

BOOK REVIEWS

*Literary Land Claims: The
“Indian Land Question” from
Pontiac’s War to Attawapiskat*

Margery Fee

Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier
University Press, 2015. 326 pp.
\$31.19 paper.

MEGAN HARVEY
University of Victoria

AMIDST THE celebrations for the 150th anniversary of Canada’s Confederation this year, scholars and citizens alike are calling for national reflection on what this anniversary is meant to commemorate. To this end, Margery Fee’s *Literary Land Claims* is timely reading. Beginning with the question of how literature claims land, Fee draws our attention to the ways our stories support or trouble the settler claims to Indigenous territories that constituted the founding acts of the Canadian nation-state. By exploring a refreshing range of textual material, Fee also challenges what counts as “literature” in the Canadian canon and makes space for diverse voices. Alongside the more conventional fare of literary studies seen in John

Richardson’s early Canadian fiction and Tekahionwake/E. Pauline Johnson’s poetry and dramatic works, Fee’s chapters focus on the transcripts of Louis Riel’s final court hearing, Archibald Belaney/Grey Owl’s conservationist writings, and Syilx elder Harry Robinson’s oral histories. Together with a conclusion that engages the public discourse around Idle No More, Attawapiskat, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Residential Schools, Fee analyzes texts from 1796 to 2013. Importantly, she teases out the entangled ways in which “identity is connected to land rights” in this country, marshalling an impressive depth and breadth of knowledge relating to Canadian literary criticism and the history of Indigenous-settler relations (3).

The main chapters offer bold rereadings of well- and lesser-known works by authors who possessed “varying relationships to Indigenousness and therefore to land” (2). Other than Robinson, her subjects are not easily slotted into the categories of Indigenous or Canadian, in their time or in ours. The question of identity here is critical to Fee’s broader concerns about the legitimacy of Canada’s claims to land. She thoughtfully unpacks the social and legal contexts

that shaped how figures as diverse as Richardson, Riel, Johnson, Belaney, and Robinson lived, wrote, and spoke. She demonstrates how all five expressed “dissident positions” in their own time with respect to the prevailing narratives on what it meant to be Canadian or Indigenous, and how land rights accrued or were denied to people as a result of how successfully they could be slotted into one category or the other or work them to their advantage.

Some of Fee’s subjects, however, are more easily apprehended as dissidents than others, which is the great strength of this fascinating book. Fee characterizes the current critical climate in Canada as one in which “agonizing discussions about who is authentically Indigenous often overwhelm discussions about the content and quality of what people actually did, said, or wrote” (3). Her refusal to allow her own readings to be similarly overwhelmed produces sensitive interpretations that challenge her readers: it is the skilful analysis of figures as controversial as Belaney, for example, that makes this work so compelling. Throughout, Fee encourages us to understand her subjects for the complex positions they inhabit in relation to a set of stories about Canada, the land, and Indigeneity in distinct historical periods. She asks that we resist dismissing those whose biographies and behaviours confound easy categories and, at the same time, offers accounts that are at once redemptive and acutely conscious of her subjects’ limitations.

The result is a rich and thoughtful book that will appeal to anyone writing or teaching in fields relating to settler-colonial, Canadian, and Indigenous studies. Historians in particular will find Fee’s chapters a valuable complement to the original texts she discusses.

*New Treaty New Tradition:
Reconciling New Zealand and
Maori Law*

Carwyn Jones

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016.
232 pp. \$95.00 cloth.

*Fragile Settlements: Aboriginal
Peoples, Law, and Resistance
in South-West Australia and
Prairie Canada*

Amanda Nettelbeck, Russell
Smandych, Louis A. Knafka,
and Robert Foster

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016.
336 pp. \$95.00 cloth.

NEIL VALLANCE
Victoria

NEITHER BOOK under review has an explicit connection with British Columbia. Nonetheless, both deal with subjects of great relevance to the province. In *New Treaty New Tradition* Jones addresses the complexities of the New Zealand treaty settlement process, which has many similarities to the modern BC treaty process. In *Fragile Settlements* the authors undertake an ambitious overview of the (imperfect) imposition of state jurisdiction over Indigenous peoples in parts of Australia and Canada, generating a variety of insights applicable to the BC experience. At first glance the two books do not appear to have much in common, but they grapple with two aspects of the same issue – namely, the tensions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous legal systems, past and present. Nettelbeck et al. describe the

growth of state law in settler colonies and Indigenous peoples' resistance to it, while Jones foregrounds the resurgence of Maori law and the resulting pushback by the New Zealand state.

Jones is schooled in Maori legal traditions by virtue of his Ngāti Kahungunu and Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki descent, and in Canadian Aboriginal law through his time as a PhD student at the University of Victoria. Each chapter of the book begins with a story told to a Maori child by his father, illustrating an area of Maori law discussed in the body of the chapter. This is an explicit adoption of John Borrows's powerful technique of using storytelling as a way to capture the essence of Indigenous legal systems. Jones explains the underpinnings of Maori legal theory and connects them to the theoretical work of Canadian legal scholars such as Borrows, Gordon Christie, Jeff Corntassel, Val Napoleon, James Tully, and Jeremy Webber. The first part of the book "lays out important historical, theoretical, and conceptual background to the analysis of Maori law" (22). Jones summarizes five central concepts of Maori law: relationships, *mana* or authority, nurturing and stewardship, recognition of the spiritual dimension, and reciprocity (66-77). The second part "focuses on the treaty settlement process" (24), by which he means the implementation of agreements providing redress for past wrongs, the allocation of land, and the co-management of resources such as fisheries and forests. He warns that the present settlement process has had the unintended consequence of undermining Maori legal traditions and impeding the reconciliation of Maori law with the New Zealand legal system (30). In large measure, this is due to the fact that the government remains wedded to the attainment of certainty and finality rather than accepting this process as "a

new beginning" (156). His conclusion applies with equal force to the BC treaty process, which is additionally hobbled by the fact that First Nations legal traditions are not as yet adequately represented in negotiations. Until this imbalance can be addressed, reconciliation is unlikely to occur.

Of the four co-authors of *Fragile Settlements* two are Australian academics and two are Canadian, which ensures well-informed commentary on both regions under study. They state: "this book sets out to examine the legal and institutional processes that shaped efforts to assert sovereignty and secure jurisdiction over Indigenous peoples, to consider how they differed ... and to ask to what degree they succeeded" (ix-x). They acknowledge that the Numbered Treaties (1 to 7) blanketed the Canadian Prairies, while no treaties were concluded in the territories of South and West Australia; nonetheless, they argue convincingly that useful comparisons can be made between the colonial experiences of these disparate regions. Chapter 1 provides an overview of British colonial policy in the first half of the nineteenth century. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the development of colonial policing, Chapter 3 describes in detail the gradual application of policing to the Aboriginal populations of the two regions, and Chapter 4 provides a thoughtful consideration of the role of "Native Police, Trackers, and Scouts." Chapters 5, 6, and 7 consider the contributions of government officials ("Protectors of Aborigines" and "Indian Agents"), the court system, and the church to the project of bringing Indigenous communities under state control. Chapter 8 points out examples of Indigenous resistance to colonial authority but does not attempt to outline the role played by Indigenous legal traditions in this struggle. Chapter 9

makes the case for the relevance of this history to the future of Indigenous-settler relations. All of these comparisons bring up a host of potential parallels with and contrasts to events in British Columbia, begging for the attention of this province's scholars.

Fragile Settlements reads like an edited collection of essays, resulting in a disjointedness that could have been offset by more effectively pulling together its component parts. This caviel aside, the authors are to be commended for their courage in making comparisons across such a wide range of temporal and geographical contexts. In this undertaking they have succeeded, thus making a major contribution to trans-colonial studies. *New Treaty New Tradition* is beautifully written, and its engaging style renders complex Maori legal concepts accessible to Canadian scholars, students, and the general public. Readers will come away not only with an understanding of Maori legal traditions but also with an appreciation of the principles informing Indigenous thinking in many jurisdictions, including British Columbia.

*The Contemporary Coast Salish:
Essays by Bruce Granville Miller*

Bruce Granville Miller and
Darby C. Stapp, editors

Richland, WA: Memoir 12, Journal
of Northwest Anthropology, 2016.
347 pp. \$19.95 paper.

BRIAN THOM
University of Victoria

I WAS A third-year undergraduate at the University of British Columbia in 1990 when Bruce Miller joined the Department of Anthropology

and Sociology, launching his second career after having taught high school. Between 1991 and 1994 I took several of his classes, worked as his research assistant, and benefited from his joining my MA committee. My experiences with Bruce were of crossing borders – between archaeology and cultural anthropology, between the United States and Canada, between Coast Salish and newcomer understandings. Many of these same concerns are reflected in the themes of this book. Navigating borders, as Miller shows, involves grappling with state power, colonial history, cultural identity, and settler ignorance. This collection represents much of Miller's published work since the 1990s, and it will benefit not only academics, those interested in public policy, and legal audiences but also Coast Salish communities themselves. In addition to nineteen previously published works, *The Contemporary Coast Salish* includes two important new chapters and several other brief contributions. These are organized into eight themes that could be broadly characterized as engaged political anthropology, set in the context of decades-long partnerships with various Coast Salish communities, most significantly those of the Upper Skagit (in which Miller did his doctoral research) and several Stó:lō communities (in which Miller and his graduate students have carried on a close research collaboration for over twenty-five years).

Several of the chapters stand out for their critical insight into issues that continue to be of pressing concern. Miller and Boxberger's "Creating Chiefdoms" (Chapter 4) crafts a carefully ethnohistorical study that problematizes dated anthropological theories that are imposed on Coast Salish peoples with ongoing consequences. In a series of chapters on "folk," or "customary," law (7,

9, 11, and 23), Miller works to make Coast Salish law recognizable in contemporary contexts – leading-edge work that informs developing legal practices. In Chapter 8, “Bringing Culture In,” Miller provides an illuminating discussion of contemporary Coast Salish potlatch, feast, and longhouse practices without stepping into the problematic and private areas that might reveal too much, instead sharing insights from historic and contemporary practice that can move us forward towards the goals of reconciliation. His post-9/11 chapters (19 and 20) sensitively relay how the hardened border affects identity and citizenship, salmon fisheries, health services, and spiritual dignity. The concluding chapter, based on his electric plenary talk given at the 2012 Vancouver Island Treaties conference (<https://vitreaties.wordpress.com/conference-videos/>), is as much an analysis of the nature of knowledge and history as it is a consideration of the possibilities of more just and equitable treaty relations in the twenty-first century. With these chapters collected in one volume, Miller and Stapp provide readers from within and beyond academia with ready access to critical insights into contemporary life in the Coast Salish world. Only Chapter 2, the introduction to another of Miller’s books, seems out of place, with its summaries of chapters from another text. The first third of that chapter should have been edited out, and the useful (but now ten-year-old) literature review updated with recent scholarship by and with Coast Salish peoples.

What makes *The Contemporary Coast Salish* special is the fact that Miller’s three decades of experience with Coast Salish peoples is not a product of grant-funded academic research programs; instead, the problems and questions Miller addresses have, by and large, emerged from communities that have set the research

agenda and benefited from Miller’s role as cogent mediator between institutions and communities interacting within the Coast Salish world. This being the case, the book is of vital importance to one of the major social questions society now faces: the place of culture in seeking social justice and equality within legacies of colonialism.

Throughout *The Contemporary Coast Salish*, Miller maintains his distinctive style, not relying on long quotes or decentering his own voice but, instead, offering a tell-it-like-it-is narrative as commentator, critic, and, at times, authority. The chapters are in dialogue with trends in academia, often providing a cold counterpoint to fashionable theories – sometimes clearly ahead of their time – and articulating principles that are relevant beyond anthropology, extending into law, public policy and history, and health. Miller challenges us to not be “stuck with the concepts of seasonal rounds, watersheds, or the notion of the historically passive Coast Salish” (339) but, rather, to embrace a diversity of social theories and disciplinary insights to reconfigure the place of Coast Salish peoples in contemporary society. This position demands that anthropological analysis focus attention on substantive matters of cultural concern rather than try to represent or recreate so-called traditional forms of culture. Miller’s approach offers a genuine position that would enable anthropologists to be powerful partners in supporting Indigenous efforts towards attaining self-determination. His infectious enthusiasm and socially grounded research have made important contributions to transforming how the contemporary lives of Coast Salish peoples are represented and understood.

Bringing Water to Victoria: An Illustrated History, 1843-1915

Charles W. Tolman

Sooke, BC: Sooke Region Museum,
2015. 220 pp. \$19.95 paper.

ADELE PERRY

University of Manitoba

LITTLE IS AS intimate and political as the water that flows from city taps. We fill our bodies with it, we wash our babies in it. Many of us depend on the state to provide it and more of us depend on the state to regulate it. The quality of our health is in no small part determined by access to plentiful amounts of drinking water. Who has good access to it and who does not – whether in the global south, the deindustrialized American city of Flint, Michigan, or the nineteen First Nations in British Columbia and eighty-seven First Nations communities elsewhere in Canada that together had a staggering 165 drinking water advisories as of the spring of 2017 – tells us a lot about who, exactly, can gain access to the promises of modernity and who cannot.

For all of this, historians have not spent an awful lot of time studying the history of drinking water and water supply, at least in British Columbia or Canada. Charles W. Tolman's *Bringing Water to Victoria: An Illustrated History, 1843-1915* is an exception. This is a small, richly illustrated book, published by the Sooke Region Museum. Tolman is a retired psychology professor from the University of Victoria. Using a private archive of photographs taken by a project engineer, newspapers, and other archival photographic collections and records, Tolman crafts a history of Victoria's municipal water supply. He begins with the arrival of non-Indigenous settlers

at Fort Victoria in 1843, takes readers through the complicated years at the end of the nineteenth century, and then focuses on the planning, funding, and building of a pipeline carrying water from Sooke Lake to Victoria between 1910 and 1915.

Tolman opens with the statement that his book "is intended as a celebration" of Victoria's water supply (vii). And indeed it is. *Bringing Water to Victoria* is full of fascinating photographs and quotes from primary sources. Tolman traces in detail the complicated process by which Victoria came to decide on Sooke Lake as a water supply and to build a flowline connecting it to the city. The book concludes with an afterword contributed by the manager of the Capital Regional District's Integrated Water Services, expressing his hope that the system built a century ago will continue to provide "some of the best drinking water in the world" (206).

Bringing Water to Victoria suggests the enormous potential of studying the history of urban domestic water supply to cities like Victoria. The development of municipal water systems in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century was a key step in urban growth and in the creation of municipal infrastructure and public health systems. During this much-studied period of social and urban reform, contemporaries documented the building of aqueducts, flowlines, reservoirs, and dams with loving, celebratory care, and Tolman marshals this rich archive to good effect.

Historians can learn much from these records. However, we will learn the most when we push beyond the celebration of city water and the people who designed, funded, and built the systems that delivered it, and continue to deliver it, to cities like Victoria. Instead, we might ask what municipal water supply systems have cost the Indigenous people upon whose

land they were built and whose water they used. We might also ask the questions that historians of the environment are posing about mega-projects and their lasting imprint on the land: How did projects like the Sooke to Victoria flowline reshape the lived environment of southern Vancouver Island, particularly by locating a substantial urban population in an area without ready access to good drinking water? As questions of water supply and the lack of it continue to make headlines, we will no doubt continue to think about the history of water, that deeply intimate and political stuff. Tolman's affectionate, visually rich and detailed local study suggests some of the ways that we might do so.

*Aqueduct: Colonialism,
Resources, and the Histories
We Remember*
Adele Perry

Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2016. 104 pp. \$14.95 paper.

DYLAN BURROWS
University of British Columbia

IF, AS ADELE Perry suggests, history is cacophony, then the opening of Winnipeg's Canadian Museum of Human Rights (CMHR) in September 2014 was bound to be discordant. Camped outside the CMHR, Anishinaabe from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation and Pimicikamak Okimawin greeted members of the public and visibly reminded them of one of the colonial ties that bind their respective communities together: the Greater Winnipeg Water District Aqueduct.

Stretching from Shoal Lake on the Manitoba-Ontario border to Winnipeg, the Aqueduct's construction between

1914 and 1919 ensured citizens and industry alike a safe and reliable source of water. A different story prevailed at Shoal Lake. Civic officials, aided by the Crown, expropriated prime reserve lands without local consent; officials' cost-saving decision to build a dyke to divert swampy water from the Aqueduct's intake marooned the Indigenous community on an artificial island. Though Anishinaabe water courses through its exhibits, the CMHR remained oblivious to Shoal Lake's struggle to survive its ongoing geographic, political, and economic isolation.

Aqueduct is a brief yet poignant exploration of these submerged histories. In this latest offering from ARP Books' Semaphore Series, Perry pursues two objectives in arguing that the Winnipeg Aqueduct "is Canadian colonialism in scale model and technicolour." First, *Aqueduct* continues Perry's long-time assertion that transnational history is a viable framework within which to understand the nature of Canada's colonial project, while not losing sight of the localized experience of settler colonialism. While Chapter 2 details the violent emergence of the classed and racialized urban geographies of later nineteenth-century Winnipeg, it is in Chapter 3, "Water and City," that Perry brings into focus the links between the local and the transnational. She shows that when local water supplies limited "capitalist profit and urban growth" outside technological and engineering expertise proved crucial. Turning to American experts in 1897, 1905, and during the Aqueduct's construction, civic leaders enmeshed themselves "within a continental, settler world and in doing so reframed the city's ongoing location within the British Empire."

Second, and I think more important, *Aqueduct* rewrites public pasts that erase Indigenous histories of the Winnipeg

Aqueduct's construction and thus sustain ongoing settler indifference to the plight of Shoal Lake 40. In Chapter 5, Perry takes persistent aim at this "language of Indigenous absence" by highlighting the few traces of Indigenous presence found within the "official" record of the aqueduct's construction. "In archival fragments like these," Perry observes, "the Indigenous history of the Aqueduct surfaces, awkwardly disrupting the settler celebration and Indigenous erasure that undergirds the planning and building of the Aqueduct." Perry uses this juxtaposition to great effect in the final chapter. Contemporary Anishinaabe voices unsettle the official narratives of the Aqueduct's past propagated by commemorative plaques scattered across Winnipeg and in the halls of the CMHR – that, in the words of Indigenous community leaders, "towering shrine to hypocrisy."

Aqueduct is an accessible counter-hegemonic history, and it comprises an ideal primer for both the general reading public and undergraduate students, enabling them to explore the colonial histories that shape the spaces they inhabit. Purchasing the book would also be an ethical choice: all royalties from *Aqueduct* go to Shoal Lake 40's Freedom Road fund, which sustains the community's on-reserve Canadian Museum of Human Rights Violations. *Aqueduct*, then, allows readers to put their money where their mouth is and make a small contribution to the process of decolonization.



*The Columbia River Treaty:
A Primer*

Robert William Sandford,
Deborah Harford, and
Jon O'Riordan

Victoria: Rocky Mountain Books,
2014. 141 pp. \$16.00 cloth.

*A River Captured: The
Columbia River Treaty and
Catastrophic Change*

Eileen Delehanty Pearkes

Victoria: Rocky Mountain Books,
2016. 288 pp. \$20.00 paper.

JASON M. COLBY
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THESE ARE two little books about one big river and the agreement that remade it. By any measure, the Columbia River Treaty (CRT) was a transformative moment for the Pacific Northwest. Finalized by Canada and the United States in 1964, it ended flooding, generated billions in electricity revenue, reordered ecosystems, erased farms and settlements in British Columbia, and created new ones in Washington State and Oregon. Although few residents seem to realize it, the CRT has shaped their region for the past five decades, and it became eligible for renegotiation in 2014.

Hence the purpose of *The Columbia River Treaty: A Primer*. Headed by international water expert Robert Sandford, its authors aim to reveal the issues at stake under the CRT. They begin by explaining what prompted it. In May 1948, the lower Columbia River flooded, destroying the city of Vanport, Oregon. The disaster spurred

the first serious discussions between American and Canadian officials regarding the damming of the upper Columbia. Eager to fund other provincial development, Liberal BC premier W.A.C. Bennett manoeuvred Ottawa into an agreement that pivoted on the “Canadian Entitlement” – a series of payments from the United States for electricity and flood control. Bennett got the cash he wanted to dam the Peace River, but this meant that the Upper Columbia would be harnessed largely for American purposes.

As the authors rightly note, the CRT came at the height of mid-century hubris. Engineers believed they could harness the Columbia, but they had little understanding of the role the river already played. The result was an ill-considered attempt to improve upon nature. “Because we did not have a full understanding of the riches we already had,” assert Sandford et al., “we took one of the greatest natural ecosystem powerhouses on the planet and shut it down to produce electricity” (66-67). The authors emphasize that negotiators took little account of First Nations on the upper Columbia, resulting in the erasure of culturally significant places and entire communities. Future negotiations, they argue, will have to address these human rights violations.

Sandford et al. make their most convincing case when they turn to environmental issues. Any revised treaty, they argue, must not only draw upon Indigenous knowledge for ecological restoration but also include greater flexibility so as to be able to respond to climate change. Yet the authors rightly note that American and Canadian priorities will be far apart on this score. Concerned with irrigation and expanding the Columbia’s salmon runs, American officials will push for larger water releases from BC reservoirs

during spring and summer, while their Canadian counterparts will want to maintain water levels to restore the riparian environment.

Despite these strengths, *The Columbia River Treaty* is limited as a historical text. The authors pay little attention to the pre-1964 remaking of the Columbia River, particularly on the American side – a period treated by Richard White’s *The Organic Machine* (1995). They also fall short when it comes to telling the human story. While their primer discusses the impact of the CRT in general terms, it lacks the local voices that would have enabled it to drive its arguments home.

Eileen Delehanty Pearkes fills this gap. Part history, part travelogue, *A River Captured* explores the natural and cultural landscape of the Columbia River borderlands – as they were before and as they are today. And while Sandford et al. acknowledge the regional benefits of the CRT, Pearkes presents a story of “catastrophic ecological and social change” (14). It is a superb read, blending historical context with moving interviews and personal asides. In the process, Pearkes offers plenty of episodes that will enrage readers. These include the 1956 Orders in Council that declared the Arrow Lake Indian Band extinct, thereby opening its land to appropriation and flooding. Also riveting are tales of Bennett’s manoeuvring to secure short-term cash over long-term Canadian water sovereignty. As a result of his myopia, the United States got Libby Dam, while BC residents were stuck with unusable reservoirs and BC Hydro.

Pearkes does stumble on occasion. She claims that the CRT reveals “universal truths about the North American settler culture” (16), but she neglects to specify what those “truths” might be. She also seems determined to attribute the CRT to “corporate greed,” in sharp contrast to the story she is telling. After all, most

of the displaced people she interviews are members of the “settler culture,” and the CRT itself was the product of government, not corporate, power. BC Hydro had the authority to force farmers out because it was a *Crown* corporation. In this sense, the CRT is less an example of corporate greed than a familiar tale of high Cold War statism run amok.

Pearkes also commits a number of factual errors. She claims, for example, that Eisenhower failed to win re-election in 1960 (he didn't run) and that Gerald Ford was the American president in 1973 (it was still Nixon). Yet these missteps don't detract from her narrative. Pearkes paints a vivid, heartbreaking picture of lives and landscapes disrupted, and her account of the displacement of the Spicer family is alone worth the price of purchase.

Both of these books are published by Rocky Mountain Books, and they make a superb pairing. Suited to a wide range of undergraduate courses, they represent engaged scholarship at its best. And considering Justin Trudeau's recent announcement that he is willing to renegotiate the CRT, they should be required reading for all residents of the Pacific Northwest.



*Edmonton House Journals,
Correspondence and Reports:
1806–1821*

Ted Binnema and
Gerhard J. Ens, editors

Calgary: Historical Society of
Alberta, 2012. 530 pp. \$60.00 cloth.

JAMIE MORTON
*Alberni Valley Museum, Port
Alberni, BC*

THIS VOLUME assembles the remaining records (with the exception of accounts) produced between 1806 and 1821 at Edmonton House, the Saskatchewan District headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company. This period starts with the 1806 Lewis and Clark expedition and ends with the 1821 amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the North West Company (NWC). Many of the records were produced by James Bird, in charge of the post as inland chief after 1803, then chief of the Saskatchewan District after 1814, and acting governor of the Northern Department from 1816 to 1818. The editors utilize the archival sources to provide an effective snapshot of the dramatic economic and social changes taking place at this time, and link them to the major themes of the early contact period in the northern Prairies.

The movements and activities of First Nations are noted, including the impact of the introduction of horses and the ways in which intergroup alliances and coalitions were formed and dissolved. The introduction and expansion of the fur trade/capitalist economy is described, with British, Canadian, and American interests trading with local First Nations or bringing in hunters. This contact led not only to a fluid pattern of alliances

and conflict with First Nations but also to the emergence of resident freeman and mixed-blood/Métis populations. The bitter competition between the NWC and the HBC is described from the perspective of the latter and the Saskatchewan District. Additionally, the records provide insight into the day-to-day operation of the post, the annual round of the post and the district, and the social environment of the fur trade. This is the period during which economic competition between the HBC and the NWC escalated into the 1814-18 Fur Trade War, and it is enlightening to read how this competition and violence was perceived by the managers of the HBC's Saskatchewan District.

The transcription of the primary documents is well judged, maintaining their character by integrating some of the quirks of grammar, spelling, and expression found in the originals. Binnema and Ens have annotated the transcribed documents effectively with biographical, contextual, and explanatory footnotes. Having these on the page with the text, rather than as endnotes, facilitates understanding, and a comprehensive index allows for easy thematic and name searches of the records. Three appendices augment and provide further context for the information presented in the documents. They include a glossary of the terms used to describe the First Nations mentioned, biographies of fur trade personnel, and brief post histories. These supporting materials make the two-hundred-year-old primary documents easily accessible.

A key feature of the book is its excellent eighty-page introduction, "The View from Edmonton House, 1806-1821," by the editors, Binnema and Ens. Both have worked extensively on the themes, places, and people presented in the primary documents, and their depth of knowledge

shines in this interpretive essay. They note the limitations of the Edmonton House records, which represent the perceptions of the HBC managers, whose comments and observations were directed by business strategies and the viability and security of the district's posts. Binnema and Ens note that, in many cases, the HBC was reacting to the more aggressive strategies of the NWC as well as to changing economic and social conditions among First Nations. They provide an effective historical overview of regional developments within which to frame the HBC records as well as an overview of fur trade operations and practices within which to locate the historical records. Notably, the authors offer new interpretations of the events of the 1814-18 Fur Trade War, including the Battle of Seven Oaks, based in part on the observations of James Bird as the HBC district chief.

Unsurprisingly, this book includes little relating to developments in the New Caledonia and Columbia fur trade districts now included in British Columbia. Prior to 1821 the HBC left the transmontane trade to the NWC, making only a few sporadic efforts in the area. Nonetheless, Binnema and Ens have produced an excellent edited collection of documents, framing the primary records with strong supporting materials and an insightful narrative introduction. For the student of BC history, this book provides insights into the factors that determined the strategies of the fur trade companies as they moved west of the Rockies.

*A Great Rural Sisterhood:
Madge Robertson Watt and
the ACWW*

Linda M. Ambrose

Toronto: University of Toronto
Press, 2015. 360 pp. \$32.95 paper.

LISA PASOLLI

St. Francis Xavier University

IN *A Great Rural Sisterhood*, Linda Ambrose takes on the challenging task of telling the life story of a woman who left behind no personal diaries or papers and whose paper trail is fragmented. Through her impressive archival efforts, Ambrose has put together a rich and detailed portrait of Margaret “Madge” Robertson Watt that highlights her contributions to early twentieth-century rural and international women’s activism.

In part, this book is a straightforward biography – an achievement in itself given the many twists and turns along Watt’s life path. More interesting, though, is the way in which Ambrose uses Watt’s life as a launching point from which to explore several themes in early twentieth-century women’s history. The first two chapters outline Watt’s formative years, including her time at the University of Toronto and her subsequent position as editor of the popular Toronto-based *Ladies Pictorial Weekly*, a remarkable position for a twenty-four-year-old woman. Ambrose uses this period of Watt’s life as a window into the complexities of the “New Woman.” In her articles about marriage, higher education for women, paid work, and motherhood, Ambrose suggests, Watt represented a “transitional” type of womanhood that occurred between Victorian social expectations and New Woman ideology. Historians interested in the entanglements of gender, class, and

feminism in the early twentieth century will find much to ponder here.

The bulk of Ambrose’s study focuses on Watt’s career as an organizer and expert on rural women’s issues. She was a key figure in the Women’s Institutes (WI) movement, beginning in Metchosin, British Columbia, which is where she moved with her husband in 1893. After her husband’s death in 1913, she moved to England, where she spent the war years establishing the first WIs in the United Kingdom. Ambrose positions Watt as a key figure in interwar transnational women’s activism, suggesting that she represented the strength of imperial feminism. Less convincing is Ambrose’s assertion that Watt undertook an act of “reverse colonialism” by transplanting ideas about rural women’s organizing from Canada to the mother country. Considered alongside the rich historiography of colonialism in Canada, calling Watt’s actions “reverse colonialism” seems to skirt the real and important issues of racial, class, and gender oppression at the heart of the colonial relationship between Canada and Britain. Ambrose’s analysis is stronger, though, in her discussion of the complex “sentimental ties” between Canada and the United Kingdom, which shaped much of women’s activism at the time (98).

Eventually, in 1933, Watt’s work with rural women around the globe culminated with her role as co-founder of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). It is in Watt’s work with this important international organization that Ambrose is able to provide rare glimpses into her personality. Watt’s tendency towards self-promotion and her desire to be recognized as an expert on international rural women’s issues often led her to clash with other members of the ACWW executive, especially those whose responsibility

it was to rein in her spending on overly ambitious international speaking tours and conferences. In these sections, Ambrose reminds us that the story of the formation of the “great rural sisterhood” was also a story of cooperation and conflict between individuals. In doing so, she humanizes this sisterhood and offers a fascinating portrait of what it meant to build an international movement of women.

*Soviet Princeton: Slim Evans
and the 1932–33 Miners’ Strike*

Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat

Vancouver: New Star Books, 2016.
126 pp. \$19.00 paper.

RON VERZUH
Eugene, OR

ARTHUR “Slim” Evans has long been a notable figure in Canadian labour history, most often associated with the famed On-to-Ottawa Trek that he led in 1935 in an effort to improve conditions in the relief camps set up by Conservative prime minister R.B. Bennett. In this account of his role in leading coal miners in Princeton, British Columbia, in a strike that occurred during the early years of the Great Depression, Bartlett and Ruebsaat highlight a lesser-known reason for Evans’s historical notability. The authors set the scene with a brief history of the region, the mining industry that sustained it, and the lives of the local miners who were exploited to sustain the profits of their employer, Tulameen Coal Mines Ltd. The action begins when the miners are faced with a 10 percent pay cut. Angry and determined to fight the cut, they seek help from the radical

communist union organizer Arthur Evans.

Evans came to the mountainous Similkameen Valley town carrying much political baggage and a reputation as an outside agitator. As a young man, he joined the storied Industrial Workers of the World (the Wobblies) and was wounded by machine gun fire in the notorious Ludlow Massacre in Colorado. Five years after its founding in 1921, he joined the Communist Party of Canada (CPC), later working as an organizer for its Workers’ Unity League (WUL) after its inception in 1929. It was as a WUL representative that he helped start a local of the Mine Workers’ Union of Canada in Princeton.

Such a reputation was grist for the mill of Dave Taylor, editor of the *Princeton Star*, a mouthpiece for local mine managers, and it provided plenty of excuses for the local establishment to attack Evans. This establishment included “the local board of trade[,] ... a vigilante organization founded by the board[,] ... the provincial police[,] ... the provincial courts, the government of British Columbia[,] and the federal government” (12). These forces met Evans with a vocal anti-communism, and, soon after his arrival (he was referred to as the “red” intruder), the so-called Citizens’ League kidnapped him and put him on a train heading back to his Vancouver base. However, Evans hopped off at the first stop and returned to help the miners form a local of the Mine Workers’ Union of Canada and to go on strike against Tulameen Coal Mines Ltd. The harassment of Evans continued, and it included a cross-burning incident organized by a klavern of the Ku Klux Klan. Yet even this did not end his troubles.

Soviet Princeton is not a full biography, and it is not intended to be an academic study; rather, it is a sympathetic treatment

of some of the events that occurred in Evans's life. It is competently written in a popular style peppered with colloquialisms, and it is generously illustrated with historic photos. It is further enlivened with salacious quotations from the *Star* and the WUL's *Unemployed Worker*, and liberally sprinkled with passages from numerous legal documents, including an excerpt from the dreaded anti-terrorist Section 98 of the Criminal Code. The authors also provide a thumbnail sketch of the politics of the Depression years and discuss the trend towards the left that gave Evans and others "who saw in the hopelessness of the Great Depression a lever to change the course of history" (96).

The book closes with a dramatic account of Evans's Section 98 conspiracy trial in late 1933. He was sentenced to eighteen months in prison, but when he emerged from Oakalla Prison Farm in Burnaby after serving nine months, his penchant for activism was undiminished.

In February 1944, at the age of fifty-three, Evans died in a Vancouver streetcar accident. According to Bartlett and Ruebsaat, he "gave heart (and political direction) to men who would remember it throughout their lives" (44). In my book, this makes him a Canadian hero and deserving of his prominent place in the annals of labour history.

* * *

For further reading on Evans's life and times, see Jean Evans Sheils (Evans's daughter) and Ben Swankey, *Work and Wages!* (Vancouver: Trade Union Research Bureau and Granville Press Ltd., 1977).

*A Rock Fell on the Moon:
Dad and the Great Yukon Silver
Ore Heist*

Alicia Priest

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2014. 256 pp. \$32.95 cloth.

KATHARINE ROLLWAGEN
Vancouver Island University

ON THE surface, Alicia Priest's memoir *A Rock Fell on the Moon: Dad and the Great Yukon Silver Ore Heist* is a well-researched and well-written account of Gerald H. Priest's attempt to steal silver ore from a mine in the Yukon in the 1960s. But, under the surface, what sparkles is Priest's desire to understand her father's actions and motivations. Did he commit the crime? And why? Her insightful and rewarding journey into the heart of a family illustrates the challenge of ever uncovering what *really* happened. And, unlike in mining, there's no heavy lifting: Priest unravels the story in concise and lively prose and includes fascinating photographs.

Priest begins the story with her ten-year-old self, ruminating on her fate. It is June 1963, and Alicia and her sister, Vona, have been "kidnapped" by their parents and removed from their Yukon home in the town of Elsa to Vancouver, British Columbia. This prologue works neatly to establish and contrast these two key settings and to introduce the Priest family. By writing from a child's perspective, Priest puts the reader in her shoes, with her limited understanding of events as they developed. Like young Alicia, we are given only newspaper headlines and radio reports, and we share her confusion and vague shame about her father's circumstances. Readers are left – like Alicia – wanting to know what happened.

Before examining the details of the silver ore heist, Priest spends the first fifth of the book setting the stage. The first chapter uses omniscient narration to reimagine the day a truckload of silver ore caught the attention of company manager Al Pike – the event that ultimately led to her father’s arrest. She then details the early lives, courtship, and marriage of her father, Gerald Henry Priest, and her mother, Helen Friesen. She briefly sketches the history of mining in the Yukon, demonstrating the key role that silver has played in the territory and describing the development of United Keno Hill Mines, Ltd., where her father was employed as chief assayer. Finally, in a chapter entitled “My Elsa,” Priest introduces the town she loved, blending a “tour” of its streets, buildings, and residents with descriptions of her family’s routines and rituals and excerpts from the town newsletter, the *Tramline*.

With the main characters introduced and the setting established, Priest sets out to reconstruct, in compelling fashion, the crime and its calamitous effects on her family. Her father was investigated, arrested in August 1963, tried, and, in March 1965, convicted of stealing silver ore. In an epilogue, Priest brings the reader closer to the present as she tries to reconcile with her father and asks him: “What really happened?”

While she characterizes her father’s version of events as a “long and convoluted fairy tale” (235), Priest uses the historical record to reconstruct the heist and subsequent trial in engaging detail. Her account mines redacted RCMP files, court transcripts, correspondence, and newspapers, and also includes interviews with several people involved in the investigation and trials. The diversity of sources means that Priest’s story of her family’s ordeal is well balanced. Priest neither defends nor condemns her father, and she includes multiple

and differing opinions of his personality and his actions. These assessments of Gerald Priest demonstrate his daughter’s commitment to providing a complex, and thus more realistic and interesting, account.

Priest’s historical “bonanza” is undoubtedly the nearly three hundred letters and cards her father wrote to her mother, along with Helen Priest’s spiral-bound notebooks filled with her thoughts. The letters allow Priest to sketch out her parents’ relationship from beginning to end, while the notebooks offer the emotional and occasionally cryptic reflections of a loyal spouse trying to keep her family together. Priest reads them as only a daughter can; they confirm and sometimes contradict her memories of the time. Her parents’ perspectives on events enrich and complicate her interpretation of the written record.

Like glittering veins running through rock, the letters and notebooks transform *A Rock Fell on the Moon* from a “true crime” account into an important record of childhood, marital relations, and emotions in 1960s Canada. Priest’s narrative consistently points to the gendered roles her parents performed. Her father was the indisputable head of his household: he strove to be independent and strong, and he hid his fear and uncertainty. Helen, Vona, and Alicia are not portrayed as helpless victims, but they were clearly at the mercy of Gerald’s desires and decisions. Stuck in Vancouver, young Alicia longs for the stable family life that, for nine years, she enjoyed in Elsa; however, her adult self suggests that the domesticity and daily routine she craved stifled her restless father and may, in part, have motivated his actions.

In contrast to this vivid portrait of family life, Priest’s account of Elsa itself is somewhat muted. It is unclear whether she consulted histories of other

company towns. While she is careful to recognize that not all residents shared her childhood memories of the town as a “gleaming gem of good things” (43), and while she does discuss the gendered, classed, and racialized dynamics of life in a company town, in her telling Elsa emerges as an idyllic and exceptional place – “a universe apart” (49). Still, Elsa shared the characteristics of many company towns in the Yukon and British Columbia, including Alice Arm and Britannia Beach, among others. The lack of a broader context here is disappointing. Priest argues that her father’s actions may have been spurred on by his mundane work and his relationship to the company, and had she offered a closer examination of the complex employee–employer relationship this may have given readers an even better understanding of the crime.

While this part of the book left this historian with some unanswered questions, *A Rock Fell on the Moon* is primarily a memoir, not a history. And it is an exemplary memoir, combining rich descriptions of the Yukon during a mining boom with the details of an almost-successful heist, and offering a rare window onto the life, laughter, and loss of a mid-century Canadian family.

Christy Clark: Behind the Smile

Judi Tyabji

Victoria: Heritage House, 2016.
373 pp. \$32.95 cloth.

PATRICIA ROY
University of Victoria

ACCORDING to Judi Tyabji, this is “not an authorized biography. In fact, it’s not really a biography at all because she’s still premier.” Rather, it

is “a book about Premier Clark written by someone who has known her, through politics, since the mid-1980s” (i), when both were university students. Although it sometimes wanders from the subject of Clark, the book looks like a biography: it even offers a psychologist’s analysis (extending for seven pages) of what Tyabji calls “the XX factor” in politics – the role of gender. It includes a chapter on Clark’s childhood, complete with a baby picture; several comments on her father’s influence; references to her former husband and political operative Mark Marissen and their son; accounts of her career as host of a talk show; and discussion of the role of her older brother, Bruce, in getting her nominated and elected in 1996 and in organizing her successful campaign for the Liberal leadership in 2011.

Tyabji, who says their relationship was that of colleagues, rather than of friends or buddies, is well placed to write about Clark since she, too, served as a Liberal member of the Legislative Assembly. Their terms, however, did not overlap. Tyabji broke with the party and was defeated in 1996, the year that Clark was elected. And Tyabji ended any relationship with Clark after the latter attacked Gordon Wilson (Tyabji’s husband), who was then an NDP cabinet minister. Tyabji also thought that Clark “sold out” by becoming Campbell’s deputy premier in 2001 (184). In 2013, however, Tyabji changed her mind after visiting the Okanagan and chatting with family members engaged in the wine industry. After Tyabji told Wilson that Clark was doing a good job as premier, he made a YouTube video endorsing Clark and, with Tyabji, ensured that it was well publicized.

Tyabji rightly concedes that the book often says more about her and Wilson than it does about Clark (311). As for Wilson’s 2013 appointment to the plum

job of LNG (liquefied natural gas) Buy BC advocate, Tyabji quotes some negative press comments but has Wilson explain that he endorsed Clark's idea that the LNG project would not only generate wealth for British Columbia but also reduce pollution in such places as China. Tyabji's main sources of information are news reports, political columnists, and her own interviews with politicians, elected officials, and party organizers (both Liberal and NDP); several First Nations leaders; and others. She quotes extensively – often a page or more – from her informants. Apart from some First Nations leaders, only Guy Monty, a wildlife consultant, was willing to speak negatively of Clark on the record. Because of this, he is quoted on many issues unrelated to his expertise. The quotations from opposition politicians such as Moe Sihota, a former NDP cabinet minister, are quite benign. The long extracts from newspaper columns and/or interviews are tedious and suggest hasty writing. Nevertheless, buried within some interviews we catch glimpses of divisions within the Liberal Party.

In the longest chapter – forty-three pages – Tyabji declares that the greatest accomplishments and conflicts of Clark's government have concerned First Nations. Tyabji suggests that Clark's relationships with First Nations are influenced by the friendships she developed with Aboriginal people during childhood summers on the Gulf Islands and the belated discovery of First Nations cousins, the descendants of a great-uncle. As minister of education, Clark instituted what Tyabji refers to as successful measures to increase the number of Aboriginal high school graduates. Several First Nations leaders offer their opinions of Clark and her policies, and these range from complaints of inaction on matters of rights and Aboriginal title to an appreciation of her willingness to

talk to them and respect their cultures. Incidentally, they also reveal that, on various matters, First Nations have divided opinions.

Christy Clark introduces some new information, especially regarding the inner workings of the Liberal Party, but it leaves some subjects hanging. For example, it mentions the Nisga'a Treaty but does not explain why it was so unpopular or why Clark voted against it in 1999. Tyabji notes that Clark's cabinet vetoed the appointment of George Abbott as chief commissioner of the BC Treaty Commission, but she does not indicate whether this decision was based on perceived problems with Abbott or on the possibility of disbanding the commission.

Most chapters begin with an epigraph from the 2015 bestseller *The Road to Character* by David Brooks, a conservative *New York Times* columnist. According to Tyabji, it is Clark's favourite book, and her copy is dog-eared and full of notes. Tyabji's goal is to provide "a bit of context to understand the unique leadership of Premier Christy Clark." She does this because: "[I] felt the portrayal of her as a heartless, arrogant, corporate sellout did not match the truth about her or the work she was doing on our behalf" (10). Despite Tyabji's disclaimer, *Christy Clark* falls into the genre of biography – specifically, the subcategory of campaign biography, a fact underscored by references to what was then the forthcoming 2017 election. Tyabji concluded that Clark's political success rested on her ability to bounce back from reverses, her willingness to delegate power to cabinet ministers, her ability to engage with voters, and, of course, her smile. As we now know, more than smiles are required for electoral success.

*Points of Entry: How Canada's
Immigration Officers Decide
Who Gets In*

Vic Satzewich

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015.
291 pp. \$32.95 paper.

DAVID LEY
University of British Columbia

THOUGH LESS controversial than in many other countries, admission of immigrants and refugees to Canada not infrequently raises protests of “too many” or “too few” from partisan commentators as well as sensationalized media accounts of particular entry decisions made by front-line visa officers. The academic literature, too, frequently questions policy decisions concerning entry numbers, visa types, and the allocation of admissions to different countries of origin. In this well-researched study, Vic Satzewich shows that, while there is an inevitable role for discretion on the part of “street level bureaucrats” while making admissions decisions, that discretion is significantly shaped by a process that would be readily recognized by Max Weber: the urgency for state bureaucracy to embody soulless efficiency and productivity.

The author’s willingness to reveal the challenge of gaining initial access to front-line government officers, including a couple of false starts, will be especially encouraging to young researchers facing their own difficulties in gaining access to “the field.” Data are drawn from statistical files on immigrant admissions from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (formerly CIC, Citizenship and Immigration Canada). More important, however, are 128 informative interviews with staff at eleven overseas visa offices.

In addition, the author looks at forty-two interviews between visa officers and applicants. The frequent and sometimes lengthy statements from officers dealing with both temporary and permanent applications add both vitality and persuasiveness to the text.

Satzewich declares: “this book is about what I call the ‘social constitution of discretion’” (16). After Chapter 1 provides a review of critical literature on admissions policy, some of which suggests racial bias, Chapter 2 turns to a consideration of the components of officer discretion. Next, statistical data on admissions show the high proportion of successful applications for permanent residence (83 percent in 2010), with no discernible bias based on applicants’ race or region of origin. Successive chapters, drawing heavily on the interviews in overseas visa offices, examine applications requesting spousal sponsorships, skilled worker admission, and visitor entry.

Satzewich demonstrates that bureaucratic pressures militate against decision bias in admissions – indeed, against the refusal of applications overall. CIC processed 1.36 million applications in 2010. Caseloads for individual visa officers are very high. Overall, an officer processing applications for temporary visas declared that she must complete an application in three minutes! Consequently, an “obsession with productivity” (121) controls daily work practice. A possibly fraudulent file requires an interview, and an interview devours valuable processing time. Too many time-consuming interviews will bring attention to an officer and to a visa station because they will not be meeting their processing target, thus inviting castigation from senior mandarins in Ottawa. Moreover, refusals may go to appeal, and the appeal court is commonly lenient. While fraud is not uncommon in applications, suspicions have to be well

founded for refusal to occur. The working decision model is to discern the balance of probability of a truthful application, with a pass mark in principle at 51 percent (143). In the social construction of officer discretion for approving or rejecting applications, a productivity mandate exercises a primary impact. As a result, Satzewich suggests that, if there is officer bias, it is a bias in *favour* of acceptance. The exercise of officer discretion need not lead to negative outcomes for applicants.

Points of Entry is a well-written, accessible volume. It makes transparent the formerly hidden exercise of decision making on the part of Canada's admissions officers and, in so doing, challenges an often critical literature that has presumed entry bias without the test of evidence.

Moving Natures: Mobility and Environment in Canadian History

Ben Bradley, Jay Young, Colin M. Coates, editors

Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2016. 352 pp. \$34.95 paper.

J.L. WELLER
University of Calgary

WHEN THE Kicking Horse Trail opened in 1927, connecting Banff to Golden via Lake Louise, parks visitors were presented with a scenic highway system unsurpassed elsewhere in the nation. For a nation that had intimately felt the challenges of moving through such vast geography, constrained even further by the seasons, the highway was a feat of engineering that made it possible to connect with the stunning wilderness the parks had to offer. As the endlessly readable parks

promoter Mabel Williams described the experience: "The great sweeping descents to the valley are like the cutting of a bird's wings through the air ... And certainly to move with the swiftness and rhythm of a bird's flight, now close to the valley, now high above it ... is to know a new ecstasy of movement, to feel half delivered from our animal bondage to the solid earth."¹ Mobility, it seemed, could be so much more than merely moving from one location to the next – it could be an experience.

But this brief example is only the edge of a world of movement. We do not simply drive, we walk, paddle, float, roll, steam, drag, and push our way through the world, and, in these experiences, the physical environment and our perceptions of it are shaped. In their new book, *Moving Natures: Mobility and Environment in Canadian History*, environmental historians Ben Bradley, Jay Young, and Colin M. Coates explore the complexities in the act of movement. The recent progression of mobility studies has presented scholars with a range of perspectives on the impact of technological innovation in modern times, but in the enthusiasm for what is new, less focus has been given to older forms of movement. Furthermore, where mobility theorists have neglected history, Canadian historians have not missed the importance of transportation to the development of the nation; the work of Harold Innis comes quickly to mind. However, in these treatments of transportation what is lost is the environment within which this movement occurred. The land itself is often seen to be a static backdrop that, as the editors

¹ Mabel Williams, *The Kicking Horse Trail: A Scenic Highway from Lake Louise, Alberta to Golden, British Columbia* (Ottawa: Department of the Interior, 1927), 35.

argue, “inspired and challenged the plans of human actors” rather than a dynamic force in its own right (4). By bringing together insights from mobility studies and environmental history, the editors and contributors to this new collection aim to demonstrate the value and potential of considering movement in Canadian history.

The book’s twelve chapters explore a wide range of forms of mobility, from steamships to subways, offering a balance between land- and water-based methods, as well as a diversity of temporal domains. While less balanced geographically, with the majority of chapters focused on central and eastern Canada, the book’s case studies do provide a highly varied introduction to the diversity of movement in the country. This variety is well organized by the editors in their choice to divide the chapters into two broad sections. The first deals with the construction of mobility technologies and infrastructure, the environmental impact, and, in many cases, the use of these systems for further resource extraction. The second focuses on the leisured side of movement, not only the pursuits that facilitated or gave rise to infrastructure but also movement as leisure.

Overall, *Moving Natures* presents an engaging and thought-provoking introduction to the potential of reimagining the interconnected roles of mobility and the environment in Canadian history. While readers of *BC Studies* will not find much new insight into the province specifically (with the notable exception of J.I. Little’s fresh look at the Union Steamship cruises), they will be inspired to find many new ways of looking at how we move through the world.

*Once They Were Hats: In Search
of the Mighty Beaver*

Frances Backhouse

Toronto: ECW Press, 2015. 256 pp.
\$18.95 paper.

EZEKIEL GOW
University of Victoria

IN *Once They Were Hats*, Frances Backhouse, who teaches creative non-fiction at the University of Victoria, invites us to join her in exploring the multi-faceted history of the beaver. She recounts personal stories about trips to museums, hat makers, Indigenous elders, and mosquito-infested woods. She concludes that the beaver is not just a resource to be harvested but a creature that has shaped our environment, our culture, and our history.

The greatest strengths of this book are the charming and informative trips Backhouse describes. Journeying north, she visits Ida Calmegane in the Yukon, where she hears the oral histories that Ida learned from her mother and grandmother. These culminate in a moving song that has been passed on through generations and that tells of a beaver who dug under a town and, with an almighty slap of its tail, caused it to fall into the lake. It is absolutely critical to include and learn from oral histories such as these. Indeed, if this book disappointed me in any way, it is that it did not include more visits to elders to learn the varied and complex histories of beavers told across Canada by Indigenous peoples.

In nine chapters, each exploring a different aspect of human interactions with beavers, Backhouse guides us through her adventures. In the first chapter, she introduces us to the romantic notion of “Beaverland,” or what remains of it. She invites us to share in her desire to

witness a pre-European “erstwhile watery Eden” (5). In Chapter 2, Backhouse retreats to the Canadian Museum of Nature to discover the physical evidence of beaver ancestors – especially the sticks upon which they chewed – from 4 million years ago. Chapter 3 is the most moving and powerful. Ida Calmegane’s stories and songs captivate and educate. Backhouse uses a gentle authorial hand to share Ida’s knowledge, drawing readers into the immense wealth of the elder’s wisdom. Chapter 4 dives into the history of beaver conservation, making an (almost) mandatory stop at Grey Owl, a.k.a. Archibald Belaney, who spearheaded early conservation. This is a sweet chapter: Who isn’t captivated by stories of beaver pups?

The fifth and most interesting chapter explores the famous beaver hat, the driving force of much of the fur trade. Backhouse takes us into the workshop of the famous Smithbilt Hats of Calgary, where craftspeople shape the finest beaver felt into works of art. The descriptions of decades-old wooden hat blocks and machines worn smooth by years of endless labour are enthralling; they are capped by the dramatic image of a final step in the craft – a burst of flame to shorten wayward beaver hairs on the hat. From here, Chapter 6 takes us to the modern fur trade, with buyers in Toronto bidding at auction to obtain countless types of furs. In Chapter 7, we witness Backhouse, with the help of a trapper, learning to skin a beaver. Having skinned a beaver myself, I can attest that this is not an easy task. She perseveres, making history very real both for herself and the reader as she grasps the knife and prepares yet another pelt for auction. Chapter 8 explores how the beaver is essential to the functioning of ecological and hydrological systems. Chapter 9 is a plea for better understanding of our beaver neighbours, including realizing

how their reintroduction or expansion could help restore water systems. Backhouse ends by commenting: “The Mighty Beaver is a superhero in its own inimitable way” (224).

This book is a welcome addition to the ranks of accessible histories. The author uses the beaver as a theme to unite science, Indigenous knowledge, history, economics, and craftsmanship. Anyone interested in Canada – from beaver biologist to historian of the fur trade to high school student seeking to learn more about our country’s national symbol – should accompany Backhouse as she expertly guides us through woods, ponds, auction halls, and laboratories as she tracks the Mighty Beaver.

*The Great Bear Sea:
Exploring the Marine Life of a
Pacific Paradise*

Ian McAllister and
Nicholas Read

Victoria: Orca Book Publishers,
2013. 128 pp. \$19.95 paper.

*The Salmon Bears: Giants of the
Great Bear Rainforest*

Ian McAllister and
Nicholas Read

Victoria: Orca Book Publishers,
2010. 96 pp. \$18.95 paper.

MARGARET (MAGGIE) LOW
University of British Columbia

THE GREAT BEAR Rainforest, a region also known as the central and north coast of British Columbia, has garnered international attention over the last few decades for its global

ecological significance and its cultural richness. Almost everything written about this region not only tells us about its majesty but also informs us that it is the last intact rainforest left in the world. Attention has also been given to what threatens the people and creatures who call this magical place home: the risk of an oil spill from supertankers, unsustainable logging practices, conflicts over fish rights, fish farms, and climate change to name only a few. Importantly, the traditional territories of several First Nations span this region, and these nations continue to challenge the provincial and federal governments for more decision-making authority over their lands and water. I have had the pleasure of living in Bella Bella for over a year and have experienced first hand its vibrant people and strong sense of place. There is certainly much to learn and love about this place, and both *The Great Bear Sea* and *The Salmon Bears* provide an accessible and imagery-rich depiction of who inhabits this region and, in doing so, explain why it is worthy of attention and protection.

Both books are well written and organized, and are divided into short but rich chapters, each of which describes a particular aspect of the ecology by exploring various themes pertaining to marine, aquatic, and/or terrestrial life. In both books, on almost every page, McAllister and Read cleverly use the subheadings “Maritime Morsels” and “Just the Bear Facts” to impart additional information to the reader. Each page contains captivating imagery from McAllister’s world famous photography as well as straightforward explanations. Plain language and comparisons – “as tall as thirty-story buildings” – are used to make facts both understandable and memorable. Thus, both books comprise excellent educational material for school

children. (I can personally attest to the fact that they are favourites among students and staff at the community school in Bella Bella.)

In *The Salmon Bears*, McAllister and Read use the four seasons to take the reader on a journey through the life stages of grizzly bears, American black bears, and spirit bears. The journey begins with their establishing the charm of the Great Bear Rainforest, describing what you will see and smell if you are lucky enough to visit. There is a short section describing the First Nations who have lived in this region since time immemorial. Several First Nations people from this region will tell you that they are deeply connected to the sea and land upon which they depend for their way of life. The reader then learns what each season brings to each type of bear, focusing on den making, mating season, foraging, or, as the title suggests, on the importance of salmon. The last chapter highlights the political agreements recently signed by the BC and First Nations governments to protect 30 percent of the land base. It also advocates placing continuous pressure on people in power to provide long-term protection for this unique place.

The Great Bear Sea focuses on how life at sea and on land are inextricably linked, explaining the importance not just of the “mega fauna” of the oceans and intertidal areas (e.g., whales, wolves, and bears) but also of the smaller and sometimes minuscule “foundational” species (e.g., plankton and herring) to all life in this region. Through nine chapters and a conclusion, the reader learns about sea otters, river otters, seals, dolphins, porpoises, salmon, sea stars, urchins, crabs, and even nudibranchs. The authors emphasize the integral role of salmon in maintaining the health of the food webs of both the ocean and the forest. They also include historical information about many of the region’s animals,

thus enhancing our understanding of their current existence. For example, Chapter 5 explains the plight of the sea otter: “Between the 1700s and the early 1900s, the demand for their luxuriant fur almost wiped them out. Today, that same cuddly fur may be what saves them” (58). And just as *The Salmon Bears* ends by calling for the long-term protection of this region, so *The Great Bear Sea* concludes by explaining the threat of tanker ships and by opposing the Northern Gateway pipeline.

Since these books were published, much has happened in this well-known region. In September 2016, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visited Bella Bella, where they announced the induction of the Great Bear Rainforest into the Queen’s Commonwealth Canopy (an initiative whose purpose is to unite the forest conservation efforts of the Commonwealth countries). Not even a month after this visit, a US-owned tugboat and fuel barge ran aground and leaked thousands of litres of diesel in the prime seafood harvesting areas of the Heiltsuk nation. The devastating impacts of this diesel spill continue today. This is all to say there is never a dull moment in this part of the world, and books like *The Salmon Bears* and *The Great Bear Sea* play a crucial role in educating all of us – child and adult, alike – in the importance of stewardship and empathy.



*Museums and the Past:
Constructing Historical
Consciousness*

Viviane Gesselin and Phaedra
Livingstone, editors

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016.
312 pp. \$34.95 paper.

ALAN GORDON
University of Guelph

Museums and the Past opens with the statement: “‘museums’ and ‘historical consciousness’ dovetail almost intuitively” (3). I don’t think they do, and this book does not convince me. The editors offer a couple of simple definitions of historical consciousness that suggest that it means reference to the past. And, with notable exceptions, the chapters in the collection do not discuss the past as anything more than a point of reference. There is little in the collection about the process of history, about how people live with historical knowledge, or about the distinctions to be drawn between different kinds of understandings of the past. Memory, which is sometimes thrown out as being synonymous with history and sometimes as being distinct from historical consciousness, is not problematized to any sustained degree; rather, this book is primarily devoted to present-day museum practices. And yet, if one ignores its pretense of discussing historical consciousness, *Museums and the Past* comprises a wonderful collection of chapters, each of which has something of interest to say about museums. Looked at in this light, it makes a valuable contribution to Canadian museum studies.

The collection’s overarching principle might be reidentified as “engagement.” As Susan Ashley suggests, engagement

is often an underdefined term (23), and she seeks to problematize it through the Royal Ontario Museum's (ROM) 2009 Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition. Although the ROM had planned an intercultural agenda for community involvement in the exhibition, the most powerful engagement was external, coming from groups like Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East and the Palestinian Authority, which were highly critical of the museum's approach to the exhibition. Once again, in looking at the history of Canadian museums, we see that public engagement reveals itself to be highly politicized.

Readers of *BC Studies* will be most interested in Jill Baird and Damara Jacobs-Morris's chapter on the UBC Museum of Anthropology's "Voices of the Canoe" website. It explores the engagement between museum workers and different Pacific cultures in their effort to build reciprocal trust regarding how the museum depicts the artefacts held in its collections. Although much of this book is not explicitly about British Columbia, many of its chapters offer different perspectives on navigating similar issues. For example, Lon Dubinsky and Del Muise discuss how trust is central to successful engagement between museums and communities. In another sense, engagement is what Brenda Trofanenko calls "public pedagogy." In an example that does, to a degree, address historical consciousness, she uses Halifax's Pier 21 to explore how museums might critically engage with the histories they present. And Laurajane Smith discusses how visitor engagement is measured. Even Lynne McTavish's personal encounter with the quirky Torrington Gopher Hole Museum in Alberta draws out the theme of engagement. As McTavish describes it, the Torrington museum is a one-room set of stuffed-gopher dioramas reminiscent of Steve Carell's stuffed-mice dioramas in

the 2010 film *Dinner for Schmucks*. These homespun dioramas reveal a degree of engagement with present-day contexts – including the criticism of the Gopher Hole Museum put forward by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals – even if, as McTavish acknowledges, they are only clever winks at history.

Recast in this manner, despite my concerns about the misdirection of historical consciousness, *Museums and the Past* is a strong collection. Its chapters are well organized and engage with one another as well as they do with the concept of engagement itself. It is a valuable book and is worth being put to use.

*Highlights: Royal British
Columbia Museum and Archives*

Gerald Truscott and
Susan Mayse

Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 2015.
64 pp. \$14.95 paper.

BIANCA MESSAGE
Central Saanich

USING TEXT and images, this short book focuses on the various elements that make up the Royal British Columbia Museum and Archives – its history, physical components (primarily the exhibits), functions, and activities – and on promoting its glowing future. On first glance it appears to be a handsome souvenir that a visitor might purchase, thus continuing the tradition of similar publications that the museum has produced over the years. The last page indicates the publication is also intended as an exhibit companion and guidebook.

The book's photographic coverage and general descriptions provide a

suitable memento of exhibit highlights. As a guidebook, however, it may be hard to follow, given that there are no museum maps or directions (other than the headings “Second Floor” and “Third Floor”). The images range from exceptional to oversaturated, weak, or poorly cropped (15, 33, 35, and 51), and image captions are often missing, reducing the book’s overall usefulness as a guide. Some titling is missing (62), typographical errors are in need of correction (8, 34), and the chapter and thematic hierarchy of information is not clearly differentiated.

The inclusion of Bill Reid’s narration, “One Terrible Year,” explaining the smallpox epidemic and its effects, adds a very compelling and useful component to the publication (36). If this level of interpretive content had been included consistently throughout the guide, it would have been an exceptional exhibit companion. As it stands, *Highlights* serves as a useful souvenir but not as a comprehensive guide.

*Northwest Coast Indian Art: An
Analysis of Form
(50th anniversary edition)*

Bill Holm

Seattle: University of Washington
Press, 2014. 114 pp. \$18.95 paper.

SOLEN ROTH

Université de Montréal

TO ANYONE who is familiar with Northwest Coast art scholarship, it will come as no surprise that Bill Holm’s *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* was published anew fifty years after it was first released in 1965. Indeed, it is without a doubt one of the most, if not *the* most read and cited

books about the Indigenous arts of the Pacific Northwest of North America. Furthermore, not only has it been greatly influential in academic circles, it has also been a crucial resource for many Northwest Coast artists. In fact, it has even drawn some criticism for having had too great an influence on Northwest Coast art production and perception. For instance, the book’s focus on northern Northwest Coast art had the unintended consequence of helping to establish an implicit hierarchy that benefited that region’s work over the arts of the southern Northwest Coast, including the arts of the Salish.

One of the primary legacies of Holm’s book is the “formline” vocabulary he developed in order to describe the complex formal system that characterizes northern Northwest Coast style, providing a terminology that many continue to use to this day. This legacy is well known and has been commented on many times over the course of the half-century since the book’s publication. What is most significant about this fiftieth anniversary edition is the addition of four reflections by renowned Northwest Coast artists who were asked to comment on the book’s influence on the understanding and practice of their art. First, Haida artist Evelyn Vanderhoop recounts the important role the book and its author played in her journey to become an expert *naaxiin* robe weaver. Next, Nuu-chah-nulth artist Joe David writes how, over the years, he came to treat the book “as a place to visit rather than as a reference” (xviii), while Tlingit artist Nathan Jackson explains that he used the book to learn the principles of Northwest Coast design and continues to use it as a teaching resource for his apprentices. In the fourth and final reflection, Haida artist Robert Davidson praises Holm for “unravel[ing] the secrets of Northwest

Coast art” (xx) with his impressive drawings and thorough scholarship. In addition to these four contributions, the readers are treated to a foreword by Burke Museum curators Robin K. Wright and Kathryn Bunn-Marcuse (colleagues and students of Holm’s) as well as a new preface by Holm in which he explains that he had never anticipated the uses artists were going to make of what began as a modest university assignment.

Those who have already been building on Holm’s work in their studies and creative processes will likely find great pleasure and interest in consulting this revamped 2014 edition, especially given its new design and numerous coloured illustrations. Those who criticized the book for having too strict a focus on form or for lacking in contextual information may find that the four artists’ comments described above will encourage them to consult the numerous other available works on Northwest Coast art, especially those written from an Indigenous perspective, of which there are now many more published examples than there were in 1965.

*Red: The Eiteljorg
Contemporary Art Fellowship,*

2013

Jennifer Complo McNutt and
Ashley Holland, editors

Indianapolis, IN: Eiteljorg
Museum, 2013. 136 pp. n.p. paper.

GEOFFREY CARR

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THE SHORT title of the book – *Red* – shares its name with the 2013 Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship for Native American Fine Art, which gathered together the work

of five notable Indigenous artists: Julie Buffalohead (Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma), Nicholas Galanin (Tlingit/Aleut), Shan Goshorn (Eastern Band of Cherokee), Meryl McMaster (Plains Cree/Blackfoot), and the Eiteljorg Museum’s invited artist Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun (Coast Salish/Okanagan).

Of course, the title *Red* also conjures Vine Deloria, Jr.’s (Standing Rock Sioux), use of the word – “red power,” *God Is Red* (1973), *Red Earth, White Lies* (1995) – not only to mobilize resistance by Indigenous peoples but also to articulate the intellectual means by which colonial societies oppress. The artworks included in *Red* demonstrate that the issues raised fifty years ago by the Red Power movement – sovereign control of territories, environmental degradation of lands, custody of children, broken treaties, and much more – continue to vex today. Additionally, though, the five Eiteljorg fellows also address emerging concerns shaped by poststructural and postcolonial forays into identity politics, cultural hybridity, cultural appropriation, playing Indian, and survivance.

Illustrations of the fellows’ artworks find support from five corresponding chapters, each of which examines a separate artist. The authors – Heather Ahtone (Chickasaw Nation and Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma), Dana Claxton (Lakota), Ashley Holland (Cherokee), Jennifer McNutt, and Tanya Willard (Secwepemc Nation) – provide readers with smart and often insightful consideration of relevant artworks and issues that the featured artists raise. Most will be familiar with Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun’s unflinching paintings and their critique of colonialism, political corruption, and resource extraction, but some may be less familiar with the other artists in *Red*. McNutt’s analysis of Julie Buffalohead’s prints makes plain their

profound, open-ended, and uncanny beauty: sensitively modelled negative spaces house a series of animal and doll figures, which subtly deride Euro-American notions of human-centred reality. Austere, restrained, surrealistic, each work is at once disarming and intimate but also devastatingly critical. Similarly, Willard's piece on Nicholas Galanin questions the implications of contemporary Indigenous artists working in the interstices between, on the one hand, traditional (or customary) materials, techniques, and purposes, and, on the other, a myriad of new possibilities offered by emerging technologies, innovative materials, and cultural collisions. Galanin's playful cultural mashups resonate in the deadly serious baskets of Shan Goshorn, woven in a traditional Cherokee manner but with startling materials. Case in point, for the piece entitled *Educational Genocide – The Legacy of the Carlisle Indian Boarding School*, the artist weaves a coffin-shaped basket from the pictures of children interned at the institution as well as text taken from a speech by Colonel Richard Henry Pratt, in which he famously urged such institutions to: "Save the man, kill the Indian." Similarly, the photo-based work of Meryl McMaster – daughter of the renowned artist and curator Gerald McMaster – delves into questions of identity, culture, and the body, which play out in liminal spaces.

On the whole, *Red* is well designed, reasonably well illustrated, and thoughtfully written. In a couple of instances, artworks important to the chapter and to understanding the artist's career were not shown (this is especially frustrating in the omission of Goshorn's *Educational Genocide*). Also, I question the use of cursive type to indicate an artist's quotation not only for the simple reason that it is difficult to read but also because its intended purpose, which is to

lend a sense of the personal, is undercut by its being used for more than one artist. These small critiques aside, this text will be a useful addition to any library that collects books on contemporary Indigenous art.

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The Art of Jeffrey Rubinoff

James Fox, editor

Douglas & McIntyre, 2016. 256 pp.
 \$36.95 cloth

SUSAN LEWIS

University of Victoria

JEFFREY RUBINOFF (1945–2017) is one of the great sculptors in steel of the second half of the twentieth century. In the 1970s and 1980s he exhibited widely in the United States and Canada. Though poised to be a major figure in the modern sculpture scene, in the early 2000s Rubinoff chose to concentrate on creating an extraordinary sculpture park on Hornby Island, British Columbia. The fifty-hectare Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park grew into an outdoor art experience with more than one hundred sculptures arranged in nine series, each fully integrated into the landscape and natural beauty of the surroundings. Rubinoff spent countless hours touring visitors and scholars around the vast acreage of the park so that he could share his sculptures. The relative isolation of Hornby Island and Rubinoff's rejection of the art market

– in the last two decades he refused to sell any of his work or to permit his sculptures to be shown outside the park – have, until recently, left the artist relatively removed from the public eye. *The Art of Jeffrey Rubinoff* is the first major account of his remarkable career.

The volume's editor, James Fox, is an art historian and fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. Having first visited the Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park in 2011, Fox subsequently brought twelve scholars from the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada to Hornby Island to experience the sculptures and to contribute to the volume. Their twelve chapters are grouped into three interrelated sections. Section 1, "Making and Meaning" (Chapters 1-4), establishes the foundational principles of Rubinoff's artistic thought, including his work methods (Barry Phipps); the implications of Rubinoff's use of steel (James Purdon); how viewers should interpret his works (Alistair Rider); and the formative influence of David Smith on his early work (1969 to 1983) (Joan Pachner). Section 2, "Space and Time" (Chapters 5-8), explores the sculptures that comprise *Series 3* as an exercise in spatial articulation (James Fox); the influence of Rubinoff's architectural work in the 1970s on his later sculptures (Mark E. Breeze); the notion of "progress" as a commitment that can be traced across Rubinoff's work (Tom Stammers); and the opposing position, that the defining temporal implication in the park is one of "decline" (Alexander Massouras). The final section, "Nature and Culture" (Chapters 9-12), examines Rubinoff's relationship to his environment (David Lawless); to the broader art scene in postwar Canada (Maria Tippett); to his Jewish heritage (Aaron Rosen); and to his political and ethical thought (Peter Clarke).

All chapters draw heavily on primary sources, making available for the first time interviews and correspondence with Rubinoff, uncatalogued archives, and unpublished documents. With fifty colour images, the volume thoroughly documents the visual and textual context of Rubinoff's life and work. *The Art of Jeffrey Rubinoff* is an engaging collection of chapters by scholars who have experienced Rubinoff's sculptures firsthand at the sculpture park built and designed by the artist. Taken together, the twelve chapters offer a compelling portrait of Rubinoff, his sculptures, and their artistic, cultural, and philosophical foundations.

The Life and Art of Mary Filer

Christina Johnson-Dean

Salt Spring Island, BC: Mother Tongue Publishing Limited, 2016.
156 pp. \$35.95 paper.

*The Life and Art of Edythe
Hembroff-Schleicher*

Christina Johnson-Dean

Salt Spring Island, BC: Mother Tongue Publishing Limited, 2013.
168 pp. \$36.95 paper.

MARIA TIPPETT
Cambridge University

The Life and Art of Mary Filer and *The Life and Art of Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher* are two of the latest contributions to the Mother Tongue series featuring "Unheralded Artists of British Columbia." They are well written and researched, and beautifully produced. Both volumes give artists of

an earlier era much-deserved attention at a time when Canadian art historians prefer to focus on the art of their contemporaries.

At a quick glance the lives of the artists featured in these two books seem to be similar. Both women lived long lives: Filer from 1920 to 2016 and Hembroff-Schleicher from 1906 to 1994. Both were married more than twice and had no children. Both had professions other than art: Filer was a registered nurse and, latterly, Hembroff-Schleicher was a translator. Both women enjoyed the financial support of their prosperous middle-class families. Hembroff-Schleicher's businessman father, Walter Hembroff, financed her studies in San Francisco and later in Europe. Not only did support from Mary Filer's parents make it possible for her to become a nurse, but once their daughter decided to make art her full-time profession, they helped her to acquire studio space and provided a modest income that enabled her to travel and study in the United States and Europe. Finally, though both women had a modest reputation by the time of their deaths, it did not come until late in their careers.

This narrative is similar to that of many women who attempted to become artists before the Second World War. But a closer look at the lives of Mary Filer and Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher shows that they had more differences than similarities.

While it is true that Hembroff-Schleicher studied in Paris for over a year in the late 1930s under the post-Impressionist painter André Lhote, she never became more than her teacher's promising student. And this was not for lack of opportunity. Before studying in France, Edythe had spent two years, from 1926 to 1928, at the California School of Arts and Crafts and the San Francisco Institute of Art. Then, after

returning from Paris to Victoria in 1930, she enjoyed a wide circle of artist friends, among whom were Jack Shadbolt, Max Maynard, and Emily Carr. Yet she failed to take vocational advantage of her association with them; instead, she was a society girl who liked fast cars, elegant ball gowns, scholarly men, and, during her later years, reliving her student days in Paris. Indeed, Hembroff-Schleicher might never have become a worthy subject for the "Unheralded Artists" series had she not encountered Emily Carr in 1930.

Carr and Hembroff-Schleicher had much in common. They were both female artists who had been trained initially in San Francisco, then in Paris. And they were both attempting to make their careers as artists in a town that preferred tepid watercolour paintings to brightly coloured French-inspired canvases. From 1930 to 1933, Edythe was a frequent visitor at Emily's Simcoe Street house and studio. She accompanied Carr on no fewer than three sketching trips. And in 1932 she and Carr attempted to bring Victoria's conservative Island Arts and Crafts Society's annual exhibition into the twentieth century by organizing a "Modern Room" that featured the city's more progressive artists. After Hembroff-Schleicher left for New Haven, Connecticut, with her second husband Frederick Brand in 1933, she and Carr kept their friendship alive by corresponding. Indeed, it was Carr's letters that formed the backbone of Hembroff-Schleicher's 1969 publication *M.E. A Portrayal of Emily Carr* (republished by Mother Tongue in 2013). The success of this book prompted the provincial government to purchase, for the sum of over nine thousand dollars, Carr's letters to Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher. The publication of this book confirmed her friendship with Carr, and the NDP government made Hembroff-Schleicher the province's "special consultant" on Emily Carr in 1974.

Four years later Hembroff-Schleicher published her second book – *Emily Carr: The Untold Story*. Once again, she recounted her friendship with Carr, who had died almost thirty years earlier. More significantly, Hembroff-Schleicher took on scholars like Doris Shadbolt, who had not only failed to consult the province’s “special consultant” when curating the first comprehensive exhibition of Carr’s work at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1971 but had also, Edythe claimed, made errors in the exhibition catalogue.

Hembroff-Schleicher’s focus on Emily Carr seems to suggest that writing had overtaken painting as her focus. While it is true that Edythe did continue to paint – there are a few nudes and portraits of Emily Carr rendered from photographs – her output was small. Nevertheless, the Art Gallery of Victoria exhibited her work alongside Emily Carr’s; it mounted solo exhibitions during Hembroff-Schleicher’s lifetime and following her death. And the gallery agreed to house her paintings and manuscripts. But surely Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher’s legacy does not rest on her art, which continued to show less and less promise after her study in France, but, rather, on her short friendship with Emily Carr.

The same certainly cannot be said about Mary Filer. Her early work – mostly watercolours – is characterized by a strong rhythmic line, also seen in the drawings of her BC contemporary, B.C. Binning. And in the mid-1950s, when she decided to devote her life to art rather than to nursing and studying children’s art education, she discovered a new medium for her art: glass. It was while viewing a 1959 exhibition of John Piper and Patrick Reyntiens’s modernist glass windows at London’s Royal Academy that Filer discovered a way of transferring the sensuous line, evident in her works on paper and canvas, to glass. Study in London and Paris

introduced Filer, as Johnson-Dean tells us, to “a new medium, crystopal, ‘a secret process’ of fiberglass, resins and plastics incorporated with colour” (56). Within a year, Mary Filer had secured the first of several commissions in England: six windows for St. Luke’s Anglican Church, in Essex. When she returned to Canada in 1967, more work came Mary’s way: she created brilliantly coloured windows in laminated float glass and free-standing glass sculptures for churches, office blocks, hospitals, and universities across Canada. Never one to rest on her laurels, Mary Filer not only produced work in glass but also created and participated in provincial and national glass art societies and exhibitions throughout North America.

Despite Filer’s standing as a leading exponent and creator of studio glass, the bulk of her work remains in private hands. Neither Vancouver’s nor Victoria’s public art galleries mounted a solo exhibition or acquired more than one or two examples of her work. Moreover, Filer’s name rarely appears in studies of Canadian art. Why is this so? Is it because she was a woman working in a man’s medium? Or because her work was so closely associated with architecture? (In 1992, for example, she was awarded the Royal Institute of Architects of Canada’s Allied Arts Silver Medal.) Or, more likely, has her work not found a comfortable perch in the visual arts world because many people consider the new glass art to be craft rather than fine art?

There was certainly no doubt in Filer’s mind regarding in which category her art belonged. “I am first of all an artist, and I am a good craftsman,” she wrote in 1982. “It seems to me that in the past craftwork was more utilitarian,” she continued, “– a matter of function, creating things to use, not things for their own sake” (85). Making things for their own sake was

Mary Filer's goal, and she kept producing work until the ninth decade of her life.

In writing about these two very different artists, Christina Johnson-Dean was faced with a dilemma regarding her sources. She had to wade through Mary Filer's vast written archive, and at times the author appears to be swamped by a surfeit of information. (Do we need to know that Filer's last husband, Harold Spence-Sales, got a speeding ticket, albeit at the age of eighty-nine?) When it came to writing about Hembroff-Schleicher the opposite was true. Edythe left few papers. When attempting to recreate the artist's early years in San Francisco and in Paris, Johnson-Dean relies heavily on the manuscripts of Edythe's long-time American artist friend Marian Allardt. The author also uncritically accepts Hembroff-Schleicher's highly retrospective recollections of her friendship with Carr.

Even so, Johnson-Dean has admirably fulfilled her mandate of bringing the lives of these two women – especially that of Mary Filer – out of obscurity. And art in British Columbia is all the richer for it.

