

BOOK REVIEWS

*The Final Forest: Big Trees,
Forks, and the Pacific Northwest*

William Dietrich

Seattle: University of Washington
Press, 2010. 320 pp. \$19.95 paper.

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TELLING THE STORY of the timber wars in the national forests of the Pacific Northwest is a task that has moved from journalism to history, William Dietrich suggests in this 2010 edition of *The Final Forest*, which features a new prologue and afterword. But it is a history that remains salient, for we “are not finished arguing about forests, and the final forest still has things to tell us about ourselves.” Dietrich’s original (1990) version of this book saw the science journalist from the *Seattle Times* stumbling through hillsides of slash to witness logging operations on Washington State’s rugged coast and artfully tracing the legal, political, and cultural contours of the debates over how to manage old-growth lands and for what values. Each chapter was a vignette that followed people and brought forth their own words, from local truckers

to the scientist who first discovered that northern spotted owls need old Douglas fir trees to survive. This work demanded a tremendous deal of research best described as ethnographic, yet the result was flowing and graceful prose uncluttered by footnotes. It was largely intended for “the popular audience” but countless scholars from diverse fields have read and referenced his account (e.g., Satterfield 2002; Pralle 2006; Klinge 2003; Ribe 2002).

This recent re-release sandwiches Dietrich’s past endeavour with fresh dispatches from Forks, Washington, the community that he chose as a lens for documenting the human and social impacts of the abrupt transformation of the forest industry in the Pacific Northwest. Since the late 1980s, when national forests were “shut down” by new environmental regulations, many rural communities have suffered economic downturn and social dislocation. Akin to the final notes that roll before the credits of a movie, Dietrich returns to tell us where the forests and people that he profiled are today. The exercise lacks the inexplicable satisfaction that goes with seeing plot lines wrapped up while jaunty music plays. While some of the characters go to school or find new homes, some are not so

fortunate – like the husband and wife who lose their trucking business, with her taking a job at Subway. It is a common story for timber towns in the Pacific Northwest. The exception in Forks is that fiction author Stephenie Meyer situated her stories of vampires in this town, and they became a global obsession that would engender pilgrimages and economic activity. But many forest-based communities, told they could rebound through tourism and recreation, either were never able to or did not truly want to turn their towns around to sell them to visitors. Some of those who succeeded found revival in new residents and new activities but also endured the frustration of not being able to do what they knew best, having, instead, to be content with earning service-sector wages serving coffee to the passerby. Dietrich captures well the angst of people who were on the cusp of being cut off from family-wage jobs and a sense of community, while also reminding us that logging was a dangerous, dirty occupation.

Dietrich also succeeds in depicting the ever-changing, dynamic forest in nuanced shades. Although the landscapes surrounding towns like Forks are often spectacular, they also tend to contain clear-cuts, plantations, and other features of heavily logged and regenerating areas that much of the general public does not want to associate with the forests of the Pacific Northwest. Yet the *Twilight* film adaptation of Meyers novels (largely filmed in Oregon, not Forks) relies on vivid, awesome wilderness. It sends its hero and heroine flying up firs as tall as skyscrapers and lounging lovestruck in the deep green glow of an unmistakably old-growth forest. Aside from a brief shot of a logging truck, the economic past and current realities of the town are merely shadowy contributors to the

overall atmosphere that one expects in a story about vampires. There is little impetus to background such a grand romance with something as assumedly mundane and tame as a tree farm. Environmental groups that engaged in litigation to prevent old-growth logging in the 1980s and 1990s had a similar kind of lens. On behalf of an owl, they sought to freeze-frame the Douglas fir forest at its most mature stage. But how right is it to try to stop natural cycles of life and death? And how much power do we have to do so?

Moreover, an overlooked contribution of this book is the evidence it offers of how natural disturbance has determined the geography of the forest industry. Forks was a remote hardscrabble agricultural community until a massive blowdown in 1933 necessitated the opening of the area to salvage logging. Large wildfires and the devastation caused by the eruption of Mount St. Helens all provided opportunities to work in the woods. Since the publication of *The Final Forest*, the Northwest Forest Plan, adopted in 1994, has instituted a new system of ecosystem-based forest management for all Pacific Northwest forests. However, partly as a result of less active harvesting, concern over uncharacteristically severe wildfires has driven much of the policy change that then followed the plan. The Forest Service now emphasizes “landscape-scale restoration” to thin forests that have grown dense, brushy, and more prone to fire than they were in the past. It is a disappointment, then, that Dietrich does not return to this theme of disturbance at any length in his new prologue and afterword. This would have allowed him to comment on the constraints and opportunities that the paradigm of ecosystem management and restoration offers for US forest-

based communities and those who study and work on their behalf today (see Hibbard and Karle 2002). To start to fill this gap, one might read this book in tandem with Alston Chase's *Playing God in Yellowstone* (1986) and *In a Dark Wood* (1995). Chase, who, like Dietrich, began his research with the intention of documenting the story of the wars in the woods, ultimately delved far deeper into the assumptions about nature and culture that lay behind ecosystem management (and was denounced by both the Reagan administration and environmental interests for doing so).

The Final Forest may also be a distant cousin to John Vaillant's popular *The Golden Spruce*. Like Dietrich, Vaillant brings to life the grandeur of forests and the inner realms of human lives, but from a different context. In British Columbia, the "wars of the woods" halted old-growth logging in Clayoquot Sound in 1993, but they have not led to a similar transformation of Crown land management and public participation across the province. Thus, a man who wanted to protest logging in British Columbia felled a special tree to have his say, while his southern neighbours took to the courts. In 2001, geographers Scott Prudham and Maureen Reed argued that environmental groups had framed British Columbia as being roughly fifteen years "behind" the US Pacific Northwest in moving away from a heavily forest-based economy (Prudham and Reed 2001). I would suggest that vertical integration in the industry, softwood lumber skirmishes, and mountain pine beetles, among other forces, have put British Columbia's forest industry on a trajectory that cannot be compared with that of the US Pacific Northwest. However, readers in this province must also live with the consequences of ever-changing

forests and, therefore, should find *The Final Forest* of interest and relevance. In sum, this is a mesmerizing story of the complexity of the relationships between forests and people that honours the uniqueness of places while spanning universal themes.

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Aboriginal Title and Indigenous Peoples: Canada, Australia, and New Zealand

Edited by Louis Knafla and Haijo Westra

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010. 267 pp.
\$32.95 paper.

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“IT IS INCONCEIVABLE, I think,” asserted Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1969, “that in a given society, one section of the society have a treaty with the other section of the society. We must be all equal under the laws and we must not sign treaties amongst ourselves.” Further, “We can’t recognize aboriginal rights because no society can be built on historical ‘might have beens.’”

Trudeau’s language was not idiosyncratic. Assimilation had been the goal of Indian policy from Confederation onwards. Accordingly, the 1969 White Paper – the context for his remarks – was not a departure from past policy but, rather, a hoped-for acceleration of the process of achieving it. Trudeau would not have been welcome at the 2003 conference from which this volume emerged. He is mentioned only once, in passing, so much has the intellectual and moral climate changed in the past forty years.

Of the ten chapters in this book, an introduction, and a conclusion, six are written by lawyers, three by historians, two by anthropologists, and one by a professor of Greek and Roman studies. The leading role of the legal academics in this policy area, evident in the last three to four decades, albeit now ceding some of their former hegemony, is manifest in the citing of more than one hundred cases and over eighty

statutes, treaties, and agreements, separately listed in two indices. The country focus is Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Two contributors have indigenous backgrounds – Paul Chartrand and Jacinta Ruru.

The authors bring their separate disciplinary skills and backgrounds to analyze a work in progress, focusing on the goal of recognition of Aboriginal title. The book’s objective is to analyze the history of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations from the pre-contact era to the present, significantly but not exclusively through the prism of government policies and indigenous resistance. The chapters are driven by empathy with indigenous peoples and sympathy for their cause of obtaining recognition of Aboriginal title. Or, as Peter Hutchins observes, citing Michael Ignatieff, responding to an indigenous “longing to live in a fair world.” Clearly, there is an international climate of opinion supportive of some version of decolonization that the authors have imbibed.

The book is a major contribution to the widespread controversies over how the contemporary state and minority peoples/nations within it can come to an enduring rapprochement. We now know that it was much easier for European empires to end external colonialism for hundreds of millions of colonized peoples around the world than for democracies to end internal colonialism for, in most cases, relatively small populations.

From this comparative perspective, it could be argued that the major contribution of this volume would have been enhanced if, when the issue is the recognition of Aboriginal title, the authors had devoted some space to the contemporary rationales of the democratic state on the other side of the bargaining table. While we should

be thankful for what this volume addresses, it is helpful to be reminded that why the state acts as it does is also a researchable question.

The indigenous resurgence challenges the idea of citizen-state relations, which lies at the heart of contemporary liberal democracies. The contemporary democratic state, as Rogers H. Smith, Charles Taylor, and many others have pointed out, is in the business of making citizens. The state naturally prefers a high degree of uniformity and homogeneity among the peoples within its jurisdiction. This was a key rationale for the historic policy of assimilation. The goal of an encompassing citizenship is a natural objective of the state. Citizenship, however, unfortunately gets little attention in this volume. It is not cited in the indices. Only Paul Chartrand devotes serious attention to it. This relative absence is regrettable, for it excludes discussion of why the liberal democratic state behaves as it does. This book, therefore, shares with many others a lack of concern for the perspective and interests of the states within which indigenous peoples live.

The organizers of the original conference and the editors of this volume are to be congratulated for their recurrent advocacy of an interdisciplinary approach, pleas for which abound. Further, this approach is practised, at least in the minimal sense that chapters from different disciplines inhabit the same book. In fact, however, there is an only partly concealed debate taking place between contributors with different disciplinary backgrounds. Several non-legal contributors decry what they see as a too great emphasis on courts and legal decisions. The anthropologist Nicolas Peterson argues that excessive dependence on legal analysis avoids

the question of what happens after the court has pronounced, Aboriginal title has been recognized, and perhaps access to increased resources has been attained. He categorically asserts: "Any sophisticated social analysis is completely lacking with the focus solely on power and legal relations, to the neglect of the economic and cultural." He critically observes that much academic writing on self-determination is "thinly disguised advocacy" or "abstract legal or political theorizing that is unrealistic" about its potential benefits. And, in his keynote address to the conference, Peter Hutchins gives "a call to arms against the disciplinary silos that have been in construction for over fifty years."

While such pleas are appealing, the reality is that the fragmentation that interdisciplinarity is supposed to overcome is becoming more pronounced. The dramatic growth of the urban Aboriginal population attracts hitherto absent disciplines to the study of employment, social mobility, postsecondary education, race relations, crime, street gangs, and so on. Although there is obviously some overlap, the reality in Canada is that the reserve and the urban setting attract different disciplines, with the result that the possibility of interdisciplinarity is minimal.

An analysis of the different composition of the disciplines that study Aboriginal issues in the three countries that are the focus of this volume would inform us how different Aboriginal realities – urban versus rural, for example – influence the composition of the research community.

None of my concerns undermines the fact that the editors and contributors have produced a volume that should be on the bookshelf of every serious scholar studying Aboriginal issues.

*Voices of British Columbia:
Stories from Our Frontier*

Robert Budd

Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre,
2010. 199 pp. 3 CDs. \$35.00 paper.

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ROBERT BUDD HAS done us all a tremendous favour by turning serious attention to the almost thousand interviews CBC journalist Imbert Orchard conducted with a wide range of British Columbians between 1959 and 1966. The interviews have long languished in the British Columbia Archives (BCA), and now Budd shares their flavour both in print and on three accompanying CDs. *Voices of British Columbia's* lengthy dominance of the "BC Bestsellers" list testifies to the appeal of Orchard's interviews, to Budd's ingenuity, and to wide-ranging interest in British Columbia's history.

Those of us who have used the Orchard interviews in research and writing will be aware of how difficult of access they have long been. Budd was at the forefront, prior to producing the book, working with the BCA to transfer the original sound recordings to CDs and to provide searchable summaries online (<http://search.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/sn-3D7A02F/search>). While partial or full paper transcripts exist for only some of the interviews, the interviews themselves can be listened to in the BCA or as CD copies purchased for private use and research purposes.

Although the sound recordings constitute an invaluable resource for probing the texture of BC life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Orchard had, like all of us, strengths and limitations as an

interviewer. He knew what he wanted, and, when subjects diverted into topics that did not interest him, he was quick to pull them back to his priorities. Orchard sought out what he termed "our great characters" (3 and CD1) and then pushed them to recall and relate interesting "incidents" (13 and CD1), making for good radio listening with a punchline. His preferences are evident not only upon listening to the sound recordings but also upon comparing the actual interviews with his broadcast CBC programs, also available from BCA.

The saving grace from the perspective of historians is that Orchard's subjects had their own reasons for wanting to talk. While being generally respectful of him as an important visitor from the big city who had selected them out for attention (a Fraser Valley woman he interviewed along with her parents made this point to me), they had their own stories to tell. This was particularly so with men, who were, as was generally the case in these generations, more outgoing than women. The interviews argue that many, and I suspect most, of Orchard's subjects lived in a primarily oral culture, which meant that these stories were their stock in trade. They had been related many times before in various social settings and would be again. The stories, or scripts, were in this sense rehearsed not in anticipation of Orchard but, rather, in the course of events by these raconteurs of local knowledge, their status in the community being a good part of the reason Orchard selected them. Women were not only generally more reticent to talk but also more fearful of saying the "wrong" thing or, where couples were interviewed together, as sometimes happened, of contradicting their husbands. One of the ways women and some men dealt with the situation was to have not only an oral but also a

written script worked out in advance, which is obvious from listening to the three CDs. Other times women would simply respond that they had nothing interesting to say, by which they meant nothing worthy of the public domain. In general, Orchard's subjects are very respectful of him but not cowed by him. The consequence of the two agendas – Orchard's and his subjects' – is that some of the stories his interviewees wanted to tell are truncated, but those that survive even in part provide unequalled windows onto many aspects of British Columbia's history.

Lucky Budd, as he is known, has selected two dozen interview excerpts that move across the province and between occupations and outlooks. Reading them gives one perspective; listening to the interviewees, with their class and regional accents, manners of speaking, and intonations of voice on the three CDs, gives quite another – one that truly brings the past to life. It is to be hoped that *Voices of British Columbia* and its accompanying CDs will encourage historians and others to check out their own particular interests in the subject searchable summaries of the Orchard interviews as well as to become aware of the thousands of other interviews to be found in the BCA.



*Municipalities and
Multiculturalism: The Politics
of Immigration in Toronto and
Vancouver*

Kristin R. Good

Toronto: University of Toronto
Press, 2009. xvii, 363 pp. \$32.00
paper.

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KRISTIN R. GOOD, a political scientist, accomplished two main objectives in this book: (1) investigating how and why municipalities responded to dramatic changes in their ethno-cultural composition and (2) evaluating her findings about municipal multicultural policies against several models, chiefly that of the “urban regime” theory and “social diversity.” The latter examination will appeal to political scientists. Her findings about the BC case studies – Vancouver, Richmond, Surrey, and Coquitlam – and a comparison with Toronto and several of its suburban municipalities that will interest a variety of readers of *BC Studies* are the focus here. The new immigrants discussed are either Chinese or South Asian; statistical tables demonstrate why they have had the greatest impact.

The bibliography lists many publications. Good's chief source, however, is almost one hundred interviews (divided almost equally between Greater Vancouver and Greater Toronto) that she conducted with a host of local political leaders, municipal employees, providers of recreation services, librarians (but not educators), the police, representatives of organizations that provide services to immigrants, and leaders of the

immigrant communities. Thus, in many ways it is a snapshot of the state of multiculturalism as it was in 2004 when most interviews were conducted, although a brief postscript mentions a few changes, such as new multiculturalism initiatives in Surrey and Coquitlam, and brings the account up to about 2006.

The municipal government of Vancouver, she argues, has been proactively “responsive” to immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities and has “adopted a *comprehensive* range of policies that reflects the needs and preferences of these groups,” whereas the suburban municipalities have been only “somewhat responsive” in a “*limited*” way and generally have done so “*reactively*” (57; my emphasis). A major reason for Vancouver’s interest in developing multicultural policies and programs is the business community’s recognition of the importance of immigration to economic growth and international competitiveness, especially in the Pacific Rim (156). Good also notes the role of private groups such as SUCCESS in immigrant settlement.

The suburbs are somewhat different from each other. Reflecting its desire for cultural bridging, Richmond rejected “multiculturalism” for “interculturalism” (51). Its actions were stimulated by the presence of proactive Chinese immigrants who protested plans to locate a group home in their neighbourhood and by the willingness of Thomas Fung, a major developer, to promote positive intercultural relations after non-Chinese residents complained about shopping malls that catered only to the Chinese. In Surrey, where Indo-Canadians are the largest immigrant community, there have been many studies of policy but, as of 2004, relatively little implementation.

Unlike Richmond, where the Chinese community is well-organized, the South Asians of Surrey are fragmented, mainly along religious lines. In addition, the agencies that provide services to immigrants often compete rather than cooperate with each other. In Coquitlam, where the arrival of a significant number of Chinese is a relatively recent phenomenon and where there were no major inter-ethnic conflicts, the municipality, apart from its library (which is mentioned at least six times), has done relatively little to respond to changing demographics.

The book is clearly written and jargon-free. A firm editorial hand, however, would have resulted in a shorter book by reducing repetition (e.g., twice mentioning – within fifteen pages, almost verbatim, and citing the same sources – Vancouver’s responding to “diversity” not “immigration” [165, 179]).

Although the book is set up as a comparative study between British Columbia and Ontario, the comparisons tend to be implicit rather than explicit. Nevertheless, Dr. Good notes, for example, many similarities between the responses of Richmond, British Columbia, and Markham, Ontario, to immigration. Provincially, she suggests that British Columbia, in contrast to Ontario, has benefitted from an absence of forced municipal amalgamations, better provincial-municipal relations, and consistent provincial support of immigration and multiculturalism.

The book could have benefitted from the addition of historical background. Vancouver and Richmond, for example, have a long tradition of dealing with Asian immigrants – alas, often not well – whereas the Asian presence is relatively new in Surrey and Coquitlam. And while recent immigrants are the primary concern, some attention should

have been given to the descendants of earlier immigrants. Their relationship with recent immigrants from the same part of the world is perhaps the subject for another study.

Kristin Good set out to provide a framework for further studies, and this she has certainly done. From her research and observations she has made some recommendations, notably that municipal governments should be in the forefront of developing multicultural policies. She rightly concludes that “managing international migration is one of the central governance challenges of the twenty-first century” (301).

Here Is Where We Disembark

Clea Roberts

Calgary: Freehand Books, 2010. 104 pp. \$16.95 paper.

Valley Sutra

Kuldip Gill

Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, 2009. 96 pp. \$16.95 paper.

DAVID STOUCK

Simon Fraser University

IN HER FIRST NOVEL, *Hetty Dorval*, Ethel Wilson identifies *genius loci*, the spirit of place, as both a guardian deity (“an incalculable godling”) and the home-shaping presence of landscape. For poets Clea Roberts and Kuldip Gill the genius of place arises from a conflation of memory and history with their physical senses and the geography they inhabit.

Clea Roberts’ strong debut collection is divided into two parts. In Part 1 there is a muted human drama of relocation to the far north of British Columbia

and the Yukon, a difficult adaptation during “a year that ruined and saved us,” and a chilling vision that “home is irrelevant” if one considers that each day’s light and warmth has taken a million years to reach us. But the real focus is the northern land and its seasons and creatures, not seen as a set of symbols for a human story but as animate and important in themselves. The poems are arranged in a cycle of the seasons, dominated by incalculable Winter, who “carved small caves” in human hearts, “pulled his boots off,” and “called up / for more snow” (27). There is more anthropomorphizing – “ice floes whisper,” a last poplar leaf “conducts the wind” – but these figures empower rather than trivialize or demonize nature. In an ecological reversal the human world is irrelevant and insubstantial: “fences run like erratic statements / supported by unreliable facts” while “the harrier hawk pauses to hover and pluck mice from the field, / ... the white-tailed deer peruses / our vegetable gardens at night” (58). In “Fool Hen, Ruffed Wood Grouse,” Roberts makes her identification clear. The speaker escapes to the woods, but there she recognizes that her heart is not broken but perches in a spruce tree, cocks a black eye, “becomes a bird again.”

In Part 2 the speaker’s northern experience is historically grounded in fourteen “two-headed” poems from the Klondike Gold Rush. There is an array of speakers in dialogue, including a river, a salmon, a wolf, and a fire. Accordingly, there is more than human truth in these poems for, as the last speaker observes, “you never know / when you’ll need / a different ending” (100). The great pleasure in what Don McKay calls these “frostbitten brevities” is that of place rendered artfully in a fresh language of essences.

The northern lights appear twice: first as “a slow, green whip” and then in the collection’s most flamboyant figure as “a dog doing improbable tricks. / The backwards flip, the tap dance, / the spontaneous operatic, all the more believable / than the myth of night” (55).

Kuldip Gill’s *Valley Sutra* is a posthumous volume, assembled by the author shortly before her death in 2009. This vibrant, accessible collection with its “iridescent shimmers” is also divided into two parts, with the author’s personal memories very much the focus in Part 1. There are poems about being one of the “mill kids” (members of Gill’s Punjabi family owned and operated lumber mills in Mission), about days at school under a sadistic teacher, a summer job at Aylmer’s Cannery, and wandering the local ravines and waterways. There are poems about the habitat – a stream that is forced to go under the town – and about the fauna of the region, particularly the birds. But they are imagined in the romantic way. Wild swans, through gunshot smoke, mount to heaven. An eagle, rising, plummeting, and circling in the sky embodies the poet’s turbulent aspirations: “I am your sibling, twin / Wait for me. I buck your blue / sky, perform my dives ... In dream / I fly as you” (33).

In subtle ways, these are also poems about race and seeing with other eyes – Mount Baker appearing as volcanic Kali (an incalculable godling indeed); the speaker’s humiliation in school learning about the black hole of Calcutta (“guilt written all over my face”); the enigma of the Indian boy who does not know who he is: “*I was born in Kelowna ... I’m adopted*” (57). But this theme of forlorn identity has its most poignant figure in the speaker’s mother, whose homesickness is triggered by the scent of certain flowers, the oil of citrus

skins, the lament of an old man who is mourning family. The mother only appears occasionally, but she haunts this book with her confusion and “big-eyed stare,” as do the transplanted forms of poetry and storytelling – the sutra, the ghazal, the “Ah mere vaht” (That’s my story) that signals the end of a recitation.

Surprisingly, given the differences in these books, Part 2 of Gill’s collection performs a parallel function to Roberts’ collection by grounding Mission in the local history of Bill Miner and the first great train robbery. But this story also serves – in Gill’s words – “to treat Miner as a Zen cowboy ghost” (94–95) and, from among several speakers in dialogue, including Bill’s horse, to present Amer Singh as Bill’s “agent in life for the rewrite” (62).

*The Cowichan Valley: Duncan,
Chemainus, Ladysmith and
Region*

Georgina Montgomery

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing,
2009. 144 pp. \$34.95 cloth.

DAVID THOMAS
Chemainus

WE BECOME travellers in our own land when we read Georgina Montgomery’s story and marvel at Kevin Oke’s photographs in *The Cowichan Valley*. The last word goes to Rick Pipes of Merridale Ciderworks, who comments: “When people travel, they want to be able to try the food and drink that is rooted in the region they’re in; they want to learn more about the place by sampling what is grown, raised, harvested and made there. Here in the Cowichan we’re able to give people that

experience now, a real taste of what the region has to offer.” The same may be said for the stories and images of First Nations lives and places, and of early European explorers and, later, settlers, dreamers, builders, and remittance men, who each in their own way established their lives and named and helped build their communities in the Cowichan Valley.

This travelogue works well. A map and a postcard from the Cowichan help set the stage for a northward trip from the Malahat through the shoreline and inland towns and villages into the warm heartland. We see glimpses of early settlements and, occasionally, astonishing pictures of sunrises over valley and lake, of frost on estuary fields, and an awesome Kinsol Trestle. While we recognize the familiar mountain skyline set by Prevost and Tzouhalem, we also see communities making something new out of their heritage. Green boxes highlight more of our treasure, including works by such artists as E.J. Hughes and Simon Charley. The author’s use of ancient, Aboriginal names – Stz’uminus (Chemainus) and Penelekut (Kuper) – respects those communities and their abiding Cowichan presence. Once through South Cowichan, we begin a long, westward loop to Lake Cowichan communities and to the west coast wonder of ancient trees in the Carmanah and Walbran valleys. The journey returns to the north Cowichan towns of Crofton and Chemainus/Stz’uminus, where murals, not photographs, give glimpses of a community’s industry, war experience, and celebrations. The adventure continues north to Ladysmith, whose stories reveal its “Heritage by the Sea” motto, and on to Yellow Point. The Cowichan region’s small islands of Saltspring, Kuper, Thetis, and Valdez

are given only a cursory glance; perhaps these await another book.

Bed-and-breakfast hosts and their guests should welcome this book, especially its two final chapters. One celebrates the diversity and bounty of the land while the other sets out non-nonsense seasonal and community samplers from which the best Cowichan itinerary can be organized. And residents should also welcome this book because it reveals as it celebrates this warm and generous land we share.

*Missing Women, Missing News:
Covering Crisis in Vancouver’s
Downtown Eastside*

David Hugill

Halifax: Fernwood Publishing,
2010. 112 pp. \$17.95 paper.

TYLER MCCREARY
York University

IN A PUBLICATION coincident with the launch of the inquiry into the police investigation of convicted serial killer Robert Pickton, David Hugill’s *Missing Women, Missing News* poses a vital and timely challenge to common-sense frames for understanding the crisis of missing women in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. Exploring national newspaper coverage of the arrest and trial of Pickton, originally charged with murdering twenty-six street-level sex workers, Hugill argues that the media failed to present the public with a framework within which to critically understand what made this crisis possible. Media discourse continued to circulate images of street-level sex workers and the space of the Downtown Eastside as morally corrupt and degenerate.

While journalists focused on bringing attention to the fringes, their “analysis fail[ed] to interrogate the existence of the fringe itself” (29). While the news coverage offered a series of coherent explanations to hold police accountable for their malfeasance, Hugill exposes the media’s omission of the broader social and political context that rendered violence against marginalized women possible. Thus, an overly simplified media narrative failed to contextualize sex workers’ marginality within the raced and gendered context of state abandonment of social services, colonialism, and the criminalization of sex work.

Working within a Marxist framework, Hugill provides a cogent argument that registers both the centrality of material factors in shaping the experience of marginalization and the importance of organizing marginalized communities to engage in the struggle to reconstruct social solidarity. The readability of Hugill’s text demonstrates that one does not need to adopt obtuse or indecipherable language to disrupt reigning common-sense frameworks. With a broadened historical awareness and spatial sensitivity, Hugill maps the series of dispossessions and disavowals that rendered particular women vulnerable in a place of marginality. He ably reconstructs the silences in the prevailing media narrative, which placed gendered vulnerability in the context of state policies that stripped women of social supports, particularly Aboriginal women, while criminalizing sex work. In the most compelling section of the work, Hugill contends with the media’s geographic accounts of the crisis. While the media located the violence of these street-level sex workers’ lives and deaths in the dynamics of their neighbourhood, Hugill situates it within a longer history. Disrupting

a naturalized portrayal of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside as a space of depravity, he positions that place within the historical process of the production of urban space. Historicizing the fragmentation of urban space through a series of gentrification projects and stroll evictions that worked to collocate deprivation and street-level sex work in the Downtown Eastside, Hugill provides a powerful antidote to common-sense accounts of skid row as autogenetically produced.

However, while the account of urban dispossession is the strongest section of *Missing Women, Missing News*, the account of colonial dispossession is the weakest. Hugill adroitly recounts the gendered exclusions of federal Indian policy and notes the impact of residential schools. However, he fails to relate either of these policies to the broader strokes of the well-documented history of deterritorializing Aboriginal space through colonial land policies, as does Cole Harris in *Making Native Space* (UBC Press, 2002). This is a crucial lapse as the foundations of Vancouver rest with the historical reterritorialization of Aboriginal into colonial space and the concomitant disruption of the traditional kinship-based networks of social solidarity within Aboriginal communities. However, Hugill develops his arguments through inverted chronologies. Centering the withdrawal of the state through the last two decades within his critique, Hugill’s book can be read as a lament for the welfare state that fails to convey the extent to which that state was grounded in the historic dispossession of Aboriginal peoples and the disruption of their pre-existing networks of social solidarity.

Hugill registers the contested and contestable terrain of the political sphere. However, in failing to take a *longue durée* approach to colonialism, he misses the

dynamic of colonial dispossession and Aboriginal resistance. Addressing this gap would fundamentally reorganize his argument, but it would also render it far more internally consistent as, for Hugill, a critique of silencing does not preclude the possibility of engaging subjugated knowledges. Indeed, his critique appears in part to be motivated by the way the media controlled the moment of crisis that the Pickton trial represented. The case of the missing and murdered women presented the opportunity to expose the workings of race, class, and gender in the neoliberal colonial state. Hugill effectively bares the ideological bias of the national newspaper coverage, but in penning a threnody to the welfare state, he inadvertently fails to account for his own ideological investment in colonial frameworks. In his conclusion, Hugill argues that it remains necessary to recognize the leadership of oppressed communities in struggles to reconstruct networks of social solidarity and to build a more fundamentally just world. This is a potent call to responsibility; following this call, however, entails extending the terms of Hugill's analysis to position gendered violence and the criminalization of the Canadian margins within a critical history of the settler state.



Resurrecting Dr. Moss: The Life and Letters of a Royal Navy Surgeon, Edward Lawton Moss

MD, RN, 1843–1880

Paul C. Appleton; edited by
William Barr

Calgary: University of Calgary
Press, 2008. 268 pp. \$42.95 paper.

CARY C. COLLINS
Maple Valley, WA

BIOGRAPHIES OF historical figures of the second rank often supply the foundational material and needed contextual support upon which larger studies are based. That certainly promises to be the case with this highly engaging and informative exploration into the life and death of the Dublin-born Edward Lawton Moss. Moss served as a surgeon in the British Royal Navy and perished at the still youthful age of thirty-seven in a tragic and controversial shipwreck off the coast of Barbados. Sadly, author Paul Appleton died suddenly just months after submitting his manuscript for publication, and thus a skilled craftsman was deprived of the opportunity of shepherding his work into final book form. On a more sanguine note, William Barr has filled in admirably in his stead, and Appleton no doubt would be gratified at the result.

In a stretch as medical officer that spanned sixteen years, Edward Moss experienced and documented a life of high adventure, a potentiality that likely had been the animating force behind his having enlisted in the Royal Navy in the first place. But he also came from a large family of limited means that relied upon him financially, and he possessed an inquisitive mind

that could be satisfied in the various exotic locations to which he would be assigned and the explorations in which he would take part. The core of Appleton's narrative, and a key aspect of the construction of his book, derives from a vast array of surviving letters written by Moss to his mother and his wife from the sites of his many duty stations. Appleton reproduces these primary documents verbatim, and some of the longer correspondence can consume several pages. Moss, as presented in his own words, proves a keen-eyed observer of events unfolding around him as well as a colourful and candid storyteller. It is this effective combination, along with the inclusion of an exquisite collection of sketches and watercolours, that conveys with élan and clarity the major phases of Moss's life. Among his many talents, which included naturalist, writer, administrator, amateur scientist, and historian, Moss was also a formidable artist.

The centrepiece of *Resurrecting Dr. Moss* and of Moss's medical career was his role as assistant naval surgeon on the Nares British Arctic Expedition of 1875-76. Here Appleton and Moss both shine, painting a riveting portrait of the exploration, from its heady formative moments to its heartbreaking and deadly scurvy-marred end. Moss, having already come under enemy fire and suffered the loss of his ship in an incidence of gunboat diplomacy off Haiti in 1865, and for a number of years having been assigned to a troopship that transported soldiers to foreign outposts and military hotspots, acquitted himself well in a harrowing trial that tested men's souls to their marrow. Four Nares crew members were lost and the entire expedition team barely escaped with their lives in this ill-guided attempt to reach the geographic North Pole

(although one of the sledging teams did set a farthest-north record for that date). For Moss, his lifework grew out of the extreme hardships endured. From his experience he published his book *Shores of the Polar Sea* (1878), which has come to be a highly sought-after and valuable chronicle of that troubled journey.

Students of BC history will be most interested in the two and one-half years that Moss served as head of the Royal Naval Hospital in Esquimalt. While deployed there, the young surgeon took a "run-down collection of ramshackle buildings and turned them into an efficient medical facility" (64). According to Appleton, those "hospital renovations and medical initiatives" make Moss "well deserving of credit for establishing one of the earliest medical institutions on the West Coast of Canada" (56). Those were formative years both for him and for the young province. During his tenure in Esquimalt from 1872 to 1875 Moss married and marked the birth of his first child. He also came into contact with troops garrisoned in British Columbia in support of the Pig War, although, disappointingly, few details survive of Moss's interactions with them.

A melancholy permeates much of *Resurrecting Dr. Moss*. The book addresses heavy topics such as scurvy, smallpox, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, and other forms of illness and disease as well as, compounding the prevailing sombreness, the recurring themes of separation, suffering, and loss, with the latter including the deaths of Moss and even Appleton. Moss and 280 fellow crew members lost their lives when the HMS *Atalanta* sank in the British West Indies in early 1880. In the inquiry that followed, it was determined that the training vessel had been unfit for sea duty and should

have been scuttled and rebuilt and not simply overhauled as had been done prior to its launch. The tragedy snuffed out the future service and contributions of a compelling personality and rising member of the medical corps, an impressive, talented individual who, in the words of Appleton, “may not have been a major figure in the fields of nineteenth-century medicine, art, or polar exploration, but [whose] life and career exemplified the best traditions of the Royal Navy Medical Branch during the Victorian Era” (206). It should be added that, through the publication of this estimable volume, Moss has been retrieved from the margins of relative obscurity and, for that, Paul C. Appleton is owed our lasting debt.

*Policing the Fringe: The Curious
Life of a Small-Town Mountie*

Charles Scheideman

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing,
2009. 320 pp. \$24.95 paper

BEN BRADLEY
Queen's University

EVERY PROVINCE and state seems to have spawned its own popular literature about those who enforce the law and those who run afoul of it. British Columbia is no exception, but most popular histories of policing in this province have focused on infamous and unusual cases from before the 1940s. The postwar years and the voices of actual police officers are usually absent from these accounts, and, as a result, readers learn little about the daily routines and institutional culture of modern policing. This is why retired RCMP officer Charles Scheideman's *Policing the Fringe* is so valuable: though

intended for a popular audience, it provides a rare insider's view of police work “at the street and road level” (9) in communities like Nelson, Cranbrook, Williams Lake, Lytton, Golden, and Quesnel from the early 1960s to the late 1980s.

The book is divided into fifty vignettes, each involving a particular person, place, incident, or theme. Most are drawn from Scheideman's own experiences, but a few are borrowed from unnamed colleagues. They represent the highlights (or lowlights, as it were) of a career in an occupation in which dealing with unusual occurrences is relatively commonplace – the kind of “big fish” stories retired police officers might share among themselves.

Readers are introduced to an assortment of anonymous drifters, down-and-outs, ne'er-do-wells, and otherwise troubled or unlucky characters, including hermits, glue sniffers, wife beaters, motorcycle gangs, drug smugglers, bank robbers, and killers. The vignettes are presented in no discernable order, with animal attacks, runaway trucks, and suicides intermingled among landslides, people reported missing, and bodies reported found. Irresponsible driving and overindulgence in drink (sometimes in conjunction) emerge as the most common problems encountered by police, while the radio-equipped patrol car and microcomputer are shown allowing an unprecedented degree of communication between officers and agencies. Particularly striking is the central role that paved, all-season roads played in policing British Columbia's hinterlands. The in-between space of the highway network provides the setting for many of the incidents Scheideman describes, bringing a steady metronome of accidents, reckless driving reports, and speed enforcement,

while allowing emergency services to reach most incidents within a fairly short time. Roads also facilitated criminal activities and mobility: Scheideman describes how, when the Canadian Police Information Computer system was introduced in the early 1970s, his detachment commander told him: “there is no need to ever feel idle or bored as long as that highway is over there; go out and check a few cars and you will have some excitement before you know it” (286).

Most of the other vignettes are set on the outskirts of the Interior’s burgeoning regional centres and in isolated, sometimes highly insular, communities whose residents were unfriendly towards the metropolitan authority represented by the RCMP – small single-industry towns, First Nations reserves, and depressed backwaters that had gained little from the modernization of the Interior economy and that Scheideman avoids identifying by name, as though they were victims. In a sense, the “fringe” of the book’s title is an internal frontier, the boundary between “haves” and “have-nots” in the increasingly uneven social geography of late Fordism and post-Fordism in British Columbia, which was characterized by the centralization of both industry and government services. Indeed, the juxtaposition of centre and margin runs throughout the book. The “freedom of the road” contrasts with the belligerent localism of places “off the beaten path.” Sightseeing tourists, adventuring hitchhikers, and outdoor recreationalists who choose to live outside for fun contrast with people who have no option but to live in flophouse hotels, decrepit shacks, or in their cars.

Scheideman has an engrossing, matter-of-fact writing style, and he avoids getting either bogged down in the intricacies of police procedure or

carried away with trying to capture the tension or excitement of a situation. He generally avoids discussing the political implications of policing, but he offers some anecdotal insights into its office politics, plus a few pointed comments on the rise of police bureaucracies as well as on the courts, where artful presentation and technical sophistry often struck him as counting for more than evidence or public safety. *Policing the Fringe* belongs on the bookshelf of anyone interested in the history of policing and crime in British Columbia, particularly for its portrayal of the period before marijuana cultivation and its associated money-laundering became major drivers of the province’s hinterland economies.

*The Quadra Story: A History of
Quadra Island*

Jeanette Taylor

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing,
2009. 272 pp. \$32.95 cloth.

HOWARD STEWART

University of British Columbia

J EANNETTE TAYLOR’s history of Quadra Island is a welcome addition to Harbour Publishing’s growing collection of Coast histories. It draws on Taylor’s profound local knowledge of the northern strait and complements her histories of Campbell River and the “Discovery Islands.” Her sensitive feel for Quadra’s diverse corners and people allows her to reveal evolving relations among them. It’s an often fascinating story full of compelling, if not always likeable, characters.

Local history is inevitably parochial but can be a better read than many academic histories when a writer such

as Taylor is armed with stories like those from Quadra Island. As Jean Barman points out in a recent issue of *BC Studies* (165 [2010]: 103), local history enhances our historical understanding “by evoking place from the perspective of families and communities with the intimacy that proximity brings.” For the most part, Taylor tells the stories of Eurasian families and communities, their descendants, and the successive wave of newcomers who had become the dominant element on the island by the twentieth century. But she does not neglect the island’s rich Native heritage. She offers a solid overview of what is known about the Salish speakers who greeted Captain Vancouver at Cape Mudge in the late eighteenth century, then of the Lekwiltok people who had replaced them by the time Eurasian settlers began arriving in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Native islanders, mostly at Cape Mudge, were decimated by disease and marginalized by colonial law and society. Nonetheless, they remain important, though often separate, players in Taylor’s story. Reflecting the influence of people like Cole Harris and John Lutz, though blessedly bare of what Lutz would call “Pomo wawa” (i.e., postmodernist jargon), Taylor demonstrates that the island’s Native people never stopped playing vital and diverse roles in its post-contact history.

Like other islands in the strait, Quadra has provided a stage for a unique cast of characters and communities. Taylor recounts the origins of the rivalry between Quathiaska Cove and Heriot Bay, the former growing up around a cannery and the latter around a bar. Settlements built around the island’s frontier logging and a bit of mining grew up at the north end of the island – especially Granite Bay. These communities are revealed

mostly through stories of their men and women. Billy Assu at Cape Mudge and Reginald Pidcock at Quathiaska Cove emerge as outstanding leaders of early modern Quadra. But its most unforgettable character is probably Helen Bull, the energetic, talented, and not terribly trustworthy proprietor of the iconic Heriot Bay Hotel, who washed ashore from New Zealand in the early 1900s, escaping a murderously irate business partner. An expanding cast of characters bursts into the boom years of the early twentieth century – with logging and fishing both thriving – then endures the brutal setbacks of the First World War and the Depression.

Taylor demonstrates how Quadra’s shifting links with the off-island world affected island life. In the steamship era, Heriot Bay and Quathiaska Cove could be more important places than Campbell River. Once the highway reached northern Vancouver Island, they were left behind. A car ferry then opened Quadra to the recreation, tourism, and real estate industries that continue to shape the island’s economy today. Taylor doesn’t linger in these recent decades. Her last big story is the arrival of the back-to-the-landers, artists and fellow travellers who stirred the ire of many established islanders in the 1960s and into the 1970s before they, too, were accepted.

It is a good story, well told and worth a read by those interested in BC coastal history, especially Native-settler relations, the evolving coastal economy, and the unique social and cultural experiments of the islands. Only geographers will regret that Taylor hasn’t put scales on her maps.