

## BOOK AND FILM REVIEWS

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*Mapping My Way Home:  
A Gitxsan History*

Neil J. Sterritt

Smithers: Creekstone Press, 2016.  
354 pp. \$29.95 paper.

JILLIAN RIDINGTON  
*Victoria, BC*

BRITISH COLUMBIANS may be familiar with the landmark *Delgamuukw* case (Supreme Court of Canada, 1997), which established that testimony based upon traditional knowledge and oral history is valid evidence. But most are limited in their knowledge of the culture and history of the people who fought for their homeland in this case. Neil J. Sterritt attempts to remedy this in *Mapping My Way Home* by tracing his Scottish and Gitxsan heritage. He combines two classic metaphors of genealogy – the tree and the river – with the cycles and arrows that symbolize time to bring us to the confluence that led to the court battles.

Sterritt's paternal roots in Canada go back to 1819 (190). A great-grandfather went west to join the gold rush;

grandfather Charlie Sterritt was born to Lucy Simpson in Gidumgaldo's longhouse on the banks of the Skeena (188). His Gitxsan grandmother was from the Wiik'aak house. Neil's mother, A. Jean Russell, led an itinerant childhood as her Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) employee father was transferred to various posts. She landed in Hazelton as a teenager, married Neil B. Sterritt there (203), and gave birth to Neil J. and his siblings.

The Xsi'yeen, or Skeena River, flows into the Pacific just south of Prince Rupert. Through the river's mouth, millennia ago, the ancestors of today's Gitxsan found their way to fertile land. "Mission Flats" at the confluence of the Skeena and Bulkley rivers has long been a meeting place and settlement; it is now near the site of Gitanmaax and Hazelton, British Columbia.

Europeans were latecomers. Captain Vancouver found the Skeena's mouth in 1793 but did not realize he had found the estuary of a great river. However, his crewmen charted the area. By 1812, Daniel Harmon had found an overland route to Mission Flats. By 1822, Europeans began to trade with the Gitxsan. Missionaries, miners, and settlers soon followed.

The Gitxsan owned land collectively. They signed no treaty. Yet, in 1891, Peter

O'Reilly, on behalf of the Indian Reserve Commission, began laying out reserves on the upper Skeena (156–57). That same year, the HBC sternwheeler *Caledonia* began to ascend the Skeena (158). Settlers, recognizing agricultural potential, began pre-empting Crown land (159).

By 1909, conflict began between settlers and the Gitxsan. The federal government dispatched the Stewart-Vowell Commission to meet with the chiefs, who asserted that the land belonged to them (175). In 1924, a Nisga'a/Gitxsan delegation met with Prime Minister McKenzie King (179) and presented him with written declarations of their position (180). In 1927, changes to the Indian Act prohibited fundraising for land claims in British Columbia; this clause was not rescinded until the early 1950s (285n). In 1984, the Gitxsan joined with the neighbouring Wet'suwet'en to file suit against the federal government (307–8). British Columbia's chief justice, Allan McEachern, dismissed their claim, refusing to recognize traditional knowledge (316). The BC Court of Appeal found that title had not been extinguished, but it split on whether title had been proven. Finally, in 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada found that Aboriginal title had not been extinguished in British Columbia and that traditional knowledge and oral histories were valid bases for a land claim (*Delgamuukw v. BC*) (318). Canada's highest court urged that title be negotiated in good faith. To date, no settlement has been achieved.

Sterritt's knowledge of Gitxsan culture and of his bloodlines, the stories his relatives tell, along with maps and genealogical charts, all give depth to this book. It is comprehensive and detailed and will be of interest to all students of Native studies.

*Chilcotin Chronicles: Stories of  
Adventure and Intrigue from  
British Columbia's Central  
Interior*

Sage Birchwater

Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, 2017.  
228 pp. \$26.95 paper.

*The Smallpox War in  
Nuxalk Territory*

Tom Swanky

British Columbia: Dragon Heart,  
2016. 212 pp. \$19.95 paper.

JO-ANNE FISKE  
*University of Lethbridge*

**I**N AN UNPRECEDENTED historic moment, on 23 October 2014, then BC premier Christy Clark and her Liberal government acknowledged that the smallpox epidemic of 1862 that ravaged the First Nations was “by some reliable historic accounts ... spread intentionally.” This admission of and apology for colonial criminality was made as the provincial government sought reconciliation with the Tsilhqot'in First Nation following its landmark victory in the Supreme Court of Canada, which affirmed its Aboriginal title to traditional territory. Tsilhqot'in resistance to the colonial violence of the catastrophic smallpox infestation, which led to the Tsilhqot'in War of 1864, and the tragedy of the Nuxalk in the same devastation, are the primary foci of Tom Swanky's *The Smallpox War in Nuxalk Territory* and lurk in the background of Sage Birchwater's *Chilcotin Chronicles*. Although both authors agree that 1862 and the events

that followed over the next three years marked the pivotal historical moment that shaped Chilcotin Cariboo history, how they deal with these events and their aftermath stand in sharp contrast to one another.

Birchwater is a long-time resident of the Chilcotin Cariboo who arrived in the back-to-the-land movement of the 1970s and stayed to become a staff writer with the *Williams Lake Tribune*, a trapper and environmentalist, and an oral historian and storyteller. During this time, he traversed the region listening to and recording the stories and anecdotes that comprise Indigenous and settler histories. Like his travels through the region, *Chilcotin Chronicles* criss-crosses through time and space: five First Nations – Dakelh, Tsilhqot'in, Nuxalk, Secwépemc, and St'at'imc – inhabit the region, where for centuries they have intermarried, formed social and economic ties, endured conflicts and warfare, and negotiated peaceful resolutions as recently as 2014. Over the past two centuries the First Nations of the region repulsed and accommodated the fur trade and the mid-nineteenth-century gold rush. Global events, the Great War among them, spurred influxes of settler immigrants from England, Scotland, Ireland, Norway, and the United States eager to establish themselves and to take advantage of the riches of the land. Some married into First Nations families or became their social allies while others, all too often with little regard for First Nations sovereignty, sought only to enrich themselves and to embrace the social freedoms of the frontier. With Indigenous peoples “at the table,” as Birchwater puts it, we come to see how the First Peoples perceived and responded to the newcomers, with some of the stories told on their behalf by Birchwater and others by First Nations narrators themselves.

Structured into discrete chapters, each of which stands on its own, Birchwater skilfully draws a portrait of vibrant, diverse communities peopled by the heroic and villainous, the flamboyant and demure. Throughout this collection of narratives, Birchwater interweaves the stories to portray the “convergence of cultures and very different ways of seeing the world” (4). While men figure more frequently in his stories, Birchwater does not overlook women of historical prominence in the local narratives: Dakelh medicine women – Nancy Swanson, Anne Nicholson, and Louisa One-Turner – are each honoured with their own chapter.

Birchwater begins with a brief introduction to the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and its implications for Aboriginal title and sovereignty, and he follows this with three vignettes of the earliest years of European presence before turning to his tableaux of individuals who peopled the region over 150 years. Writing in a personable style, he eschews theoretical discussions of colonial violence in favour of a familiar discourse of settlement that references pre-emption and homesteading, staking gold claims, and immigration. Nonetheless, he leaves no doubt he is knowledgeable about and empathetic to the consequences of colonial violence. He recounts the actions of Francis Poole in spreading smallpox through the territory in 1862 (45), the devious pre-emptions by Davidson (42) that forced the T'exelcenc from their villages and territory at what is now Williams Lake, and the role of Oblate priests in reducing the people to dependence on charity (59ff).

Tom Swanky, born in Quesnel, was also a long-time resident of the Chilcotin Cariboo. A self-defined “life-long student of political philosophy, history, and Canadian government (209),” he spent more than a decade researching

archival records of colonial British Columbia to uncover the events leading up to the 1862-63 smallpox event that wiped out the Indigenous communities and empowered newcomers to seize Indigenous land and resources. To date, he has self-published the results of his research in three volumes, all of which offer vigorous repudiation of established historical narratives of the formative years of the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia.

Arguing as if in a criminal case, Swanky offers extensive evidence to support the argument he introduced in his two earlier works: *The True Story of Canada's War of Extermination on the Pacific: Plus the Tsilhqot'in and Other First Nations Resistance* and *A Missing Genocide and the Demonization of Its Heroes*. He asserts that members of the colonial government and their close associates in Victoria, knowing that it was unlawful to appropriate settled lands in sovereign Indigenous territories and fearing an "Indian war" if they did so, deliberately spread smallpox to exterminate the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Coast and Chilcotin Cariboo. He avers that smallpox did not arrive accidentally from San Francisco in March 1862 but was intentionally "imported" by "[George] Carey's steamship committee" who travelled on the *Brother Jonathan*, the same ship as the man who is alleged to have been the carrier of the disease (127). Swanky contends that they did this in order to pre-empt land for speculation and settlement, and to build transport routes from the coast to goldfields in the interior.

To support his case, Swanky presents evidence found in primary documents of colonial authorities, official documents of land speculation companies and their hirelings, contemporary news accounts, and oral evidence of Indigenous histories, the last of which he was likely

familiar with throughout his lifetime in Quesnel. The documents cited clearly and unequivocally record key facts of the time of the smallpox: it came to Victoria from San Francisco on the ship carrying men who later acted intentionally to spread the disease among Indigenous people; in Victoria the colonial regime, medical doctors among them, forced the removal of coastal First Nations peoples ill with the disease knowing full well the devastation this would cause among the Indigenous populations of the coast; Francis Poole, by his own accounts, left men with the disease in several Indigenous communities with full awareness of the dreadful consequences that would follow. Swanky interprets his evidence as a prosecutor would, offering explanations of recorded events in the context of probable motives and opportunities. Briefly, he asserts that the evidence and motives he has advanced prove without doubt that then attorney general George Cary, holding interests in the New Aberdeen syndicate, instigated the criminal spread of smallpox in order to enrich himself and his financial associates.

*The Smallpox War* is compelling reading. Heavy with references to archival documents and other contemporary sources (461 footnotes in all), Swanky draws official history, personal reminiscences, colourful journalism, and much conjecture into a dense, highly charged narrative. He includes frequent analogies to international laws of nation-state governance and evasion of accepted normalizing narratives of pre-emption and settlement as rhetorical strategies to demonstrate colonial criminality and disregard for Indigenous sovereignty. It was the settlers and their conniving governments who acted in insurrection of the laws of the land, not the Indigenous peoples (who conducted themselves within their established legal order). It

was the settlers and their governments who violated the laws of the British Empire, not Indigenous chiefs (who lawfully sought to protect their peoples, resources, and lands). Swanky is certain of his position, so much so that he eschews any competing accounts of the smallpox times and any contrary interpretation of the evidence upon which he relies. To say he doubts standard accounts and professional historians' veracity would be an understatement: he excoriates historians who present the smallpox devastation as a natural disaster or an unpredictable and unintended consequence of panicked officials; bears no patience for "settler universities"; and contemptuously dismisses peer review practices of academic research institutions. His tone makes reading his narrative challenging. This is unfortunate as his argument is, for the most part, unequivocally supported by archival records and, even when it relies on conjecture and assertions based on circumstantial evidence, is highly plausible. Colonial authorities did indeed have motive and opportunity to intentionally exterminate the Indigenous peoples whom they perceived as blocking their social, economic, and political aspirations and whose potentially violent reprisals, based on their knowledge of subjugated peoples elsewhere in the Empire, they feared. A timeline, maps, and illustrations aid the reader in navigating this dense narrative. Sadly, it lacks an index, a reference list of sources, and sufficient acknowledgment of scholars who have, successfully or otherwise, addressed the smallpox times and their aftermath.

First Nations today will take comfort in the recognition Swanky and Birchwater have slowly gained from government officials. Clark's 2014 affirmation that the smallpox war was a travesty of human rights and that the Tsilhqot'in chiefs

were indeed wrongfully convicted of insurrection is but one tribute to the significance of these two historians. The Supreme Court, in February of this year, further verified Indigenous rights and colonial wrongdoing as it ruled that, in the 1860s, British Columbia and later Canada unlawfully dispossessed the T'exelcenc of their lands at Williams Lake.

*Secwépemc People, Land,  
and Laws: Yerí7 re  
Stsq'ey's-kucw*

Marianne Ignace and Ronald  
E. Ignace

Montreal and Kingston: McGill-  
Queen's University Press, 2017.  
624 pp. \$39.95 cloth.

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MARIANNE and Ron Ignace are members of the Secwépemc First Nation in south-central British Columbia. Ron was raised by his great-grandparents, grew up speaking Secwepemctsin, and is a former chief. Both Ron and Marianne have advanced degrees in anthropology. Together with past and present Secwépemc elders, linguists, archaeologists, and ethnobotanists, they have produced a masterful and definitive story of an ancient culture that continues to thrive despite years of colonial oppression. Both authors are excellent writers and sensitive interpreters of everything from oral history to archaeology, with the archaeology chapter written by Marianne Ignace and archaeologist Mike K. Rousseau.

Oral history supports archaeological and linguistic evidence that Salish speakers moved into Secwépmc territory in “the time of the transformers,” between five thousand and forty-five hundred years ago. Oral historians know the original inhabitants before that time as “coyote people.” Oral history is a living thing, as Ron demonstrates in his telling of the story of Tsxlitentem re Skelép (Coyote and Hosts). He tells it in Secwepemctsin, with an interlinear translation by Marianne. The story begins with acknowledgment of the elders who have passed it on over the generations. “Coyote was travelling here in our land, it is said.” As he travelled, the animal people of the land hosted him. Each one shared the food he knew with Coyote but warned him, “Don’t copy me, you will get hurt by copying me, when you try it out.” Coyote, of course, plays tricks on himself and is hurt every time he tries to copy his host. After describing how Coyote fails over and over to copy one of the animal people, Ron concludes the story as follows:

See, nowadays our [Aboriginal] people are copying the white people. That way, we have got hurt, we have hurt ourselves, we have hurt one another even. We have forgotten our language, we have forgotten our stories, all the ways of governing ourselves. See, we have become pitiful. The white people have taken our land from us. That’s why we must return to our own ancestors’ ways so we can heal ourselves and once again become numerous. And so that we can get the white people to recognize our existence on the land (71-72).

The book is a realization of that return, using the tools of the white people without copying them. It is a comprehensive work of research into the relevant academic literature as well as an opportunity for Secwépmc people to tell their story in their own words. It acknowledges the

contribution of James Teit for bridging Secwépmc and academic traditions at the beginning of the twentieth century. The book is a contribution to scholarship and a tribute to the living traditions of the Secwépmc people. The Secwepemctsin texts are written in the practical alphabet of the language developed by linguist Aert Kuipers. For actual pronunciations I suggest the reader consult an online source. A link to pronouncing the name Secwépmc is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ubSFEekTro>.

### *Everything Shuswap*

Jim Cooperman

Shuswap Lake Region: Shuswap Press, 2017. 250 pp. \$28.50 paper.

MICHAEL M’GONIGLE  
*University of Victoria*

**I**N 1969, Jim Cooperman arrived in British Columbia from the United States, one of many Vietnam War resisters who remade our province in ways that few people yet fully appreciate. One was in building a new environmental movement, the other was in fostering a bioregional spirit of “reinhabitation.” Focused on local regions conceived as whole ecosystems, bioregionalists like Cooperman have dedicated their lives to making these large landscapes healthy as both human and natural habitats. *Everything Shuswap* is a triumphant testament to his work in both genres.

The word “everything” in the title is a curious, but telling, choice – literally and figuratively. On the one hand, he covers a massive territory, with detailed attention to geology, ecology, the traditional Secwépmc peoples, and the history of settler colonialism. It is the product of

prodigious research, both in the archives and in the forests. On the other hand, his portrait of this region conveys, without saying so explicitly, a message of living in a place that means everything to those who learn how to “inhabit” it. The rewards of being truly part of one’s place come through on every page.

The volume provides a “geographic handbook” that, in the first half, takes the reader through a detailed account and visually stunning exploration of the Shuswap watershed’s twelve sub-drainages, from the famous Adams River in the north to the Shuswap River in the south. The region is hugely varied – remote mountains and wild streams, popular lakes, rich farmlands, and historic towns. So, too, is the text, with its discussion of everything from the lifecycle of the lakes’ plankton to the state of the region’s salmon runs. Its rich photos and descriptions prompted me to plan a hiking trip, out of a book-inspired frustration for all the time I have lost in not exploring the area more than I have. Indeed, most British Columbians know the area only from the perspective of driving through it on the Trans-Canada Highway. As a destination, it has been somewhat spared by the tourist draw of its regional neighbour to the south, the Okanagan Valley.

Of all the diverse stories, none is more compelling than that of the Secwépemc. From their oral traditions to snapshots of their land practices to a well-informed account of their historic struggles against land enclosures and the residential school system, Cooperman provides a necessarily brief but respectful and tangible account. It is filled with details and colourful and powerful personalities, such as the famous Neskonlith chief George Manuel. His history of settlement addresses forestry and mining, rail- and road-building, steamship travel, and city building (Cherryville, Lumby, Sicamous, and Salmon Arm).

Numerous historic photographs and maps, mini-biographies, and captivating anecdotes supplement the text.

Through all this richness, Cooperman’s love of his adopted bioregion shines through – and all in one volume, with two more to come. This book is not just a thoughtful, well-researched *study* of a region but an ongoing *contribution* to it. An educational project undertaken with the regional school board and hundreds of local volunteers, *Everything Shuswap* will soon be read by local students. On its own, the book provides the syllabus and all the research for a full semester class. Cellphones in class will be no competition! Because it will so excite student interests, it is fortunate that Cooperman is around – living in his hand-built log house or out in his vast garden or at the newspaper putting his column to bed, but always keen to share his vast research. This book is but an introduction.

A unique and beautiful book, *Everything Shuswap* brings alive one of British Columbia’s most remarkable landscapes and its people.

*Crossing Home Ground:  
A Grassland Odyssey through  
Southern Interior British  
Columbia*

David Pitt-Brooke

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing,  
2016. 320 pp. \$32.95 cloth.

LAUREN HARDING  
*University of British Columbia*

DAVID PITT-BROOKE is an advocate for the protection and preservation of one of British Columbia’s underappreciated landscapes. Rather than looking towards the more iconic

mountain peaks and old-growth forests of British Columbia in his search for natural beauty, Pitt-Brooke looks inward, both in a personal and a geographical sense. He styles himself as a twenty-first-century British Columbian John Muir and recounts his long, solo walk from Crater Mountain near Osoyoos to Williams Lake over several summer seasons. He focuses on close details of the ecosystems in the places he walked across and is motivated not only by a search for pristine grasslands but also for “beloved home places” (2). Key to his narrative is his own personal attachment to specific places in the Interior. His writing is rife with lovely and loving descriptions of lesser-known places in the region, and his sheer affection for the landscape carries the reader on his pedestrian journey through spaces of which most British Columbians only catch glimpses from the highway.

His account is peppered with histories of colonial settlement and environmental transformation in the Interior. Like a walker going off the path for a moment or two to get a better view, Pitt-Brooke goes off on various tangents on the history and ecology of the landscape he traverses. These asides follow no set pattern or organization, yet are nicely threaded together by their relation to his own footsteps across the land. Despite a lack of citations (bothersome for a non-academic reader but welcome for a non-academic one), he possesses a detailed knowledge of BC history, geography, and ecology. At the same time, many of his tangents can be categorized as rants. He tends to idealize early twentieth-century Interior towns and denounces twenty-first-century land use policy. His condemnation of suburban development may strike a chord with many readers. Yet his claim that “the countryside has ceased to be a home for the heart and has

become mere commodity”<sup>(3)</sup> rests upon a romantic image of historic Canadian settlement. He ignores the fact that market forces and the commodification of natural resources were the main impetus for the settling of British Columbia and for the towns, orchards, and ranches to which he feels an emotional connection. Even though Pitt-Brooke acknowledges his crossing of Indigenous territory, he does not connect colonial dispossession and contemporary land-use issues. Furthermore, the people who “desecrate” his beloved places are anonymous, invisible, and directly compared to aliens (15). They are so thoroughly Othered that these evil-doers fall into the tropes of ignorant yokels (ATV riders), indifferent bureaucrats (Parks administration), or evil industrialists (loggers) rather than fellow British Columbians.

This book will be of interest not only to those who want to better understand the grassland ecosystems of the BC Interior but also to the process of walking across them. Although not intended as a guidebook, in many ways it could be used as such. It is refreshing to read the practical details of Pitt-Brooke’s comings and goings: where he set up his tent each night, the coldness or wetness of the weather, and his logic for choosing particular paths over others. His writing of the more mundane practicalities of his journey (such as where and how to find drinking water) also has the effect of making his journey more tangible for the reader and balances out his more romantic descriptions. Heat, thirst, cold, and hunger and other bodily sensations figure heavily in his narrative, as does his appreciation for a good cheeseburger after a long walk. Perhaps the principal strength of Pitt-Brooke’s account is that it triggers the urge to encounter BC places for oneself – not through taking a drive or looking at a map, but through a nice, long walk.

*Summer of the Horse: A Memoir*

Donna Kane

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing,  
2018. 224 pp. \$19.95 paper.

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Okanagan*

DONNA KANE'S *Summer of the Horse* delates and lures readers towards *reenchantment*, or what deep ecologist Thomas Berry calls "a reverence for the mystery and magic of the earth and the larger universe" (17). Kane calls the book a memoir. It is also a travel narrative and an apology, which Francis Hart defines as "a personal history that seeks to demonstrate or realize the integrity of the self" (491). In life writing, Hart asserts, "such intentions must overlap" (491-92). So, too, does Kane's form. As Kane transposes her visual acuity into words, poetic vision spills into prose, affording readers moments of synaesthesia. We both see and hear. That quality is evident in earlier works like "Hunter Moon," when we see, step on, hear "brittle leaves, pine cones / cracking" (16). It is evident, too, in *Summer of the Horse* as Kane reenchants us. "The Earth is a body too" (53) she tells us; "*I am a part of this ... I am also apart*" (158, original emphasis). Kane desires to experience the earth in "a liminal state" as she and her partner traverse the Muskwa-Kechika region on horseback (50). She iterates a special moment as "a threshold between past and present" (50). On the trail weeks later and on foot, Kane ponders time, observing how the Red Deer River "has cut down through the sediments, year after year, carrying the soil away, opening up this canyon, how the perpetual movement of wind

and water has sculpted the earth" (167). She pauses – "The place seemed to have stopped, as though it were under a spell" (168) – and then goes on: "I knew it wasn't true. The forces of wind and water were still at work. I just couldn't see it" (168). Savouring her vision, we are reenchanting.

Thomas Berry tells us that our "reenchantment with the earth as a living reality is the condition for our rescue of the earth" (21). Kane's story is a kind of rescue of both an injured horse and the poet herself. In the time it takes to heal the horse, Kane makes peace with the choices she's made. She heals us, too, as we find wonder in her words and her journeys – both literal and metaphorical. Less lyrical but equally uplifting are the depictions of horses. Kane's acute perception puts her on par with Donna Haraway. Treating her equine companion over many weeks of summer, washing away the "bits of loose flesh" that cling to his wound, Kane shares Zen-like moments (129). "Sometimes, hosing Comet is the most relaxing part of my day," she writes, "Comet must feel it too. When we're about ten minutes in, he will heave a big sigh" (129). Kane's portrayal of the horse attests to the intrinsic value of our relationships with *companion species*, as Haraway calls them. Kane writes that Comet's "wound, as it heals, grows itchy. When I scratch the hide that edges the wound, Comet's lower lip drops and quivers with pleasure" (175-76). Kane's recognition of the horse's sentience also attests to animals' knowable dispositions, and yet ... "Who can know the mind of another being?" she asks. "Who can even know their own? I watch the horses. There is a power and a grace we recognize as beauty, a beauty we want to be part of. And if that means thousands of years of human intervention, of domestication, to capture even a small part of that beauty, we do it. And the horses let us" (199).

*Summer of the Horse* promises to entrance and enliven. It's a rich draught from a deep well. Sip it slowly.

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### *Animal Metropolis: Histories of Human-Animal Relations in Urban Canada*

Joanna Dean, Darcy Ingram, and Christabelle Sethna, eds.

Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2017. 358 pp. \$34.95 paper.

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*Montreal*

*Animal Metropolis: Histories of Human-Animal Relations in Urban Canada* edited by Joanna Dean, Darcy Ingram, and Christabelle Sethna represents a collective effort to create a historiography of non-human animals and human subjects in Canada since Confederation, a topic wittily shorthanded as "Canamalia Urbanis." Dean, Ingram, and Sethna assembled this collection to address what they identify as a lack of historical scholarly engagement regarding non-human animals and their relation to humans in urban spaces. Instructionally, a definition of urban is outlined for readers in the introduction. Instead

of presenting urban as a metric for "population density and spatial geographical boundaries," the editors offer a more encompassing definition that considers "the ways humans and non-human animals coexist in industrial modernity" (15). Opening up the concept of urban more broadly creates conditions for historians to engage with the "animal turn." Texts such as *Animal Metropolis* are tasked with the initial hurdle of demonstrating why such a turn matters. Dean, Ingram, and Sethna argue that historians are uniquely positioned to take on this task as a key research focus in contemporary history is to locate marginalized individuals' assertions of agency in consulted archives. *Animal Metropolis* accomplishes this task by meticulously showcasing studies from Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, and Canada more generally.

This text animates what are considered innocuous architectural designs of places so as to make visible the ways in which non-human animals were either active co-producers of that place or harmed in the process of place-making, rendering them mere simulacra in the modern era. For this book and animal studies more generally, Sherry Olson's chapter offers the key concept of the ghostly figure. Olson theorizes how "phantom" animals "cast their shadows" in numerous ways (57). Ghostly metaphor lends itself to making sense of many case studies presented in *Animal Metropolis*. Take, for example, Rachel Poliquin's chapter examining the tales of the beavers in one of the oldest parks in North America: Vancouver's Stanley Park. In 2008, a single beaver returned to the park after decades of its ancestors' absence, which was caused by the relentless extermination programs that captured beavers to export, enclose, or kill. Applying the phantom figure, beavers were historical actors in

the design of the park as the park itself represents a violent form of architecture that evicted its natural inhabitants due to the beavers' rigorous labour of place-making, which failed to align with the human design of the park.

The eleven authors of this text contribute great insight into the depository of "Canamalia Urbanis"; however, they fail to aptly capture or ground these narratives in legacies of colonialism. Approaching animal studies in settler-nations with a clear commitment to addressing how colonialism continues to enrol non-human animals, including their relationships to humans, is necessary in any historical endeavour such as *Animal Metropolis*. In much of this book's metanarrative, non-human animals serve to represent a particular story of Canada, one that fails to capture the plethora of non-human and human relations that constitute this nation. What this text does do, however, is take steps towards developing a critical lens for locating non-human animals in historical archives. *Animal Metropolis* writes the beginning of a historiography of non-human animals and humans in Canada that hopes to embolden further curiosity in looking for the presence of non-human animals in policies, architecture, domesticities, and places of consumption. Erring on the side of responsible scholarship, it is important to note that locating non-human animals is not enough. As critical scholars, especially those in animal studies, we must recognize that our obligation is bound to more than research. As *Animal Metropolis* presents curious stories of non-human animals in Canada, readers and scholars should be inspired beyond pondering and ask, with humility, what responsibilities come with this knowledge.

*Building the Power:  
The Labourers' Union in  
British Columbia*

M.C. Warrior

Surrey: Construction and Specialized Workers' Union, LIUNA  
Local 1611, 2016. 266 pp.

GORDON HAK  
Victoria, BC

THIS BOOK tells the story of the Labourers' International Union of North America in British Columbia since 1937 and is intended primarily for workers and retirees associated with the union. It is an insider's perspective: for eight years prior to the book's publication, the author, M.C. Warrior, was engaged in strategic research and analysis for the union. However, the book has a broader appeal, and at a time when unions and working people are increasingly losing their profile in public life and in the scholarly world, *Building the Power* is a reminder of the rich union history in the province, the difficult situation in which unions now find themselves, and the challenges of the future. While there are no hard copies of the book available for sale, it can be downloaded at no charge from this address: [www.cswu1611.org/book/](http://www.cswu1611.org/book/).

Warrior writes that "this is an unabashedly pro-union history, for which I make no apologies" (255). This is the strength of the book. Drawing on interviews with workers, former workers, and union officials, as well as a union newsletter, the book takes us into a working-class and union culture that is little known to outsiders, giving readers a sense of how jobs are actually performed, insights into the hopes and fears of workers, and an understanding of the purpose of the union as it operates

in the day-to-day realities of the working world. Wonderful pictures enhance the presentation.

The union has members in a wide variety of industries, including road building, paving, commercial construction, curb and gutter, precast concrete, parking and security, and the health sector. Large numbers of unionized construction labourers were involved in major projects such as the Kitimat Smelter-Kemano Dam project of the 1950s, the Peace River Dam in the 1960s, the Coquihalla Highway in the 1980s, and the Canada Line in the first decade of the twenty-first century, all of which are described in the book, but the union also had and has members working at much smaller sites.

Workers and the union have many enemies, notes Warrior. Employers engage in all sorts of tactics to undermine union efforts. The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), later WorkSafe BC, and the Unemployment Insurance Commission, now known as EI, "far too often treat the injured and the unemployed as scroungers looking to game the system" (147). Says Warrior, "the WCB is perhaps the government agency most despised by the labour movement, more than even the Labour Relations Board" (148). Then there is the challenge of "rat unions or pseudo-unions" that are "employer-friendly" but still "treated as legitimate unions by the Labour Code and the courts" (187). Warrior also chronicles the legislative assault on organized labour from the time of W.A.C. Bennett's Social Credit government in the 1960s through the Gordon Campbell Liberal government after 2001. Notably, the book investigates these issues from the perspective of workers and the union, discussing specific struggles in a variety of places to show the impact on the lives of working people as well as their response.

*Building the Power* is a fine, well-written portrait of a union. For some readers, referencing and an index will be missed. Some, too, might note the lack of focus on race, gender, Indigenous peoples, and the environment. Internal union politics are hardly mentioned. But importantly, the oft-neglected issue of class is given its due here, and the book makes the case for its ongoing relevance in the province's history.

*Never Rest on Your Ores:  
Building a Mining Company,  
One Stone at a Time*

Norman B. Keevil

Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017.

496 pp. \$39.95 cloth.

ARN KEELING  
*Memorial University*

HOW DO YOU turn a relatively modest copper mining play on Lake Temagami in the 1950s into Canada's largest diversified mining company, with a market capitalization in 2017 of nearly \$14 billion? In telling the story of the rise of Teck Resources, Norman Keevil, the company's chairman of the board and legendary figure in Canadian mining and business circles, suggests it was a blend of serendipity and far-sightedness that enabled his family and his company to prosper. In *Never Rest on Your Ores*, Keevil blends an as-told-to style memoir of his company's rise to Canadian (and global) corporate heights, while dispensing homespun, mining-oriented versions of the corporate maxims no doubt familiar to readers of books by business gurus.

Over the course of its evolution into a twenty-first-century mining giant, Teck

intersected with many of the important discoveries, episodes, and players of the postwar Canadian mining boom (and various “busts”). In addition to recounting the history of Teck’s own properties across Canada and in South America, readers will find insights and stories related to Teck’s acquisition of Cominco in the 1980s, the Bre-X scandal, and the Voisey’s Bay nickel development in Labrador. Keevil’s view of this history is very much from the boardroom – though there are some discussions early in the book of geology and geophysics, much of *Never Rest on Your Ores* focuses on the corporate side of mining and the men (yes, they are virtually all men) who built the mines and companies.

As such, the narrative tends to alternate between insider-ish stories of mine-finding and deal-making, and shareholders’ report-speak on the building of corporate value. Much of this will be primarily of interest to the author’s many friends and colleagues in the mining fraternity. For general readers, such a narrative strategy rewards a kind of “bulk sampling” approach to identify and separate higher-value material from the “gangue” (valueless matter). For instance, chapters 24 to 26, which detail Teck’s consolidation of the Highland Valley copper deposits and its merger with Cominco, are particularly interesting accounts.

Indeed, readers of *BC Studies* will find insights into important historical and contemporary people and places. From the vantage of the Kootenays, it is impossible to miss Teck’s influence: from the Elkview and Fording River coal properties in the East Kootenay to the massive Trail Smelter complex to (a little further north and west, near Ashcroft) the massive Highland Valley Copper Mine. Just to the south, the company operates the Pend Oreille lead-zinc mine in Washington, along the international

river of the same name. Keevil shares his experiences with Dave Barrett’s short-lived NDP government (“socialist hordes”) and Bill Bennett (Social Credit premier, later Teck director), among other provincial notables.

What readers will not find is reference to mining’s environmental impacts, conflicts with Indigenous peoples, or labour issues, among the hot-button issues that are key aspects of the industry’s history and present. While entirely characteristic, perhaps, of the era that Keevil recounts, these omissions limit the book’s usefulness to readers interested in the evolving social and environmental sides of the business.

*The Peace in Peril: The Real  
Cost of the Site C Dam*

Christopher Pollon, with  
photographs by Ben Nelms

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing,  
2016. 160 pp. \$24.95 paper.

MATTHEW EVENDEN  
*University of British Columbia*

ANYTHING WRITTEN about the Site C dam in the past year or two was bound to become dated rapidly, given the pace of events, the uncertainty around the future of the project after the 2017 provincial election, and the drawn out yet rapidly compressed review process launched by the NDP government. Chris Pollon’s *The Peace in Peril* might well have fallen into this trap, and to some extent it does. After all, the book concludes with musings about the approach of the Clark Liberals in the summer of 2016 that bear a somewhat dejected, fatalistic tone and offer no sense that the course of events on this river might flow differently.

The book offers more than its postscript suggests, however, providing insight into the river, its current and past environmental circumstances, human histories, and communities. Conceived around the writerly device of a canoe trip of discovery, Pollon drifts ashore in the text and talks to trappers, casts a fishing rod, spies dam work crews suspiciously from a distance, and visits Site C critics in surrounding communities. Throughout, he inserts relevant historical context, interviews experts, discusses First Nations perspectives, and generally fleshes out the travelogue into something more substantial and meaningful. Ben Nelms's photography illustrates the book, capturing the river at different moments, its wildlife – dead and alive – as well as the river's advocates in their homes and on the river's banks. The juxtaposition of historical photographs enhances the reader's sense of change over time and helps to reinforce Pollon's discussion of previous dam development and its effects on the Peace.

The book is a lament of sorts, a travelogue of a writer and a photographer floating down the Peace River from Hudson's Hope to Taylor, trying to make sense of a river that will soon be transformed. There are moments of fear about bears, astonishment over the number of jumping rainbow trout, and embarrassment as Emergency Management BC staff swoop down in a helicopter to rescue the writer and his photographer after Pollon neglects to inform his wife of his current whereabouts. This mistake leads to ongoing guffaws in the Peace River communities that Pollon visits – his reputation precedes him. A rollicking tale of misadventure provides one strand of the storytelling, but it also allows Pollon to reveal himself as an author, a freelance journalist whose life will not be significantly affected by the dam, but

whose computer runs on power generated by BC rivers and who feels implicated in the public policy decisions driving the dam forward.

Pollon does not support the dam proposal, and he gives over most of his time to interviewing others who are similarly critical. The most interesting such interviews are with people who assist him at different stages of the journey and who want to share their story and point of view, such as Ross and Deborah Peck, Art and Laurel Hadland, and Ken and Arlene Boon. Just as revealing is a discussion with a trapper, Vic Gouldie, who supports the dam and has a lot to say about trapping, caring for the land, and how annoying he finds Site C protesters. While Pollon manages to interview First Nations leaders like West Moberly chief Roland Willson, First Nations perspectives are generally drawn at one remove. Pollon does not interview dam construction workers or BC Hydro employees, though he does describe an encounter with surveyors. To some extent this is the happenstantial outcome of the canoe's drift, but it is also the result of how Pollon planned his interviews and frames his story.

Whether or not one is critical of the Site C Dam, readers will appreciate the extent to which Pollon ties the current events on the Peace to the history of the region and its peoples, and they will enjoy Nelms's evocative photographs of the Peace on the cusp of change.

*Unbuilt Environments: Tracing  
Postwar Development in  
Northwest British Columbia*

Jonathan Peyton

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

DANIEL SIMS  
*University of Alberta,  
Augustana Campus*

IN 1921, the *Prince George Citizen* reminded its readership that “central BC is not a new country” (1921). Defining “central BC” as those parts of the province situated between the 52nd and 57th parallel, in true booster fashion the paper examined how, even though this part of the province had been left behind economically following Confederation, it was now poised to catch up with southern BC (*Prince George Citizen* 1921). Even though he is perhaps unaware of this article, Jonathan Peyton’s *Unbuilt Environments* reveals how the northwestern part of “central BC” never caught up and, indeed, conceptually receded into the provincial north.

Limiting his examination to the period after the Second World War, Peyton examines five developments in the Stikine: the Cassiar asbestos mine, the BC Rail extension to Dease Lake, the Stikine-Iskut hydroelectric project, Dome Petroleum’s Western LNG Project, and the Northwest Transmission Line. Eschewing the failure and success of these projects as a false dichotomy that suggests the lack of long-term impacts in the case of the latter, he reveals how both outcomes affect not only the environment but also how we, as a society, conceptualize it and the debates surrounding future developments (166-67). Building upon William Turkel’s

concept of the archive of place (Turkel 2007), Peyton considers how the physical remains of both inform views of the past (8-9). Rather than relying on local and/or former residents of the Stikine, however, he bases most of his conclusion upon traditional archival sources available at national, provincial, and local archives (165-66, 206-7). While this approach is completely understandable, it does disappoint, especially considering that the first section of Chapter 1, “Cassiar 2010,” is a vivid, well-written description of Peyton’s trip to the ghost town of Cassiar.

As someone who examines how Indigenous people interact with the environment and economy, I also found Peyton’s inclusion of local Indigenous peoples particularly interesting. As Susan Neylan (2013, 839) points out, “the fascination with colonialism has positioned Native-Settler relations at the heart of British Columbia History.” This book is not Indigenous history, and, to Peyton’s credit, he is quite blunt about this (165-66). Nevertheless, as a thorough academic, he does include Indigenous history when talking about these projects, most notably in Chapter 3 (which deals with the Stikine-Iskut hydroelectric project) and Chapter 5 (which deals with the Northwest Transmission Line). Yet, for some stylistic reason that escapes me, the section in the introduction titled “Stikine Outlines” separates the paragraphs dealing with the Indigenous groups in the Stikine from the rest of the text (18-21). This choice, when combined with the fact that the aforementioned paragraphs seemingly do not fit with the overall flow of the section in which they are located, gives the appearance that some editor has simply instructed him to insert it after the fact. And this made me fear that subsequent references to Indigenous people would be clunky,

awkward, and, potentially, simplistic to the point of being wrong. Not helping the situation was the fact that Chapter 1 is fairly light when it comes to references to Indigenous people. As I continued to read, however, it became apparent that my initial assessment was wrong, and, while Peyton is not writing Indigenous history, his inclusion of it (apart from equating the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council to a people) is quite good (19).

In my final assessment I wanted more from the book, but in a good way. Overall it was well written, kept my attention, and at times was a page turner. More important, however, it achieved the goal of any academic book, which is to convey information and, in doing so, to spur further research. It invites the reader to consider its arguments, methods, and theories and, thereupon, to either challenge or support them. Beyond this, however, it encourages its audience to consider its own “unbuilt environments,” both physically and metaphorically. And for those interested in researching the Stikine, it provides a great reference point.

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*Maximum Canada:  
Why 35 Million Canadians  
Are Not Enough*  
Doug Saunders

Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, Canada,  
2017. 249 pp. \$20.95 paper.

JOHN DOUGLAS BELSHAW  
*Thompson Rivers University –  
Open Learning*

ANYONE with even the most superficial knowledge of eugenics, racism, the “domestication” of women, and the history of the twentieth century will know why pronatalism might ring the wrong bells. And this is setting aside the question of whether the public should be spending money so that the last five breeding pairs of humans in Smalltown, Canada, may claim funds to keep open the school and the health clinic. Indeed, let’s set aside the moral, historic, environmental, and fiscal questions of pronatalism, as Doug Saunders does, and focus instead on numbers.

Canada is, according to this study, grotesquely underpopulated. It’s one-third the size it should be. One hundred million is the magic number, and a means to kickstart the conversation. To be clear, 100 million is where we should be *now*. Seeing as we’re not nearly there, it’s thus a goal to aim for in the twenty-first century: three times the current number of Canadians by the time millennials collect their pension cheques. The world needs more Canada, evidently.

There are good arguments for a serious look at demographic goals and strategies. The baby boomers continue to age, and they will need more taxpaying successors to deal with their rising health needs. Underpopulated suburbs leave a heavy carbon footprint and impose

inefficiencies on infrastructure for energy, transportation, and water. As for commerce, Canadian dependence on exports for prosperity has its limits (cue: American trade war) and a small population spread across a vast country is not enough of a marketplace. An underpopulated Canada cannot generate the creative heat and light necessary to be culturally independent (cue: American cultural invasion). Saunders points out that 100 million Canadians would be better positioned to defend their country and its interests abroad, noting that recent events have shaken confidence that Washington, DC, and Ottawa will indefinitely see eye to eye (cue: American *real* invasion).

All of this should be of interest to British Columbians precisely because the southwest corner of the province is where much of the population is likely to land. The proposal is not, let's be clear, to spread out some 66 million babies and immigrants across the landscape like avocado smeared on toast. No, they shall be concentrated in those areas most able to (1) absorb their numbers and (2) maximize the many assets they bring. Saunders has written (more) persuasively about *Arrival Cities* and how landing pads like Surrey create a particular population dynamic.<sup>1</sup> He believes that it is in the outer ring of the metropolis that newcomers will find homes, establish businesses, and extend the reach of their distant villages. Handled smartly, he argues, this won't contribute to further urban sprawl ... it will cure it.

A population of 6 to 10 million below Hope and stretching through Squamish to Lillooet would necessarily entail vastly greater density, would make better public transit worth the candle,

and would hothouse creativity. We don't have these assets now because of a "paradox": Greater Vancouver requires "a lot more population in order to overcome the practical and ecological problems of population" (174). It would also necessitate a severe recalibrating of political power in the province. As if the metropolitan areas do not already have a heavy claim on parliamentary representation, a super-sized Vancouver and a much larger Victoria would utterly eclipse even a doubled or trebled Prince George, Kamloops, or Nanaimo, let alone the truly rural parts.

It is too early to speak, as Saunders does, of "a maximizing consensus." In a housing market like Vancouver's, any proposal to double-down on immigration would raise more than eyebrows. Flipping this, it's hard to accept Saunders's argument that a "minimizing vision" has dominated Canadian cultural and political discourse since the 1600s. He makes the case, but with a shoehorn in hand. Was it the goal of every settler administration in what is now Canada to restrict population growth? Racism levies and barriers notwithstanding, it is difficult to shake the feeling that two-thirds of this book is spent erecting a strawman of fictive policy.

What Saunders has right is the need to discuss and make choices about population rather than engage in further decades of "ad hocery." These are difficult conversations because, as is the case with pronatalism, population policies trigger sharp responses. The people we might be in the future, in that case, are held hostage by the people we were in the past. As is so often the case, history is not through with us yet.

<sup>1</sup> Doug Saunders, *Arrival City: The Final Migration and Our Next World* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2011).

*Borderline Crime: Fugitive  
Criminals and the Challenge of  
the Border*

Bradley Miller

Toronto: University of Toronto  
Press, 2016. 304 pp. \$65.00 cloth.

BRANDON DIMMEL  
*London, ON*

BRADLEY MILLER, an assistant professor of history at the University of British Columbia, has produced an unprecedented look at the patchwork development of the law as it pertains to the Canada-US border over the course of the period following the War of 1812 and preceding the First World War. An important and helpful book for legal historians and historians of the Canada-US border, it lays a framework for examining how the border was interpreted as a legal and political entity during its most formative years in the nineteenth century.

*Borderline Crime* examines how the slow and inconsistent introduction of an international boundary running across thousands of kilometres of forest, rivers, lakes, plains, and mountains was interpreted and used by criminals, lawmakers, and law enforcement officials as Canada and the United States slowly and awkwardly stretched their sovereignty from sea to sea. It was a huge and challenging undertaking that, given today's climate at the border, is hard to imagine. Miller's book effectively reveals how this struggle to create and enforce a border took shape and how many Canadians and Americans sought to exploit the immaturity of their respective federal governments in order to evade the law.

That the Canada-US border was implemented in a patchwork, ambiguous

fashion over more than a century is not a new position. What is new, however, is the way Miller explores how this took place: there is a fascinating discussion of how criminals of all kinds – from “undesirable” immigrants (usually visible minorities) to military deserters to white-collar crooks to violent offenders – evaded the law by using the border as a shield against prosecution. Miller provides a glimpse of the diversity of these criminals and their crimes and how they sought to use the porous and adolescent nature of the boundary to avoid being held accountable to legal systems that overwhelmingly favoured affluent white, Anglo-Saxon peoples.

To accomplish this, Miller uses a vast array of archival sources, some of which have never been consulted for this purpose before. There is no shortage of primary research here, with correspondence between government officials and legal experts dominating Miller's endnotes.

Nevertheless, Miller's book leaves some questions unanswered. First and foremost, where is the connection between his focus on the legal side of things and the growing body of historical research focusing on the development of the Canada-US border, including migration experiences? Miller's historiographical section makes no mention of major works in this area, including those from historians like Bruno Ramirez, Randy Widdis, Reginald Stuart, or Marcus Lee Hansen.

Miller acknowledges that his book doesn't have a “normative argument,” and for some readers this may also be an issue. Instead, Miller says his book “tries to think beyond exigent political factors or social paranoias as the primary agents of law formation and to explore the often nuanced relationship between law and society” (8). This is not a clear

direction for the book, and the result is a somewhat shapeless structure.

And yet it does not appear that Miller has any interest in creating the most comprehensive legal history of the border. Instead, he has established a useful foundation that may allow other historians to fill in the gaps by making the connection between how the border took shape according to law and how this development played out along the border itself. In any case, in the years to come, we can expect to see Miller's book mentioned in many works on the history of the Canada-US border.

*The Language of Family: Stories of Bonds and Belonging*

Michelle van der Merwe, editor

Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 2017.  
207 pp. \$27.95 paper.

EMILY JEAN LEISCHNER  
*University of British Columbia*

“WHAT DOES a book about family look like when everyone’s idea of family is different?” So opens Michelle van der Merwe’s thoughtfully edited volume *The Language of Family: Stories of Bonds and Belonging*. This anthology was published as part of the contribution that the Royal BC Museum and BC Archives made to Canada’s 150th anniversary year, and it accompanied an exhibition at the museum entitled *Family: Bonds and Belonging*. A collection of twenty narratives and essays, poems and reflections, from writers across British Columbia, this book offers a careful selection of the deeply personal and diverse bonds that unite families across place and time.

Drawing on a broad selection of writers, the contributions succeed in capturing the intimate nature of family. The works included offer a wide array of accounts, from historical to contemporary, that together express the breadth of meaningful connections families can provide. They range from an examination of historical letters written by children to their families while away at boarding school (Bridge); to a moving spoken-word piece reflecting on home, legacy, and loss (Thomas); to Joy Kogawa’s lovingly written experience of belonging with a cherry tree from her childhood. Care was clearly taken to provide vastly differing perspectives on what family means, and the varied insights from Canadian immigrant, First Nations, and LGBTQ communities, among others, provide a rich tapestry of experiences. The accompanying illustrations, largely photographs from the BC Archives, all feature people and give the anthology the inviting feel of a family album. As a whole, the authors share captivating and vulnerable accounts that echo diary entries in their frankness, inviting the reader to reflect on our mutual longing for connection as an essential part of being human.

The only time this volume falls flat is when it hints at applying family as a metaphor for Canadian nationhood, which risks naturalizing the state and ignoring the colonial violence inherent in its creation. The Canadian government also has a paternalistic relationship with First Nations peoples, legislating their identity and rights and placing them under control of the state, all of which renders this metaphor particularly distasteful. That said, the purpose of this anthology is neither to define the nation as a family nor to homogenize these experiences but, rather, to celebrate the differing perspectives concerning what these relationships can mean.

While it is not an exhibition catalogue in the traditional sense, this volume also contains welcome additions to the field of museum scholarship in the form of three chapters that explore how museum practice could embrace the family as a central focus of discussion (Lohman, Hammond, Black). Authors elucidate how relationships are embedded within the objects museums collect and propose that revealing these connections both enriches their layered meanings and provides an opportunity for speaking across the traditional categorical divides between curatorial departments. They also question why family connections are rarely expressed in labels, exhibitions, or collections databases. These scholarly chapters, like all the pieces in this volume, generously share the authors' personal experiences while encountering the meaning of family in their work, which nicely connects them to the anthology as a whole.

Overall, this collection is a lovely addition to Canadian history and literature studies. Its greatest strength lies in its ability to express the diversity of family connections while also beautifully communicating the strong emotions that these relationships elicit, be they with those we have chosen or those with which we were born. This work should be of interest to museum scholars, graduate students, and historians. It is also accessible to casual readers of BC literature and history.

## *Uninterrupted*

Nettie Wild, director

National Film Board of Canada,  
2012. 6 min.

NICK STANGER

*Western Washington University*

*Editorial note: Uninterrupted is reviewed here following its role as inspiration for a nightly "cinematic spectacle" on Vancouver's Cambie Street Bridge during the summer of 2017 (see *uninterrupted.ca*).*

*Uninterrupted*, a film about a very special place in British Columbia, the Adams River, uses a celebratory and creative technique to share the beauty and richness of the sockeye run, which sees thousands of salmon returning there every year. This six-minute National Film Board of Canada film uses a multiple split screen technique to help juxtapose and compare different textures, colours, and movements and to provide an artistic rendering of the last stage of a sockeye's life.

## SOUNDTRACK

The soundtrack uses a specific water-themed technique, which is overwhelming at times. It is a bit grating at first, with a loud crescendo that fills a room's speakers, but then it shifts to slow, quiet dripping noises and altered soundscapes of other water features. Perhaps this is a comment on the incredible power of the sockeye as they move up the Fraser River and into the much mellower Shuswap River and then the Adams River. Near the end a celebratory chant is sung by a Secwépemc member, Peter August-Sjödín, which brings closure to the piece in a culturally centred way.

## NARRATION

With a Secwépemc narrator and famed Neskonlith elder and ethnobotanist Dr. Mary Thomas speaking in Secwepemctsin (superimposed over the soundtrack at times), the knowledge on offer is somewhat opaque for English speakers as there are no subtitles. This is likely appropriate and intentional since the stories and knowledge being shared may not be allowed for all viewers to hear or understand. It also speaks to the artistic nature of the work as a celebration of the sockeye and the First Nations special relationship with those fish. However, I wonder about how a more thorough acknowledgment of territory could have helped frame this film more fully and to set up a conversation about reconciliation.

## IMAGERY

The images are striking, focusing mostly on the water landscapes, the sockeye themselves, and the substrate at the bottom of the river. They start with life-giving grasses, textures of Ponderosa pine, and vibrant sockeye dorsal fins, and then travel through the short adult spawning lifespan of the fish during the time they are in the Adams River. Greens, blues, reds, and browns dominate. Near the end we see decomposing fish underwater as well as the broader context of the little river and its shoreline. Throughout, multiple screens project at once, creating repeated and contrasting images, to show the diversity of the landscape, biology, and experience of the sockeye.

## OVERALL

I had the great fortune of snorkelling the Adams River during the 2003 sockeye spawn with a fisheries biologist. This

was an incredible experience, not only in seeing the biology happening in front of me but also in experiencing the colours, smells, and sounds. This film goes some way towards recreating that experience. As a resource, this film could help local teachers who might want to explore the art and feeling of the Adams run. It could be paired with some of British Columbia's new K-12 curriculum, developed into art and ecology lessons, or framed as an Indigenous knowledge piece (with lots more context). It also appeals generally to British Columbians who are interested in the well-known Adams River sockeye salmon run, which is both very accessible and difficult to see due to its seasonality.