

BOOK REVIEWS

*People, Politics, and Child
Welfare in British Columbia*

Leslie T. Foster and Brian
Wharf, editors

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007. 286
pp. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

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THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT book now available on children and public policy in British Columbia. Its contributions by engaged and thoughtful scholar-advocates should be required reading for all Canadians interested in the welfare of children.

The foreword by Deryck Thomson, a distinguished social worker and a founder of the Social Planning Council of British Columbia, sets the agenda with its reminder about the historical foundation of current dilemmas, the egregious treatment of Aboriginal children, the polarized politics of the province, and the centrality of poverty. Co-editor and author of the introduction, Brian Wharf, professor emeritus of Social Work at the University of Victoria, confirms his reputation as the province's leading commentator on

child welfare. Historians in particular will rejoice at his determination, evident throughout the book, to establish a clear chronology of the tragedy that leaves nearly a fifth of the province's kids in poverty at the beginning of the twenty-first century. European colonialism has worked hand-in-hand with the dogma of "residualism" to hold individuals largely accountable for supposedly "private troubles." Public remedies have been undermined by disputes as to whether family support or child protection should be prioritized, recurring administrative confusion, and the temptation of the media and others to scapegoat social workers rather than to confront injustice.

Chapter 1, "Rethinking Child Welfare Reform in British Columbia, 1900-60" by Marilyn Callahan and Christopher Walmsley, provides a critical and fair-minded assessment of British Columbia's early volunteer and professional child-savers, many of whom were women. While much historical scholarship fails to distinguish this group from its adversaries, often in the majority, who resisted using state power to better the lot of the poor, these scholars mount a convincing defence of the courage of social work pioneers. They also conclude that

recurring Eurocentrism meant that “child welfare for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children developed in two separate worlds informed by widely different values” (28), and Aboriginal communities became rightly suspicious and hostile. This call to acknowledge historic strengths and failures is followed by co-editor Leslie T. Foster’s extremely useful “Trends in Child Welfare: What Do the Data Show?” which painstakingly sets out key trends regarding children-in-care (numbers, ages, Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal origins, protection orders, and regional distribution) from the mid-twentieth century on and offers both demographic and non-demographic (often political and bureaucratic) explanations. In Chapter 3, Wharf returns to his longstanding concern with the NDP’s Community Resource Board experiment, “the most ambitious and comprehensive reform of the social services in Canada” (67) during the early 1970s. Its preference for community development over casework, with the latter’s investment in residualism, constitutes a great lost opportunity for British Columbia’s children.

Chapter 4 by Sandra Scarth and Richard Sullivan turns to a much less promising moment, the 1980s, “A Time of Turbulence and Change.” While some advances occurred, notably interministerial cooperation and recognition of sexual abuse and of the value of Aboriginal communities’ controlling Aboriginal child welfare, the restraint program of the Social Credit government, with its preference for private remedies and deep cuts to welfare rates, further injured vulnerable youngsters. Chapter 5, “Witnessing Wild Woman: Resistance and Resilience in Aboriginal Child Welfare” by Maggie Kovachs, Robina Thomas, Monty Montgomery, Jacquie Green, and Leslie Brown, all of whom

have ties to Aboriginal communities, offers familiar reminders of racism and the importance of honouring Aboriginal traditions. The particulars of effective indigenous solutions and the meaning of increasingly urban populations and diverse agendas among elite Aboriginal people receive less attention.

Riley Hern and John Cossom valuably chart unfamiliar terrain in Chapter 6’s consideration of the tenure of Joan Smallwood as NDP minister of social services in the 1990s. Ironically, a moral panic associated with the Gove Commission of Enquiry into the death of Matthew Vaudreuil (1995) compromised the promise of reports by community panels, *Liberating Our Children: Liberating Our Nations* (1992) and *Making Changes: A Place to Start* (1992). In Chapter 7, “Thomas Gove: A Commission of Inquiry Puts Children First and Proposes Community Governance and Integration of Services,” Andrew Armitage and Elaine Murray analyze the Gove commission’s report and conclude that good intentions and a legitimate concern with administrative problems did not compensate for lack of attention to Aboriginal girls and boys and failure to confront root causes. Their summary is followed by Marilyn Callahan and Karen Swift’s fascinating assessment of the 1980s and 1990s trend to “risk assessment,” with its privileging of “standardized approaches” over “discretionary practices” (180) and its disempowering of social workers, who, not surprisingly, are increasingly loath to accept child welfare positions. In Chapter 9, Leslie Foster adeptly takes on the challenge of fairly appraising the provincial Liberals from 2001 to 2006. Once again, devolution to regional and Aboriginal communities was undermined by budget cuts and a media frenzy over the death in care in 2002 of Sherry Charlie, who had been

placed with Aboriginal kith and kin on Vancouver Island. The province with the “biggest single child welfare system in the country and one of the largest on the North American continent” (188) again floundered, although the commitment to Aboriginal governance appears to have survived. Gordon Hogg, the responsible minister during much of this time, like Karen Smallwood before him, emerges rather favourably, but, as the author understands, the road to British Columbia’s present predicament is paved with good intentions. In Chapter 10, the reflections on other jurisdictions by social work scholars from Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia provides an unusual and helpful comparison to British Columbia’s sad stories. Regular restructuring, neoconservative regimes, and moral panics everywhere confront poverty, Aboriginal resistance, and demoralized social workers. As Brian Wharf then observes in “The Case for a Comprehensive Vision for Child Welfare,” the media’s implication in continuing ignorance about the plight of children and the damage wrought by recurring bureaucratic, staff, and political changes have often reduced social workers to “social cops” (228). Poverty and economic disadvantage, always the major causes of children’s vulnerability, remain today, as in the past, largely unaddressed. In Chapter 12, Tony Morrison describes a similarly dispiriting situation in England. Brian Wharf’s “Final Thoughts,” with their indictment of residualism and their endorsement of investment in community development and universal family support, tell us what needs to happen if the province is to be a good place for all its citizens. Three appendices – “Key Events in British Columbia Child Welfare, 1863 to May 2006,” “Key Government Decision Makers in British Columbia

Child Welfare, 1947 to May 2006,” and “Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Service Agencies’ Status, May 2006” – provide invaluable guides.

Voices Rising: Asian Canadian Cultural Activism

Xiaoping Li

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007. 307 pp. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

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THE PUBLICATION OF Xiaoping Li’s *Voices Rising* is a rare literary event, a cause for celebration. Through its analysis of the social and cultural movements of Asian Canada, especially in Vancouver and Toronto, her work signals the dawn of a truly Asian Canadian intellectual presence in the nation. It was not always this way.

For too long, the emergence of a purely Canadian civilization that was postcolonial, postmulticultural, non-European, and assuredly post-seventeenth century has been hampered by the continuing binary debate between English and French settlers and their descendants. Many volumes stressing issues such as French language retention and the division of Canada into “two solitudes” have pointed ad nauseam to this enduring and uniquely “Canadian” process. It was as if Canada without the English-French debate did not have a soul. More significantly, it was as if, in Canada, only the English and French peoples and their cultural traditions mattered. Even when considered within the context of this “binary debate,” these other cultures were usually portrayed as peripheral to the main story.

The intellectual essence and epistemologies of the Arabs, Asians, Africans, Latinos, and First Nations – Canada’s “others” – were relegated to the status of “multicultural” Canadians, especially during the first reign of Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Multicultural status was marked by such exotic practices as strange dancing, drum banging, pungent cooking, wearing colourful costumes, and speaking unintelligible languages: practices that did not convey a normative identity as “Canadian.”

Since being English or French was the standard of excellence in Canada, state endorsement for the arts and cultures was common. The yardstick of legitimacy for all peoples, including Asian Canadians, was measured against the ability to write in fluent English or French and the ability to secure government funding.

Unlike Asian American programs, which evolved from the widespread institutional and intellectual protests that erupted spontaneously in San Francisco and Berkeley in 1969, Asian Canadian studies, as an institutional unit, has never mattered in Canadian universities. It was simply not part of the typical Canadian “binary debate.” Whereas Asian American studies flourished within numerous departments and programs funded both publicly or privately, proponents of Asian Canadian studies are still debating whether programs that dispense Asian Canadian knowledge ought to be known as “Asian Canadian studies,” “Pacific Canada studies,” “diaspora studies,” or “migration studies.”

Yet, even with a paucity of government funding, studies of Asian Canada did come about. For instance, in the 1980s, standard Asian Canadian histories and social science studies, included works by Adachi, Chan, Indra and Buchignani, and Wickberg.

With Xiaoping Li’s *Voices Rising*, the study of Asian Canada has reached a new level of inquiry and analysis. Going beyond the traditional English-French binary debate, it sets new standards of excellence and expands the intellectual conversation about race, power, and gender in Asian Canada. Utilizing a compelling analytical thrust informed by such writers as Antonio Gramsci, Stuart Hall, and Edward Said, Li’s narrative creates a provocative landscape in which one sees the historical beginnings of the social and cultural movements that served to construct and/or recognize a distinctively Asian Canadian identity. That beginning involved social and cultural activists whose roots, for the most part, were in East Asia.

At the heart of the social and political movement whose purpose was to construct an Asian Canadian identity was *The Asianadian: An Asian Canadian Magazine*. Published from 1978 to 1985 and comprising twenty-four issues, it was the only Asian Canadian community journal that adopted an overtly anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-homophobic stance. As writer Kyo Maclear recalled, “I went to the library and found those back issues of *The Asianadian*. It is great because some of the people who wrote for the magazine later became professional writers – pretty established names like Richard Fung and Joy Kogawa. *The Asianadian* introduced a way to articulate a racial identity that was not just about ‘being victimized’” (209). Indeed, it was in the 1980s that a truly Asian Canadian intellectual movement began to emerge. Professor Li states that “a national network was established, connected by conferences, festivals, *Rikka*, *The Asianadian*, *Pender Guy*, friendships, and common goals” (79). Her intricate analysis of *The Asianadian* sets the historical stage

contained in Part 1, "Mapping Asian Canadian Cultural Activism."

Following Part 1, she begins Part 2, "Voices," with a series of provocative interviews with social and cultural activists from the 1970s to the present. It is essential to know the Asian Canadian precedents that gave rise to the vibrant voices of these dancers, filmmakers, journalists, musicians, painters, poets, and writers. During the 1970s, Asian Canadian voices began to emerge. In Japanese Canada, musician Harry Aoki, *Tora* publisher and writer David Fujino, artist Aiko Suzuki, civil rights activist and photographer Tamio Wakayama, and musician and writer Terry Watada began to tell *their* stories. They personified the internment history of Canada and depicted how they, as Japanese Canadians, went beyond simply being victims of a brutal state policy. In Chinese Canada, filmmaker Keith Lock, poet and bassist Sean Gunn, and radio journalist Keeman Wong of *Pender Guy* established a concrete foundation for media and music. Thus, Chinese Canadians began to come to terms with exclusion, the head tax, and the Red scare.

All these artists transcended their own ethnic boundaries to include many other Asian Canadian artists and social commentators. The emergence of this Asian Canadian intellectual sector created, in the two decades that followed, a significant and enduring stage for other artists and activists. The vital twenty interviews in Part 2 of *Voices Rising* demonstrate that Asian Canadians have a compelling intellectual milieu within which they can discover themselves and their place in the world. They establish a cross-section of Asian Canadian performers, artists, writers, and filmmakers who galvanized and gave life to the Asian Canadian social, political, and cultural movement.

What this twenty-first-century book reveals is that Asian Canadian cultural activism has empowered many Asian Canadians within the specific context of being Asian Canadian. In fact, *Voices Rising* tells us that there is a new Asian Canadian persona – one that seeks approval and legitimacy only from within. This is a new civic concept, and it is neither Asian nor Canadian; rather, it is uniquely Asian Canadian. Indeed, this movement has given rise to a confident intelligentsia that will continue to write in the radical mode of Jen Lam, to produce films in the intriguing style of Mina Shum, and to dance with the vigour and creativity of Alvin Erasga Tolentino.

Voices Rising is a remarkable book. It proclaims a new voice in Canada. With a more powerful Asia and its diaspora as a source of inspiration, this unique Asian Canadian intellectual sector ventures beyond Canada's anachronistic multicultural state policy and, even more significantly, beyond the binarism of the English-French debate.

*Canada and Arctic North
America: An Environmental
History*

Graeme Wynn

Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2007.
Nature and Human Society series,
edited by Mark Stoll. 503 pp. Illus.
\$85.00 cloth.

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IN THE THREE DECADES since environmental history burst onto the academic scene in the United States in the early 1970s, the field experienced

impressive growth among American scholars and internationally in arenas such as South Asia, Africa, Europe, and Australia. Yet in Canada, a large nation that was founded on natural resource exploitation and whose economy still relies on primary industries to a great degree, the development of environmental history proceeded at a glacial pace in the 1980s and 1990s. One contributing factor was likely the dismal hiring situation in Canadian universities during this period, a situation that stifled innovation and the development of new subfields in many history departments. As late as 2004, Peter Coates wrote in the pages of *Environment and History* (10, 4:423) that, despite recent signs of enthusiasm for the field, the development of environmental history in Canada “remains a fledgling compared to its American counterpart.”

The publication of Graeme Wynn’s *Canada and Arctic North America: An Environmental History* will do much to challenge Coates’s assertion that environmental history remains underdeveloped in this country. An expansive work that begins with the retreat of the glaciers and ends with a discussion of global trade and technology transfers, Wynn’s book is the first complete narrative history of environmental change in Canada. It draws not only on an extremely rich body of recent and foundational works in Canadian environmental history but also on a vast literature from aligned subfields such as agricultural history, Native history, and historical geography. So vast is the list of works cited that, for many environmental historians, the bibliography alone would be worth the price of the volume.

But this is not simply an uninspired reference work or a textbook. The narrative stands alone as a dazzling

piece of scholarship and storytelling that captures the depth and complexity associated with the history of environmental change in Canada. Here under one cover Wynn accomplishes the monumental task of documenting the most important environmental transformations in Canadian history. He begins twelve millennia ago, with the original colonization of North America, and moves through other epochal moments, such as the advent of European fishing and whaling on the Atlantic coast, the expansion of the fur trade, early settlement in Acadia and the St. Lawrence Valley, and the neotechnic revolution associated with industrialization and urbanization in the twentieth century. Dispersed within the broader historical narrative are chapters devoted to significant resource sectors in Canada, such as mining, fishing, forestry, and energy production. For readers of this journal, British Columbia’s environmental history is amply represented in the chapters that touch on fisheries, forestry, hydroelectric development, and mining. At no time does Wynn sacrifice depth for breadth in his treatment of these diverse themes, and many of the chapters – the ones on energy, northern mining, and trade in particular – break new thematic ground and will serve as foundational statements on their subjects for years to come. Among Canadian environmental historians, Wynn’s work clearly deserves to be regarded not only as our *Sgt. Pepper’s* (for its innovative and original treatment of emerging subfields within the discipline of environmental history) but also as our *White Album* (for its comprehensive overview of diverse themes and idioms within the field).

Canada and Arctic North America is also a hard book to put down. Not only is Wynn’s prose engaging and entertaining (infused, as it is,

with erudite references to everything from author Jane Urquhart's *The Underpainter* to the Canadian film *Margaret's Museum*), but Wynn also manages the remarkable feat of telling a gripping story while at the same time placing the seemingly dry stuff of historical environmental change at the centre of his narrative. He nevertheless avoids the temptation, most vividly represented in Jared Diamond's recent works, to reduce his account of environmental change to a declensionist narrative that foretells inevitable global ecological collapse. Wynn rightly notes that such prophecies of doom not only rely on an oversimplified interpretation of complex human interactions with the natural world but also run the risk of inducing apathy as tales of ecological collapse from the past are interpreted as an unmanageable historical inevitability in the present day. If the results of his approach constitute a somewhat fragmented tale, the book nevertheless holds together under the compelling idea that environmental history might teach us not only about the ecological sins of the past but also about the (admittedly perhaps much rarer) cases in which human communities in Canada have been able to at least begin to address local and, at times, global environmental problems. While this assessment may strike some readers as the overly sanguine view of a specialist in a field devoted to frustratingly complex interpretations of the past, Wynn's volume is broad enough in its appeal to grasp the attention of senior undergraduate students in history, geography, and environmental studies (students in first and second year might balk at the sheer volume of material in the book) as well as that of any general readers who maintain an interest in environmental issues.

Wynn somewhat pessimistically notes near the end of the book that his attempt at a broad synthesis will invite quibbles from readers over the volume's inevitable omissions. Obviously, we would all like to see our own favourite topics covered in a representative work (my own list would include more space devoted to wildlife exploitation and the environmental impacts associated with Canadian military activity). My main criticism of *Canada and Arctic North America* lies, however, with what was included rather than with what was omitted. Indeed, I was never once convinced that an environmental history of Canada should have been lumped in with that of the rest of Arctic North America (i.e., Canada with Alaska tacked on for convenience). The editors of the larger ABC-CLIO series on environmental history (to which this volume belongs) likely adopted this approach in an effort to avoid a stand-alone study of Alaska, a state difficult to lump with the other lower forty-eight, which were subdivided into broad regional studies in other volumes. Although Wynn deftly weaves material on Alaska into the book, it struck me as out of place with the larger narrative, and it raised questions as to why other arguably more important cross-border regional economic and trade linkages between Canada and the United States (i.e., in the Pacific Northwest and in the Great Lakes states and provinces) should not also be examined in the volume.

The uneven relationship between the Alaskan and Canadian material is not enough, however, to tarnish what is a masterful contribution to the growth and development of environmental history in Canada. We finally have a beautifully crafted and far-reaching narrative that accounts for the importance of the natural world in human life through the broad sweep of Canadian history. Wynn's compelling and comprehensive

account of environmental change in Canada's past will serve as a central work in the field for many years, if not many decades, to come.

Rain before Morning

Michael Poole

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing,
2006. 318 pp. \$24.95 paper.

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IN THE SPRING OF 1913, sisters Leah and Elspeth Jamieson, seventeen and eighteen years old, respectively, travel on the Union Steamship *Comox* from Vancouver past Halfmoon Bay and Pender Harbour to their parents' home at Silva Landing. Elspeth hardly figures in the novel that follows, but Leah becomes one of two central figures. The other is Nathan Lockhart, an eighteen-year-old at Silva Landing who falls in love at the first sight of Leah and her thick braid of hair, which swings "in an arc of purest amber. *No, not amber*, he thought, *something darker, like fireweed honey*" (17).

Nathan takes Leah out for a spin in his kicker, a fourteen-footer, and Leah shows herself to be unrestrained by social niceties of conversation. When Nathan asks why her parents sent her to a convent school, she answers: "It's not just about education. We have to be good little Catholics as well. And I really believe Mom feels more comfortable having us locked up. I suspect Dad got her in the family way when she was only sixteen, and she's afraid of a repeat performance." "Family way?" "Where have you been, Nathan? Pregnant, knocked up" (32). Later in the conversation, when Nathan admits that

he was homesick during the few months that he spent in Vancouver, Leah runs the backs of her fingers down his cheek and exclaims, "Balls, Nathan" (33).

Is this how a teenaged girl with a conservative education would speak in 1913 to a young man whom she has just met? Probably nobody can say for sure, and so we suspend our disbelief and read on. A few months later, in the last full summer before war, Nathan and Leah run away in the kicker and spend several weeks sailing along the coast before the provincial police seize Leah and return her to her parents.

The remaining two-thirds of the novel move quickly. War comes. Leah serves as a nurse in France. She is drummed out of the Canadian Army Medical Corps for giving succour to a deserter – "To hell with the army and its rules" (141) – and returns to Silva Landing. Nathan, in the meantime, works in a logging camp until he is injured. His injuries and his pacifism are not enough to exempt him from compulsory military service. Rather than appeal the rejection of his claim to conscientious objection, he and several other men on the run from army service hide in the hills above Silva Landing. Ironically, their life in hiding forces them to live as they would have done in the army: they lug eighty-pound packs; they live in squalid, uncomfortable conditions amidst fear, boredom, and irritation with each other; and they must hunt the police or be hunted by them. (Nathan even shows that he has the makings of an excellent sniper.) Nathan's desire to leave the deserters' camp and see Leah, by now pregnant, trips off the chain of events that bring the novel to a quick and conclusive end.

Rain before Morning deals with issues that do not often figure in novels by British Columbia writers: the First World War, wartime nursing, conscription, shell

shock, desertion, working conditions in logging camps, the postwar influenza outbreak. Unfortunately, the treatment of these issues is uneven. While Poole explores the reasons why some men avoided conscription, he ignores the complex and varied reasons why many more men joined up voluntarily. He touches on the reasons why some men deserted (he shows, rightly, that shell shock was not the only motive) but ignores the fact that, in retrospect, many others regarded their military service as a necessity (horrific for many, exhilarating for some, and for most, just something that they had to get through) and felt angered and cheated by members of the public who spoke of soldiers' service and sacrifice as a waste.

Poole is weak and unconvincing on dialogue but excellent on detail. In a passage on the treatment of shrapnel wounds, he writes: "The radiology units were too much in demand to be used for the routine location of foreign objects. In their place, a powerful electromagnet was passed over the area where a bullet or piece of shrapnel had entered. If the object was electro-sensitive and close to the surface, it would vibrate so violently that one could easily feel it with a hand laid on the skin. Buried deeper, metal produced a bizarre sound, described by some as resembling the distant whistle of a steamboat" (110).

Poole also writes evocatively about landscapes. On Leah's journey by train from Portland to Vancouver in late 1917, many of her fellow passengers are wounded soldiers returning home. Just west of Kenora, where the temperature is minus thirty-eight degrees Fahrenheit, the train stops. "Leah looked out for the station. There was none, not even a shelter beside the track. Across a moonlit field of stumps capped like mushrooms with snow, three log cabins huddled together, the orange light

of oil lamps in their windows. She stepped down into the hard snow, and it squeaked under her boots. Waiting by the train was a sleigh, a mere box on runners, drawn by a woolly horse that stamped its feet and jetted steam from its nostrils. A woman and two men came forward to receive the stretcher, bundled against the cold so that their faces were all but hidden" (152-3).

This small scene, of no great importance in the larger sweep of the novel, is nevertheless one of the most memorable, even haunting, and shows the novel's underused potential. It is a pity, then, that in an earlier passage Poole allows himself to write that Leah's nipples "stood up like raspberries in the cold" (75). It is cheap, sensational prose. His themes and characters deserve better.

*Guarding the Gates: The
Canadian Labour Movement
and Immigration, 1872-1934*

David Goutor

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007.
288 pp. \$85.00 cloth, \$32.95 paper.

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UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRATION is central to understanding Canadian working-class history and the fortunes of the Canadian labour movement. This is the case not just because immigration stocked, and restocked, the labour market but also because workers in Canada were conscious of this process and the huge impact it had on their lives and their ability to confront the challenges of the capitalist economy. Work in the late nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries was especially precarious as the economy boomed and busted, and workers competed with each other in a brutal buyers' market for their labour. Not surprisingly, employers sought to flood the labour market with cheap labour. Workers, in response, attempted to gain a measure of control by forming unions that could regulate entry into a trade; in many cases this seemed to require restricting entry into Canada or, at least, stopping employers from luring workers here on the basis of empty promises of plentiful work at good wages. Canadian workers knew that the facts were otherwise.

David Goutor skilfully explores the meanings and consequences of organized labour's opposition to wholesale recruitment of labour abroad and to different streams of immigration. Not surprisingly, competition and demands for exclusion encouraged racism as some immigrants were deemed to be a particular peril based upon their countries of origin. In particular, Canadian workers constructed notions of very poorly paid Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian workers as being threats to the "civilized standards" of a "white man's country." At the same time though, organized labour exhibited considerable solidarity with other racialized groups, including African Americans and colonized peoples fighting imperialism in their own countries. Demands for exclusion were not necessarily discriminatory. Immigration from Britain was much more numerically significant than was immigration from Asia, and it was responded to quite differently. Canadian unionists worked closely with British trade unions to expose the activities of both business and charitable emigration promoters, collectively recognizing that such schemes led to exploitative conditions for all workers in Canada.

Goutor's most significant contribution is to explore the relationship between labour's attitudes to immigration and its ability to develop as an effective political force. Racism is generally seen by historians such as David Roediger as undermining class consciousness, but British Columbia emerges as an interesting counter-example. The province experienced both vicious anti-Asian racism and a radical labour movement. Goutor notes that the importation of Asians was seen by labour as a capitalist tactic to cheapen labour generally; fighting capitalism was necessary to solve the problem as they had framed it. Similarly, in an era when the single-tax ideas of Henry George had gained massive popularity among reformers, labour could connect the massive land grants to corporations such as the CPR, the iniquitous effects of the protective tariff, and the problem of sponsored immigration. Together they formed a compelling critique of the emergence of corporate capitalism in Canada.

Goutor has effectively placed immigration at the centre of debates within the emerging labour movement – both the craft unions and the Knights of Labor – in the late nineteenth century, noting ways in which partisan differences were refracted through this important issue. His treatment of the subsequent era is, however, not as strong. After 1902, the conservative American-based craft unions managed to monopolize the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada (TLC), constraining the range of debate and isolating the issue of immigration from broader questions of social change. However, it is not really possible to reduce the labour movement to this one stream, and especially not to its relatively small leadership. The broader labour movement in the first three decades of the twentieth century

was particularly diverse as more radical movements emerged, such as the Industrial Workers of the World and the One Big Union. Even the TLC was not as monolithic as Goutor's focus on its leadership suggests; the First World War era saw a flowering of political debate and activism that sometimes carried the leaders along with them. This broader labour movement tended to define class somewhat more broadly, and so an investigation of their attitudes towards immigration would be an important part of the picture. As in the earlier period, this could open a window to both the identity and effectiveness of the broader union movement since questions about the social construction of race and the political capacity of labour are relevant to this period as well. Focusing too narrowly on the TLC and on its small band of leaders can obscure a much broader, and important, debate about how workers viewed those who would come to our shores, and how labour organizations should react. That said, David Goutor has reminded us of the importance organized labour placed upon immigration policy and of the ways in which labour imagined Canada could be built.

*The Seattle Bungalow: People
and Houses, 1900-1940*

Janet Ore

Seattle: University of Washington
Press, 2007. 216 pp. Illus., map.
US\$24.95 paper.

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AS JANET ORE SAYS in the preface to this book, she seeks to overturn many assumptions associated with

the bungalow. First, she wishes to re-examine the universality of its Arts and Crafts credentials and assumed ideology. Second, she aims to demonstrate that, contrary to its purported meaning as a retreat from the modern industrial world, it facilitated a transition to modern consumer society. Finally, she counters the bungalow's elite architectural pedigree with a building genealogy that highlights the role of class and gender in determining values and consumer choice as these related to houses and their locations.

Ore uses a methodology that is attentive to material practices, economic structure, and personal experience. The cross-disciplinary scope of this research is evidenced in the impressive sixteen-page bibliography and an appendix of graphs and tables that provide data on house form, mechanical systems, stylistic categories, construction dates, and the origin and occupation of occupants. Although not copiously illustrated, every map, plan, diagram, and photograph is judiciously chosen. The research is framed by contemporary debates on consumerism, vernacular architectural history, heritage conservation, and gender studies. It combines archival material with oral history, information from the popular and professional presses, on-site investigation, and secondary sources to plot the spatial and temporal aspects of the builder's modest bungalow and its appearance in a specific locale – four north end suburbs of Seattle in the opening decades of the twentieth century. By stitching together her variously themed chapters with constant reference to one house and one family, she brings an ethnographic approach to the study of the modern built environment. Coinciding with consumer demand, sanitation legislation, and developments

in domestic technology and industrial production, the bungalow was, Ore argues, an instrument that allowed those of modest incomes to enter the new consumer economy and to adapt to a modern world that was being shaped by mortgages and debt, proximity to streetcar lines, and economies in construction developed to offset the added costs of new domestic technology like bathroom fixtures, numerous electrical outlets, and central heating. Sellers and buyers of ordinary bungalows, she asserts, “created something new, a landscape of consumerism” (95).

The value of *The Seattle Bungalow* resides in its refocusing attention away from the bungalow’s assumed aesthetic and ideological value to elite culture and, instead, towards the values of people of modest means and modern economic structures. She also makes the pertinent observation that the Arts and Crafts bungalow in Seattle was concerned with self-development, not with criticism of industrial capitalism, marking a profound difference between the United States and the England of William Morris. Arts and Crafts for the middle class in Seattle was “a phase, a therapeutic rather than a challenge to capitalism” (46). Consequently, the relations between aesthetics and class, value and economy, clearly come into view, and they compel a reassessment of what is modern in modern architecture. In this way, Ore’s work amplifies on regionally based studies of the bungalow, as exemplified by Robert Winter’s *The California Bungalow* (1980), with an approach more informed by ethnography and vernacular architecture studies. It is also an approach that refuses to equate vernacular with conservative thinking or nostalgia for the past; Ore’s distinction is that she understands “vernacular” as modern. Where she is

less convincing is where she strays from her subject as neatly circumscribed by case studies and physical evidence into a more speculative realm: the concluding chapter on the legacy of the bungalow draws rather large conclusions from meagre data. Whether the result of methodology or vernacular focus, *The Seattle Bungalow* cannot capture the larger spatial, temporal, and economic context of the subject. For this context one might consult Anthony King’s path-breaking *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (1984). Likewise, stretching the definition of the bungalow to include Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and four-square houses needed greater justification and was perhaps a missed opportunity for a more nuanced understanding of consumer choices. But Ore does offer the understanding that the bungalow must be read in multiple contexts and that attention must be given to changes in its use and purpose according to space and time, and this insight could be profitably followed in researching the rich bungalow landscape of Vancouver and other cities in British Columbia. In addition, Ore provides a glimpse into a way in which suburbia, especially the inner city streetcar suburbs that constitute her modern landscape, might be understood.



*The Culture of Flushing:
A Social and Legal History
of Sewage*

Jamie Benidickson

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007.
432 pp. Illus. \$85.00 cloth.

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IN A SMALL, UNBUILT PARCEL of land in East Vancouver surrounded by houses, streets, and Tyee Elementary school, a grassy gulch takes the shape, on closer inspection, of a thin, winding creek bed. At the south end of the lot – known to neighbourhood residents as “Gibby’s Field” – a ghostly streamlet emerges from a culvert out of a steep bank and wends its way northward, downslope towards the ocean. As it meets 18th Avenue, it enters a wide-mouthed, grated structure built into the side hill and supported with masonry. Crouch down there. You can hear, perhaps faintly above the roar of traffic on Knight Street half a block away, the rush of creek water below. Here, amidst the pavement and houses of East Vancouver, a remnant of the former landscape sings out from the cast concrete channel of its former life. Now incorporated into the city’s sewerage and drainage system, something of “Gibson Creek” yet remains: a subtle reminder of the intersections of nature and the built environment of the city and, in particular, of the complex flows and management of water that enable modern, urban life.

These intimate connections are explored on a rather grander scale by legal historian Jamie Benidickson in his illuminating and engaging new book, *The Culture of Flushing*. Part of

the UBC Press Nature/History/Society series, the book examines the legal and physical “enclosure” of waterways into systems of urban and industrial waste disposal. As Benidickson illustrates, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the ability to “usefully” impair water quality (up to a certain point) through waste disposal became regarded as a kind of resource use in its own right, albeit one that constantly threatened to infringe on other rights and uses of water (such as drinking) that were dependent upon its relative purity.

In twelve short, detail-packed chapters, Benidickson’s book artfully combines legal, environmental, and political history perspectives in a sweeping survey of waste disposal and water law in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada during the rise of urbanization and industrialization in these countries. His contention is that a “culture of flushing” emerged during this period out of the gradual codification and sanction of the traditional use of waterways for the disposal of domestic and industrial wastes. In spite of their ever-growing volume and their changing composition, these effluents were permitted to flow into creeks, streams, and ocean waters on the basis of legal and institutional assumptions about the proper use of water and the rights of stream users and occupants (“riparians”). Rapidly changing and uncertain scientific understandings of water pollution further complicated debates over the use and abuse of natural waterways by growing urban and industrial centres on either side of the Atlantic.

The result, asserts Benidickson, was the general decline of water quality and widespread damage to aquatic ecosystems during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Overall, natural waterways “were sacrificed to waste

through ignorance of the consequences and through misunderstanding and delusion about self-purification and the apparent infinity of the oceans” (327). For humans, declining water quality could be fatal as the increasing reliance on natural streams for the disposal of domestic wastes threatened municipal water supplies with disease-causing microorganisms. The responses of the public, policy makers, and lawyers to these problems reflected local and national conditions and trends but, overall, tended to privilege the principles of economic growth and “efficiency” over those of conservation and environmental protection. The “culture of flushing,” Benidickson maintains, remains deeply inscribed in the institutions and values that shape contemporary water law and policy, compromising the protection of the environmental systems upon which society depends.

Tracing these developments across three countries inevitably necessitates a shifting lens to capture both local examples of these impacts and general trends across national and international scales. Benidickson skilfully moves from, for example, case studies of Manchester or Toronto or Chicago to consider broad developments in common law and national policies on water and waste. The international dimensions of law, science, and policy are a welcome addition to the literature on water and waste, which tends to focus on local and national scales. The inevitable selectivity in cases, however, means that the diversity of local and regional environmental problems within each country remains somewhat obscure; for instance, in Canada, Toronto – and, to a lesser extent, Montreal and Ottawa – largely stands for national trends in sewerage and pollution problems.

Though there is little reference to British Columbia in these pages, Benidickson’s book will be of interest to observers of debates over water supply and water quality in that province. Something like the “culture of flushing” deeply influenced sewerage practices and water pollution laws in British Columbia, much as they did elsewhere in the English-speaking world in the early to mid-twentieth century. For those more generally interested in how legal regimes and public policy have shaped both practices and attitudes towards nature, Benidickson’s work will be a standard reference.

*“Call Me Hank”: A Stó:lō Man’s
Reflections on Logging,
Living, and Growing Old*

Keith Thor Carlson and
Kristina Fagan, editors

Toronto: University of Toronto
Press, 2006. 144 pp. Illus., map.
\$60.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

RICHARD A. RAJALA
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OLD LOGGERS LOVE TO TELL STORIES, but few find their way onto paper. We are fortunate indeed, then, that in 1969 linguist Wyn Roberts visited Henry Pennier at his home near Mission and asked the sixty-five-year-old to take part in a study of the Halq’emeylem language. Pennier agreed, but Roberts soon discovered that he “was not going to get old Indian stories from Hank Pennier” (xlii). Instead, Hank penned a selection of memories, along with a few traditional Stó:lō stories, that came into print in 1972 under the title *Chiefly Indian: The Warm and Witty Story of a British Columbia Half Breed Logger*.

Now, thanks to editors Keith Thor Carlson and Kristina Fagan, we have a second chance to consider the significance of Pennier's life as "what the white man calls a half breed" in British Columbia during the twentieth century (3). There's plenty of warmth and wit here, but this is also a story of struggle in a "complicated world," travelled as one "not white and not Indian but we look Indian and everybody except Indians takes us for Indian" (4). As the editors put it in their introduction, Hank brought his own unique perspective as coastal logger and member of the Stó:lō community to "issues of race, culture, identity, masculinity, politics, labour, technology, and aging" in a provocative series of reflections (xv). My task in reviewing the book is complicated by the editors' fine introduction, which left me little to add in the way of scholarly analysis. Most readers of *BC Studies* will have read neither edition, however, and my solution is to explain why they should by emphasizing the themes that command attention from labour and environmental historians.

Hank's account of his youth introduces the theme of labour early on. In 1919, at age fifteen, his "growing up kid days" came to an end. Without access to federal support "there was only one thing to do, keep moving and find some work" (19-20). The 1920s saw Pennier gain experience logging in the Harrison Lake region. Married in 1924, he offers only scattered insights into domestic life, but wife Margaret contributed to the family economy by picking hops during summers.

Working six days a week as a choker-erman, Pennier made good money during the latter 1920s despite winter shutdowns. "But boy oh boy logging was a tough and rough game," he asserts. "You had to work or else. If you were a little slow getting to those chokers the

hooker would holler at you, don't run, fly" (36). With "big logs flying around" and "log hungry" foremen pushing men and machinery hard, casualties were inevitable: "Nothing mattered just so long as they got the logs out" (36). That pressure helps explain high transiency among loggers, but, while not one of the "camp inspectors" who frequently left for periods of relaxation in Vancouver, Pennier understood well the industry's power relations. Quitting was an assertion of independence, "but you had to be a good worker to get away with this" (36).

By 1930 Hank had developed just such a reputation, and this was a decisive factor in his ability to withstand the Great Depression. Always managing to find work (a challenge that took him to camps on Ramsay Arm and Vancouver Island), hunting deer to cut food costs, and "watching every penny for the next winter," he takes considerable pride in avoiding relief through rugged self-reliance (51). Earning "a fair day's wages for a good day's work" throughout the decade, Hank reflects on woods unionization with some misgivings. Perhaps, he muses, in criticizing the soft life of union bureaucrats and the acquisitiveness of modern workers, "they all should a been born half-breeds then they would know how to work hard to make their way and stay ahead and be better than another guy" (54-5).

Healthy markets and tenure policies geared to satisfy the fibre demands of large, integrated firms provided coastal loggers with greater stability during the postwar boom. Pennier, however, suffered a series of injuries that forced an early retirement in 1959. Despite his disabilities Hank had no regrets over a life in the woods that forged a masculinity founded upon the dignity of hard, outdoor labour. "The work is never the same like say in a factory," he

explains, “it’s a man’s work and is risky” (58). Moreover, hard-earned physical and conceptual skill could override attitudes and policies that placed “half breeds” at a disadvantage relative to both non-Natives and status Indians. “An Indian can feel as good as the next guy,” Hank reflects, but better yet, “with me as a halfbreed which is neither one nor the other,” logging provided opportunity to anyone willing to “put in an extra effort” (58).

Pennier’s thoughts on the relationship between men, machines, and the forest are well worth considering. Contrasting sophisticated, modern equipment to the simpler steam technology of his era, he regrets the passing of a more intimate connection to nature. “Where’s the chance for a guy to get in there into the jungle with just his muscle and his brains and slug it out with a tough opponent?” he asks (59). As a Stó:lō logger, Hank believed that trees represented more than commodities; their spirit demanded respect in putting nature to human use. Modern technology had disrupted a relationship of honourable competition: “I can’t see how a logger can have much respect anymore,” Hank observes (60).

As his injuries took their toll, Pennier’s frustration at the indignity of being forced to accept less demanding work culminated in a final, short stint filling potholes, an intolerable blow to the pride of a man who had risen to the top of logging’s occupational hierarchy. “What the hell was I Hank Pennier doing shovelling a shovel for God’s sake!” (73). But he lost neither his dignity nor his sense of humour. His was a life well lived, and we are lucky to have a fresh opportunity to explore its meanings. Well-chosen images, explanatory notes, a glossary of logging terms, and a list of relevant sources enhance the text. Also included

are a transcript of a 1972 interview with Hank and a biographical sketch of his grandfather, George John Perrier. “Way back in the big trees doing a man’s work, I wasn’t a halfbreed, I was just good old Hank,” the author reflects, but readers will finish this book with many complex issues to ponder (86).

*The Letters of Margaret Butcher:
Missionary–Imperialism
on the North Pacific Coast*

Mary-Ellen Kelm, editor

Calgary: University of Calgary
Press, 2006. 300 pp. Illus., map.
\$29.95 paper.

JACQUELINE GRESKO
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AS A STUDY OF MISSIONARY-Imperialism, Mary-Ellen Kelm’s edition of the letters Margaret Butcher wrote from Kitamaat between 1916 and 1919 makes an important contribution to historical conversations about the Haisla, missionaries, and residential schools in British Columbia. Kelm introduces Margaret Butcher as a forty-six-year-old Englishwoman, a nurse, who came to British Columbia to join her married sister in 1914. Butcher’s temporary work with the Methodist mission to Japanese immigrants at Steveston helped her obtain a paid post as nurse and teacher at the Elizabeth Long Memorial Home in the Haisla community of Kitamaat. The Haisla, like their neighbours the Tsimshian, had survived the challenges brought by settlers, industrialists, epidemic diseases, missionaries, and Indian agents. By 1916, when Margaret Butcher arrived, the Haisla “retained much of their social structure.” Her letters,

intended for family and friends, “serve as a remarkable ethnographic record” of the Haisla (xxvi-xxvii).

Although Christianity had been brought to Kitamaat by Native converts in the 1870s, Canadian Methodists dominated the mission effort in the next decades. The men got the credit for establishing the church, boarding home, and day school. The government paid the salary of the day schoolteacher who taught the younger children. The Canadian Woman’s Missionary Society funded the construction of the Elizabeth Long Memorial Home and selected and paid its women teachers and nurses. The home served as a domestic education centre for the dozen older girls and as a dormitory for all three dozen pupils. The absence of a resident minister at Kitamaat meant that the women workers took Sunday services, did parish work for the Haisla and nearby settlers, and tended to building maintenance. Isolation, hard labour, and depression led to high turnover rates among the women mission workers. They “keenly felt” the deaths of Haisla students from tuberculosis, and the community-wide deaths from Spanish influenza added to their distress. Butcher, who had spoken of making a career of mission work, turned down a promotion from sewing teacher to matron of the home. She had “lost hope” (xxix), leaving Kitamaat and the missions once her term was done.

In a historiographical conclusion, Kelm sets Margaret Butcher’s letters within the frame of missionary imperialism. She discusses their “accounting of residential school life” and their presentation of “the ways in which people – Haisla, settlers, missionaries and government agents – were racialized” (218). Kelm contends that, although criticisms of residential schools and their assimilative goals,

harsh discipline, poor health conditions, and racist staff were applicable to the Elizabeth Long Memorial Home during Margaret Butcher’s 1916–19 term, her letters “paint a complex picture of residential school life” (217). “The distinction between the world of the mission, the world of the settlers and the world of the Haisla was not always clear. The children moved back and forth between the village and the school,” and so did the mission workers (243). When Haisla parents returned to the village from seasonal jobs, they arranged with the matron to take their children home. When missionaries and their pupils attended Christian Haisla weddings and funerals, they witnessed festivities that incorporated elements of the potlatch, which the missionaries had campaigned to outlaw.

Kelm argues that Margaret Butcher’s letters have value not only as ethnography but also as works that provide insight into how residential schools developed as assimilative institutions; that is, into how the process of racialization unfolded and how Butcher’s gender, class, and English background contributed to it. I would argue that the conversation Kelm has begun in *The Letters of Margaret Butcher* should be continued. Her book should be compared with other missionary ethnographies, such as Jan Hare and Jean Barman’s *Good Intentions Gone Awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission on the Northwest Coast*. Such analysis would indicate how the orphanage/refuge model influenced Canadian women working in residential schools in British Columbia, as it did their sisters who were serving in immigrant missions in Toronto or Montreal – and as it did European women who were working to “make empire respectable” in Asian and Indian institutions whose purpose was “to prevent ‘neglect and degeneracy’” and

to create “patriotic loyalty” to European culture.¹

*Philip Timms' Vancouver:
1900-1910*

Fred Thirkell and Bob Scullion

Vancouver: Heritage House, 2006.
192 pp. Illus. \$39.95 cloth.

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I FIRST MET FRED THIRKELL in the late 1970s when I ran an antique store in North Vancouver. Fred was a postcard collector, and we played the familiar dance between buyer and seller in the used goods trade for several years. Fred Thirkell's impressive postcard collection, along with that of fellow collector Bob Scullion, has been turned into seven published monographs for Heritage House, the most recent being *Philip Timms' Vancouver: 1900-1910*. The culture of collection shapes the organization and content of this book and, indeed, of all the Thirkell-Scullion books; these are essentially published displays of the best of the postcard collections divided into topical chapters with accompanying contextual descriptions for each photograph. Any entry into the history of Vancouver and its surroundings is worthwhile, and certainly the Thirkell-Scullion texts, three of which have won City of Vancouver Heritage Awards, are informative and entertaining.

In the Timms text we are given a short introduction to the life and work of photographer and printer Philip Timms, where we learn of his struggle to establish his trade, his professional dependence on older brother Art, and his wide range of personal interests, which included accomplishments as a musician – he performed publicly on both string and brass instruments – and an energetic pursuit of natural and local history. Early on, Timms quite deliberately set out to capture “the city's vista” and “produce a photographic record of Vancouver and its neighbouring municipalities in the opening years of the 20th century” (7). Thirkell and Scullion suggest that, therefore, the documentarian in Timms determined the character of his photographs; Timms was driven to record in photographic images the physical structures, buildings, streets, and factories, as well as “pictures of people at play, at home and at work,” before these were “all swept away.”

The body of the book, as with all Thirkell and Scullion texts, is separated into an eclectic two dozen or so chapters, some based on regional communities or specific locations, with titles such as “Barnet,” “The Royal City,” and “Hastings Street,” while others are based on events, activities, socio-economic sectors, or institutions, with titles such as “The CPR Comes to Vancouver,” “The Provincial Exhibition,” and “Schools and More Schools.” The authors begin each chapter with a short introduction that situates the photographic subject within a historical context, and then anywhere from eight to fifteen images are exhibited, with short annotations for each. It is hard not to find personal favourites here. I found the chapters on downtown city life and photographs of people caught in motion especially

¹ Ann Laura Stoler, “Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-century Colonial Cultures,” *American Ethnologist*, 16-4 (1989): 634-660.

captivating – take the series on Hastings Street shopping, where Timms’ camera captured men and women in mid-moment, sometimes mid-conversation, along the busy street in the midst of their lives during a summer Saturday before the war. Some of these views will be familiar – the well-known photograph entitled “Our First Line of Defence,” which depicts an exuberant line of young boys riding the cannon outside the Beatty Street Drill Hall, still has a classic irony – but most others are new, fresh, and unfamiliar, offering evidence to the fundamental prewar zeitgeist, while also encouraging the viewer to discover the incidental and the accidental.

If these 170 photographs are representative of Timms’ work – he took over 3,000 photographs, of which over 1,200 were made into postcards, and of which the collectors have recovered around 800 – then the buildings, factories, streets, boats, and vehicles appear as important, if not more important, to Timms as they were to the people who used them. Certainly the postcard genre explains this focus on structures: in many of the views the buildings, ships, or other structures are the main subjects; people often adorn the scenes like skirting around an exhibit table. A collectors’ collection, *Philip Timms’ Vancouver: 1900-1910* is a work of public history, and for this reason some academic readers may find his pictures important but the text sometimes shallow. Even with its biographical focus, the book makes no real central point about Timms’ body of work, and its scattered approach to organization only reinforces this fact. The anecdotes that accompany the photographs are always useful, often intriguing, and reflect an enthusiasm for research, but they are left as just that: anecdotes. In keeping with the collectors’ impulse to

defend the integrity of the collection, the authors also avoid any substantive critical analysis of the work. They raise no critical questions about the subject choices made by Timms, whose work fits quite comfortably within the city’s middle-class promotional prewar engine. When we do encounter images that don’t promote regional industrial enterprise, the work and leisure of the city’s entrepreneurial class, or the bricks and mortar that were its legacy, their uniqueness is left largely unexplored.

Also missing is any analysis of the photographs as *images*. Thirkell and Scullion see their role as providing historical background for the objects in the photographs; however, analysis should consist of more than simply enlarging on the historical content in the frame: photographs, even documentary images, also have constructed meanings. And it is not as though good recent examinations of Vancouver documentary photographs do not exist. Two exhibits of Vancouver street photography, the 2003 Presentation House show “Unfinished Business: Photographing Vancouver Streets, 1955 to 1985” and the eye-popping Fred Hertzog exhibit at the Vancouver Art Gallery just this year, have produced excellent written commentaries that delve deeply into the meaning of Vancouver street scenes in the post-Second World War period. From the 2003 publication, Bill Jeffries reminds us how the meanings, and even the perceived value, of such photographs shift over time. There’s also the persistent tension that exists between the act of documentation and the aesthetic intent of the photographer. These understandings were acknowledged by the turn of the century; the practice of documentary street photography had exploded across the urbanizing world and was already raising important compositional

questions about the relationship between buildings, people, movement/stasis, and the urban transformation of the environment. Timms clearly put much care and thought into his photographs, making choices regarding subject, perspective, lighting, timing, and framing. A deeper explanation of these compositional elements and how they were informed by, and perhaps even informed, the historical context could have been attempted here.

Criticisms of the text aside, the Thirkell and Scullion series can be used very successfully in undergraduate history courses as accessible visual entrances into a host of social and cultural history topics. I've used an earlier Thirkell and Scullion text, *Vancouver and Beyond: During the Golden Age of Postcards, 1900-1914* (2000) both in a lower-level survey and in an upper-level public history course. In the former, first-year students wrote historical analyses of three chapters, of their own choosing, that used images to draw out elements of historical consciousness. In the public history class, the Thirkell and Scullion text was examined as an example of popular print history; in their written assignments, students used the text to identify the different goals, ideals, and practices between popular print history and the histories produced by academic professionals. In both cases, the Thirkell and Scullion text proved to be an excellent, accessible learning tool. With its tighter human focus, *Philip Timms' Vancouver: 1900-1910* could also be used with great success.



*Sakura in the Land of the
Maple Leaf: Japanese Cultural
Traditions in Canada*

Ban Seng Hoe, editor

Gatineau: Canadian Museum of
Civilization, 2007. 216 pp. Illus.
\$39.95 paper.

MICHIKO MIDGE AYUKAWA
Victoria

THIS BOOK, EDITED by the curator of Asian studies at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec, is a worthy publication. It is a compilation of three research projects conducted in 1976-77 for the Asian and Middle Eastern Program of the National Museum of Man (the present Canadian Museum of Civilization). The late Carlo Caldarola (1928-81), Mitsuru Shimpo, and K. Victor Ujimoto were assigned southern Alberta, Greater Vancouver (primarily the fishing community of Steveston), and Metro Toronto, respectively. The general subject was the retention and transmission of Japanese culture in these regions. It is difficult to surmise what directions researchers were given, but they were clearly not as strictly laid out as they were by Paul Robert Margosi in the *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* (University of Toronto Press, 1999), in which I participated. Although the editor states in his introduction that he condensed researchers' works to avoid repetition, the problem lies in the differences rather than the similarities. Caldarola discusses Buddhism at great length, while Shimpo writes extensively about the language, behaviour, and lifestyle of the Steveston fishers. Ujimoto, on the other hand, gives even coverage to the many aspects of culture transmission.

Caldarola provides a short but excellent background for the two groups of Japanese who lived in Alberta – the original settlers who arrived in the early 1900s and the 1942 relocatees from British Columbia. Calderola may already have been familiar with and also attended a number of Japanese community events in southern Alberta. He closely observed the transmission of Japanese culture through Buddhist rites, Japanese gardens (in particular the Lethbridge Nikka Yuko Garden [Japan-Canada Friendship Garden] created to commemorate Canada's centennial in 1967), Japanese arts, fortune gods, folk tales, poetry, medicine, proverbs, music, and musical instruments. He gives a number of examples of children's folk tales that are especially complete (unlike the abbreviated versions being transmitted in Toronto, as noted by Ujimoto).

What is regretful is that some quite obvious errors have not been corrected, such as Caldarola's statement that JCCA stands for Japanese Canadian Community Association (9). At the time of his research, the JCCA was the Japanese Canadian Citizens Association, which was the precursor of the NAJC, the National Association of Japanese Canadians, which was organized in the struggle for redress. The JCCA was a national organization with branches in many communities across Canada, but its influence and the extent of its community participation varied. Another error is Caldarola's translation of *fuki* as "Japanese green beans" (54). *Fuki* may be a vegetable unique to Japanese cuisine. It is said to be coltsfoot or bog rhubarb. Indeed, the plant resembles rhubarb and, like that plant, comes up every year once it is well established. It tends to spread. In fact, there is to this day an extensive bed in the former Japanese relocation centre of

Popoff. It ranges from the Slovan River to the old highway to Slovan City.

Caldarola's discussion of the Buddhist churches in Alberta was especially interesting. He brings to light an inner struggle rarely publicly discussed. He is, however, inconsistent. He says that "the first Japanese minister, Buddhist or Christian did not come to Alberta until the time of relocation in 1942" (7). Later he states that the first Buddhist congregation was formed in Raymond in 1929 and that Reverend Shinzo Nagatomi was sent out the following year from "the sect's headquarters at the Nishihonganji Temple in Kyoto" (11). Another minister, Reverend Yutatsu Kawamura, arrived in 1934.

Mitsuru Shimpo, author of the second part of the book, which deals with the Greater Vancouver area, is a Japanese sociologist who carried out extensive research in the 1960s and 1970s on Japanese society in that region. Although he had difficulty understanding the Japanese-Canadian spoken language and at times mocked the "uneducated writings" of the pioneers, he did record important data at a time when few others were interested in the past experiences of Japanese Canadians. He was preceded in the 1950s by a number of other scholars from Japan who studied the postwar Japanese-Canadian inhabitants around Steveston.

Steveston had been populated for decades by Japanese fishers and their families. Most were from Wakayama prefecture, in particular, Mio village. They spoke a dialect that was almost incomprehensible to other Japanese. Unlike other relocatees, who, by April 1949, when the Japanese were allowed back to the west coast, were well settled in the eastern provinces and chose to remain there, 65 percent of the fishers were lured back to their former

occupation by their love of the sea. The canneries to which they had been under contract before the Second World War offered to rent them boats and to give them good monetary returns. These returnees no longer lived in the squalid company houses of the prewar era but, rather, in the general area. The Issei (the immigrant generation) remained in close contact with each other, retained their language and old customs, and transmitted them to their children and grandchildren. Shimpo discusses the dialect, folklore, and degree of retention of the old customs.

It is unfortunate, however, that there are a number of errors both in Japanese spelling and in English, and in information. Some examples: in discussing the writings of Yasutaro Yamaga and his reference to the PTA, Shimpo calls it the Physical Training Association (102). There is no question that Yamaga was referring to the Parent Teacher Association. Shimpo also refers to Hastings Park in 1942 as the "Man-Pool Centre." Forrest E. La Violette (*The Canadian Japanese and World War II*, University of Toronto Press, 1948) called it the Manning Pool, as we all did. The dimensions of the "shacks" that were built for the families in the BC interior are also incorrect. Rather disturbing language is used in reference to the four thousand "repatriates" who left Canada in 1946. Many Japanese Canadians will be appalled at this section of the report. These errors could have all been avoided by having a Nisei (second generation, i.e. Canadian-born children of the immigrants) read over Shimpo's work.

His description of "shingle" cutting also shows that he understood neither the process nor the Japanese-Canadian pronunciation of English terms. Many of his anecdotes are from material stored in the University of British Columbia

Library's Special Collections. In particular, he draws extensively from the memoirs of a Japanese pioneer woman. But he has clearly misunderstood or misrepresented some passages as what he has written does not agree with what she wrote. It is difficult to understand why Shimpo states that a fellow Japanese man was responsible for causing the addiction of the woman's husband to Chinese gambling (illegal games of chance involving guessing letters, number of objects, bingo, and so on run by Chinese) (123) or to know where he read that the female boarding house owner had expected her to give sexual favours to the white roomers (107).

Victor Ujimoto's contribution to this project avoids the disturbing errors contained in the other two sections. Ujimoto is an active and knowledgeable member of the Japanese-Canadian community. His general observation is that, since the Japanese community in Metro Toronto consisted of people who had been displaced and scattered throughout the area, there is a lack of oral tradition. The former communities in company towns and on Powell Street in Vancouver, where Japanese people were in daily contact with each other, no longer exist. In the Toronto area, those who wished to participate in social and cultural activities went to the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre and the Toronto Buddhist Church. Classes in Japanese martial arts, poetry writing, storytelling, flower arranging, the tea ceremony, Japanese dancing, doll making, and brush painting, as well as many community celebrations, were offered at these two centres. Ujimoto reproduces a fine collection of Japanese traditional poetry as well as Western-style poetry that was written by their members. He also retells a few folk tales he heard there, deploring the fact

that they had been abbreviated and thus lacked many interesting details. I found the art of Japanese brush painting as explained by Ruth Yamada, a Nisei who studied in Japan and passed on her knowledge in classes at the jccc, especially interesting.

Despite the number of misprints and errors, and the unevenness of the three parts that comprise this volume, as Ban Seng Hoe states, it is a “snapshot in time” and describes a society in transition. We must appreciate the effort that was made to record this now lost period in the history of Japanese immigrants and their descendants. However, it is unfortunate that it was not edited more carefully, both for English usage and for factual information.

Thompson's Highway: British Columbia's Fur Trade, 1800-1850

Alan Twigg

Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 2006.
251 pp. Illus. \$29.95 paper.

BRUCE WATSON
Vancouver

THROUGH HIS PUBLICATION *BC Book World*, Alan Twigg has contributed enormously to generating interest in BC literature. As well as drawing attention to BC writers, Twigg has also published his own work, of which *Thompson's Highway* is his latest (and twelfth) book. It is divided into three sections: an introductory overview under the title “Forts and Furs,” a biographical section under “People,” and an appendix that lists fifty forts. A bibliography of primary and secondary sources follows. There is no index. To capture the reader's attention at the outset, Twigg

wryly suggests that the name “Scottish Columbia” is appropriate for an area, now largely part of British Columbia, that was dominated by Scottish traders. His narrative follows six leading fur traders, five of whom were of Scottish descent: George Simpson, James Douglas, John McLoughlin, Simon Fraser, and Alexander Mackenzie. Also included are twenty-nine biographies of Europeans and North Americans connected to the fur trade, among them six artists and scientists, nine largely maritime fur traders, thirteen land-based fur traders working in New Caledonia, and one female missionary.

Such an ambitious range of material is difficult to explore adequately in 250 pages, even for a popular audience. First, the fur trade west of the Rockies was enormously complex, ranging from the emergence of the maritime fur trade in the late eighteenth century to its land-based cousin, operating under many companies and partnerships, in the nineteenth century, not to mention a large diversity of employees. Twigg has chosen a simplified, popular approach to the subject and cheekily suggests the possibility of a Hollywood blockbuster. This perspective might give readers new to the subject of the fur trade a skewed view of its tremendous racial, national, and ethnic complexity, particularly with regard to the land-based fur trade. Even though the book is meant for a popular readership, and the use of numerous quotations does help to anchor the material, some aspects of the subject cry out for source references. References to “rampages that were sanctioned by the HBC” and the statement that “Peter Skene Ogden reputedly volunteered to eradicate all Aboriginal males from the Snake country” leave the reader wanting some contextual framework.

The challenges of tackling such a widespread subject in a popular form

are many. For example, the restrictive geographical and temporal aspects of the subtitle *British Columbia's Fur Trade, 1800-1850* is problematic as the larger Pacific Northwest on both sides of the 1846 international border functioned to outsiders as one geopolitical unit from the maritime fur trade onward. To complicate matters, the continuous Thompson's Highway referred to by Twigg is essentially the Columbia-Kootenay River drainage system, which was severed by the drawing of the border. Further north, however, the amorphous borders of New Caledonia do make logical the inclusion of the plains of northeastern British Columbia, with their even earlier fur-trading dates.

As a popular book, *Thompson's Highway* usefully introduces readers

to a new topic, aiding them with its extensive bibliography. However, in deference to that readership, which is today as diverse as the fur trade ever was and several generations removed from colonial British Columbia, a wider choice of biographies would have reflected more fully the nature of both the maritime and land-based fur trade systems. The author has carefully included useful visual material, but a map showing the locations of the fifty forts listed in the appendix would have been helpful. As well, several historical errors have to be addressed if the book is to be reprinted. In short, for the uninitiated there is much useful material here, but a sharper focus on one aspect of this very complex subject might have made the book more useful and readable.