

## BOOK REVIEWS

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### *Images from the Likeness House*

Dan Savard

Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 2010.  
224 pp. \$39.95 paper.

JENNIFER CADOR  
*University of Victoria*

AT THE START of *Images from the Likeness House*, Dan Savard tells us why the photographs he presents of Aboriginal people are important. Put succinctly, it is because of their past and continuing influence on public perceptions of First Peoples. Though he has deliberately chosen images not often reproduced, his point remains strong: photographs such as the ones published here are used in films, prints, and exhibits, and have been for more than a century. It is for this reason that such photographs require critical scrutiny.

Savard is well positioned to produce such a volume, having recently retired from a long career as a curator at the Royal British Columbia Museum (RBCM). In his sampling of 241 images – primarily created by non-Aboriginal photographers – Savard successfully presents a subjective interpretation of the photographic interplay between Aboriginal and settler populations in

the British Columbia, Washington State, and Alaska regions between 1860 and 1920. The photographs are gathered from diverse museum collections, with an emphasis on the RBCM collections. Refreshingly, Savard uses the images as primary source documents rather than as mere evidence to support text. By covering a range of areas and cultures, and by providing a sampling of the work of numerous professional and amateur photographers, *Images from the Likeness House* is broader in scope than many other books in the genre.

The reader will appreciate Savard's in-depth explanation of the technological developments, which occurred throughout the nineteenth century, that made the photographs possible. Though he has published some of this information relatively recently (Grant Keddie, *Songhees Pictorial*, 2003, foreword, 10-12) – such description is a necessary addition here as it enables the reader to more fully appreciate the complexities of early photograph-making.

The images are valuable documents. Their high resolution provides opportunity for close study, and readers will find a magnifying glass to be a useful tool. Most images feature people; others depict landscapes or artworks.

Their thematic organization emphasizes interactions between Aboriginal and settler populations, with chapters on topics such as scientific research, tourism, and missionary photography. Though somewhat unexpected in a book of photographs taken by outsiders, Savard's section on First Nations photographers is of particular interest because of its shift in point of view. He includes, for example, a rare insider's view of a Makah whaling expedition (147). One wishes this section had been longer.

Readers should understand, however, that Savard approaches the images from a decidedly anthropological point of view, which means he privileges some aspects of the photographs over others. He sees the images as visual evidence of lifeways. I certainly agree that they are. However, he does not view them as art and, indeed, seems to see artistic embellishment, such as that seen in Edward Curtis's or Hannah Maynard's images, as tainting their documentary value. This position will not serve all readers. For art historians, for example, the aesthetic elements also form important parts of the visual histories of First Peoples and are inseparable from content. It is a matter of vantage point.

*Images from the Likeness House* is a carefully cited, critical volume, and scholars will find it to be a useful starting point for the study of First Nations images in the region, providing leads to diverse collections and photographers. It is also a clearly written, image-heavy volume, and popular audiences will find it to be an accessible historical and anthropological resource. Indeed, it has already received recognition: *Images from the Likeness House* was recently awarded the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize (best B.C.-based book) from BC Book Prizes.

*The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism*

Keith Thor Carlson

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010. 368 pp. \$32.95 paper.

MADELINE KNICKERBOCKER  
*Simon Fraser University*

KEITH THOR CARLSON'S book focuses on the relationship between history and identity among the Stó:lō people of the Lower Fraser River between 1780 and 1906. He examines specific events and broad trends to demonstrate how Stó:lō collective identities can be both fluid and fixed, and how the passage of time leaves space for the reinterpretation of those identities. Influenced particularly by Marshall Sahlins, Carlson seeks to study "change in continuity" by combining a long historical view with a micro-ethnohistorical lens in his examination of Coast Salish identity formation (27). This approach allows Carlson to develop his argument that Stó:lō identity is constituted by both long-term relational social structures and particular, transformative events.

In his well organized and clearly written book, Carlson focuses on how Stó:lō people used historical consciousness of transformed ancestors and social affiliations based on rivers or watersheds to understand and mitigate the effects of smallpox and fur trade incursions during the eighteenth century. Later, he argues, Stó:lō people drew on these histories to (re)create a series of nesting identities that would allow simultaneous identification with an individual ancestor, local tribe, regional nation, and provincial

collective. Carlson points to the late nineteenth century as the era of gradual assertion of Stó:lō collective political identity, which, he argues, was made manifest in the Stó:lō reserve redress petition of 1874; in the refusal to participate in the Queen's birthday celebrations the following year; and, especially, in the eruption of fierce political dialogue following the lynching of Louie Sam, a Stó:lō youth, by American vigilantes in 1884. Carlson concludes that, as shown in the 1906 Aboriginal political delegation to King Edward VII, the trend towards supratribal identity was firmly established by the early twentieth century – not as a product of colonialism but in spite of divisive colonial policies.

Carlson's engagement with the historiographical material on his subject is profound. He makes extensive use of oral history interviews and relies on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal archives, manuscript collections, and other source material (such as unpublished field notes) to tease out conclusions that he then contextualizes through the work of other Aboriginal historians. Like many of his colleagues, Carlson insists on a more nuanced view of Aboriginal-newcomer relations than the oft-expounded idea that the metanarrative of cooperation in the contact era gave way to racialized conflict in the settlement era. This stance helps him identify exploitation and collaboration when and where the phenomena occur in the historical record instead of in correspondence to the dictates of outdated periodization.

While Carlson acknowledges (indeed, explores) aspects of the legacy of trauma left by colonialism, he avoids two problematic tendencies in Aboriginal historiography: (1) the common apologetics of researchers

who still cling to white guilt and (2) the hypersensitive avoidance of any critique of Aboriginal issues. Instead, Carlson's thoughtful contribution assesses the historical events that contributed to the making and remaking of Stó:lō identities without relying on an insecure substructure of negative racial self-consciousness.

Carlson's book is especially useful as an example of well-executed ethnohistorical research. As Sonny McHalsie expresses in the foreword, Carlson's long-term friendships and professional relationships with Stó:lō people, his commitment to Stó:lō histories, and his sincere involvement in ongoing cross-cultural dialogue are good lessons for practitioners and students of ethnohistory, and they add interest and texture for the general reader of BC history.

Ultimately, Carlson argues that, although colonialism may have altered the context of events in Stó:lō histories, it could not erode Stó:lō historical consciousness and so did not significantly change the foundations of Stó:lō identities. This thesis – that change during the colonial period was not necessarily colonial in nature – dovetails with Carlson's assertion that Aboriginal history can be studied on its own terms, and it suggests that Aboriginally centred histories can be written without emphasizing either the drastic effects of colonialism or the over-used tropes of Aboriginal agency and resistance. Carlson's work thus represents an innovative avenue towards the further decolonizing of Aboriginal history, and this, combined with his concern for contemporary Aboriginal political issues, heightens the relevance of the book and marks his claims as being significant both in and beyond the academy.

*Urbanizing Frontiers:  
Indigenous Peoples and Settlers  
in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Pacific*

*Rim Cities*

Penelope Edmonds

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010. 328 pp.  
\$85.00 cloth, \$35.95 paper.

JOHN LUTZ

*University of Victoria*

COLONISTS SELDOM embarked alone to new continents, and so the act of “settling” was often the act of creating a “settlement.” Penelope Edmonds’s *Urbanizing Frontiers* reminds us that the interface between settler and Native was very often an urban one – a town, a village, an outpost – and urban areas have their own geographies of power and politics of space.

Her book compares Melbourne, Australia, in the State of Victoria, with the City of Victoria on Vancouver Island, focusing on the 1830s-60s, and asks whether British colonialism had similar patterns on different sides of the Pacific. She examines “the racialized transformation of these developing cities and proposes that urbanizing colonial precincts can be viewed as formative sites ... where bodies and spaces were rapidly transformed and mutually imbricated in sometimes violent ways, reflecting the making of plural settler-colonial modernity” (5). Influenced by Judith Butler’s insights into the relationship between bodies and space, by Ann Stoler and Frederick Cooper’s attention to intimate geographies of power, and by Henri Lefebvre’s insights into the social construction of space, Edmonds brings post-colonial theorists to the urban history of empire.

There is much to learn from the comparison. Both Victoria and Melbourne were brought into the European orbit by James Cook in the 1760s-70s, both were described as “Eden” by early British visitors, both boomed as a result of 1850s gold rushes, and both, in their way, honour Britain’s longest-serving monarch. But what Edmonds wants to tell us is that both required similar discursive strategies to displace indigenous peoples, first by rhetorically creating them as interlopers and vagrants in territories that had recently been theirs and then by pathologizing them as threats to white order: savage, diseased, and depraved. Rhetoric was backed up with force: police tried to remove indigenous people from the settler cities, while on both continents missionaries tried to transform them into civilized citizens. Both depended on similar property regimes and systems of surveying and mapping. Ironically, Edmonds argues, while colonists devoted so much energy to displacing indigenous peoples, their own identity was being displaced by commercial and carnal intercourse with them – a case that is stronger for Victoria than it is for Melbourne. As much as the colonists wished, the resulting cities were not “Britain on the Pacific;” rather, these nineteenth-century cities, particularly Victoria, were hybrid spaces characterized by racial mingling and vestigial indigenous spaces in the heart of the urban world.

The differences tell us as much as do the similarities. The burghers of Melbourne were more successful at “vanishing the indigene” and blanching the city white than were those of Victoria, in large part because of the balance of power that comes from the balance of population. In Victoria, a much smaller colonial population encountered a much larger indigenous

one, even after diseases had reduced the latter to a fraction, so settlers were more constrained in their violence, more dependent on indigenous labour, and more inclined to marry into the local population. Edmonds's conclusions rest upon a modes of production interpretation: the fur trade economy that founded Victoria was one that depended on indigenous participation, while the pastoral economy that founded Melbourne depended on displacing indigenous people from their land.

Particularly welcome is not only the comparative insights from Australia and Canada but also the transnational post-colonial investigation into how power operated. But such an enterprise has its own risks. It is a challenge to bring that literature to a wide audience without burdening it too much with jargon, and it is impossible to be an expert on the big picture as well as on the minute details in two far-flung case studies. So, at least with respect to Victoria, a few minor inaccuracies have crept in.

On an interpretive level, Edmonds emphasizes an underlying fear among the settlers in both colonies, which provoked "often violent spatial contestation" (6, 243). In looking at the evidence she offers (34-35, 38, 193-95), I agree that violence was part of the process (more so in Melbourne), but I would emphasize the opposite – the peaceable subordination or what Mary Louise Pratt calls the "anti-conquest." Most of the displacement of indigenous peoples Edmonds describes happened through disciplinary practices such as sanitation and vagrancy laws, and through capitalist, missionary, or educational institutions. Time frame makes all the difference. The fear of the indigene was very short-lived, followed by a long-lasting cultural

imperative to protect and to civilize. Not surprisingly, in such a regime most of the displacement of settler identities happened through intermarriage (particularly in Victoria) and every-day interaction.

Overall, this is an insightful book that effectively links the macro processes of colonization with the local processes of city growth. It should be read by historians of British Columbia and British colonial enterprises worldwide, who will be made to think afresh about the distinctive features of British settler colonialism and about the way "New World" cities hide the racial and spatial displacements that were required for them to exist and grow.

*Broken Circle: The Dark Legacy  
of Indian Residential Schools –  
A Memoir*

Theodore Fontaine

Victoria: Heritage House, 2010.  
208 pp. \$19.95 paper.

JIM MILLER

*University of Saskatchewan*

CANADIANS who advise survivors of Native residential schools to "just get over it" should read *Broken Circle: The Dark Legacy of Indian Residential Schools*. Author Theodore Fontaine, cousin of the more famous Phil, attended two such institutions in Manitoba over twelve years. He then spent a number of decades living a marginal existence before recovering and living a fulfilling and successful life. His explanation of why his post-school life was initially so aimless and how he managed to rise above it cast a great deal of light on both the residential school experience and its

“dark legacy.”

In 1948, the seven-year-old Ted was taken to the Oblate school near the Fort Alexander (Sagkeeng) Reserve by his loving parents. After ten unhappy years he transferred to the Assiniboia Residential School in Winnipeg for high school. In both residential schools, he explains, the students were subjected to authoritarian control and a belittling form of religious indoctrination that undermined their attachment to their own culture and sapped their confidence and will. He tells of being suspicious of his own parents when he returned home during the summer vacation because their language and cultural practices exemplified things he had been warned about at school. At the Fort Alexander institution he was also one of many boys who were victimized sexually by a priest and physically mistreated by both religious and lay personnel. Simultaneously, he became emotionally dependent on and antagonistic towards the staff. He describes the atmosphere in the residential school as an example of Stockholm Syndrome, in which the inmates come to identify with their keepers. As well, he notes: “I developed a deep sense of suspicion and wariness” (156). Eventually, he simply left the Assiniboia Residential School in search of the freedom he craved.

For many years he got by with a succession of short-term jobs before beginning, in 1976, to work for what he refers to as “my people” (151) in his own First Nation and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. Reconnection with his own culture and the support of a loving, patient wife enabled him to heed the urging of a friend to get counselling to deal with the trauma he carried with him from the residential schools. The final stage of his recovery, described brilliantly, was the successful adjudication of his claim against the

government and church for the abuse he had suffered in residential school.

If the key to successful communication is showing, not telling, a story, Ted Fontaine succeeds completely in demonstrating from his own experience how damaging the “dark legacy” of residential school can be. His story’s upbeat ending also serves as an inspirational example of the lucky minority of survivors who, with help and determination, triumph over that malignant inheritance.

*Unsettling the Settler Within:  
Indian Residential Schools,  
Truth Telling, and Reconciliation  
in Canada*

Paulette Regan

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010. 316 pp.  
\$34.95 paper.

DANIEL FRANCIS  
*Vancouver*

FOR YEARS Canadians have been learning about the horrors of the Indian residential schools: from histories that have been written, from the 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (which blamed the schools for the high rates of suicide, substance abuse, and family dysfunction in Aboriginal communities), and, most heartrendingly, from the testimony of people who attended the schools. In 2006, after initially resisting calls for redress, the federal government announced the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, which provided for cash payments to former students, a new process for dealing with cases of abuse, a fund to support various commemorative projects, and

the creation of a commission intended to help all Canadians understand the legacy of the schools. This was followed, in June 2008, with a formal apology in the House of Commons by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) has now begun hearing testimony at meetings across the country from people who operated the schools and from the students who attended them, with a view to healing the deep wound they created.

Paulette Regan is the director of research with the TRC. In her book, *Unsettling the Settler Within*, she makes a provocative argument about the purpose of the commission. I think most non-Aboriginal Canadians – let's call us the Rest of Canada (ROC) – will be surprised to be told that the TRC is about “us,” not “them.” Most of us conceive of the commission as an opportunity to educate the public about the schools and to allow victims of the system to achieve catharsis by publicly describing their experiences. In other words, it is largely about the survivors and their families and communities. Not so, says Regan. Of course, this is important; but, for her, the TRC is far more than a teaching moment, an opportunity for the ROC “to feel good about feeling bad.” For her, the TRC is a unique opportunity for all Canadians to come to terms with our own history, which, as regards Aboriginal peoples, is a history of oppression and injustice.

*Unsettling* provides a useful summary of the government's response to the legacy of the residential schools and an explanation of how the TRC came to be established, then plunges into its real subject, which is the need to address the myths of Canadian history. Chief among these is what Regan calls “the peacemaker myth,” by which she means the idea that “the settling of

Canada was relatively peaceful because our ancestors ... made treaties rather than war with Native peoples, brought law and order to the frontier, and created well-intentioned (if ultimately misguided) policies designed to solve the Indian problem by civilizing and saving people seen as savages”. For her, this myth infects Canadian history like a virus, and the TRC will only be successful if it causes the ROC to come to terms with an entirely different version of its own past.

The truth telling of Regan's subtitle is not just the truth about the residential school experience: it is the truth about past relations between settlers and Aboriginal peoples. The process of reconciliation is not only about allowing Aboriginal people to heal; it is also about non-Aboriginal people learning that we all bear responsibility and acknowledging the ways we have profited from the inequities and injustices perpetrated in our name. The job confronting the ROC is not to “solve the Indian problem,” says Regan; rather, it is to solve the settler problem. As she says: “Without a truth telling in which we confront our own history and identity ... there can be no ethical or just reconciliation with Indigenous people.”



MAKING WAY FOR  
INDIGENOUS VOICES

*The 500 Years of Resistance  
Comic Book*

Gord Hill

Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press,  
2010. 88 pp. \$12.95 paper.

*Morris as Elvis:*

*Take a Chance on Life*

Morris Bates and Jim Brown

Kingston, ON: Fox Music Books,  
2010. 379 pp. \$34.95 paper.

*Working with Wool: A Coast  
Salish Legacy and the Cowichan  
Sweater*

Sylvia Olsen

Winlaw, BC: Sono Nis Press, 2010.  
328 pp. \$38.95 cloth.

JEAN BARMAN

*University of British Columbia*

HOWEVER SENSITIVE those of us who are non-indigenous and write on indigenous topics might be, we do so as outsiders. We have empathy and we attempt to understand, but we are not indigenous. Differences in perspectives have long been visible in literature and poetry, but only recently have indigenous voices found their way into the mainstream of non-fiction. Three recent additions make this point in different ways.

All three authors are embedded within BC First Nations. Gord Hill is Kwakwaka'wakw with some Tlingit ancestry. Morris Bates, who is Shuswap and Haida, grew up between the Sugar

Cane Reserve outside of Williams Lake and Loomis, Washington, to which his family moved temporarily to avoid his being sent to residential school. At age seventeen, Sylvia Olsen married into the Coast Salish people and moved to the Tsartlip Reserve on Vancouver Island, where she raised her family as a member of the community.

The authors come to their topics through lived experience. Gord Hill is a long-time Vancouver social activist and graphic artist who effectively combines his two passions in *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book*. Hill uses a combination of black-and-white drawings and explanatory text to chronicle episodically how indigenous peoples of the Americas have repeatedly and persistently opposed outsiders' intrusions into their ways of life. His goal of giving indigenous peoples a better understanding of their past so as to counter the benign version all too often taught in schools and presented in the media makes that format the perfect vehicle for his hard-hitting message. The impetus behind *Morris as Elvis* is Morris Bates's ten years headlining in Las Vegas as an Elvis Presley impersonator, with all of the high living that thereby ensued. The visually attractive book chronicles Bates's pathway from a remote reserve with "nothing to go back to" (191) through the ups and downs of fame to redefining himself as a Native youth counsellor in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. It was taken for granted that Sylvia Olsen would learn to knit as soon as she moved on to a reserve, where women contributed to the family economy through making the Cowichan sweaters that had by then become world renowned. Beautifully illustrated, *Working with Wool* interweaves Olsen's story with portraits of some of the many First



Nations women past and present who have sustained this remarkable home industry. The book is not, however, all goodness and light, also telling the story of knitters “too poor and powerless to resist the merchants’ firm grip of the industry,” with the result that they sometimes worked “long hours in cramped quarters for very little gain” (210). The ease with which all three authors draw on their lived experience is a powerful reminder that all of us do this, if usually far less openly. The authority we give to the written word belies its basis in ourselves. These three books help us to grasp that critical link between what we write and how we get to that point, particularly when combined with readily accessible websites pointing out how these three authors made the jump.<sup>1</sup>

Gord Hill, Morris Bates and his co-author Jim Brown, and Sylvia Olsen also make a larger point, which concerns the diversity of indigenous perspectives and experiences. The stark simplicity of *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* gives its main point an authority that is all too often lost from view in more nuanced and sophisticated accounts: “This is the world we live in, and the history that has made us who we are ... Long live the warrior!” (87). So ends the book. Gord Hill is angry,

and well he should be. In sharp contrast, *Morris as Elvis* takes us along on an amazing ride redolent of the human spirit: “There is nothing you can’t do if you put your mind to it, and you work really, really hard” (9). The book’s subtitle, *Take a Chance on Life*, sums up Bates’s perspective. *Working with Wool* introduces us, in yet another contrast, to indigenous women who, for all of the Cowichan sweater’s fame, have until now remained quietly anonymous. I for one found it impossible to put the three books down, from beginning to end, and am extraordinarily grateful to the authors for sharing these dimensions of what it means to be indigenous in today’s British Columbia and Canada.



<sup>1</sup> On Hill, see “Gord Hill Breaks It Down,” available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRLH-9cEfPg&feature=related> (viewed 17 February 2010); and “500 Years of Resistance,” available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXNTzqzhjGY> (viewed 25 April 2010). On Bates, see “Morris Bates the Elvis Years” and standard interviews, available at <http://www.myspace.com/morrisbatesaselvisfansite/videos> (viewed 2010). On Olsen, see “Sylvia Olsen Working with Wool,” available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X78Lwb8jGC4> (accessed 19 November 2010).

*This Is What They Say: Stories  
by François Mandeville -  
A Story Cycle Dictated in  
Northern Alberta in 1928*

François Mandeville

Edited and translated from  
Chipewyan by Ron Scollon.

Foreword by Robert Bringhurst

Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre,  
2009. 286 pp. Ill. \$22.95 paper.

PATRICIA McCORMACK  
*University of Alberta*

RON SCOLLON was an eminent linguist who worked for much of his life on Athapaskan languages and the ethnography of speaking. *This Is What They Say* was his final project; sadly, he died in 2010. He wished to honour a master Aboriginal storyteller – François Mandeville – and the master linguist who collaborated with him at Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca in 1928 – Li Fang-kuei. Li was also Scollon’s own teacher: the two collaborated in the production of an earlier version of these stories (Li and Scollon, *Chipewyan Texts* [Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1976]). Scollon traces the genealogy of the resulting intellectual tradition. He explains exactly how Mandeville and Li worked together and what each hoped to learn, then how Li and Scollon worked together four decades later, and finally how Scollon brought his own formidable scholarship to a new translation of these stories and his analysis of how they should be presented for readability in English and faithfulness to the original Chipewyan. (I am the fourth link in this chain at Fort Chipewyan; when I arrived in 1977 to conduct research for my PhD

dissertation, Ron generously allowed me to read a major manuscript he had prepared.) The book is a fascinating reflective piece about fieldwork, tutelage, serendipity, and continuity of multiple traditions – linguistic, anthropological, and cultural – as well as an insightful presentation of a subset of Chipewyan oral traditions.

The book’s organization reflects Scollon’s analysis of how the stories themselves are organized. It begins with a short “translator’s preface,” a prologue to the stories. There are three formal sections. Part One contains sixteen stories that were selected by Mandeville and constituted his “narrative ethnography,” the stories he used to guide Li Fang-kuei “in his understanding of the Chipewyan people” (13). They are presented in the order in which Mandeville told them in 1928. Many of the stories are classic Chipewyan traditions, which have remained remarkably consistent since they were first recorded by Oblate father Émile Petitot in the nineteenth century (see, for example, Petitot’s *Traditions indiennes du Canada Nord-Ouest* [Paris: Maisonneuve Frères et Ch. Leclerc, 1886]). Others reflect a Yellowknife historic tradition: the Mandeville family was more closely connected to Great Slave Lake than to Lake Athabasca. Some of the same stories are also found in texts recorded at Fort Chipewyan by Robert H. Lowie in 1908 (“Chipewyan Tales,” *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* 10, 3 [1912]: 171–200) and at Cold Lake by Pliny Earle Goddard in 1911 (“Chipewyan Texts,” *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* 10, 1 [1912]: 1–65). While it was beyond the scope of the book to conduct a comparative analysis or to address the specific story

genres, those subjects would have been fine additions.

Part Two comprises “elicited accounts” (by Li). These narratives contain ethnographic information about how children were educated and what they learned; how to make fishnets, birchbark canoes, and a tanned moose skin; and how to fish and hunt beaver.

Part Three presents biographical information about Mandeville and discusses the important processes through which Li worked with him and then Scollon with Li. Scollon then dissects the elements that contribute to the meaning of the story, such as linguistic markers and sequencing. He also considers possible historical influences on the structure of these particular narratives. The appendix depicts the presentations of one story by Li, Li and Scollon, and Scollon.

Scollon included two archival photographs of François Mandeville and recent photos of the house that Mandeville built in Fort Chipewyan and the neighbouring Athabasca Café, which was rebuilt in 1932 after the original café burned down. Dan Mah, an immigrant from China, owned the café in 1928, and it is intriguing to speculate that Li may have stayed there while in Fort Chipewyan.

While the specific analysis concerns Chipewyan stories, the interest of the book is much broader. It will appeal to scholars working with oral traditions, Athapaskan/Dene linguistics, and intellectual history. The careful construction and presentation of the narratives should also prove helpful to Chipewyans (*Dene Sų́łíné*) themselves who are looking for earlier versions of their own oral traditions.

*The Forgotten Explorer: Samuel Prescott Fay's 1914 Expedition to the Northern Rockies*

Edited by Charles Helm and Mike Murtha

Surrey: Rocky Mountain Books, 2009. 292 pp. \$27.95 paper.

PEARLANN REICHWEIN  
*University of Alberta*

IN 1914, Samuel Prescott Fay (1884–1971), a Harvard graduate from Boston, ventured twelve hundred kilometres through the northern Rockies from Jasper to Hudson's Hope. While the Harvard Travelers Club deferred exploration in the region to Fay that summer, other mountain travellers, particularly Mary Jobe and Curly Phillips, were game to push north into uncharted spots on the map after railways transected Yellowhead Pass. Fay's five-man expedition – outfitted by Fred Brewster – sought the limits of bighorn sheep and collected specimens for the Smithsonian Institution, where his wildlife report and journal were archived. First published in 2009, these papers add to the corpus of turn-of-the-century travel narratives and journals about the Canadian Rockies. Fay was a wealthy sportsman on a hunting holiday when modern colonial resettlement impinged on the Canadian Rockies; his long traverse is not well known and its exact route has not been duplicated. Helm and Murtha insert Fay into the popular canon of Rocky Mountain exploration literature in a way that reproduces a heroic narrative of masculinist high adventure. In the foreword, references to a region “timeless” and “unknown” present tropes of pristine wilderness removed from civilization that mask

another argument central to the book: Fay provides a temporal benchmark for changing environmental and social history along a spatial trajectory little documented in known written records before his era.

Expeditionary travel writing underscores distance in terms of weather, exertion, and group dynamics. Fay was a keen observer and reporter: rainy days reveal humdrum hours confined to a tepee; successful hunts raised spirits and dispelled hunger; moments spent fly fishing rise to lyric nature writing. Kakwa, Mt. Sir Alexander, and Kinuseo Falls are described as scenic wonders. Fay named these places with the approval of the Geographic Board of Canada and surveyor Arthur Oliver (mistaken as "Oswald") Wheeler. Later they were proclaimed provincial parks. The party met Métis settlers such as Ewan Moberly's family, relocated near Grand Cache from the Athabasca Valley following the creation of Jasper Park in Alberta, and a scorbatic Fay ate potatoes grown on Joseph Calliou's family homestead at Moberly Lake in British Columbia. Social flux, trade, and kinship marked the borderland region as mobile and resilient. Fay's stories and archival photos indicate it was neither timeless nor untouched; he did, however, bushwhack a lonely route obstructed by deadfall from forest fires in many areas that were, thus, seldom frequented in his era. Brewster's unpublished diaries and maps are well cross-referenced with Fay's account. Annotation and biographical notes are thorough, and appendices highlight Fay's ongoing role in contested claims of exploration and geographic memory. Larger print would have enhanced maps and endnotes.

Fay believed that these magnificent scenic places were worthy of park creation, but his hunting trip also

suggests why landscapes supporting large wildlife species in the Rockies necessarily go beyond small, protected areas. The editors identify current industrial encroachments on the eastern slopes and future risks. Overall, Fay represents a generation of expeditionary sport hunters who sought out roadless tracts from the Rockies to the Masai Mara before the First World War. Four of the five in Fay's party soon went to war and two died overseas, underscoring that the northern Rockies were part of a modern world in transformation documented by passing travellers. The book is a fascinating source that incites study and travel.

*From Victoria to Vladivostok:  
Canada's Siberian Expedition,  
1917-1919*

Benjamin Isitt

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010. 352 pp.  
\$29.95 paper.

CHRIS LEACH

*University of the Fraser Valley*

WHILE THE sixtieth anniversary of the Korean War unfolds with little or no fanfare, it is appropriate to consider an even more forgotten Canadian military adventure: the Canadian Siberian Expedition to the Russian port city of Vladivostok in 1918-19 as part of the Allied counter-revolutionary intervention during the Bolshevik Revolution and subsequent Civil War. In *From Victoria to Vladivostok*, Benjamin Isitt considers the significance of this expedition – an expedition that consisted of over four thousand soldiers from across Canada, that has won no place in the national memory, and that

barely registers in the historical record. Uncomfortably straddling the histories of the Great War and the histories of the Bolshevik Revolution, intervention finds little room in either, whether they address military and strategic matters or consider the impact of those events on domestic politics and society. By addressing this gap in the historiography, Isitt has provided an invaluable addition to Canadian military history and to the history of the intervention while, at the same time, exploring the expedition's role in the broader political discourse of class, socialism, and French-English relations in this country at the end of the Great War.

Using a diverse range of sources from both sides of the Pacific, Isitt unravels the complex interplay of war, revolution, diplomacy, domestic politics, and even the influenza epidemic. In doing so he convincingly reveals the importance of the expedition, which he characterizes as a military "fiasco" (169), albeit one that had significant domestic repercussions. Here, it seemed to the political left, was an explicit manifestation of the conservative capitalist Canadian government pursuing an aggressive, commercially self-serving but ultimately subservient foreign policy at the end of an already exhausting war. At the request of the British and in concert with several other allied states, the government sought to defeat a young Bolshevik regime whose rhetoric, it feared, increasingly resonated with the ever more radical labour movement – notably in British Columbia, the departure point for the expedition – and with those in the rest of the company who opposed conscription.

Isitt offers engaging narratives of government ambitions and fears, military misadventures symptomatic

of a poorly coordinated and unwelcome multinational expedition, and growing public opposition. Defeating Bolshevism ran parallel with efforts to defeat social and political opposition at home as trade unions grew and found common cause with disgruntled conscripts. Incidents of labour unrest, police violence, and repressive government policies proliferated across the country but particularly in British Columbia. Finally, prior to leaving for Vladivostok, on 21 December 1918 the predominantly French-Canadian soldiers from the ill-fated 259th Battalion mutinied in Victoria. The Armistice of November 1918 exacerbated the feelings of these men – men who were opposed to conscription and who were suffering loss and illness due to the Spanish flu – that the Siberian Expedition was an act of folly, an ill-conceived demonstration of government opposition to the left wherever it threatened. This folly became increasingly apparent as the expedition forces mouldered in Vladivostok and Prime Minister Borden's determination to support Britain's interventionist policy finally succumbed to ministerial, military, and public criticism. By April 1919, the soldiers started coming home, having lost twenty-one of their ranks to disease, accident, and suicide.

*From Victoria to Vladivostok* is an excellent piece of scholarship. This work puts into a broad context – both foreign and domestic – the neglected narrative of the Canadian Siberian Expedition. Supported by its impressive bibliography, comprehensive index, clearly presented appendices, and relevant maps, this is a sophisticated work of interwoven narratives and analysis by Benjamin Isitt.

*Still Fishin': The BC Fishing  
Industry Revisited*

Alan Haig-Brown

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing,  
2010. 264 pp. 40 b/w photos.  
\$26.95 paper.

DIANA PEDERSEN  
*Victoria*

IS THERE A future for sustainable commercial fisheries that support independent fishers and their way of life in British Columbia's coastal communities? This timely question has recently been examined by Alan Haig-Brown – former fisher, journalist, writer, and long-time champion of commercial fishers and of British Columbia's underappreciated fishing heritage. Since the mid-1980s, Haig-Brown has been photographing BC fishers and their boats as well as interviewing both the members of successive generations of fishing families and the builders and restorers of classic fishing boats. In 1993, his award-winning *Fishing for a Living* documented a century of evolution of commercial fishing as a way of life on the BC coast, with a primary focus on the seine fisheries for salmon and herring. In *Still Fishin': The BC Fishing Industry Revisited*, Haig-Brown widens his focus to include other fisheries, traces the recent fortunes of some veteran fishers and their classic boats, and makes the acquaintance of a new generation of fishers. Highlighting the dramatic changes in government regulation of the fisheries over the past three decades, Haig-Brown warns that the resulting corporatization and privatization of British Columbia's fishing industry threaten as never before to turn the independent fisher into “the

equivalent of a grocery bagger in a vertically integrated food empire” (216).

*Still Fishin'* takes the form of nineteen illustrated profiles of people and boats, based primarily on interviews conducted by the author. Haig-Brown's reminiscences of his own fishing apprenticeship in the 1960s and 1970s and his reflections on the evolution of the industry are skilfully integrated. The boats appear as principal, and often beloved, actors in the drama of British Columbia's commercial fisheries, playing multiple roles as they are sold, refitted, converted, or restored over the decades. Haig-Brown allows us to hear the voices of a range of people with deep connections to the fishing industry. Many have inherited their livelihoods on the BC coast as descendants of immigrants from countries with strong maritime traditions (including Norway, Finland, Croatia, Japan, and Vietnam) or as members of great First Nations fishing families (such as the Assus of Campbell River and the Hunts of Fort Rupert). In *Still Fishin'*, independent fishers speak of their love of the life, the work, and the boats; their debts to their forebears in the industry; their hopes for the coming generation and for the fish; and, frequently, their discouragement and anger regarding the current fisheries management regime.

Contrasting British Columbia with Norway, Haig-Brown is critical of what he sees as a widespread indifference to the province's fishing heritage, with the exception of a few communities such as Campbell River and Steveston. He is filled with admiration for those individuals who devote their skills and money to the restoration and refitting of classic BC seiners; many of these fine boats are leaving the province to find a home in Alaskan waters. As Haig-Brown and many of the

other voices in *Still Fishin'* explain at length, government policies introduced in the 1980s to reduce the size of the fleet (ostensibly a conservation measure) have resulted, paradoxically, in bigger boats, greater capacity, and increased corporate ownership. More expensive boats make it difficult for a new generation of aspiring fishers to buy into the industry. An even greater obstacle, however, is the Byzantine system, administered by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, requiring exorbitantly priced licences to fish during extremely brief openings and allowing those licences to be purchased by non-fishers. The result is that more and more fishers are working as employees of corporate speculators. In *Still Fishin'*, the situation of independent fishers in British Columbia is repeatedly contrasted with that of fishers in Alaska, the latter having a greater say in the setting of fisheries policy. In Alaska, regulations require that licence holders be on board the boat during the fishing, thus preserving a system of owner-operators and discouraging speculation. The fact that enthusiastic and educated young people still aspire to join the fishing fleet is cause for optimism for the future, according to Haig-Brown. So, too, is the existence of an alternative fisheries management regime in Alaska, demonstrating that, in British Columbia, policies could be changed and a sustainable system more supportive of independent fishers put in place. As some of those fishers explain in *Still Fishin'*, opportunities can still be found by embracing niche markets, cultivating the domestic market, and developing value-added products. Alan Haig-Brown is to be commended for providing a thoughtful analysis of the present and future of the BC fishing industry and for allowing the voices of independent fishers and their

supporters to be heard by a wider public. Readers new to the topic would have been better served by a more substantial author's introduction offering a succinct survey of developments in the fishing industry and fisheries policy over the past century. Nonetheless, this is an interesting, enlightening, and accessible book that adds a human dimension to a timely discussion of complex issues often obscured by technical jargon and statistics.

*Human Welfare, Rights, and  
Social Activism: Rethinking the  
Legacy of J.S. Woodsworth*  
Edited by Jane Pulkingham

Toronto: University of Toronto  
Press, 2010. 261 pp. \$24.99 cloth

KAREN BRIDGET MURRAY  
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**H**UMAN WELFARE, *Rights, and Social Activism* is one of those unique edited volumes in which the whole is indeed greater than the sum of its parts. As suggested in the subtitle, the legacy of J.S. Woodsworth is the focus of discussion, but the book's importance derives more from how it uses the figure of Woodsworth to cast new light on historical and contemporary understandings of Canada's "liberal order framework" (MacKay 2000).

Volume editor Jane Pulkingham situates the text against the backdrop of Ian MacKay's insistence not only that the pressing issues of the day need to be understood in historical context but also that the presuppositions of the day should not be imposed upon how we understand history (5). This is a tall order and one that is far from apolitical. Who gets to tell history, how the

“truth” of history is defined, and how it is used for political purposes – these are questions that infuse Canadian political life at all levels and in every corner. Stepping up to this challenge, the book evaluates Woodsworth’s contemporary political pertinence in relation to diverse themes, including labour relations, poverty, colonial rule, racism, capitalism, globalization, resistance, and democratic governance. The contributors are drawn from cultural anthropology, indigenous studies, law, literary and cultural studies, political science, social work, and sociology. Not surprisingly, given the disciplinary positions of the authors, the text enlists an array of analytical frames, including Derridean, neo-Foucauldian, Gramscian, feminist, post-colonial, and political economic. Deftly crafted, the book ponders the historical significance of Woodsworth in a manner that unsettles history as the ineluctable progress from then to now; and it encourages readers to see past the tired old lines of the holy trinity of “otherness” (race, class, gender) to show that political hierarchies in manifold forms are enmeshed within a larger terrain of power and politics. A broad readership will be drawn to this book. It will be of interest not only to people wanting to know more about Woodsworth or the “history of the left” but also to anyone interested in making another, better, world possible through collective action.

Allen Mills cautions against valourizing Woodsworth. His positions were often problematic, including his views “on immigration and same-sex rights and the prospects for Aborigines.” His life, nevertheless, was “an instructive instance of the pains, the perplexities, and also the possibilities of concrete political and social action, responsibly, intelligently,

all the while suffused with a deep moral sensitivity” (62). Woodsworth saw potential for transformative change through parliamentary democracy (43), but this promise rested on an acceptance of coercive techniques of power domestically, even though he rejected the use of violence internationally (56–58). Mills leaves the reader to wonder if Woodsworth’s preference for working within the system, including his uneven application of pacifism, was his weakness or his strength.

When twenty-one-year-old Brigitte DePape sauntered onto the middle of the Senate floor and stood peacefully holding her STOP HARPER sign, she reminded us that Woodsworth’s preference for the parliamentary path and the debates surrounding it are far from theoretical. DePape enacted her beliefs without compromise, but some tut-tutted her lack of “respect for Parliament” (CTV.ca 2011a and 2011b; Wherry 2011). That same Parliament, it is plain to see, has been unable and unwilling to find a way to make room not only for gender parity but also for any enduring articulation of politics that deviates too far from established political interests. And many of the chapters in this book cue us to evaluate Canada’s liberal order as well and truly an economic endeavour that, as Gary Teeple argues, is part of a “global continuum” (91) that leaves little option but to resist. Teeple’s was a prophetic observation in light of the recent uprisings in the Arab world, which DePape expressly held up as a model for change (Silver 2011). To what extent these struggles will challenge the nation-state frame is unclear, but Teeple argues that, even if the nation-state remains intact, it is still radical to demand that nation-states such as Canada live up to their express commitments to human rights (107).



David Schneiderman points out that today political resistance takes place on terms very different from those in Woodsworth's time because Canada has moved closer to the American model, narrowing opportunities for harnessing the state as a defender of human rights (162). For Schneiderman, this contemporary political environment requires a "reawakening" of "Canadian imaginations to the principle of elevating human rights above property rights" (174). He does not tell us from where such a new imaginary world would emerge, but Gwen Brodsky, Hugh Shewell, Eric Tucker, and Neal McLeod take up this issue in light of what "Woodsworth might have done" (or did). For both Brodsky (136) and Shewell (114), Woodsworth's ideas shaped a vision of public policy that hinged on egalitarian sensibilities. For Brodsky, a resurrection of such ideals can be promoted by rendering government more transparent so that Canada's human rights obligations are lived up to (137). For Shewell, social rights as human rights need to be constitutionally entrenched as a means through which liberal capitalism can be transformed (131). Tucker couches his assessment of Woodsworth in terms of what he calls a "change in starting points [that have] significant implications for the pursuit of labour rights in our time" (84). He sees promise in a renewed democratic socialism that learns from Woodsworth's failure to link labour rights to a "broader understanding of the role of subordinate classes in creating the conditions that made resistance and reform, let alone transformation, possible" (85).

Neal McLeod credits Woodsworth for generating "discursive space wherein Indigenous people could begin to play a larger role in shaping the political discourse of our country" (262), but

the phrase "our country" raises the questions: Whose country? Whose history? Indeed, whose rights? These questions came to the fore recently when Shawn Atleo, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, went "rogue" by aligning with the federal government in his proposal to dismantle the Indian Act (Indian Country Today Media Network 2011). Perhaps there is room for discursive space for indigenous peoples' ways of living, being, and knowing if colonial rule is viewed as something that can be left in the past. What if, however, as many indigenous peoples maintain, Canada's liberal order is innately colonial? McLeod's chapter invites us to muse about where discursive space for indigenous peoples in "our country" might be located. In this regard, Daniel Coleman's chapter on "white civility" calls for analytical vigilance and reflexivity by pointing out that Woodsworth attempted to "revise and temper the discriminatory elements" in his early comments on race but nevertheless "maintain[ed] a colour line for Canadian civility." "We can see what we ourselves are up against," writes Coleman, "as we too in the twenty-first century inhabit and try to live critically beyond the limitations of white Canadian civility" (238). David Chariandy presents a similar argument when he draws attention to the duplicity of Western modernity, which has been capable of undermining old tools of race while adapting equally problematic new ones (273).

There is an agony evident in many of the chapters with regard to the growing and deepening forms of extreme human suffering evident in contemporary Canada. Brodsky captures this anguish when she writes: "it has become shockingly ordinary that people ... have to line up at food banks, beg, steal, sleep in doorways

and on church pews, and sell their bodies to support their children” (136). Denielle Elliot focuses on this street-level angle and shows how even leftist-oriented humanitarian approaches fail to provide “room for the development of a political critique of everyday practices ... that marginalize and stigmatize the urban poor” (193-94). This important insight points to the limits of pursuing progressive transformations built upon conventional policy and political lexicons. Seeking to centre a broader understanding of “labour rights” in the informal spaces that are formally outside the labour market, the chapter by Geraldine Polanco and Cecily Nicholson trains a light on the often invisible facets of power relations operating in family spaces wherein “disposable” (201) women are recruited to work in “precarious labour niches” (200).

Empirically and theoretically this rethinking of J.S. Woodsworth’s legacy makes many significant contributions, but the book would have benefited from a conclusion that had drawn out the nuances of the debates traversing the individual chapters. A concluding synthesis might have identified the book’s overall tendency to rely on conventional binaries – state/society, economics/politics, insider/outsider, and so on – that almost invariably point to official institutions of authority as the locus of power. The chapters that disrupt such dichotomies encourage us to consider how seemingly apolitical processes might actually be key governmental elements of domination and control. Is extreme poverty, for instance, a failure to fully implement a rights agenda or has abject misery been rendered a technical feature of power through which self-actualizing individuals recognize the norms of responsible, entrepreneurial forms

of citizenship? If the latter, then upon what basis can such norms be challenged? This question might lead us to ponder the role of science as a field within which poverty is being redefined. For example, more needs to be known about the political importance of the cancelling of the long-form census, which, along with other national surveys, provided the social scientific data that informed the social state. We need to grasp the governmental salience of the ascendancy of biological experts, and biological determinism, in poverty debates, particularly with respect to the science of child brain development as the intellectual underpinning of new public policies aimed at very young children. This biological orientation to governing points to the wider importance of paying attention to how we understand human and non-human relations and what political opportunities might arise from decentering humans as the exclusive bearers of rights. What political strategies might be imagined if, for example, non-human animals were treated as “companion species” (Haraway 2003) as opposed to property; or, to use McLeod’s words, if we embraced “a more explicit consideration of the earth around us, beyond mere human interest” (262)? By encouraging us to ponder what is at stake in history and the present, this book makes it possible to seriously imagine problems and possibilities that might seem strange. Woodsworth struggled with the strangeness of his times. This volume encourages us all to do the same.

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## *The Beggar’s Garden*

Michael Christie

Toronto: HarperCollins, 2011. 261 pp. \$24.99 cloth.

MARK DIOTTE

*University of British Columbia*

WHEN I FIRST picked up Michael Christie’s collection of short stories, *The Beggar’s Garden*, I worried that it would be an overly romanticized or pitying account of the residents of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. Yet, as I paged through “Emergency Contact,” the opening story of the collection, these fears were quickly put to rest. The author information at the back of the book tells us that Christie once worked in a Vancouver Eastside homeless shelter and “provided outreach to the severely mentally ill” – experiences and knowledge that he clearly and successfully puts to good use. In “Emergency Contact,” Christie could have told a comical story of a woman who was seeking attention from a handsome paramedic and who was condemned and dismissed as ridiculous or unstable. Instead, he represents a series of actions in a woman’s life that reveals the depth of her utter loneliness, desperation, and humanity. This is the strength of Christie’s work: he backs away from moral judgments, caricature, and overly dramatic portrayals, instead opting for straightforward description and leaving judgment to his readers.

In “Discard” a lonely and depressed grandfather glimpses his long-lost grandson in a televised special on homelessness in Vancouver. Christie subverts the predicted rescue narrative, and, ironically, it is the grandfather who finds a sense of redemption on the streets of the city. The most powerful story of the collection is “The Extra.”

Here, Christie reveals the squalor two men are forced to live in at the hands of poverty and a dishonest landlord. The narrator of the story is intellectually delayed due to brain damage that occurred at birth and supports himself through disability assistance. The narrator's description of his roommate Rick conveys a sense of love, friendship, and protection among the two men as they attempt to survive, take care of each other, and get ahead in the world. Yet, ultimately, this story is one of depravity and betrayal, both magnified and assuaged by the knowledge that this betrayal is neither recognized nor understood by the narrator. Christie does a superb job of illustrating the positive connections people make with one another alongside what they are capable of doing to each other.

Christie's collection is comprehensive: there are stories here of the homeless and hospitalized, yet there are also stories of friendship at a dog park, thrift-store ownership, juvenile car-thieves, and the changes that take place through love and marriage. Other than the fact that these stories take place in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, they bear little similarity to one another, and, despite their setting, a sense of place is sometimes lacking. The Downtown Eastside is little more than a backdrop for the characters – both a strength and a weakness of the collection. While Christie is successful in challenging many of the popular stereotypes of the Downtown Eastside, at times I felt at a distance from the stories, and I searched for more emotional depth in the collection, a deeper connection with the characters. Yet, *The Beggar's Garden* is ultimately a successful volume and one that opens a much needed door onto life in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

*Chicken Poop for the Soul: In  
Search of Food Sovereignty*

Kristeva Dowling

Halfmoon Bay, BC: Caitlin Press,  
2011. 256 pp. \$26.95 paper.

KATHERINE DUNSTER  
*Denman Island*

**C**HICKEN POOP for the Soul is, in part, a personal journal documenting Kristeva Dowling's quest to take more control of the food she consumes by spending eighteen months growing, foraging, bartering, hunting, and fishing for enough food to be self-sufficient. It is also an important contribution to the literature on local food and farming. This is not a "how-to" book but, rather, a book that describes the various ways Dowling acquired the practical skills to fill her freezer and pantry with home-grown and processed food. For anyone over the age of fifty, most of these domestic skills are within living memory, having been passed down from grandmother to mother to daughter. For younger generations, new tools and techniques are required, and *Chicken Poop* provides good advice based on practical experience – with a few recipes thrown in for good measure. Postwar prosperity and the popularity of commercially prepared foods led to a decline in the growing and raising of food for personal consumption. This decline is also linked to the growth of urban populations in Canada. In 1931, one in three Canadians lived on a farm (Trant 2008), and people were more connected to the growing and processing of food for home consumption, whether they lived in cities or rural areas. These food-related connections were at the core of every community, as Dowling soon

discovered when she began to farm at her home in Hagensborg in the rural Bella Coola Valley. Dowling's central coast location faces some severe geographical challenges, including isolation from the regular food supply chain and an unusually wet climate.

Though the knowledge about self-provisioning has not been completely lost, at least two generations have had fewer connections to food, other than going to the grocery store to buy it. By 2006 more than 25 million Canadians (80 percent) lived in urban areas, a complete reversal from 1871, when only 19 percent of the population were urban dwellers (Statistics Canada 2006). Rising interest in local food has, however, led to a resurgence of interest in learning or re-learning how to grow, process, stockpile, and cook food. Self-provisioning has recently become a positive cultural trend, along with community gardens, community-shared agriculture, farmers markets, and all things local. Most important, whether in rural areas or inner-urban neighbourhoods, food is again bringing communities and community groups together around this most common human need.

Dowling provides a window through which urban dwellers can view the trials and tribulations of becoming a farmer, and the lifestyle of a newly aspiring ruralista in British Columbia; but the subtitle, "In Search of Food Sovereignty," is perhaps the more important part of *Chicken Poop*. In 2007, at the Forum for Food Sovereignty in Mali, delegates from more than eighty countries adopted the Declaration of Nyéléni, which defines food sovereignty as "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture

systems. It [food sovereignty] puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute, and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations."

In British Columbia, Dowling argues, there is too much federal and provincial bureaucracy, policy, and regulation standing in the way of small farms' being able to actually grow and process food and to participate in their local economy by selling or trading surplus to others. As yet, there is no need to worry about selling your surplus zucchini to strangers because no marketing board has been created to regulate supply and demand, but small farmers in British Columbia involved in creating value-added specialty farm products from such raw materials as meat, dairy, or poultry are required not only to navigate marketing boards and the quota system but also the BC Meat Inspection Regulation of 2004. Consumers wishing to purchase the same value-added specialty foods from their local farmer and move towards food sovereignty are caught in the middle of this regulatory nightmare.

While the 2004 regulation was intended to protect consumers from contaminated food and to protect animal health and welfare, it effectively shut down the small-scale abattoirs and mobile meat-processing facilities that helped small farmers either by coming to their farms to assist with butchering or by being within close travelling distance. And, as we have learned, all the meat inspection and regulation in this country did little to prevent the tragic listeria outbreaks at several large meat-processing plants in Ontario.

As a small farmer on a small Gulf Island, I looked forward to the annual call that the mobile poultry butcher was on his way to the island. The costs

were shared by friends and neighbours, all of whom were in need of butchering services; the day became a chance for members of the small farm community to get together, help each other, and talk. The mobile butcher offered a far more efficient way to handle thirty or fifty chickens than doing it yourself, and it was far easier for the birds than having to endure ferry line-ups and a drive across the Lower Mainland to the nearest meat-processing plant.

Dowling brings all of these issues into the perspective of local food and food sovereignty within the BC agri-food system. Farmers are intimately aware of the policies and regulations affecting their right to farm. Consumers of food, especially consumers partaking of local food, are becoming increasingly politicized as they connect with farmers and realize the need to become more involved in defining and defending their rights to food. *Chicken Poop for the Soul* is a good introduction to the subject of food sovereignty as it relates to both the producer and the consumer.

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### *Seeking Refuge: Birds and Landscapes of the Pacific Flyway*

Robert M. Wilson

Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010. 264 pp. \$35.00 cloth. Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books.

GARY KAISER  
*Victoria*

THE MOST spectacular and accessible wildlife spectacle in British Columbia is the annual arrival of snow geese on Westham Island. For twenty-five years my office overlooked Reifel Refuge, and flocks of snow geese tumbling out of the sky marked the annual onset of winter. I was manager of the migratory bird program for the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the return of the snow geese was a major event. We would literally run outside to see how many young had survived the long flight from their breeding grounds on Wrangel Island off Siberia and begin the annual tally of neck collars. Most of the geese stayed only a few weeks before heading south to national wildlife refuges in the Great Central Valley of California. Once the geese crossed the border, we heard nothing of them until their return in the spring.

From a Canadian point of view, these refuges were almost as exotic and remote as Wrangel Island. At international meetings the managers would willingly discuss details of water entitlement and land ownership but said little of the refuges' value to snow geese and other migrants. The refuges remain a relatively obscure but apparently essential element in the survival of waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway, and Robert Wilson's *Seeking Refuge* offers

an objective and factual description of their tumultuous history.

In spite of its subtitle, this book is not about birds. Pintail and Ruddy Duck make it into the index; Mallard, Teal, Canada Goose, and Ross Goose do not; Snow Goose only appears in reference to a map. Nonetheless, these birds make up the majority of the millions of travellers along the Pacific Flyway, and this book focuses on the social and political geography of its southern terminus, the Central Valley of California. The Atlantic, Mississippi, and Western flyways end in the low-lying coastal wetlands of the Gulf of Mexico. Both areas have been affected by industrial activity for a century and a half, but the gulf coast remains intact, at least in part. The wetlands of the Central Valley, and the Klamath Basin, have disappeared beneath homesteads, irrigation schemes, and artificially constructed habitat. It has become one of the most intensively modified patches of rural habitats in the world, and, in the process, indigenous communities, fish populations, and wintering birds have all suffered. Wilson puts the biological problems within the context of a long history of competing land-use interests, water entitlements, and overlapping mandates of powerful federal agencies. He manages to remain dispassionate, even though many of the management decisions are characterized by greed, ignorance, arrogance, and outright stupidity.

This is a very clearly written book that deals concisely with a hundred years' worth of complex confrontations and conflicts in surprisingly few pages. The story is completed in only five chapters covering 170 pages, but it is supported by an additional forty pages of notes and 322 references to published sources. Although it rarely touches on events in the Canadian portion of the

flyway, it offers useful object lessons regarding the dangers of interfering with fundamental ecological processes.

