

BOOK AND FILM REVIEWS

The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open

Directed by Kathleen Hepburn
and Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers

Story by Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers;
Co-writer, Kathleen Hepburn
Experimental Forest Films:
levelFILM, 2019.

KARRMEN CREY
Simon Fraser University

THOUGH many will recognize Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers for her remarkable body of short and documentary films (*Bloodland* [2011], *A Red Girl's Reasoning* [2012], *Bihttöš* [2014], *casna?əm, the city before the city* [2017]), *The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open* (2019) is distinguished by being her first feature-length film, co-directed and co-written by Kathleen Hepburn (writer/director of 2018's *Never Steady, Never Still*), and by its meteoric success: it has won multiple festival awards, received theatrical release, and has been picked up by Ava Duvernay's distribution company, Array, for release on Netflix in December 2019 (US, UK, AUS, and NZ; streaming in Canada will be available in January 2020 via CBC Gem).

The Body Remembers begins at the intersection of two Indigenous women's lives in the Hastings–Sunrise area of Vancouver: Áila, a light-skinned Sami and Blackfoot woman returning from receiving birth control at a clinic; and Rosie, a pregnant Kwakwaka'wakw woman standing with her head lowered, bruised and barefoot in the rain, while her abusive boyfriend shouts at her from down the street. Áila, quickly grasping the situation, steps in and leads a hesitant Rosie to her own apartment to find her help and shelter.

It would be simplistic, though, to describe the moment when Áila and Rosie meet as a “chance encounter.” There's nothing random about the lives of two Indigenous women intersecting *here*, in the traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and the site of a low-income neighbourhood (home to a large Indigenous population) that has been undergoing intense gentrification as Vancouver continues its march eastward accompanied by young professionals seeking more affordable housing options. This place is shaped by colonization, class, and race, which are the dynamics informing the lives of these women who, while both Indigenous, live different realities shaped by skin privilege, urban

and rural upbringings, and educational and economic opportunity. As other reviewers have noted, this is one of the first times we have seen class difference between Indigenous people onscreen, but through Tailfeathers and Hepburn's clear lens, we also understand that class is just one node in the broader social (and colonial) matrix within which Indigenous women's lives are constrained, the complexity of which is revealed by Áila and Rosie's individual motivations as well as in their nuanced interactions with one another. See, for instance, Áila's unbearable mix of vulnerability and composure as she relates her medical history to her doctor, including an abortion and issues with anxiety and depression, and how it inflects her drive to use her resources to help a young and pregnant Rosie. Look also at how Rosie responds to Áila's rescue efforts, withdrawn and muted while also carefully assessing Áila's apartment for money and anything else she can put in her meticulously guarded backpack to provide for herself and her baby.

Yes, this is stereotype busting: Áila, driven by her self-awareness and a sense of responsibility, actually needs Rosie as much as Rosie needs her. Rosie is equipped to deal with crisis and danger in adaptive and canny ways outside of Áila's experience. Instructors, researchers, and students will find *The Body Remembers* to be a text rich in potential for decolonial and intersectional analysis. The film, however, is not an intellectual exercise. *The Body Remembers* is based on a real encounter Tailfeathers experienced, bringing it out of the realm of the purely fictional and closer to home. Filmed in real time and almost entirely in one long take, Tailfeathers and Hepburn draw the audience into intimate proximity with Rosie and Áila's spoken and unspoken exchanges to insist that we recognize their complexity and humanity in all their

discomforts. Frequent close-ups of their faces capture thoughts and emotions too nuanced to see from afar, encouraging empathy for women who are often unseen, and who also shield themselves and their scars from the world—though, for a brief time, not from one another.

*Moved by the State: Forced
Relocation and Making a Good
Life in Postwar Canada*

Tina Loo

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019.
296 pp. \$29.95 paper.

CAROLINE DESBIENS
Université Laval

FOCUSING on the *trente glorieuses* period, Tina Loo's study of how the Canadian welfare state pursued its promise of universality gives us an in-depth look at five communities: namely, Inuit villages in the district of Keewatin (Nunavut), small outposts in Newfoundland, rural villages in the lower Saint-Lawrence and Gaspé (Quebec), the Africville settlement in Halifax (Nova Scotia), and the Strathcona area in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (British Columbia). Despite their differing social and geographical characteristics, these locales have in common the fact that their residents all "found themselves moved by the state" (197). Through a meticulous treatment of archives and a well-crafted framing of development as a tension between community empowerment and state discipline, Loo interrogates the ways in which "if [the postwar liberal state] couldn't deliver services to the poor, it would deliver the poor to services" (197). She brings together qualitatively

different communities within a common analytical framework, but her focus on local realities remains expansive. As a result, the book is larger than the sum of its parts. Often couched as a benevolent pursuit of social security through spatial justice, relocation schemes nevertheless enabled the state to exercise power. This ambiguity runs through each of the cases examined. In my reading, Loo does not seek to resolve it but to show the ways in which it is woven into the very fabric of Canadian policy: "Uprooting people against their wills so they could realize their potential as individuals captures the violence and contradiction inherent in extending the 'liberal order' that Ian McKay argues characterized Canada" (197).¹

Of the five relocation cases chosen, Loo is careful to present as balanced an account as can possibly be given. Her sources are drawn from federal as well as regional and university archives, including municipal ones for Halifax and Vancouver. The book does not include first-hand accounts but, drawing from the archives, the author has selected several testimonies of individuals involved in these relocations. To her credit, these voices are not just those of the people targeted by these policies but also those of the government employees who conceived and deployed them. The most notable achievement of *Moved by the State* is that it proposes a framework for understanding the subjectivity of government bureaucrats as well as that of relocation participants. In Loo's analysis, power acquires many nuances: hope and agency are undeniably part of its realm, and both circulated broadly among local residents and policy-makers,

with surprising results. Although the book spans Canada, readers located in British Columbia will find much to relate to as redevelopment dynamics in other provinces can shed light on the Vancouver Downtown Eastside experience. All in all, this new book by Tina Loo confirms her rigour, originality, and leadership in Canadian history.

*Trans-Pacific Mobilities:
The Chinese and Canada*

Lloyd Wong, editor

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017.
361 pp. \$34.95 paper.

DAVID LEY
University of British Columbia

THIS BOOK examines the trans-Pacific mobility of migrants, products, images, and ideas as part of the great global diaspora of Chinese migrants. As China has modernized and globalized, aspects of its self-transformation have been exported to other societies, not least to Canada. The book's sixteen chapters and twenty-seven interdisciplinary authors are ably marshalled and introduced by Lloyd Wong, who has made significant contributions of his own to the study of immigration to Canada from Greater China.

The varied disciplines represented by authors lead to diverse methodologies, from historical analysis to interviews and surveys, ethnography, media analysis, and the use of large databases. The contributions are accessible and comprehensible to a general reader. What emerges is a rich and varied series of chapters that includes a number of studies of immigrant subgroups: new immigrants from China (by Eva Xiaoling

¹ Ian McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History," *Canadian Historical Review* 81, no. 4 (2000): 616–45.

Li and Peter S. Li), highly skilled migrants (an informative Canada–US comparison by Lucia Lo, Shaolu Yu, and Wei Li), “techno-immigrants” (Karl Froschauer and Lloyd Wong), students and permanent residency (Yixi Lu and Li Zong), family members and their spatial dispersal (Eric Fong and Jenny Li), professional women (Guida Man and Elena Chou), adopted children (Sara Dorow), immigrant children in Canada (Yan Zhang and Yan Guo), and a fascinating study of return migrants to Beijing (Shibao Guo). An interesting set of chapters addresses cultural and institutional forms established by the Chinese in Canada: the Chinese-language Fairchild media group (Shuyu Kong), Pacific Mall in suburban Toronto (Ho Hon Leung), and congregations in Hong Kong and Vancouver that meditate on the work of a cultic scholar (Paul Crowe). Marcella Sisqueira Cassiano, Sara Dorow, and Heather Schmidt examine mainstream media representations of Chinese investment and labour practices in Alberta.

The collection begins with two expansive historical chapters on the boldly articulated Cantonese Pacific (Henry Yu and Stephanie Chan), which deftly blends spatial scales in its use of network analysis and oral histories, followed by a chapter on Chinatowns in Canada, in which David Chuenyan Lai adds references to the opium trade and the trans-Pacific repatriation of the bones of deceased Chinese to more familiar examples of immigrant mobilities. The book ends appropriately with Kay Anderson’s insightful revisionist interpretation of the reconfiguration of Sydney’s Chinatown in light of the emergence of a confident, global China.

Lloyd Wong has ambitiously sought to bring coherence to the collection through the mobilities perspective developed by sociologists and geographers, and laid out

in his helpful introduction. Most chapters start by referencing this approach, cross-referencing other chapters, and citing a few authors who have advocated a mobilities perspective (notably John Urry and Tim Cresswell), thereby bringing some success to establishing a common project through the volume. With the emphasis on immigration, however, many chapters then move into the more familiar discourse of transnationalism. In my view, transnationalism with its evocation of cross-border movements of people, trade, and cultures within a globalization metanarrative provides a richer conceptual language and theoretical object of study than does the empirically unspecified notion of mobility. There is a danger too (noted by Lo et al.) in over-identifying mobility and opportunity and overlooking immobility and constraint, when even the experience of skilled migrants can be as restricted as the self-referential language of the phrase “immigration jail” suggests.

This collection significantly advances our understanding of the varied experiences of immigration among Chinese arrivals in Canada. Those experiences, shaping their developing sense of identity, are effectively nested within the changing historical and economic contexts of Chinese encounter with Canadian land and society.

*Captive Audience:
How Corporations
Invaded Our Schools*

Catherine Gidney

Toronto: Between the Lines, 2019.
248 pp. \$27.95 paper.

JASON ELLIS

University of British Columbia

CORPORATE involvement in Canadian schools is an emotional topic. There are alarmists, like some of the teachers' federations. They long for public education's halcyon days and warn vaguely of nefarious "neoliberals" set to "privatize." There are industry apologists. They say innocently, but unconvincingly, "All we're trying to do is help youngsters" (the title of this book's Chapter 7). In this kerfuffle, historian of education Catherine Gidney is calm, cool, and collected. She makes two main claims in *Captive Audience*. There is no corporate-free golden age to return to because commercialism in Canadian classrooms is not new. Yet, commercialism in schools has "intensified" (2) since the 1980s or 1990s. She describes this escalation and explains why it should worry us.

Chapter 1 looks at the long history of commercial forays into Canadian classrooms. Teachers in days gone by had a constant need for instructional materials. Recognizing this, and the opportunity it presented, large firms – as early as the 1920s – produced teaching aids. They promoted these aids precisely where teachers desperate for classroom ideas would find them – in professional magazines like *BC Teacher*. They also gave away the materials they produced, like maps, notebooks, filmstrips, and wall charts. Outfits like Colgate, Bristol-Myers, and Kleenex/Kotex-maker

Canadian Cellucotton branded free posters and pencils with their logos and slogans. Or they devised lesson plans around filmstrips and booklets that taught about their products' virtues. (Shell distributed educational films about oil and the good things it could be made into.) Advertising appeared in high school yearbooks and snuck into schools in other ways as well. Commercialism gained a grasp in classrooms about a century ago.

The rest of the book's chapters look at how corporations leveraged teaching aids and a few direct advertisements into a stronger grip on schools starting in the 1980s. There is a chapter on school-business partnerships. There is another on the multi-billion-dollar business of selling school boards computers. There are chapters as well on direct advertising in schools, the Youth News Network, vending machines and fast food in cafeterias, and corporate-sponsored school improvements, like Vancouver's school playgrounds brought to you by Home Depot.

What policy, social, economic, and other developments since the 1980s or 1990s did all of these endeavours reflect? Gidney names four. The ideological belief that running a school like you run a business can turn a supposedly failing educational system into a succeeding one. The demand for microcomputers at such a huge cost that schools turned to corporate help to defray it. Government spending cuts that prompted schools to look elsewhere for funds. Finally, the colossal spending power of modern youth that made it irresistible for corporations to want to advertise to them day and night, including during school time.

This book is short and very informative. The writing is straightforward. Teachers, parents, policy-makers, and even kids who are interested in the topic can read this academic analysis without having to hack

through the “theoretical frameworks,” “methodologies,” “ontologies,” and jargon that densely and regrettably often cover scholarly literature on topics like this one.

Ultimately, Gidney warns that the recent acceleration of schoolhouse commercialism should worry us for some very clear reasons. Schools are priceless for teaching publicly agreed-to values. Corporations are private and have their own values to teach. The more places corporate values are found, including at school, the more curtailed are possibilities to imagine a world different from a corporate capitalist one. Corporations are more powerful than schools and will dominate them in partnerships. Corporate objectives, like material accumulation without much regard to environmental impacts, hinder young people’s well-being. As a 5G-connected world looms, the possibility to captivate a captive audience and sell to it without any interruption can only grow.

Vancouverism

Larry Beasley, with a prologue
by Frances Bula

Vancouver: On Point Press, 2019.
424 pp., illus. \$39.95 paper.

JOHN DOUGLAS BELSHAW
Thompson Rivers University

IT’S BEST TO start any study with a clear, concise, and irrefutable sentence. But “Vancouver is a place” is taking that axiom too far. And, as anyone who knows horses will tell you, a place is not a win.

Larry Beasley arrived at Vancouver City Hall in 1976 and in 1994 became co-director of the planning department. The period in between is pivotal in the city’s history. Population growth, globalization,

an embryonic sustainability movement, and deindustrialization arrived in the 1980s and set city departments loose with new mandates and tools. City staff outlast all but the hardest civic politicians: Beasley spent thirty years at City Hall. It is possible *only* for someone like Beasley to tell a story like this one, highlighting continuities and changes over a longish haul. From his perspective, the period was transformative of the cityscape and a breakthrough in planning processes. *Vancouverism* is thus an account, an explanation, and a validation of a civic planning culture that favours density, win-win outcomes, proximity to services, innovations in public transportation, and a rich culture of neighbourhoods.

The focus is very much on what Beasley calls the “megaprojects” on Coal Harbour and around False Creek. Vancouverism in this sense doesn’t really stretch into other neighbourhoods except insofar as it models good (let’s not say “best”) practices. Downtown freeway proposals were gassed in the late 1960s; planners thereafter were obliged to think about how to achieve and manage growth and mobility in different ways. Foreshore mills and shipyards were swept away and the city found itself with a largely unanticipated endowment of vacant property bracketing the city core. Using the high-density and lively West End as a model and seeing the limits of detached single houses for families, city planners opted to densify the centre, lace it up with rapid transit, and reconstitute it as a space that welcomed diverse households and economic activities. “Vancouverism” is, thus, a highly regulated rejection of sprawl, an ode to high-rise living and busy sidewalks, an appreciation for light and air, and a process of negotiation, regulation, and aspiration. Vancouver might have evolved very differently after Expo ’86; Vancouverism ensured that what Douglas Coupland called “the city

of glass” didn’t turn out so badly. To his credit, Beasley lives in a neighbourhood he helped design – unlike NYC’s Robert Moses (who built freeways but never drove) or Vancouver brutalist Arthur Erickson (who lived in a wood frame structure from the 1920s) – and that’s an important testament in its own right. It is, however, one thing to plan a city; it is another to write a book about it.

Beasley was, perhaps, ill advised to try to make this a single work. There are at least three books between the covers. It is a memoir, an homage, a handbook, and a suite of recommendations. That’s just too much. Aesthetically and intellectually this scale leads to repetition, contradiction, unclear purpose, and difficulties for the user. Beasley is, for example, mad-keen for lists, including: Six Principles (58–63); Ten Parameters (112) – which don’t seem to survive more than sixteen pages; Five “Friends of the Heart and of the Brain” (89–100); Four Primary Features of Approvals (343–44); and Three Elements to Megaproject Planning (352–53). Many of these overlap, but whether and how they might operate concurrently is entirely unclear.

What could make sense of all this is a few detailed case studies. Even one blow-by-blow of a significant development process from conceptualization and zoning through application, negotiation, consultations, approval, construction, and final inspection would be nice. If client privilege requires redactions, fine, but without some details we are left to take Beasley’s word for it that developers’ worst instincts were kept in check and the public interest was well served. Chapter 9 nearly takes us there. It deals with the processes that govern Vancouverist planning and could have stood alone as a very good and useful book on the practice of Vancouverism. What Chapter 9 also reveals, however, is the extent to which Beasley’s world is shot through with

snobbery. Beasley notes that Indigenous participants in city-making have “now ... found a positive way to position their interests in land and development,” a statement that drips ignorance as regards how local Indigenous communities were systematically stripped of land and opportunities to participate (371). He also overlooks repeated expressions of community frustration, saying that “even one such protest [over inadequate or inauthentic consultation] is a blunt indictment that city hall has dropped the ball, which should instigate an immediate reform” (363). Long past due, long past due. The use of three-dimensional models of proposed structures “make it so easy for average people to understand what is going on” (349). But heaven forfend if one of those “average” people becomes compelled to pursue the issue further because no one likes a “professional citizen” (347). These characterizations recur throughout the book, revealing much about the culture of planning and city bureaucracies. It’s not toxic but it’s not alert either.

Take the topic of housing affordability. In a study of planning for density (a.k.a.: housing) this should loom rather large. Beasley neglects empty condos, non-resident money, the impact of speculation, and the distortions widely ascribed to money laundering. When new housing units are treated like chips at the craps table, however, it no longer matters much whether we’ve negotiated the right mix of “market” and social housing. (Perhaps the problem is that Beasley’s people of “modest-income” [129] are not middle-class Vancouverites: they are the poor. Everyone else is in the “market” and it’s devil take the hindmost.) At the very least, Beasley needs to acknowledge that this is a question worthy of pursuit. Another is my neighbourhood.

Just this weekend, more gunfire. There’s been a slew of shootings since the

summer in the old Downtown Eastside (a.k.a.: the DTES). There was a fatal knifing and lately a sixty-year-old woman was found murdered in her apartment. The Vancouver Police claim that they confiscated roughly two hundred firearms in the DTES nine months into 2019. Meanwhile, fentanyl mortalities continue to increase and the homeless count is more than two thousand. These events are happening not a kilometre from where I live and barely three kilometres from Beasley's home. They form the backdrop to my reading of this book.

You know that thing with fortune cookies where you add the words "in bed" to your fortune? I tacked on the words *except in the DTES* to every celebratory claim in this book. Back pats all round because we've created wonderfully livable neighbourhoods, vital street life, and a process that balances the goals of developers with those of community and planners ... *except in the DTES*. Beasley claims that a "strong culture of ... 'urban connoisseurship' has been engendered among a significant segment of the community" ... *except in the DTES* (350–51). In a three-page section headed "The Biggest Black Eye in the Whole Story," he writes, "Looking around [the DTES] today, you might conclude that no one has done anything through the years, which, of course, would be the ultimate indictment for Vancouverism. In fact, such was not the case." He points to 2003 efforts to curtail the loss of single room accommodations (SRAs) and the rise of the Four Pillars drug strategy, closing with "God forbid what might be the situation today if the Vancouver Agreement and all of its spinoffs had not happened." Really? We saw a dead guy. On a discarded sofa. In a public park! How much worse could it get? (Touch wood.) Beasley acknowledges that more needs to be done. He says, with respect to the mental health and

addictions crisis that this "plight is a blight on everything that is celebrated in this book" (379) and calls for greater effort in the years going forward. Agreed, but the accelerating tailspin of despair began on his watch. While his planning team was sculpting False Creek into a new urbanism work of art, the challenges of the DTES became increasingly knotty and grotesque. Vancouverism has done much of value for Vancouverites, but all the creative resources that poured into the megaprojects are resources that did not go into the DTES and, yes, that *is* indictable and a reminder that it's not down to God to forbid this mess.

Unlike me, Beasley can say (on the first page of the preface), "I am not a historian." So he hands the business of setting the historic context to ... a journalist. Now, Frances Bula's done much that I admire but there are literally a dozen actual historians to whom Beasley might have turned and several historical studies he (or Bula) might have read. Robert A.J. McDonald's *Making Vancouver* is the ground floor; Will Langford's work on high modernist planning under Gerald Sutton Brown is not cited, and it should be.² It may be hard to find now, but UBC geographer Walter Hardwick's *Vancouver* contextualized and laid out the essential goals and principles of what became Vancouverism in 1974 and thus sets the intellectual if not ideological stage.³ Much more recently, Jack Little has written on the roles played in and around Vancouver by citizens and citizen groups who were contemporaries of Hardwick

² Robert A.J. McDonald, *Making Vancouver: Class, Status, and Social Boundaries, 1863–1913* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996); Will Langford, "Gerald Sutton Brown and the Discourse of City Planning Expertise in Vancouver, 1953–1959," *Urban History Review* no. 41, 2 (2013): 30–41.

³ Walter G. Hardwick, *Vancouver* (Don Mills: Collier-MacMillan, 1974), 201–5.

and a fresh-faced Larry Beasley: they shared/shaped values in the decade before Expo.⁴ Would a deeper immersion in the historiography have made a difference to the book? I think it might have sharpened or at least tested Beasley's sense of the environment from which Vancouverism arose. It might have given him a greater sense of the dialogue in which this book might fit. Take, for example, the very recent southeast False Creek project, better known as "Olympic Village." Beasley writes glowingly on this topic and gives it full marks for sustainability and livability. A 2015 doctoral dissertation, however, explores how multiple narratives of "The Village" followed different wavelengths for twelve years, oscillating from innovation and sustainability through "lost opportunities" to "costly mistake" and back again.⁵ The point isn't that the project was badly/well conceived or executed but that Beasley's narrative is just that: one of several stories that ignores and/or eclipses other more critical versions. Not acknowledging those other histories puts his account in a bubble.

This is a handsome book, much like the urban creations it describes. But its aesthetic brilliance is blind to Vancouverism's deformities. As a reviewer, my first responsibility is to determine whether a book delivers on its promise, and this one mostly cannot. It sets out to do too much. And then it does too little. Vancouverism, it turns out, isn't a citywide vision: it's really just a few neighbourhoods, or,

to slightly amend Beasley's opening line, Vancouverism is a place. If the goal was merely a study of False Creek developments since the 1980s or the planning process, *Vancouverism* would be a win, but it isn't and so opens itself to criticism. As a citizen and a historian, I'm obliged to ask of the material whether the document is reliable ... and on balance it is not. Beasley's purpose is diffuse and the persistent unwillingness to confront what Vancouverism failed to do is discouraging. It's a place, could've been a win, but it's all for show.

Outside In: A Political Memoir

Libby Davies

Toronto: Between the Lines, 320 pp.
\$26.95 paper.

GORD PERKS

City Councillor, Toronto

Outside In can be read and enjoyed as a straightforward memoir of Libby Davies's remarkable career as an activist and elected official. It traces her path from her early days working for housing justice in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside to her time as a key figure in the NDP's heady days as the official opposition. Along the way we are treated to first-hand accounts of her involvement in campaigns on housing, drug policy, peace, same-sex marriage, environment, sex work, and many more.

Davies's strong belief in direct action for change put her on the front line of these and many other struggles. We find her with Greenpeace swimming around a US nuclear capable warship and on a street corner staging a hunger strike for housing. Her telling of these and other struggles always centres the vast network

⁴ Jack Little, *At the Wilderness Edge: The Rise of the Antidevelopment Movement on Canada's West Coast* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019), which I reviewed in *Ormsby Review*, 11 August 2019.

⁵ Lisa Michelle Westerhoff, "City Stories: From Narrative to Practice in Vancouver's Olympic Village" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2015), 86–87.

of activists she worked with and the individual people she fought for.

The book is very open about her personal life. Reading about her loves and losses reminds us that it is human beings who do the work that leads to change. Her candour about doubts and mistakes and finding a way forward in the very toxic male political world in Ottawa is an object lesson in how simple courage and principled leadership can overcome.

As compelling as these elements are, the real value of the book lies elsewhere. Politics has developed a discouraging pall in recent years: the rise of Trump and his imitators in Canada; Brexit; fake news; the fixation on horse-race polling; and “hot takes.” It all paints an ugly picture of the practice of politics. This book is the perfect tonic. Time and again we see Davies patiently and relentlessly practising a different and better kind of politics.

The various campaigns Davies recounts have a common pattern. Working with real people who have been pushed to the margins, she finds the dignity and truth of people who deserve better. She then finds allies and builds networks both inside and outside of government. She breaks open public dialogue with audacious acts and then firmly and practically finds a way to thread the political needle to negotiate important reforms.

Time and again the book shakes the reader awake with a reminder that politics, when done right, can make people's lives better.

I once met Davies at a community health centre in the ward I represent as a Toronto city councillor. She was touring the country to build support for a harm reduction approach to drug addiction. This was shortly before the current opioid crisis emerged as the most dangerous public health crisis of our generation. Recently, that same health centre opened

a safe injection service, one of several that have opened in the past few years. Daily, these services save lives. Without her leadership (and, as she points out, the leadership of many others) many thousands more Canadians would have died.

Outside In is written in clear, direct prose, making it available to a wide audience, which it deserves.

*The Last Suffragist Standing:
The Life and Times of
Laura Marshall Jamieson*

Veronica Strong-Boag

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018.

284 pp. \$32.95 paper.

LYNNE MARKS

University of Victoria

VERONICA Strong-Boag is one of Canada's most distinguished women's historians. One of the major themes of her publishing career has been Canadian women's struggle for the vote. Strong-Boag's expertise in the field is very much in evidence in her fascinating biography of BC suffragist and politician Laura Jamieson, the last suffragist to be elected to a Canadian legislature. Strong-Boag notes early in the book that she had to work with very limited sources, but she has made excellent use of those that were available. These included speeches by Jamieson when she was active as a suffragist and in her impressive work as a three-term Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) MLA in the BC legislature and a one-term Vancouver city councillor.

Where sources are particularly sparse, as is the case in Jamieson's early years as an orphaned child living in rural

poverty on the Bruce Peninsula, as a school teacher working in BC mountain communities to earn enough to put herself through the University of Toronto, and as a young widow with two children in the 1920s who supported her family by becoming a juvenile court judge, Strong-Boag is careful not to speculate beyond the sources. However, in these cases Strong-Boag's deep knowledge of the existing literature in Canadian women's history gives us a broader sense of what Jamieson's life must have been like in those years of hardship.

Similarly, in chronicling Jamieson's early years as a suffragist, Strong-Boag makes excellent use of the limited sources available regarding Jamieson's own suffrage work and ideology while, at the same time, drawing on her knowledge of the women's suffrage movement in British Columbia not only to tell us about Jamieson but also to provide a detailed and fascinating history of the broader suffrage movement in the province. Strong-Boag had access to more evidence regarding Jamieson's career in the BC legislature, but Jamieson's career is again placed in the context of the (very few) other women elected to that legislature in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Strong-Boag clearly reveals the hostility Jamieson and other women faced in the larger political sphere while also noting that the five women elected to the BC legislature in 1941, including Jamieson, would be the highest percentage of women politicians in that institution until 1972.

Strong-Boag skilfully presents Jamieson as a product of her time with regard to her lack of recognition of the suffering and dispossession of Indigenous peoples. At the same time, she also traces how Jamieson challenged anti-Asian racism in the 1930s and 1940s, when she moved far beyond many of her contemporaries. We are also shown

the limits to how far Jamieson was able to go in this regard.

Strong-Boag clearly traces how, in a number of other ways, Jamieson moved beyond many of her sister suffragists as she tacked to the left over her career, focusing on the inequalities of both gender and class – championing the concerns of children, working-class housewives, and women in the workforce. She also presents fascinating insights into how Jamieson lived her politics. For example, an advocate of cooperatives in various spheres of life, in 1941 she moved into a cooperative house in Vancouver with nine other working women with whom she shared expenses and chores. In addition to its focus on Jamieson, this book provides important details about the history of the CCF in British Columbia from the 1930s to the late 1950s, providing a clear sense of both its strengths and its deep sexism. Jamieson worked hard to make a difference, although she was disappointed that women's political gains from suffrage were not as great as many had hoped they would be.

In a fascinating biography that is also a history of left and feminist politics in British Columbia, Strong-Boag ends with short passages from four of Jamieson's granddaughters, who discuss the influence that their grandmother had on their lives. This is an innovative way to demonstrate that women like Jamieson had an influence both in the broader political sphere and within families and over generations.

*Cornelius O'Keefe:
The Life, Loves,
and Legacy of an
Okanagan Rancher*

Sherri Field

Victoria, BC: Heritage House, 2019.
149 pp. \$9.95 paper.

DUANE THOMSON
*University of British Columbia
Okanagan*

CORNELIUS O'Keefe was one of a small group of pioneer Okanagan ranchers who managed, in the late nineteenth century, to accumulate land, wealth, and influence. His rags-to-riches story was made possible by a combination of timing, luck, vision, and good management. Unlike some others in the "cattle oligarchy" in the Okanagan, men such as Price Ellison and Forbes G. Vernon, he did not aspire to provincial or national political power but was content to accumulate land and wealth and to display it publicly.

Sherri Field first explores O'Keefe's youth as the son of an illiterate, Irish-Catholic navy who developed a subsistence farm in Fallowfield, Ontario. From age fourteen to twenty-four, Cornelius assisted his elderly father in the myriad heavy tasks of clearing dense timbered land, planting and harvesting grain and vegetables, and tending stock. In 1861, "Connie" left for the goldfields of British Columbia, and in 1867 he formed a cattle partnership with Thomas Greenhow in the North Okanagan. O'Keefe quickly developed his home ranch, complete with a gristmill, general store, post office, and Catholic church. From a limited land base, but with free access to adjacent Crown grazing lands, by 1879, O'Keefe and Greenhow gradually increased their herds to four

hundred head each. Their cattle found a lucrative market during the building of the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway in the early 1880s. With these revenues, the two cattlemen began to strategically acquire land, focusing on controlling access to water in the areas around Swan Lake and Priest's Valley. As the market developed, O'Keefe turned to wheat farming, cultivating hundreds of acres in the Swan Lake area. When land values increased dramatically, O'Keefe and Greenhow's widow sold out to land developers, making the two families extremely wealthy by local standards.

Field uses a wide variety of sources to explore O'Keefe's business operations and his personal life, from ranch and museum archives, census and land records, newspaper articles, artifacts found in the still-functioning ranch house, reminiscences of personal acquaintances, and family lore. She provides the date and legal description of each of O'Keefe's land purchases, documenting his rise to land baron. These records might have been utilized more thoroughly. The land-assembly history of both O'Keefe and Greenhow would be much more understandable and have much more impact, even for a local audience, if the book had included a detailed map of their holdings, illustrating the scope, timing, and strategy behind these purchases.

Field also explores the domestic and social aspects of O'Keefe's life. She considers him to have been driven to improve his social standing. His ostentatious home and lavish parties, his presidency of the local jockey club, and his associations with the local elite demonstrated his need to achieve an elevated social position. In his role as employer, Field is more ambiguous, presenting him as a hard driving, intemperate, and miserly boss, but one who at times could be considerate, fair, and lenient.

Field presents a brief history of O'Keefe's early Indigenous family as well as biographies of local, notable acquaintances, although the connections between O'Keefe and these men were not particularly close. O'Keefe's social relationship with his business partner is not as thoroughly developed as it could be. The Oblate correspondence provides details about the time O'Keefe's young niece, Elizabeth Coughlan, decided to marry the older, Protestant Thomas Greenhow. When O'Keefe refused his permission for the marriage, the two men became sworn enemies, a situation that lasted until Greenhow's death in 1889 (see Richard to d'Herbomez, letters written between 10 June 1879 and 19 June 1880, Library and Archives Canada, Records of the Oblate Mission of British Columbia).

Field's book is a good read, well organized and well written. A few minor errors exist, however – O'Keefe's partners Wood and Greenhow were from Newfoundland and England, respectively; Charles Houghton's land grant and Thomas Wood's pre-emption were not accurately located; and the Catholic bishop's name was Durieu, not Durien. The use of proper titles and their capitalization is problematic, with titles such as the "chief commissioner of lands and works" and the "superintendent general of Indian affairs" mishandled.

Field's biography of Cornelius O'Keefe is a welcome addition to the study of the one-generation cattle ranching era in the Okanagan, especially because his experience was representative in many ways. Like others in the "cattle oligopoly," he benefited from early entry to the industry, the ability to control access to water and exclude new entrants from the neighbourhood, free access to Crown grazing land for years, a good market for his cattle at a critical time, and, ultimately, dramatically increased land values.

This Was Our Valley

Shirlee Smith Matheson and
Earl K. Pollon

Calgary: Frontenac House, 2019.
424 pp. \$29.95 paper.

DOUGLAS ROBB
University of British Columbia

THE 2019 edition of *This Was Our Valley* by Shirlee Smith Matheson and Earl K. Pollon continues a long-standing conversation about the impacts of large dams in northern British Columbia. This story, told in three acts, renders a detailed account of life along the Peace River in the vicinity of Hudson's Hope over the past one hundred years. Whereas much of the recent writing on this subject has focused on the social and political turbulence surrounding the construction of the Site C Dam (Sarah Cox's excellent *Breaching the Peace* [2018] comes to mind), the reissue of *This Was Our Valley* begins at a time when hydro power on the Peace was a distant fantasy. This long historical view of life along the Peace (i.e., settler colonial life) captures the breathless transformation of the river from a place of trappers and gold panners to a fully infrastructuralized landscape within the short span of a mere half-century.

Part 1 of the book is told from the perspective of Earl Pollon and chronicles the life and times of a young man in Hudson's Hope from the 1930s to the mid-1960s. Over the course of fourteen chapters interspersed with poems, Pollon offers an intimate, if perhaps occasionally disjointed, recollection of life along the Peace. Part autobiography, part travelogue, Pollon sketches a series of vignettes that introduce the reader to the landscapes (many now submerged)

and the characters (most long deceased) of the river prior to the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. To the contemporary reader, Pollon's warm reminiscences feel somewhat outdated in the context of current conversations regarding the trauma of colonialism and industrial extractivism. Yet his recollections succeed in conveying to the reader a deep and melancholic nostalgia for a way of life drowned under the Williston Reservoir.

Part 2 of the book is told by Shirlee Smith Matheson, and it describes the myriad consequences following the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon Dams. Drawing together interviews, archival research, and her own first-hand experience, Smith skilfully weaves diverse narratives of labour unrest, natural resource mismanagement, bungled infrastructure projects, geological instability, and Indigenous dispossession (among many others). What differentiates her account from other writing on the industrialization of the Peace River is her ability to contextualize high-level political and economic machinations within the lived experience of local citizens. Smith sketches a vast and complex geography that could have been better supported by clearer maps and visual documentation, yet she nonetheless provides the reader with a comprehensive account of the impacts wrought by large dams in British Columbia during the latter half of the twentieth century.

Each edition of *This Was Our Valley* responds to the construction of a new dam along the Peace, and the 2019 reissue offers valuable context and information for the ongoing Site C Dam project. Like previous editions, Part 3 frames the nuanced and often highly politicized discourse surrounding Site C through the lives of everyday people who are directly and indirectly affected. While some

perspectives are conspicuously absent – what of the construction workers, engineers, or local proponents? – the 2019 edition remains true to the spirit of Earl Pollon's original project by giving voice to local residents who, all too often, feel relegated to the periphery. While the saga of the Site C Dam may be far from over, *This Was Our Valley* provides essential reading for researchers, activists, or concerned observers who are interested in the social and environmental history of the Peace River and the countless schemes to exert control over British Columbia's landscapes.

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Love of the Salish Sea Islands: New Essays, Memoir and Poetry by 40 Island Writers

Salt Spring Island, BC:
Mother Tongue Publishing, 2019.
216 pp. \$23.95 paper.

GINNY BROADHURST
Western Washington University

THE SALISH SEA is an international ecosystem that features an amazing array of gorgeous and largely tranquil islands. Tourists and residents enjoy the rural simplicity of the islands and, from most appearances, the living is idyllic. As with many places, the history of the Salish Sea islands is one of white settlers displacing First Nations and attempting to erase their culture – this is true on both sides of the US–Canada border. The authors featured in *Love of the Salish Sea Islands* are settlers, transplants,

and adventurers who fell in love with the islands. Several of them make references to First Nations peoples, stories, histories, and traditional names. However, you would not know from reading this book what has become of the WSÁNEĆ people or hear from them about their love of the Salish Sea islands that are their home. This is because not a single author is of Coast Salish descent.

The talented authors collected here all identify the transformative and healing nature of the Salish Sea islands. William Deverell, who thought he would never move from the city to the tranquility of Pender Island, writes: "So you, my green-gowned lady, my lovely, lusty, busty Aphrodite with your coves and buffs and winding trails – you, my island, have been my muse." In her essay about home on Salt Spring Island, Maureen Moore writes: "This island offered many such glimpses of beauty, drawing me into a closer relationship with trees and forests." Ann Eriksson reminds us of the many current environmental challenges facing the area, including sea star wasting disease, warming waters, declining bird populations, and development that is loving the islands to death. Taiaiake Alfred shares a personal story about connecting with ancestral spirits that "are grounded in the land and pulsing through the waters of this territory." He appreciates the places where he can take his son deer hunting and feel proud and grateful.

Not surprisingly, love is a common theme in these stories. Love found, love lost, and consistently, of course, the love of the place. "The sweetest lullabies I ever heard were the sounds of waves on the shore and the wind through the branches of the pine trees," writes Alison Watt.

Whether you are already intimately aware of this part of the world, or just wish you were, you will likely enjoy

reading this book. Every piece will transport you briefly to a lovely place in the Salish Sea. However, the lack of Coast Salish writers and Coast Salish perspective takes away from the experience of reading this book. This absence should not only be outwardly acknowledged but also remedied.

Voices from the Skeena:

An Illustrated Oral History

Robert Budd, illustrated by Roy Henry Vickers

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2019. 120 pp. Illus. \$29.95 cloth.

TED BINNEMA

University of Northern British Columbia

MANY familiar with Imbert Orchard's CBC Radio interviews from the 1960s will welcome this publication of transcriptions of oral interviews relating to the history of the Skeena River, together with forty illustrations executed by the Indigenous artist Roy Henry Vickers in his distinctive vibrant style. Published in a coffee-table format (28 x 20 cms), this book will appeal to a broad audience of people interested in the Skeena River. Most of the words in *Voices from the Skeena* are transcriptions of six oral interviews conducted in 1961, 1962, or 1963, and a radio documentary aired in 1963. They feature eleven different people, including Indigenous people and very early settlers. The stories relate to life along the Skeena River at the end of the nineteenth and the very early twentieth centuries. The book also provides the URL to the high-quality original audio recordings and a few additional oral resources (easily downloadable).

This is not a scholarly work, but it should appeal to the entire readership of *BC Studies*. Professional and amateur scholars will appreciate that these primary sources, housed at the British Columbia Archives in Victoria, are now readily available in both print and digital formats. Those interested in nothing more than enjoying stories about the history of the Skeena River will enjoy these evocative and poignant accounts. Even pre-literate children will enjoy the lively and colourful illustrations. The fact that this book appeared on the *Vancouver Sun's* bestseller list for several weeks in 2019 speaks of its appeal to a popular audience. Many people probably have seen it, or will see it, gift-wrapped.

In coming years, researchers will appreciate having these accounts readily available to them, both in written and audio formats. Imbert Orchard, of course, was not a scholar, and the gathering of these accounts may not conform to today's standards of oral historiography, but those interested in the history of the lower Skeena River basin, especially between Metlakatla and Hazelton, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries should turn to this publication of primary source material. The stories, shared by Indigenous people, including Chief Jeffrey H. Johnson (Gitxsan) and Captain Joseph Alphonsus Gardner (Halkomelem), and early settlers, including Sarah Glassey (the first woman to pre-empt land in British Columbia), shed light on the memories of the informants of early missionaries, paddle wheelers, and legendary figures such as Cataline (Jean Caux) and Glassey. Much of what is contained in the accounts cannot be found in the written documents of the period.

In sum, a diverse range of readers, from the curious public to the academic community, should welcome this publication.

*Shared Histories: Witsuwit'en—
Settler Relations in Smithers,
British Columbia, 1913–1973*

Tyler McCreary

Smithers, BC: Creekstone Press,
2018. 264 pp. \$24.95 paper.

MOLLY MALONE

The Firelight Group

GEOGRAPHER Tyler McCreary's book about Witsuwit'en-settler relations in Smithers is a valuable new addition to research and writing on histories of place in settler-colonial contexts. *Shared Histories* demonstrates how academic work can be integrated with local efforts by Indigenous and settler communities across British Columbia and Canada as they grapple with the complexities of settler-colonialism and work to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (TRC 2015a). Theoretically grounded in Doreen Massey's understanding of towns as the products of meetings between peoples (Massey 2005, 9), and building on work by historical geographers about Indigenous-settler relationships in the region prior to the establishment of the railway (Galois 1993, 2007; Ray 1985, 1991), *Shared Histories* aims to capture "the dynamic character of the social processes shaping a place and the ways that they change over time," examining spatial transformations in Smithers across the twentieth century through archival documents and oral histories.

McCreary grew up in Smithers and acknowledges his positionality as a settler academic. As a doctoral researcher, he learned of the Witsuwit'en community's desire to explore the history of Indiantown, a largely Witsuwit'en neighbourhood that flourished in

Smithers until it was displaced by settler development pressure in the late 1960s. The refusal of the settler community to acknowledge this dispossession had significant impacts on the relationships between Witsuwit'en and townspeople, and while municipal councillors and mayors were aware of the issue (thanks to organizers like Elder Peter David), they lacked the funding to do anything about it. Aware of the appetite in Smithers for such research – particularly after the release of the TRC's Final Report in 2015 – McCreary and a joint Witsuwit'en-settler working committee designed a project to document the history of Indian town and the wider context of Witsuwit'en-settler relationships.

The stories of Smithers are told through McCreary's analyses of archival and oral history data from both Witsuwit'en people and settlers, which he presents in a coherent narrative accessible to both academic and public audiences. The accessibility of the final research product is key, because *Shared Histories* draws on the historical consciousness of many to illuminate what has shaped Smithers into the place it is today: Witsuwit'en presence on the land before settlement, how and why northern interior British Columbia was settled, Indigenous displacement and the formation of Indian town, the impacts of the Indian Act (including differential access to health care, discriminatory policies around alcohol, and loss of Indian status through marriage), economic shifts over time, and attempts at community planning, ending with the destruction of Indian town and a look forward to Smithers's future.

Published by a local press in Smithers, the book's format (23 x 24 cm) provides enough space for readers to envision through maps and images what the voices on the pages are saying about the spatiality of the town. They are shaped by relationships between the

residents and their day-to-day lives under the emergent local, provincial, and federal governments. While it does not provide detailed methodology for data collection and analysis, the book would be teachable in a variety of social science contexts, including geography, First Nations and Indigenous studies, anthropology, history, and sociology, at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

As both a research project and product, *Shared Histories* can serve as inspiration to other municipalities whose leadership and citizens are looking to confront their colonial histories. It should also inspire researchers looking to design projects attuned to local needs, who can gain access to funding opportunities and make things happen. Across British Columbia and Canada, people struggle to have open conversations about how, exactly, the places they live were established in territories already used and occupied by Indigenous peoples. This is because a major crux of reconciliation is understanding the systemic logics of settler-colonialism that justify settler possession of lands and extinguishment of Indigenous rights and title (TRC 2015b, 29). Untangling all of this can be daunting, but *Shared Histories* shows that the process can be helped along by making space for stories to be told and ensuring that those stories are accessible to people who live in those places and beyond.

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*Stories from the
Magic Canoe of Wa'xaid*

Cecil Paul,
as told to Briony Penn

Victoria, BC: Rocky Mountain
Books, 2019. 224 pp. \$30 cloth.

BRUCE ERICKSON
University of Manitoba

THE STORY OF the Wa'xaid's (Xenakaisla Elder Cecil Paul) Magic Canoe is well known in some circles. From coastal rainforest conservation groups to international Indigenous networks, Cecil Paul has been invited to tell his story of organizing for the protection of Xessdu'wäx", the temperate rainforest known as the Kitlope, throughout the world. In *Stories from the Magic Canoe of Wa'xaid*, Cecil Paul tells this story in

full. It is also the story of his life, which is transcribed and edited by Briony Penn, detailing the "many arrows" (19) of colonialism on the Xenakaisla, Paul's battles with residential schools, and the historic efforts to save the Kitlope from industrial logging. It is a valuable contribution to Indigenous history, in the vein of books like Tshaukuesh Elizabeth Penashue's *Nitinikiau Innusi: I Keep the Land Alive* (2019) and Johnny Neyelle's *The Man Who Lived with a Giant* (2019).

The Magic Canoe is a metaphor for the journey Paul travels in his attempts to keep the Kitlope as a living legacy for future generations of Xenakaisla and neighbouring Haisla. On this journey, he welcomes all those who are willing to "paddle together" (13) to this destination in his "supernatural" canoe (31). Indeed, the paddlers he has welcomed include community members, Indigenous leaders, international celebrities (he tells the story of meeting Harrison Ford at a fundraiser and not recognizing him), and environmental activists (legendary logger Merve Wilkinson and David Suzuki stand out).

The Magic Canoe is a story of resilience and resistance as it details the struggles Paul has faced, struggles that are put in the larger history and context of settler colonialism. For example, through the stories told in this book we understand that the Kitlope is valuable precisely because it is the anchor to a community that has been decimated by colonialism. We learn of the smallpox epidemic, the consolidation of three villages by decree of the Indian agent, and the flooding of neighbouring valleys. Paul tells of his experience at residential school in Port Alberni, his times working as a longshoreman, a fisher, and a miner, all of which were clouded by alcoholism. His healing journey starts with a return to the Kitlope, the place of his birth,

and a conversation with the spirit of his grandmother.

The episodes of Paul's life and activism are told in story format – we are invited into these stories as though they were his living room. Penn's extensive notes add clarity, detail, and background. The footnotes themselves are worth the price of entry as they illustrate an exceptional familiarity with the context of Paul's story (Penn is shortly coming out with a biography of Paul). She consults primary sources (including the records of the residential school Paul attended), scientific literature (to tell us, for example, that the Kitlope represented 2 percent of the remaining temperate rainforest on earth), and personal interviews (notably including the CEO of the logging company that relinquished the licence to the Kitlope) to add depth and insight to Paul's stories. It is the combination of two stories, the oral history and the archival history, that makes *The Stories of the Magic Canoe of Wa'xaid* a powerful model of Indigenous history. Penn's footnotes are not there to validate Wa'xaid's stories, which are powerful indictments of colonialism in and of themselves. Rather, they expand the scope, linking the Kitlope to Indigenous experiences throughout the world. This book is a welcome read for those interested in the history of conservation in British Columbia, the practice of Indigenous memoir, and the specifics of colonial history in Canada.

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