin story have acquired a permanency and legitimacy that are not supported by what actually happened at this Edwardian orchard settlement. Larry Jacobsen's book, *Walhachin: Birth of Legend,* goes some way towards dispelling some of the more enduring misconceptions but is compromised by its unstructured and confusing approach.

The Walhachin story is generally understood to revolve around certain key events. In 1907, an American entrepreneur named Charles Barnes saw the potential for a prosperous orchard community along the south shore of the Thompson River west of Kamloops. Barnes wanted to build a community that would appeal to English settlers. In due course, the settlers arrived and they proved to be comprised of solid middle-class Britons. Poor soil and an unreliable and badly constructed irrigation flume hampered efforts to establish productive orchards. Then came the First World War and the departure of the male settlers to join the fight. When the war ended, almost all of the men had been killed and the community collapsed. The focus of Jacobsen's book is, presumably, on examining those factors and events that led to the demise of Walhachin as a viable agricultural settlement.

Jacobsen turns a knowledgeable eye towards many of the practical aspects of the Walhachin story. He shows that the main irrigation flume was well constructed and adequate to meet the demands of a growing orchard community. Jacobsen's experience in construction and engineering are evident: he uses photographs, graphs, and text to show that the flume that serviced the orchard lands was sound in design and well built. Jacobsen also pays considerable attention to orchard management, detailing how filler crops of onions and potatoes not only provided cash income for the settlers but also food for their own use. Jacobsen shows that, properly irrigated, the Walhachin properties could and did produce commercial crops.

Unfortunately, the author's careful work on flume construction is not carried through the rest of the book. A large number of photographs, maps, and tables break up an already confusing text. The layout of the book does not allow for a logical progression of the story. Jacobsen mentions that low fruit prices and lack of capitalization contributed to Walhachin's collapse, but this information is not presented in a coherent fashion. There is no index to help the reader find his/her way. On the other hand, Jacobsen has included some most moving and evocative photographs. The images of Captain Rowland Paget (150-51), struggling to maintain his orchard after the loss of his leg in France, speak to the determination displayed by many of the Walhachin settlers.

Jacobsen reproduces a table listing Walhachin men who joined up in the Great War. The table, based on the work of Kamloops historian Keith Wood, does not tell the reader how many men died compared to total enlistments and does not compare Walhachin war deaths with those in similar communities, an omission that leaves this part of the story unresolved. Wood, however, argues that the number of Walhachin men killed during the war was well within the average.

Jacobsen introduces chapters on the history of the Christie family, which was involved in Walhachin's founding, and provides a long piece taken directly from the local First Peoples website on the establishment of the nearby Skeetchestn Reserve. Some material seems quite out of place and might have been better suited for an appendix. Jacobsen ends with an epilogue that compares Walhachin with the Eastern Irrigation District (EID) near Brooks, Alberta. As Jacobsen makes clear, the EID was eventually successful, but this part of the book needs to be more fully developed to shed real light on the reasons for Walhachin's demise. It is not clear whether or not the EID and Walhachin form a legitimate basis for comparison.

*Walhachin: Birth of a Legend* would have been a far better book if the author had marshalled his information properly and developed his arguments in a logical fashion. While adding to the scholarship around Walhachin, Jacobsen's book leaves the reader with an incomplete picture of this fascinating episode in BC history.

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## *Salmo Stories: Memories of a Place in the Kootenays*

Larry Jacobsen

Port Coquitlam: Larry G. Jacobsen, 2012. 377 pp. $35.00 paper.

## *The Green Necklace: The Vision Quest of Edward Mahon*

Walter O. Volovsek

Castlegar: Otmar Publishing, 2012. 284 pp. $25.00 paper.

Takaia Larsen
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The year 2012 saw the publication of two books dealing with aspects of the history of the West Kootenay. As with so many histories of this region, both are labours of love and represent the culmination of years of research and personal connection. While both books share a similar geographic focus, they are strikingly different in their approach, tone, and purpose. In the end, they both contribute greatly to our understanding of this region by adding voices (in *Salmo Stories*) and analysis (in *The Green Necklace*) to the somewhat limited history of settlement and development in the West Kootenay.

Walter Volovsek's *The Green Necklace: The Vision Quest of Edward Mahon* is a thoughtful and lovingly written biography of an important BC entrepreneur, businessman, and developer who played a significant part in the settlement and growth of what became (urban) North Vancouver and (rural) Castlegar. While the book provides a detailed account of the life and work of one man, whose career Volovsek conveys with great respect and admiration, it also contributes much to

our understanding of the development of both North Vancouver and Castlegar. Mahon's work is perpetuated in North Vancouver's "Green Necklace," a string of green spaces that still forms an important part of the community, and in Castlegar itself, which was named after the Mahon family estate in Ireland. *The Green Necklace* provides a rare opportunity to speak to both rural and urban development through the story of one promoter who had high hopes for both areas. Volovsek provides a historical narrative of both urban and rural development in British Columbia, something that few works of BC history can claim. So often local histories ignore the broader context in their attempt to give voice to rural areas, while urban histories neglect to mention their rural hinterlands. Volovsek shows that, in the late nineteenth century, when mining was booming and hopes for British Columbia were at their highest, Mahon saw the potential for growth both in the West Kootenay and on Burrard Inlet. Through an exploration of Mahon's life and times, the broader impact of the Canadian Pacific Railway's monopoly, the Great Depression, and the Lower Mainland's long-term prosperity and growth, Volovsek explains how North Vancouver came to grow and develop while Castlegar did not. In doing so, Volovsek has written an intriguing book that, while somewhat romanticized, provides an important history of North Vancouver and a clear account of the development of the Castlegar townsite, a story hitherto completely unknown.

In contrast to *The Green Necklace* (which focuses on just one family), Larry Jacobsen's *Salmo Stories* is a collection of stories (both of individuals and families) drawn from over one hundred interviews conducted by the author. While Jacobsen includes several short chapters of broader historical context – for example, "The Birth of a Mining Region" (13-17) and "The Doukhobors (Spirit Wrestlers) in Canada" (128-31) – those chapters lack footnotes and referencing and, therefore, scholarly credibility. The interviews, by contrast, which make up the bulk of this book, provide us with a close and valuable look at the early settlers of Salmo and their varied experiences. Jacobsen has done a commendable job of collecting, recording, and preserving these stories. My only concern is that, while Jacobsen acknowledges that he has "adjusted" and "shortened" interview materials, he provides no indication of where he did so; and while he claims he tried to maintain the "colour" (11) of the narratives, the reader has no idea of the extent of his intervention. As such, oral historians might question the authenticity of some of the interview materials. While the book does not intend to be analytical, the interviews themselves will stand as an important primary source for future historians as they study the development of this region and prepare their own arguments. Usefully, Jacobsen includes several previously unpublished memoirs of former Salmo residents as appendices (311-70) and makes them accessible. In the end, *Salmo Stories* stands as a solid collection of stories from those who experienced life in early Salmo. Its testimonies and photographs will serve as important sources for local studies for years to come.

Taken together, *The Green Necklace* and *Salmo Stories* are welcome additions to the history of the West Kootenay, a region that warrants further historical research and analysis. *The Green Necklace* explores historical connections between Vancouver and the Interior when most works consider one or the other; it also shows the interconnections between development in late nineteenth-century British Columbia and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few prominent

families and their companies. For its part, *Salmo Stories* is less progressive. It follows a long tradition of local histories that records the lives of rural residents and presents them without interpretation, analysis, or connection. Having said that, such histories require time and dedication to prepare and remain an important source of material for future analysis and interpretation. *Salmo Stories* will undoubtedly be mined for source materials for years to come by historians of the West Kootenay, while *The Green Necklace* will stand as a notable biography of a forgotten promoter and financier.

## *Surveying Southern British Columbia: A Photojournal of Frank Swannell, 1901–07*

Jay Sherwood

Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, 2014.
160 pp. 150 b&w images.
$36.95 paper.

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When the Vancouver convention centre was completed in 2009, a series of interpretive panels describing the history of British Columbia was placed along the waterfront promenade. Featured among these panels is the story of "BC's greatest surveyor," Frank Swannell. Visitors to the waterfront receive only a glimpse into Swannell's legacy, but in *Surveying Southern British Columbia: A Photojournal of Frank Swannell, 1901–07*, Jay Sherwood reveals the surveyor's extensive role in British Columbia's political and economic history.

*Surveying Southern British Columbia* introduces us to Swannell at the beginning of his career, spanning the years 1901 to 1907 when Swannell was employed by the Victoria-based surveying firm Gore and McGregor. Sherwood describes this book as a "prequel" (1) to his three other books, which cover Swannell's later contract work with the BC government.

Sherwood reveals an omnipresent, hard-working, and romantic Swannell. From Ocean Falls to Quesnel, to the Flathead Valley, Texada Island, and Bamfield, Swannell's work shaped a myriad of communities and resource industries across the young province. The book traces these numerous and diverse projects through the use of Swannell's diaries, journals, letters, and vast archival photo collection. However, Sherwood notes that Swannell's diaries contain "primarily one-line entries" (1), which made the surveyor's letters to his sweetheart and future wife, Ada Driver, a richer source of detail for *Surveying Southern British Columbia*. With these primary sources, Sherwood has constructed a chronological account that provides the reader with the necessary historical context to understand both Swannell and British Columbia during the early Edwardian era.

One of the book's primary features are Swannell's photographs, which offer a stunning and revealing look at the people and places of turn-of-the-century British Columbia. His images not only reveal the spectacular landscapes of British Columbia but also the harsh working conditions and lived experience of surveying. The final chapter uses recent photographs by Sherwood to contrast some of Swannell's images with their present-day locations. Yet this care and attention to photographic detail is not extended to every image in the book. Specifically, the human subjects of Swannell's photographs are inconsistently identified. For example, one image is presented to the reader as showing an

"Indian Chief" – Swannell's own term – and "probably his wife" (30). Sherwood has carefully assembled a great quantity of information on a variety of projects, locations, and persons; however, given that Swannell's images are foundational to the book, Sherwood might, perhaps, have dug deeper to link faces with historical names.

Perhaps the main shortcoming of *Surveying Southern British Columbia* is Sherwood's failure to explicitly establish Swannell as an agent of colonialism. With an economy rooted in resource extraction, the alienation of land from Indigenous peoples is central to both the past and the present of British Columbia. Readers of this journal may be familiar with Darby Cameron's article "An Agent of Change: William Drewry and Land Surveying in British Columbia, 1887-1929" (*BC Studies*, no. 167), which details the many ways provincial and Dominion surveyors were instrumental in plotting land grants, resource claims, and First Nations reserves. Sherwood does look at several of Swannell's projects that involved the relocation, reduction, or destruction of First Nations reserves and sacred sites (117-19; 137-43), but he does not analyze events as part of a larger colonial project, and this is an unfortunate oversight. Nevertheless, there are many historical threads in *Surveying Southern British Columbia* that could lead to further fruitful research in this regard.

Swannell's photographs, letters, and journal entries – compiled by Sherwood with crucial context and attention to detail – offer a vivid look into British Columbia's coming of age as a resource frontier in the early years of Richard McBride's premiership. Swannell's seemingly ubiquitous involvement in political and economic events at the turn of the twentieth century makes *Surveying Southern British Columbia* an essential book for any BC history collection.

## *Boundless Optimism: Richard McBride's British Columbia*

Patricia E. Roy

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012. 428 pp. $32.95 paper.

Duff Sutherland
*Selkirk College*

Patricia E. Roy's *Boundless Optimism: Richard McBride's British Columbia* examines the political career of one of the province's most significant premiers. Born in New Westminster in 1870 and educated at New Westminster High School and Dalhousie Law School, McBride served as premier from 1903 until 1915. An inhabitant of what Roy refers to as British Columbia's pre-war "British World," McBride benefited politically from the "Angloboom" of the Edwardian era, which saw high levels of British immigration and investment transform the province (2-3). For McBride, a booster rather than a planner, prosperity meant "white" settlers displacing Indigenous peoples, government incentives for railways to open up the province's regions, investor access to natural resources, and expanding trade with the rest of Canada and the British Empire.

McBride famously used the Conservative Party to dominate provincial politics. After 1903, he and William J. Bowser made the party a vehicle to attract votes, dispense patronage, and boost the province. The long "McBride era" ended finally in 1916, when the Liberals under H.C. Brewster defeated the Conservatives. By this time, McBride had retired to London, and the province's resource economy was in deep depression. All of this is the subject of Roy's detailed and important book.

Roy makes clear that McBride's political success came from his ability to promote the opportunities of a rapidly expanding and industrializing Canadian dominion set within an expansive British Empire. His growing up during the dynamic growth following the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway, his being educated in the aggressive "new" imperialism, his experiences of eastern Canada at law school in Halifax, and even his firm's humble clientele all contributed, Roy argues, to his belief that rapid capitalist growth could provide confident individual opportunity in early twentieth-century British Columbia.

Taking his own opportunity, McBride won the rural constituency of Dewdney in the Fraser Valley in 1898. In the structural chaos before the institution of party politics in 1902, McBride supported Victoria merchant J.H. Turner's faction of "progress and prosperity," served as minister of mines in James Dunsmuir's government, and, by 1903, was recognized by the lieutenant-governor as leader of the Opposition. McBride won the provincial election that year as Conservative Party leader. Roy views McBride's introduction of party politics as part of his "modernization" of the province; but, as well as looking forward, one wonders if McBride was also looking back admiringly to Sir John A. Macdonald's Conservative domination of federal politics during the previous generation. Those interested in the recent emergence of independent candidates and politics in British Columbia might also find Roy's detailed narrative of the pre-party era to be a useful starting point for further reflection and analysis.

The core of *Boundless Optimism* focuses on McBride's efforts to promote British Columbia after 1903. As in other parts of the Empire during this period, McBride was representative of a British elite that promoted immigration, investment, and infrastructure, usually railways, to open up "boundless" settler-colonial resource frontiers. McBride's vision was essentially a provincial version of the national policies of Canada but within a Pacific-oriented imperial framework. Up to 1907, McBride promoted the province through the promise of stable government, improved infrastructure, rising revenues from the sale of resources and "Better Terms" with Canada, and an immigration policy designed to create a "white man's" province out of what had been, demographically, a comparatively diverse edge of nineteenth-century empire. In the 1909 and 1912 elections, however, McBride swept the province with the promise of railways for every region. In the southern half of the province, this meant support for the provincial section of the Canadian Northern line, CPR branch lines on the mainland and southern Vancouver Island, and an interurban line for the Lower Mainland. In the northern half, McBride promised the Pacific Great Eastern as an eventual link between the Lower Mainland and the Peace River district. As elsewhere in the Empire, the government employed land grants, access to resources, and the backing of bonds to encourage investors to lay track. However, soon after the 1912 election, a worldwide economic depression devastated the economy, led to the collapse of the Bank of Vancouver and the Dominion Trust Company, and left the provincial government with a mounting debt. McBride encouraged everyone to "wear a smile," but his failing health led to his retirement in December 1915 (283). As his associate, R.E. Gosnell, summed it up: "He was too hopeful of the immediate future and too trustful of the railway companies" (314).

Roy points out that, throughout McBride's career, imperialism infused his "boundless optimism" for the province. He believed that British Columbia

was a strategic frontier of empire that would benefit from aggressive economic expansion. As part of this, McBride's belief in empire motivated him and those of his class to remake British Columbia as a destination for setters from Britain and the rest of Canada and to provide them with access to the province's considerable natural resources. This same belief convinced McBride that London would help British Columbia pressure the federal government for "Better Terms" and for more restrictive immigration policies. McBride's imperial devotion led to his ill-starred purchase of two submarines to defend the coast in 1914, while his support of Prime Minister Robert Borden's imperialist Naval Aid Bill, 1912, won him a knighthood. In the end, Roy points out that, under McBride, British Columbia became more British than ever before, a demographic shift that would have a lasting impact on the history of the province.

But a growing British influence was only one aspect of Richard McBride's "British Columbia." In other ways McBride's leadership reflected well known and lasting patterns of provincial development. Roy demonstrates that his opposition to Asian immigration was a cornerstone of his politics. He supported the eight-hour day for workers but opposed unions and strikes that impeded investment and profits. Although he was out of the province when acting premier William Bowser called up the militia during the "Great Strike" of 1912–14 in the Vancouver Island coal mines, McBride did little to resolve the conflict, which ended when deepening poverty forced miners back to work. Finally, he refused to recognize Indigenous title, took steps to prevent a court challenge on the question, and presided over the ongoing process of settlers dispossessing Native people of their land. As such, Roy's political narrative offers a window on the way elite power operated on resettled terrain during the crucial period from 1890 to 1914.

*Boundless Optimism* represents a significant achievement that deserves a wide readership in British Columbia. Richard McBride governed during a period of largely unregulated resource exploitation throughout the province, a bonanza that began before his arrival but that is closely associated with his time as premier after 1903. Roy points to royal commissions, stringent new regulations for land settlement and forest exploitation, and the establishment of a provincial university as evidence that McBride's policies extended beyond rapid economic development. However, we need more analysis to see how much the people of British Columbia benefited from McBride's policies.

In the book's last paragraph, Roy invokes another railway-building politician during a period of economic boom, W.A.C. Bennett. Indeed, in a 2013 presentation at the Columbia Basin Symposium in Creston, University of Northern British Columbia researcher Marleen Morris suggested that part of Bennett's significance was his government's focus on community – including hospitals, schools, and other "amenities" for families – which, together with economic development, led to a more integrated province with a rising standard of living from the 1950s to the 1970s. Morris called for a renewed government emphasis on community development as the province moves into another period of rapid resource exploitation, especially in the booming northeast. All of this suggests that Richard McBride's premiership may have more in common with the province's Liberal governments of the past decade than with Bennett's Social Credit amenity-minded governments of the 1950s and 1960s. Patricia Roy's major

work on Richard McBride allows for such reflections on the broader patterns of BC history.

## *Buckerfield: The Story of a Vancouver Family*

Mary Buckerfield White, with Philip Sherwood

Vancouver: Mary White, 2011.
334 pp. $25.00 cloth.

Robert A.J. McDonald
*University of British Columbia*

*Buckerfield* tells the story of one of Vancouver's most important business families. The story is structured around two narrative strands. One is the business history of the family patriarch, Edward Ernest Buckerfield, the New Brunswick-born farm boy who established a feed, flour, and grain export company that, from the 1920s to the 1950s, carried the name "Buckerfield" to the far corners of British Columbia. The other recounts the family histories of mother, father, husband, and children as told by Ernest and Amy Buckerfield's daughter Mary Buckerfield White.

While the text appears to have been written mainly for a specific circle of family and friends, the book will engage others with its illuminating insights into the lives of a socially prominent Vancouver family through the middle years of the twentieth century. Ernest Buckerfield was a creative entrepreneur and one of Vancouver's most successful businessmen whose company reflected the city's role as the centre of provincial economic power. The company's rise to prominence also paralleled and facilitated Vancouver's emergence as a major port for Prairie grain, a point conveyed in an excellent photograph of the company's elevators on the Burrard Inlet waterfront in 1936. But where the book most successfully moves beyond the dense thicket of family information to link family and community history is in the story of the Buckerfields' cultural role as supporters of the arts in Vancouver. Amy (Wilson) Buckerfield came from a privileged background that heightened her interest in high culture, an interest that she brought to Vancouver and was able, through the family's business success, to foster and enjoy. With other members of the city's upper class, such as Mary Isabella Rogers (the wife of B.T. Rogers), she was a strong supporter of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. The writer Ethel Wilson was her sister-in-law, theatre promoter Dorothy Somerset was a close personal friend, Dylan Thomas read poetry in her living room, and performers such as Leonard Bernstein, Yehudi Menuhin, and Joan Sutherland were attracted to Vancouver in part through the friendship and organizational effort of Amy Buckerfield. The story of Mary Buckerfield White's relationship to her husband Victor White, himself an accomplished singer, integrates the themes of family and community especially well.

*Buckerfield* entices us with stories about unfamiliar corners of Vancouver's history and establishes for the record the fact that the name "Buckerfield" must be included in any telling of the city's economic, social, and cultural history. It also whets our appetite for a more scholarly treatment of the economic and cultural roles played by Vancouver's "pioneer feed merchant" (246) and his family. For instance, a photograph of Ernest walking casually with the powerful federal politician C.D. Howe cries out for more extensive comment on the connections between Vancouver's business elite and the federal Liberal Party through the

Second World War. Yet the fact that the photograph should be noticed speaks to one of the real strengths of the book: the photos and illustrations encourage us to think further about the role and meaning of this important Vancouver family.

## *Rebel Youth: 1960s Labour Unrest, Young Workers, and New Leftists in English Canada*
Ian Milligan

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014. 252 pp. $32.95 paper.

Ron Verzuh
*Simon Fraser University*

With *Rebel Youth*, Ian Milligan hearkens back to the political youth movements that went to the barricades, the conferences, and the picket lines in the 1960s and, in the process, historicizes the events and people that evoke strong memories of an era that brought many changes to society and to the labour movement.

He situates those events within a unique context. This is no visit to the counterculture 1960s or the hippie summer of love but, rather, an exploration of some of the ideological clashes that occurred during that turbulent period, particularly between labour youth and New Left youth.

Milligan returns us to the sometimes violent strikes of the 1960s, when youth supported demands for childcare, improved workplace safety, pay equity, and other issues. We relive the *Peterborough Examiner* strike; the Dare Cookie strike in Kitchener, Ontario; the Texpack strike in Brantford, Ontario; the fish workers strike in Canso, Nova Scotia; and the Artistic Woodworkers strike in Toronto. All are examples of how the attempt at a worker-student alliance manifested itself.

Milligan also describes some of the key confrontations during what he calls the mid-1960s "wildcat wave" (45). The irony of that wave, he writes, is that "just as young workers were rising up against managers and industrial legality in record numbers, their New Leftist counterparts were writing them off as ineffective agents of social change" (64).

The "agents" debate resurfaces elsewhere as Milligan examines campus unrest led by the Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA), "Canada's pre-eminent New Left formation" (72); the Canadian Union of Students (CUS); and the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in the United States. Milligan quotes youth leaders like Martin Loney, Sharon Yandle, John Conway, Jim Harding, John Cleveland, Dorothy Wigmore, and others who spoke out at rallies for peace, women's rights, civil rights, an end to the Vietnam War, and the need for a war on poverty.

In his analysis of the struggle to build a fighting coalition of workers and youth in Canada, Milligan acknowledges that, at times, it failed badly. In at least one instance, he notes: "The gulf between the leadership of the labour movement and of the student movement was simply too profound" (99). But he also acknowledges the value of New Left thinking on campuses that fostered a "dynamic movement out into the community in an attempt to foster meaningful change" (120).

His review of what was happening from the mid-1960s into the early 1970s fills in some gaps, ties together seemingly disparate events, and signals that something was happening there but what it was ain't exactly clear (to paraphrase a Buffalo Springfield youth anthem from 1967). Of course, there are differences of opinion as to what did happen. Many of the participants who helped make

that history are still alive and politically active, as Milligan points out. Some have gone on to play more traditional political roles. Some have continued to support social justice movements while others long ago abandoned their youthful dalliance with changing the world. All will have conflicting memories of the militant past that Milligan has so carefully constructed.

Perhaps this book will encourage some to revisit their pasts in search of some useful lessons for today. Those who became historians have a special role to play. "The decade was obviously about more than just middle-class students and New Leftists rebelling against alienation and liberalism," Milligan writes. "To establish the period's true significance," we also need to show "how it touched youth of all classes as well as interacted with previous social movements such as labour" (183).

*Rebel Youth* gives us some hope that the lessons learned from the struggles that marked the youth movement of the 1960s have not been lost. "We must learn from the past and heed the ironic missed opportunities of this generation," Milligan argues, "especially as contemporary activists and politicians come to grips with a new narrative to understand our circumstances" (182).

Shortly after I read *Rebel Youth*, I watched *Pride*, the British feature film about a group of gays and lesbians who decided to support the striking mine workers in the 1980s in defiance of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's declaration of war against unions. It immediately reminded me of Milligan's account of the attempts of Canadian youth to support workers in their struggles. The film was an uplifting experience that suggested that such coalitions of very different groups are possible, effective, and desirable, if at times painful. So it is with *Rebel Youth*.

## *Welcome to Resisterville: American Dissidents in British Columbia*

Kathleen Rodgers

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014. 240 pp. $29.95 paper.

Sean Kheraj
*York University*

Just about every kid who grew up in British Columbia in the 1980s had a friend (or a friend of a friend) whose parents were American immigrants. Their parents usually arrived in the province sometime between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s. If you stole a peek at one of their family photo albums, you might see folks with long hair, funny clothes, VW vans, and a headband or two. As you chuckled with your friend and flashed a peace sign, you might also share that your parents were hippies too, once upon a time. And when pressed further, that friend might reveal to you, in hushed tones, that her mom and dad were in fact "draft dodgers."

Throughout British Columbia, American dissidents of the 1960s and 1970s left their mark on the province. The communities of the West Kootenay region bear some of the most enduring signatures of the period, remaining to this day counterculture enclaves nestled in the mountains of southeastern British Columbia. *Welcome to Resisterville* attempts to explain how this peculiar immigration experience came to shape this region.

Using a qualitative case-study approach based on fifty-two in-depth interviews, newspapers, and personal, government, and private organization records, Kathleen Rodgers demonstrates how the American migration to the

West Kootenay region influenced the emergence of a counterculture identity that remains to this day. Although many of the immigrants shared values associated with the American counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s, Rodgers argues that "these ideas were not simply transferred from one location to another but were fostered, negotiated, adapted, and sharpened as the migrants settled" (13). The emergence of a counterculture identity in this region, then, was a product of the confluence of the immigration experience with a series of complex interactions with the local community. The book explores the founding of counterculture settlements in the West Kootenay, interactions and conflicts with the local population, and the emergence of an environmental consciousness in the region that eventually came to have an influence across the province.

Through its qualitative case study approach, this book reveals important insights into individual and community experiences, some of which could only be brought to light through detailed interviews. But the author overlooks vital points of context. The most obvious omission is the absence of a sustained and thorough analysis of race and gender in her assessment of American dissident identity formation in the West Kootenay. Rodgers insists that, "besides their youth, the only characteristic they all shared was the fact that once they crossed the Canadian border, they were American immigrants who had made a conscious choice to participate in this nation's history" (35). Yet she neglects to highlight what were perhaps two of the most important common traits that facilitated American resettlement in the region: race and gender identities.

Although Rodgers does not make it clear to the reader, it seems that one thing nearly all of her interview subjects had in common was that they were white, English-speaking Americans. Rodgers notes the unique privilege that American immigrants had to "pass" in Canada because they had "the advantage of looking and speaking like the average Canadian," (17), but she does not highlight the racial assumptions implicit in this analysis. While this migrant group may have shared counterculture values of the back-to-the-land movement, feminism, communalism, and anti-militarism, they also shared a common racial identity that, one might argue, was instrumental to their integration into rural British Columbia. According to David Sterling Surrey's 1982 study of war resisters in Canada: "In terms of race, resisters in Canada are extremely homogenous. Those who went to Canada were mostly white; those who remain are almost exclusively white" (Surrey 1982, 76). He also notes that very few visible minorities (particularly African Americans) fled to Canada and that those who did had much more difficulty assimilating, often opting to return to the United States. The methodological appendix to Rodgers's book does not provide racial data in the breakdown of the characteristics of the interview group. They are only identified as being "primarily American-born" (184). Given that American war resisters also often referred to their migration as part of "the Underground Railroad," it seems that a more robust discussion of the role of race in this immigration experience was needed.

Some traditional gender roles were also common defining characteristics of the American war resister community in British Columbia. Rodgers adeptly shows the ways in which American immigrant women began to challenge these gender roles, introducing feminist ideas to the community, but she overlooks the degree to which the war resister migration itself was structured by normative gender

identities. Like many other immigrant communities, the decision to migrate was driven by men whose economic interests and roles as breadwinners structured family life (albeit dependent upon the domestic labour of women). What stands out in Rodgers's research is that many of the women in this book migrated to Canada as girlfriends and wives of men who sought to avoid military service or imprisonment for war resistance. In fact, none of the women interviewed in this book migrated to Canada outside of a partnership with a male spouse of some kind. The heteronormativity of these case studies seems to be a common characteristic worth further investigation.

These omissions in the analysis of the identity of the American dissident community in the West Kootenay region should not detract from what is a well researched and important contribution to immigration history and the history of British Columbia. It is also a useful case study for understanding the formation of community identity through immigration experiences. Rodgers's extensive interviews offer unique insights into the development of these communities in rural British Columbia. The discussions with Corky Evans and other prominent political figures to come out of the American migration are especially revealing and valuable. Rodgers opens up new possibilities for further research on the impact of American war resisters on Canada during the 1960s and 1970s.

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## *Accidental Eden: Hippie Days on Lasqueti Island*

Douglas L. Hamilton and Darlene Olesko

Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, 2014. 253 pp. $24.95 paper.

Howard Stewart
*University of British Columbia*

A friend said recently that he didn't think much of the new generation of histories about British Columbia's "back-to-the-landers" in the 1960s and 1970s because if you weren't there, then the stories just don't mean that much to you. But not all these stories are equal. Susan Safyan (2012) recently wrote a pretty good one about the unique alternative community that grew up in the middle of nowhere, in the middle of the province, at Wells, where counterculture lifestyles were supported by seasonal employment at nearby Barkerville Historic Town and Bowron Lake Provincial Park. And now Douglas Hamilton and Darlene Olesko have given us another great history, also published by Caitlin Press, about the exceptional collection of gifted, idealistic, stoic, and profoundly eccentric refugees, drifters, misfits, and outlaws who washed up in the middle of the Strait of Georgia, on Lasqueti Island, in these years.

I started out determined to high-grade this book, pigeonhole and dispose of it in a couple of hours. Then I got caught up in the stories. Before I did, it helped me to better understand some of the findings in Sharon Weaver's (2010) comparative study of back-to-the-landers on Lasqueti, Denman, Hornby, and Cape Breton islands. Weaver found that old timers on Lasqueti had been more welcoming to the hippies than had those on Denman

or Hornby. Hamilton and Olesko explain that Lasqueti in these years was a rocky, logged over, and mostly abandoned backwater, down to about fifty residents with a starkly diminished range of options. Any new blood was welcome, and this new wave was stimulating new blood indeed. The hippies brought exotic new life into a dying community. They did not care if Lasqueti had no car ferry – they didn't want one. They didn't want BC Hydro's tainted electricity either.

The story of how this tiny, marginal, artsy counterculture population way out there in the middle of Georgia Strait stood up to the arrogant BC Hydro giant, then turned Lasqueti into a laboratory for innovative new energy technologies, is worth a book on its own. But then so are the stories about the development of the island's half dozen alternative neighbourhoods, of how the hippies learned the value of sanitation and electricity, of the budding pot industry (sorry), and of the dour commune founded by Ted Sideras, Lasqueti's own quirky version of Brother XII.

It's easy to overwork the adjective "quirky" even before you get to the last third of the book, which is devoted to some of the island's most memorable characters from that era. This "people" section helped me understand why friends on Hornby Island in the 1970s, not exactly conformist suburbanites themselves, were awed and more than a little intimidated by the untamed energy of their Lasqueti neighbours. A cast like Countess Kolbassa, Roger Ramjet (Roger Rectum to his enemies), Boho Ron, Brother Richard, the perpetually drunken ferry captain Ian Cole, and all the others might have come together on some other island in the strait, but I can't imagine which one. They all thrived on Lasqueti, where some stayed, some died, some remain, and some disappeared never to be heard of again. It would take an exceptionally good novelist to capture the implausibly earthy and psychedelic collage of creative and idealistic humanity that Hamilton and Olesko have given us in their little history.

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## *Becoming Wild: Living the Primitive Life on a West Coast Island*

Nikki van Schyndel

Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, 2014. 224 pp. $24.95 paper.

## *Heart and Soil: The Revolutionary Good of Gardens*

Des Kennedy

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 2014. 224 pp. $24.95 paper.

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At first glance, *Becoming Wild* and *Heart and Soil* appear to be accounts of very different ways of relating to the natural world. Nikki van Schyndel describes her year living in the "wilderness" and Des Kennedy writes of the very civilized pursuit of gardening. However, the Edenic longings of both van Schyndel and Kennedy possess noteworthy parallels. Both authors describe their attempts at creating

a nature-based earthly paradise in coastal British Columbia. Furthermore, both accounts reflect tropes of settler-colonial discourse and the finding of the "good life" through communion with (and sometimes control over) their environment.

*Heart and Soil* collects various newspaper columns and other writing on gardening authored by Kennedy over several decades. Kennedy begins by introducing what he calls the paradox of gardening, that what "may seem from a distance the mildest and most innocuous of activities, can be at heart a revolutionary act," in that it creates "inspired environments and opportunities for enlightenment" (13). Eloquently written, Kennedy's book ponders a wide variety of topics pertaining to gardening in order to "collectively reflect upon gardening as an active engagement of the human spirit with the natural world" (15). He uses humorous anecdotes throughout, often featuring the character of the curmudgeonly gardener railing against the weeds, animals, and other forces of chaos that plague and foil his efforts to manage nature according to his vision. However, there is another paradox to gardening that Kennedy fails to notice: an activity that brings people so close, on multiple levels, to natural processes is also often steeped in historical associations with the colonial project of bringing order and civilization to a chaotic nature.

Kennedy's own origin story of gardening as "homesteading" on Denman Island, the traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, and his account of turning the wasteland of logging slash into a bountiful garden, has obvious Lockean implications. Kennedy, although perhaps not aware of the colonial implications of his attempts at "taming" nature, is very aware of his limits of control over his own piece of paradise and his genuine affection for the natural forces that sometimes trouble his attempts at order – indeed, he anthropomorphizes them as "outlaws" and "rebels." His tales are not simply of taming a landscape but of creating a complex relationship with an environment by also accepting "nature as mentor" (203). Kennedy's gardener is an environmentalist at heart, someone who seeks both to preserve and to protect nature, and who seeks enlightenment through communion with nature. He maintains "that gardeners – because we each love a little piece of earth so dearly – are perfectly positioned to champion better treatment of the earth in general" (199).

In 2005, Nikki van Schyndel, her companion Micah, and her cat Scout set out for the Broughton Archipelago with the goal of living a "primitive" lifestyle for at least a year. Van Schyndel discusses her fascination with survivalism and how this expedition was meant both as a test of her skills at self-sufficient living and as a means for her to build connections with the natural world. Upon landing on an island they had never visited before, van Schyndel and her companion fish, forage, hunt, and shelter primarily using tools they have built themselves from materials found in their local environment.

Throughout her account, van Schyndel continually uses the terms "primitive" and "wild" as descriptors of her experience, with the former denoting the use of pre-industrial technology and the latter a pristine non-human environment. Her experiences with so-called primitive tools, often haphazardly derived from multiple First Nations cultures and far more complex both to make and to use than they would initially appear, as well as the clear signs of human presence in the region, both past and present, contradict the terms she stubbornly clings to throughout. The semantics are important: her continual use of these

descriptors highlights her nostalgic longing for a premodern paradise, and her narrative draws from a literary culture of survivalist romanticism, which, in turn, is the contemporary offspring of colonial explorer narratives. Also inherited from wilderness/survivalist/explorer discourse is van Schyndel's idolization/idealization of rugged individualism. Although she ventures into the "wild" with a human companion, she clings throughout to the idea that she could have "done it on her own." This despite the fact that, even in a twosome, their adventure was very reliant on the knowledge and support of their fellow humans, from a Kwakwaka'wakw man who guided them to the region to summer tourists with whom they traded their woven baskets. Furthermore, despite her female gender, van Schyndel's idolized image of a rugged individual surviving in the wild is a masculine one. Her supposedly feminine inclinations, like painting her toenails and taking long baths, are representative of the materialism and corruption of modern urban society, and she sees the "girly" part of herself as something that contradicts her survivalist self and must be expunged in order for her to transform into the wilderness-dweller she wishes to become.

Van Schyndel's account is captivating, and her representation of the Broughton Peninsula as a wilderness paradise is seductive, as is her genuine love for the place. However, for scholars interested in contemporary BC outdoor culture, it presents in astonishingly sharp relief the power held by the symbolism of Edenic nature in settler-Canadian culture – a symbolism so powerful that this insightful, intelligent, and capable young woman, despite her contradictory experiences, continually interprets her survival in the romantic terms of the rugged individual. This does little justice to the people on whose support she drew, the thousands of years of human habitation on the coast, the colonial process that made her "wilderness" possible, and the vast accumulation of Indigenous knowledge and practice represented by the tools she made "from looking at books and museums" (203).

## *Aboriginal Peoples and Forest Lands in Canada*

D.B. Tindall, Ronald L. Trosper, and Pamela Perrault, editors

Vancouver: UBC Press: 2013. 364 pp. $34.95 paper.

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Forests, long of economic and socio-cultural importance to both Aboriginal peoples and settlers in Canada, have also been sites of contention between these groups, reflected in blockades, court action, and state policies intended to address such conflict. With a forest industry in transition and with our understanding of Aboriginal title and rights evolving rapidly, questions about Aboriginal peoples and forests in Canada are of critical interest to scholars, policy-makers, and forest-dependent communities. Such questions are the concern of *Aboriginal Peoples and Forest Lands in Canada*, the object of which is "to provide the reader with an opportunity to learn more about Aboriginal issues relating to politics, culture, forest resource use, and land ethics, so that they may have a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that will arise in the coming years from increased Aboriginal self-government and increased

Aboriginal land management" (5).

The book has four parts. The first provides context, including a history of Aboriginal-settler land conflict in British Columbia, an overview of Aboriginal peoples' social location in Canada, an assessment of modern treaty-making in British Columbia, and a study of Aboriginal assertion of land and resource rights. The second explores the different visions – Aboriginal and settler – that shape land and resource use in Canada, with chapters on different approaches to co-management, the integration of Aboriginal knowledge into forest management, and on forms of forest tenure that accommodate Aboriginal rights. The third focuses on traditional ecological knowledge, including prehistoric forest use in British Columbia, cultural resource management in BC forests, cross-cultural understandings of water, and spiritual conceptions of forestry. The fourth examines collaborative approaches to forest use and management, with chapters on forest conflict resolution, co-management and joint ventures in British Columbia, Aboriginal content in forestry education, efforts to accommodate Aboriginal interests in forest policy, and how consultation and accommodation serve to highlight (and perhaps reduce) losses incurred by Aboriginal communities through resource development decisions and activities.

The book, therefore, covers a broad terrain, from general discussion of the socio-economic status of Aboriginal peoples in Canada to detailed and place-specific case studies of forestry conflicts. Such a broad scope may appeal to a wide audience but weakens the volume's coherence; this somewhat loose anthology of chapters, collected under a very broad subject heading, lacks a central narrative. This is undoubtedly a familiar hazard of edited volumes, but a conclusion pulling together or integrating the book's main themes would have been useful. The volume is also uneven in a geographic sense, with more than half of the chapters focused on British Columbia. This is not surprising given the high-profile forest conflicts here, but the result is that other parts of the country are neglected.

Nonetheless, *Aboriginal Peoples and Forest Lands in Canada* makes a number of strong and useful contributions, particularly those straddling the meso landscape between case studies and the general contextual. Notable among these is M.A. (Peggy) Smith's analysis of natural resource co-management with Aboriginal peoples, in which she distinguishes between those based on an outdated assimilationist approach and those rooted in an ethos of coexistence. Also useful are chapters highlighting the need for an Aboriginal forest tenure (by Monique Passelac-Ross and M.A. Smith) and calling for integration of traditional knowledge into sustainable forest management (by Marc G. Stevenson). Altogether, the book represents a timely contribution to an important area of study that is deserving of more attention from scholars. Its gaps point to the need for more work in this rapidly changing field.

## *On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada*

Michael Asch

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014. 232 pp. $24.95 paper.

Neil Vallance
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Michael Asch has enjoyed a distinguished career as an anthropologist and original thinker.

In his writing he wrestles with the big questions of Indigenous/settler relations, proposes original answers, and argues his points with elegance and logic. His work is always a pleasure to read. The book under review represents his most recent thinking about a problem that has preoccupied him for thirty years: "We may be convinced by reasoned argument that Indigenous peoples have the same right of self-determination as do other colonized peoples, and the consequence may well be a recognition on our part that we have no right to stay. Yet, as [former Chief Justice] Lamer aptly summarized, we are here to stay. Therefore, even though the argument may be compelling, we are likely to reject it" (72). Each of the nine short chapters deals with an aspect of this conundrum.

In the first half of the book Asch critiques standard objections to his core premises: (a) "It is not right to move onto lands that belong to others without their permission," and (b) the permission granted by historical treaties "does not give us the authority to live as though these lands now belong to us" (4). In Chapter 1 Asch demonstrates that the Government of Canada offers only a meagre vision of Aboriginal rights, one in which "an Indigenous party must agree to exchange whatever rights derive from their pre-existence as societies for financial compensation and state recognition of specified rights" (21). In Chapter 3 he considers five arguments put forward in 2000 by Tom Flanagan (in *First Nations? Second Thoughts*) as to why Canadians should ignore the principle of "temporal priority," which holds "that people who were here before European settlement have rights which those who came later must recognize" (34). Asch then demolishes them one by one with merciless logic. In Chapter 4 he problematizes the argument that "it is the majority that determines the rights of Indigenous peoples regardless of how the majority came to be" (63).

In the ensuing chapters Asch switches from the negative to the positive, using the history of the so-called Numbered Treaties (especially Treaty No. 4 of 1874) as a way to frame potential solutions to the conundrum. He begins with the assertion that Indigenous parties to all the numbered treaties "speak with one voice in asserting that what the Crown asked for was permission to share the land, not to transfer the authority to govern it" (77), and he concludes that the Indigenous version "more closely conforms to what actually transpired at the time of treaty making" than does the government's account (80). He neatly sidesteps the issue of bad faith on the part of the Crown by arguing that at least some government representatives tried to be fair and by adopting the position of the courts, which is that "the Crown must be assumed to intend to fulfill its promises" (viii). Once past this hurdle, Asch innovatively draws upon Indigenous treaty law and marriage rules to provide fresh ways of looking at the historical treaties. For example, he takes the common image of the Two Row Wampum Treaty at Niagara – two canoes travelling down a river side by side – and gives it an intriguing new twist. He also argues that a treaty is like a marriage: "A treaty links two collectivities, just as a marriage joins two families together. Furthermore, as with our treaties, this marriage joins together two families that are living together on lands that originally belonged to one of them" (130).

Asch concludes that the way forward will require of Canadians both "setting the record straight" and "keeping our promises" (152-65). His arguments will not satisfy everyone, but this important reflection on the state of Indigenous/settler relations in Canada merits a wide readership.

## *Elusive Destiny: The Political Vocation of John Napier Turner*
Paul Litt

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011. 536 pp. $39.95 cloth.

## *Unbreakable: The Ujjal Dosanjh Story*
Douglas P. Welbanks

Vancouver: Chateau Lane Publishing, 2014. 175 pp. $19.95 paper.

## *Who We Are: Reflections on My Life and Canada*
Elizabeth May

Vancouver: Greystone, 2014. 214 pp. $29.95 cloth.

## *Radio Daze: 25 Years of Winning Awards and Getting Fired in Canadian Radio*
Rafe Mair

Victoria: Promontory Press, 2013. 187 pp. $14.99 paper.

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All four volumes reviewed here have a link with British Columbia, although for two it is very tenuous. They vary in genre, in focus, and in the political persuasions of their subjects or authors. Two are biographies; two can loosely be described as memoirs. The subjects of the biographies, John Turner and Ujjal Dosanjh, both had a brief time in a top office: Turner as Liberal prime minister in 1984 and Dosanjh as NDP premier of British Columbia (2000-01). Rafe Mair's memoir includes a few anecdotes about his time as a Social Credit cabinet minister between 1975 and 1981, while Elizabeth May, the federal leader of the Green Party and a serving member of Parliament, has produced a political manifesto in the guise of an autobiography. How much do these books tell us about BC politics? The answer ranges from almost nothing to a few tantalizing glimpses.

*Elusive Destiny*, the well-chosen title of Paul Litt's biography of John Turner, is the only scholarly work among the four. Well written and based on the extensive Turner papers and interviews with Turner himself, his wife, and a number of his contemporaries, it is a well balanced study. Alas, it says little about British Columbia. That is not Litt's fault. Turner has spent little time in British Columbia. As a small child he briefly lived with his widowed mother and her parents in Rossland before she became an economist in Ottawa. Her second marriage to Frank Mackenzie Ross, a Vancouver industrialist and later lieutenant-governor, brought Turner to Vancouver, where he spent four years at the University of British Columbia, an experience that culminated in a Rhodes Scholarship, but when he completed his legal studies he chose to practise law in Montreal. Apart from visits to his mother and trips for political purposes or as part of his responsibilities as a federal cabinet minister, Turner had limited contact with the province. The exceptions were shepherding the Columbia River treaty through the House of Commons and persuading W.A.C. Bennett to accept the Official Languages Act in return for a promise (not honoured) to appoint a British Columbian to the next vacancy in the Supreme Court. In 1984, as the newly elected leader of the

federal Liberals and prime minister, he needed a parliamentary seat; he chose to run in Vancouver-Quadra. Litt hints that Turner chose Vancouver rather than Montreal or Toronto, where he had previously served as an MP, in the hope of rebuilding the Liberals as a national party. Turner won the seat but the Conservatives won the election. For British Columbia, Turner remained elusive.

In contrast to Litt, whose thoroughly documented biography deals both with Turner's accomplishments and weaknesses, Douglas P. Welbanks wrote *Unbreakable: The Ujjal Dosanjh Story* to tell the story of his long-time friends, Ujjal Dosanjh and his wife Raminder Sandhu. Much of the information comes from the press, but Welbanks makes no attempt to hide his support for the NDP and his disdain for Social Credit even when this is not directly germane to Dosanjh. After briefly recounting their lives in India, Welbanks traces the experiences of the Dosanjhes in Vancouver as students; as professionals, he in law and she in teaching ESL (English as a second language); and in working for human rights. As an NDP candidate in the 1979 provincial election, Dosanjh experienced racism when "bigots suggested that as an immigrant he was not a suitable candidate" (41). Unfortunately for Dosanjh, his opposition to violence in India and the proposed creation of an independent Sikh state led Sikh extremists to attempt to assassinate him, to try to deny him the nomination in Vancouver-Kensington, and to firebomb his constituency office.

Welbanks suggests that, a decade later, the majority of voters saw Dosanjh "not as an 'ethnic' candidate but as a social democrat who transcended ethnicity" (62). Dosanjh was elected to the legislature in 1989 and re-elected in 1991 when the NDP formed the government. Four years later, he joined the cabinet and soon became attorney general, a position he continued to hold after Glen Clark succeeded Harcourt. When Clark resigned in 1999, Dosanjh ran for the party leadership. Despite a bitter "Anyone-But-Dosanjh" campaign, with the support of over half of the cabinet and other prominent NDP members, he won and became premier in February 2000. Divisions within the NDP and a legacy of scandals around some of his predecessors gave Dosanjh a short tenure as premier. In May 2001 the NDP lost all but two seats and neither belonged to Dosanjh.

Dosanjh's absence from politics was short. Demonstrating the fluidity of party lines, in 2004 Prime Minister Paul Martin invited him to run in the federal election as a Liberal. Welbanks suggests that "the provincial NDP was a liberal party, whereas the BC Liberals were a conservative-social credit party [so] … a jump from the BC NDP affiliation to the federal Liberal party was not much of a leap of faith or ideology" (132). Dosanjh easily won and was named minister of health. But it was a minority government, and after the 2006 election, he became opposition critic for national defence. After his defeat in the 2011 election, he announced plans to write his autobiography. Welbanks's biography whets the appetite for this "unbreakable" man's own story.

As part of a general comment on politics, Welbanks quotes Hubert Beyer of the *Nanaimo Daily News*, who said that Rafe Mair became "a legend in his own mind and [was] convinced that he single-handedly saved the nation at least twice as a result of his opposition to the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords" (101). Mair's own memoir, a slim volume, focuses on his twenty-five-year career in Vancouver's fiercely competitive radio talk show industry after he retired from Bill Bennett's

Social Credit cabinet. In a few pages, Mair recounts his opposition to Meech Lake and the Charlottetown Accord. He argues that had Prime Minister Brian Mulroney honoured a promise to appear on his show to defend the accord, the time allotted to speakers for both sides of the issue would have been exactly even. He gives much credit for British Columbia's vote against the accord to retired teachers Bud and Monica Smith and their friends, who distributed pamphlets and copies of Mair's editorials to the public. Mair devotes more space to his efforts to defend the environment, including opposition to the Ross Dam on the Skagit River, the Kemano II project, and fish farms. His environmental interests led him to move his political affiliation from the "centre to centre left" and he voted for the NDP in 2009 (7), despite assessing former NDP premiers Mike Harcourt as "a helluva good guy - just a lousy premier" (127) and Glen Clark as a "bright guy" with "lousy judgment" (128).

Although Elizabeth May, the leader of the Green Party, notes that she lives "on the edge of the Salish Sea" in Sidney by the Sea and is the member of Parliament for Saanich-Gulf Islands, her memoir says virtually nothing about British Columbia. She does not explain, for example, why she chose to move to British Columbia from her former bases in Nova Scotia and Ottawa. To be fair, her well written and researched biography is entitled, *Who We Are: Reflections on My Life and Canada*. The first section is rich in details about environmental issues and deals with her work in Ottawa mainly as a political advisor to Tom McMillan, the environment minister in the Mulroney cabinet, and as executive director of the Sierra Club of Canada. The main thrust of the book, however, is a Green Party election manifesto. Not only does she outline ideas for reforming the economy and dealing with climate change, she attacks Prime Minister Stephen Harper for, among other things, renouncing the Kyoto targets, breaking the fixed election date, cutting back on government scientific research, silencing scientists, ignoring warnings on global warming, promoting greater production from the oil sands, "killing" the long-form census, "excessive partisanship," and for concentrating power in the Prime Minister's Office. On a more optimistic note, she concludes: "We do not lack solutions" but must choose "survival over short-term profits," and we have the political will to do so (204).

In their varied styles and substance, collectively, these books reinforce the traditional idea that British Columbia pays slightly more attention to Ottawa than the reverse. The biography of Turner and the memoir of May say almost nothing about the province they chose to represent in Parliament. Dosanjh's biography only briefly refers to his federal career. And while Mair gained some fame (or infamy) for opposing Meech Lake and the Charlottetown Accord, it is only a small part of his account of his experiences as a talk show host. Neither individually nor collectively are these books major contributions to British Columbia's political history. Nevertheless, the biography of Turner and the manifesto by May are worth reading for their national significance while the biography of Dosanjh and the recollections of Mair add some texture to the complicated story of BC politics.