

## BOOK REVIEWS

---

*States of Nature:  
Conserving Canada's Wildlife  
in the Twentieth Century*

Tina Loo

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006. 320 pp.  
Illus. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

BILL PARENTEAU  
*University of New Brunswick*

THE PUBLICATION of Tina Loo's *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* marks the coming of age of the field of Canadian environmental history. In some respects, this statement may seem over the top, as Canadian historians, particularly those writing in the political economy tradition, have seen the environment as central to the economic and political development of the nation for almost a century. Although historians outside of Canada have expended considerable effort to define the antecedents and parameters of the field, especially in the United States, Canadian historiography has been all but ignored. Thus, it would perhaps be more appropriate to state that *States of Nature* is a monograph of major international significance on a

topic that is central to current trends in the rapidly expanding field of environmental history. It is a sweeping, imaginative, and elegantly written study that will change how historians in Canada and beyond understand the formation of wildlife management, the construction of wilderness values, and the human-animal relationship in the twentieth century.

Chapters 1 and 2, on wildlife management to 1945 and the processes of exclusion and colonization that were central features of late nineteenth-century wildlife management, are the least satisfying parts of *States of Nature*. The first chapter traces the evolution of state wildlife management laws from mediaeval England to the end of the Second World War, focusing on the influence of progressivism and anti-modernism. As others have noted, these dual influences produced a regime that favoured recreational over commercial and subsistence hunting. In the second chapter, Loo concentrates on the class- and race-based conflicts produced by these exclusionary policies, particularly as they were applied to the rural poor and First Nations. The chapters are well-organized and well-written. However, these are very large topics, and the space given to them does not allow much

room for examining variations and the sometimes significant differences in the dates of implementation of specific regulations between jurisdictions. To cite one example, Loo states that wildlife conservation regulations were “fragmentary and uncoordinated” until the end of the nineteenth century. This may be true for some parts of Canada, but not for the Maritimes and Quebec, where pressure from the sporting fraternity, tourism promoters, and their allies in provincial fish and game commissions produced the essential elements of modern fish and game management in the 1880s. Specialists on other regions of Canada will undoubtedly have some quibbles along these lines. They are strictly minor criticisms. It is clear that the intent of the two chapters is to provide a framework and context for the case studies that follow, all of which are thoroughly satisfying. Indeed, these two chapters are a jumping-off point for a richer and fuller examination of the subject.

The important contribution *States of Nature* makes to the international literature is that it breaks out of the two paradigms that have dominated the historiography of wildlife conservation and fish and game regulation. The first of these is what might be called the “class, power and the state” model, which emphasizes the elite-centred formation of modern fish and game law and the conflicts that it produced. The second is the “bureaucratic reform” model, in which state agents are either lauded for achieving the ideals of progressive scientific management of game species, as in Janet Foster’s groundbreaking study, or castigated for perpetuating faulty and antiquated principles of conservation, as in the literature on predator eradication. There is some attention paid to these

two areas of concern; they are an important part of the story. However, Tina Loo demonstrates with startling clarity that the formation of wildlife conservation was far more complex, involving many more interests and central actors than the various groups of hunters and state administrators. Moreover, she argues convincingly that alternative visions of wildlife and wildlife conservation programs developed outside state bureaucracies had every bit as much influence on shaping public perceptions and public policy with regard to wildlife.

Chapter 3 examines the program of Jack Miner (“Father Goose”), an Ontario farmer who was instrumental in the conservation of migratory birds from around 1910 to his death in 1944, when his son Manly took over his work. Miner’s utilitarian and Christian notions that conservation should flow from humanity’s dominion over nature and his folksy charm resonated with the hundreds of thousands of people who read his writings and attended his frequent lectures. “Dominion” for Miner meant not only the right to manipulate and consume nature but also the responsibility to safeguard God’s creatures. While he achieved considerable fame and adulation, his “unscientific” approach and his taxonomy of “good” and “bad” animals (particularly as it related to his slaughter of owls, hawks, and other predators) disturbed government scientists and administrators, who were becoming increasingly informed in their work by the emerging ecosystem theory. It was a clash between local knowledge – built on economic circumstance, life experience, and faith – and scientific training.

While the differences and even hostilities between the Miners and university-trained government experts

were never resolved, the gulf between local ecological knowledge and science was much better negotiated by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). The HBC, as Loo points out in Chapter 4, had been practising game management for almost a century before it became a science. In the 1920s, the company began sponsoring the population dynamics research of Oxford zoologist Charles Elton, an example of its ongoing commitment to scientific research. Elton shared the HBC's basic assumption that the local ecological knowledge and methods of Cree trappers were central to efforts to manage and conserve the beaver and other fur-bearing animals. Employing a combination of "local knowledge, paternalism and scientific game management" (108), the company and the Cree carried on a series of beaver conservation projects in northern Ontario and Quebec in the 1930s. The HBC may have been the most active agent in addressing the population crisis of Canada's national symbol, but the public face of the save-the-beaver campaign was Grey Owl – the English adventurer turned "Indian" – Archibald Belaney. His brand of transcendental philosophy and anti-modern sentiment, expressed in articles, best-selling books, and well-attended lectures, was wildly popular during his brief career from 1930 to his death in 1938. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Depression-era federal relief projects that set up muskrat and beaver preserves. These three central themes in Chapter 4 – corporate resource management, a sentimental attachment to nature, and a more activist state – anticipate some of the central factors in the formation of wildlife conservation policy in postwar Canada.

In the decades after 1945, Loo explains in Chapter 5, the technocratic dreams of the progressive conservation

crusade were fulfilled through a more proactive, state-centred, and formal scientific approach to game management and conservation. The federal and provincial governments began to hire personnel trained in the biological sciences in the postwar decade, who linked arms with their university-based colleagues to make wildlife conservation more "rational" and "efficient." Of particular interest to the bureaucrats was the enhancement of animal populations. A casualty of this process of "modernization," Loo suggests, was an inattention and sometimes dismissive attitude towards local ecological knowledge.

In Chapter 6, Loo examines state predator policy as a means of demonstrating that principles of scientific conservation, backed by the state regulation and enforcement regimes, did not move forward without being challenged when they offended local sensibilities. The principle example of the contested terrain of game management is a fascinating examination of the debate over paying bounties for species deemed dangerous or a nuisance. Despite near consensus in the scientific community that predators occupied a useful place within ecosystems and that eradication was not a reliable means of maintaining populations of prey species, the bounty persisted in some provinces. The bounty, Loo suggests, was a form of local governance, a subsidy to some rural dwellers and, for a few, a source of social status. Moreover, the notion that predators had little impact on the populations of domestic and game species "did not square with many people's experiences of seeing half eaten deer carcasses or their perception that game had disappeared" (169). In the early 1960s, scientists and bureaucrats were increasingly aided in their efforts to save predators by a growing number

of urban people who adopted a more sentimental view of nature. In Canada, this sentiment was fuelled by such novels as Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* (1963) and Bill Mason's popular documentary films in the early 1970s, which imbued predators with admirable human qualities while at the same time extolling their wildness. Arguing for the inalienable rights of wolves to exist was as much a repudiation of scientific management as it was of traditional rural practice. The works of these two men anticipated the sometimes enormous power of urban sentimentality in the modern environmental movement.

Chapter 7 examines the growing emphasis on preserving wild spaces as opposed to conserving specific species of animals. It focuses on the substantial and long-term efforts of Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) to preserve and rehabilitate wetlands and the campaigns of outfitters Tommy Walker and Andy Russell to save mountain habitats in British Columbia and Alberta, respectively. DUC was in many respects the most successful example of what might be called elite sporting utilitarianism, but it also, at times, successfully enlisted farmers and other rural people in its campaigns. Walker and Russell combined commercial interest with a strong sense of place and "way of life" arguments to fight against encroaching development.

*States of Nature* is a multilayered and complex monograph that combines the methodological and analytical tools of social, cultural, and intellectual history. For all of its sophistication, it is also highly readable because of its clear prose and the obvious attachment that the author has to some of the characters. On the surface, it is not always readily apparent how the large number of people and organizations

that pass through its pages fit together. However, Tina Loo brings them together by stepping back and positing that the development of wildlife management and conservation, and all its controversies and contradictions, can be viewed as a function of the values that people placed on the human-animal relationship. It is a powerful argument that allows Loo to define a master narrative of wildlife conservation in twentieth-century Canada. This book is the type of study, both in subject-matter and in intellectual content, that cracks open a significant field of inquiry and that will not only attract new scholars to the study of a range of issue related to wildlife but also change the ideas of those already writing on the topic. *States of Nature* will undoubtedly be recognized as a landmark in the field of environmental history.

*Finding Families, Finding  
Ourselves: English Canada  
Encounters Adoption from the  
Nineteenth Century to the 1990s*

Veronica Strong-Boag

Toronto: Oxford University Press,  
2006. 318 pp. \$49.95 paper.

LORI CHAMBERS  
*Lakehead University*

THIS BOOK is a long-overdue corrective to existing literature on the history of the Canadian family. Adoption, as Veronica Strong-Boag asserts, "is a far from marginal phenomenon in Canadian history" (vii), yet historians have given little attention to the rights and obligations of those who surrendered or received children in adoptive exchanges. Even in the United States, the history of adoption

remains in its infancy, and *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves* makes an important contribution to existing literature. Strong-Boag's exhaustive study of "legislation, the popular media, royal commissions, biographies and autobiographies, fiction and poetry" (xi) not only expands our knowledge of the ideals and practice of adoption but also connects themes of domestic life to the history "of the project of Canadian nation-building" (ix).

Strong-Boag begins by exploring, and exploding, the myth of the nuclear family. She illustrates the myriad forms that family took in the decades before the legislative reform of adoption. Children, she argues, were "exchanged among adults under a variety of conditions and for varying periods of time" (1). Tracing this history, however, is challenging, as the transfer of children has often been informal and unrecorded. Concern about the fate of transferred children led to early adoption legislation that "took for granted persisting connection to birth families" (xiv). By the mid-twentieth century, optimism about the malleability of children replaced fears of genetic taint, and provinces established "in camera proceedings [and] sealed records" (31) that facilitated the erasure of an adopted child's past. By the last decades of the twentieth century, demands for open adoption and for access to adoption records emerged as both adopted children and relinquishing mothers challenged this erasure. Although her book provides the first overview of the evolution of adoption law in Canada, Strong-Boag argues that laws "can only hint at the realities of class, gender, and race that shaped Canadians' experiences of adoption" (51), and it is to these themes that she then turns.

Strong-Boag asserts that "however well-intentioned, adoption laws put the

poor on notice that parental rights were not sacrosanct" (31) and that adoption, from the outset, took "the normality of the middle-class or propertied household as their fundamental yardstick" (56). Poor children constituted the bulk of those available for adoption, but they were rarely placed in working-class homes. In fact, public discourse, welfare workers, and adopting parents themselves asserted an assimilative view of adoption, a belief that, through adoption, children could "escape from unfortunate origins" (73). Simultaneously, discourses of motherhood emphasized the necessity of maternity as the fulfilment of a (married) woman's destiny and set the terms (marriage and financial security) under which maternity would be socially acceptable. Strong-Boag asserts that "the place of fathers in the adoption circle has traditionally been viewed as biologically central but socially marginal" (102). Men were valued for their ability to provide the "material foundation for parenting" (105). Adoption, therefore, has reflected and reaffirmed traditional gendered ideals of parenthood. Racial, ethnic, and religious hierarchies have also permeated adoptive relations. Until the 1960s, "any trace of Catholic, non-Christian or non-Caucasian beginnings, most particularly skin colour other than 'white,' has regularly marked youngsters as less adoptable" (109). During the 1960s, growing faith in the assimilative ideal led to increasing acceptance of interracial adoption. Non-white babies might now be welcomed into middle-class white homes, but, despite liberal rhetoric, rarely would white babies be placed with non-white parents (112). Adoption mythology celebrated a forgetting not only of the child's individual past but also of her distinctive racial identity.

This theme is most fully explored in Strong-Boag's chapter on the adoption of First Nations children. Many First Nations communities practised customary adoption (where children are placed with an adoptive family within the community using ceremonies which recognize traditional practices), prior to and after contact. Such traditions were challenged by the emergence of child-rescue ideologies that "justified" the placement of First Nations children in industrial and residential schools (140). As the failure of residential schools became undeniable, child welfare authorities turned to having First Nations children adopted by middle-class white families (150). These adoptions raised enormous ethical and legal questions. Would the Indian Act status of children be preserved after adoption? Could customary adoption placements be found instead? How is the endemic poverty of First Nations communities to be overcome? As Strong-Boag makes clear, solutions to these problems remain elusive. In a parallel analysis of cross-border adoption, Strong-Boag asserts that Canadians like to think of themselves "as the rescuers of youngsters not properly cared for by less responsible or less lucky adults and communities" (174). However, demand for foreign youngsters has emerged primarily when "domestic options proved unavailing" (175), a fact that belies this myth of benevolence. Strong-Boag's examination of attempts to regulate the growing international adoption trade clearly illustrates that such exchanges are "inextricably linked to relations of power among empires, states and peoples" (174), an assertion that resonates with the themes evident in regard to domestic adoption and the "sixties scoop" of First Nations children.

*Finding Families, Finding Ourselves* provides a comprehensive and engaging

overview of the history of adoption in Canada. Perhaps the most interesting element of this discussion is Strong-Boag's consistent comparison between the regulation of adoption and the regulation of immigration and citizenship. She clearly illustrates that, "like immigrants and other suspect members of the national community, individuals within adoption circles have regularly been forced to negotiate what part of their pasts is to be remembered and told in the making of the future" (ix). Domestic policy and the regulation of family life and family formation were (and are) intimately connected to the project of nation building and assimilation into normative, white, middle-class Canadian culture. The adoption regime, as this book elucidates, is culturally constructed and specific. *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves* documents, with unprecedented detail, how English-Canadians thought about adoption, adopted children, birth parents, and receiving homes and how these perceptions were mediated by class, gender, and racial identity. *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves* is required reading not only for anyone interested in the history of the family in Canada but also for those interested in historical ideas of nation and nation building.

The scope of *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves*, however, is at once the greatest strength and greatest weakness of the book. As Strong-Boag admits in her introduction, her "attention to this 'big picture' in adoption means that not every debate or experience receives equivalent, or indeed any, attention" (x). *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves* provides an excellent institutional history of adoption and of ideas that shaped the adoption regime. It does not, however, provide the reader with much detail regarding the particular experiences

of adopted individuals, relinquishing parents, or receiving families. Strong-Boag is to be commended for beginning the “telling” of the “commonplace story” of adoption (viii), but, as she also argues, there remain many stories of adoption to be told. In particular, the sources used by Strong-Boag do not allow the participants in the adoption regime to speak for themselves. This project remains for other authors in the field. *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves* should inspire further study of the complex, hitherto neglected, history of adoption in Canada.

*Recognizing Aboriginal Title:  
The Mabo Case and Indigenous  
Resistance to English-Settler  
Colonialism*

Peter Russell

Toronto: University of Toronto  
Press, 2006. 470 pp. \$65.00 cloth,  
\$35.00 paper.

ARTHUR J. RAY  
*University of British Columbia*

AUSTRALIA IS ONE of the few countries of the world where academics and politicians often debate interpretations of their country's history in the national media. They focus on the story of Aborigine-settler relations. Even the country's prime minister, John Howard, has waded in. He has objected to what he calls “black armband history,” which is a revisionist approach that challenges the older nation-building mythologies that glorified colonial settlers as conquerors of a largely vacant land. The revisionists who raise Howard's ire focus on the Aborigines' side of the frontier and tell

the tale of shameful dispossession and racism. They also recount Aboriginal resistance. Indeed, it was the resistance of Aboriginal activists, such as Eddie Mabo from Mer Island north of Queensland, who were the catalysts for a rethinking of Australian history. Mabo played this role by pressing a title claim for ancestral family farming plots and fishing places.

After ten years of struggling against innumerable hurdles and concerted efforts to sidetrack his claim, Mabo saw it reach the Australian High Court, where it resulted in the landmark *Mabo* (1 and 2) rulings.<sup>1</sup> In *Mabo*, the High Court attempted to “cleanse the common” law of Australia by judicially recognizing for the first time that the continent and its offshore islands were not vacant when Europeans first arrived. In the eyes of the law, this meant acknowledging that Aborigines of the mainland and Murray Islanders<sup>2</sup> held “common law aboriginal titles” at contact. This came as a rude shock to many non-Aboriginal Australians, and they deeply feared it would have very adverse consequences for their economic interests. The *Mabo* decisions and others that followed soon afterward ignited a political firestorm; they prompted the federal government to draft legislation in the form of the Native Title Act (and subsequent amendments) that undid the “damage” the court had wrought; and they led the Court to beat a retreat from its bold attempt to reconcile Aborigines and settler interests by adopting a revisionist historical and legal perspective.

Canadian political scientist Peter Russell tells this fascinating story. He

<sup>1</sup> *Mabo v. Queensland, 1988*, 166 C.L.R., 186; and *Mabo v. Queensland (No. 2)*, 1992, 175 C.L.R. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Mer Island is part of this island group. They are located in the Torres Strait.

puts his story in a very broad context by opening with a comprehensive survey of changing Western perceptions of indigenous people and their rights, from the opening phase of the age of European global exploration to the *Mabo* and post-*Mabo* era at the end of the twentieth century. In his truly impressive survey, Russell pays particular attention to the role that the international civil rights movement of the post-Second World War era played in leading Australia to pass the federal Racial Discrimination Act, 1973, which had profound implications for Aborigines' rights. He also carefully explores how political/legal developments in the United States (especially the Supreme Court *Marshall* decisions of the 1820s and 1830s<sup>3</sup> and *Tee-Hit-Ton* 1955<sup>4</sup>) and Canada (especially the *Calder* [1973] and *Sparrow* [1992] decisions) influenced the development of Aboriginal rights law in Australia.

Russell devotes considerable attention to the extraordinary efforts many white Australian lawyers and politicians made to resist Aborigines' efforts to affirm their rights through the country's courts. He recounts how these rights opponents tenaciously clung to the founding legal fiction that Australia began as a terra nullius colony based on the Eurocentric notion that Aborigines were too primitive to have developed any system of laws, particularly land ownership regimes. This part of Russell's story should resonate strongly with the readers of *BC Studies* who are familiar with the rights struggles of First Nations in British Columbia. Indeed, Russell observes that, before *Delgamuukw*

(1997),<sup>5</sup> British Columbia had been "Canada's Australia." Conversely, his discussion of the Australian political landscape makes it clear that successive governments of the states of Queensland and Western Australia have acted as Australia's British Columbia in their steadfast resistance to any approaches to political/legal reconciliation that fail to give absolute priority to settlers' interests in the land. What is striking is that the places where the boot of colonial oppression was felt most forcefully by indigenous peoples in Australia and Canada are the places that spawned the most far-reaching legal challenges.

At its core, Russell's story about *Mabo* is a comprehensive discussion about the challenges that Aboriginal peoples' quest for political justice poses for the liberal democracies created by English settler societies. Particularly troublesome are their demands for collective group rights, which liberal democracies are predisposed to regard as being incompatible with the notion that all citizens should have equal rights. Also problematic are their demands for some form of self-government, which raise issues about the limits of state sovereignty. Finally, Aboriginal peoples' willingness to pursue legal remedies has served to highlight the blockages that stand in the way of the courts rendering them justice. Courts cannot openly challenge the legitimacy of the state that gives them their authority. Also, as *Mabo* made all too clear, they cannot render judgments that are too out of tune with public sentiments without being subject to attack and risking provoking legislation that negates the intended effect of their rulings. Russell is to be applauded for

<sup>3</sup> *Johnson and Grangers' Lessee v. Mackintosh*, 1823; and *Worcester v. the State of Georgia*, 1832.

<sup>4</sup> *Tee-Hit-Ton v. The United States*, 1955.

<sup>5</sup> *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, 1997, 3 S.C.R. 1010.



telling the crucial *Mabo* story so well and in a way that has resonance well beyond Australia.

*Good Intentions Gone Awry:  
Emma Crosby and the Methodist  
Mission on the Northwest Coast*

Jan Hare and Jean Barman

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006. 368 pp. Illus. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

JOHN BARKER

*University of British Columbia*

OVER THE YEARS, historians have paid only sporadic attention to Christian missionaries in British Columbia. While excellent studies periodically appear, they tend to reflect themes and approaches developed elsewhere. *Good Intentions Gone Awry* thus reflects a more general shift in missionary studies from male leaders to the much more poorly documented roles played by missionary women and indigenous evangelists. The true originality of this book lies in the manner in which Hare and Barman approach their subject. Perhaps for the first time, a book has emerged from British Columbia that should serve as a model to be emulated elsewhere.

The heart of *Good Intentions Gone Awry* is occupied by letters written by Emma Douse Crosby to her mother, dating from her departure from Ontario in 1874 until her mother's death in 1881. The daughter of a prominent Methodist minister, Emma Douse attended, and became a teacher at, Hamilton's Wesleyan Female College. When he returned to Ontario to raise funds for a new venture in northern British Columbia, Thomas Crosby had already established a reputation

as an energetic missionary to Native groups in southern British Columbia. After a brief courtship, he married Emma, and, within weeks, the couple began the long journey to their new home. Seeking assurance and yet not wanting to alarm her mother, Emma chronicled her experiences in letters, often dashed off to meet the unpredictable arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company boat, the *Otter*, the only reliable connection to the outside world. Rarely complaining, accepting her lot as a missionary wife, Emma endured long periods of uncertainty and loneliness, particularly during the winter months (when the *Otter* did not make the journey north from Victoria) and during her husband's frequent absences. The mission demanded much of both Thomas and Emma: besides evangelistic work, they built their own house, grew much of their own food, administered Native and non-Native staff as the mission grew, taught in the school, comforted and provided basic medical support for both Tsimshian and whites in the area, and wrote inspirational accounts to solicit funds to continue and expand their work. The task of a nineteenth-century missionary often required considerable sacrifice. In the end, Emma and Thomas buried four of their eight children on the northern coast.

One cannot read these evocative letters without admiring Emma's strength and fortitude. Still, *Good Intentions Gone Awry* is not an exercise in hagiography. Hare and Barman link each letter within a running commentary, producing a coherent narrative that places Emma's experiences into context and that continues the story until her death in 1926. They follow a number of themes over the years, but two are especially important. The first is the critical role played by the Tsimshian in their

own conversion. Methodism came to Fort Simpson at the invitation of high-ranking Tsimshian, notably the Dudoward family. This has long been recognized by historians, but Hare and Barman add new details concerning the various roles Tsimshian played as sponsors, parishioners, neighbours, teachers, and ministers. Much of the evidence they draw upon is indirect and faint – mere traces in Emma’s letters. Yet Hare and Barman’s reading of the letters “across the grain” for traces of Tsimshian agency never appears forced or unreasonable. Indeed, it deepens the reader’s appreciation of Emma’s situation and character.

The second theme provides the book with its title. The Methodist mission to the Tsimshian, like colonial missions elsewhere, floundered on the contradiction between a religious ethic of radical equivalence and the inability of most missionaries to shake assumptions of European racial superiority. Once they became established, Thomas and Emma seem to have become blind to their continuing dependence upon their Tsimshian hosts. Along with detachment came an increasing authoritarianism. Thomas originally went to the north to nurture a Christian community in Fort Simpson, but he ended up devoting most of his time and energy to running a far-flung empire of remote village stations. In the early trying years, Emma welcomed adolescent Tsimshian girls into her home for companionship and to help care for her young children; soon, however, she separated her children from the community and oversaw the creation of a girls’ home that became a prototype of later residential schools. The Crosbys stayed too long and, in the end, lost the support of both the Tsimshian leaders and church authorities.

*Good Intentions Gone Awry* is not only good history, it’s a joy to read. Hare and Barman provide a compassionate portrait of Emma while critically exploring the contradictions that undermined the missionary enterprise. Most intriguingly, they describe their project as an act of repatriation to the Tsimshian nation. It is thus fitting that Caroline Dudoward concludes the book with a moving testimonial to her illustrious ancestors.

*In the Days of Our Grandmothers:  
A Reader in Aboriginal Women’s  
History in Canada*

Mary-Ellen Kelm and Lorna  
Townsend, editors

Toronto: University of Toronto  
Press, 2006. 434 pp. Maps, illus.  
\$75.00 cloth, \$35.00 paper.

CHELSEA HORTON  
*University of British Columbia*

THE ISSUE OF VOICE, its recuperation and responsible representation, has long ranked among Aboriginal history’s central concerns. *In the Days of Our Grandmothers: A Reader in Aboriginal Women’s History in Canada* shares this commitment. Refuting the so-called “myth of silence,” this collection works to foreground Aboriginal women’s voices in all their diversity (4). *In the Days of Our Grandmothers* does not feature new research; rather, it brings together those recent publications that editors Mary-Ellen Kelm and Lorna Townsend deem at once “the most provocative” and “the most accessible” (407). Organized roughly chronologically and featuring scholars from a range of disciplines, this volume displays broad thematic and

temporal reach as it explores Aboriginal women's historical intersections with the fur trade (chapters by Susan Sleeper-Smith and Bruce M. White), religious encounter (Nancy Shoemaker and Carol Williams), colonial settlement (Sarah Carter and Sylvia Van Kirk), labour (Hetty Jo Brumbach, Robert Jarvenpa, and John Lutz), sexuality and reproduction (Mary C. Wright and Jean Barman), law and the state (Joan Sangster and Jo-Anne Fiske), and writing and the politics of representation (Veronica Strong-Boag and Emma LaRocque). A select bibliography with suggestions for further reading rounds out the collection.

Kelm and Townsend position this reader explicitly within a feminist politics of collaboration. While dedicated to the democratization of the historical record and a spirit of discursive cross-cultural engagement, the editors are similarly attuned to the all-too-real relations of power that continue to undergird contemporary sites and processes of academic knowledge production. Their inclusion of Aboriginal poet and Native studies professor Emma LaRocque's potent "The Colonization of a Native Woman Scholar" works forcefully to underscore this deeply politicized context. So, too, does it highlight the firmly interdisciplinary nature of Aboriginal women's scholarship. As poststructural and postcolonial theory has taught, and as Kelm and Townsend readily acknowledge, history is not a straightforward redemptive project of liberating subaltern voices from the colonial archive. In addition to "epistemic humility" (6), Aboriginal women's history demands a creative methodological tool kit for reading against the grain those colonial sources that, due to the combined historical forces of racism and sexism, inevitably serve as (partial) evidence.

Thus, we see Mary C. Wright revisiting the work of ethnographer James Teit for the insight he affords into the role of the woman's lodge in the construction of Aboriginal femininity on the nineteenth-century Pacific Northwest plateau. And, in chapters by Carol Williams and Sylvia Van Kirk, we see the novel use of the photographic record as a lens into Aboriginal women's nineteenth-century engagements with Methodism (Williams) and the newly founded Victoria (Van Kirk). Oral history figures also in this reader, although the seminal work of Julie Cruikshank, recognized in the introduction, is notably absent. Combining the methods and materials of archaeology, anthropology, and, to a lesser (and less satisfying) degree, history, Hetty Jo Brumbach and Robert Jarvenpa's "Woman the Hunter: Ethnoarchaeological Lessons from Chipewyan Life-Cycle Dynamics" reminds us that, despite claims to ethnohistory as a shared project, disciplinary distinctions do indeed persist.

*In the Days of Our Grandmothers* explores thematic terrain both well- and less-trodden. More familiar are characterizations of Aboriginal women as liminal agents of cultural mediation and adaptation in the realms of the fur trade and religious encounter (Sleeper Smith and White, and Shoemaker and Williams, respectively). Most provocative are those theoretically informed pieces that critically interrogate the social construction of the very categories "Aboriginal" and "woman." Chapters by Sarah Carter and Jean Barman cogently expose how settler society's twin imagery of the sexualized Aboriginal "squaw" worked, and continues to function, to underwrite Canadian colonialism. Other pieces, such as Joan Sangster's "Native Women, Sexuality, and the Law" implicitly serve

to destabilize Canada itself. As Kelm and Townsend productively suggest in their introduction, Aboriginal women's history encourages a reconceptualization of Canada as a project of rule, or, following Ian McKay's proposed reconnaissance, as "liberal order framework" (*Canadian Historical Review* 81, 4 [2000]). Reconceived thus, national borders are blurred, as displayed in the fur trade and plateau region histories included here, and nationalist narratives disrupted, as borne out in Veronica Strong-Boag's trenchant chapter "A Red Girl's Reasoning: E. Pauline Johnson Constructs the New Nation."

If this collection illustrates fruitful avenues of recent inquiry, it likewise points to gaps in the field. Although its firm western, and, more specifically, British Columbian, focus renders *In the Days of Our Grandmothers* of particular relevance to readers of this journal, it also reveals regional imbalance. And, while *In the Days* is admittedly a women's history reader, Aboriginal men, and the construction of Aboriginal masculinity, are nevertheless conspicuously absent. Chapters by Bruce White and John Lutz are notable for their efforts to explore the experiences of Aboriginal women and men in concert; however, in restricting their analyses to the delineation of respective gender "roles," they do not significantly inform or advance intersectional gender analysis in this field. Equally lacking is sustained discussion of Aboriginal women's political philosophy and action, particularly in the twentieth century. A chapter by Jo-Anne Fiske gestures towards this goal, but through its sweeping temporal and spatial gaze loses sight of the specificity of Aboriginal women's political action and agency. Kelm and Townsend's introduction likewise hints at such key

issues as Aboriginal women's contested relations with feminism(s) and their status as so-called "bearers of tradition" (10) without fleshing them out in sufficient depth.

Such contextual gloss diminishes this reader's pedagogic potential. To be sure, bringing these pieces together in a single volume is in itself a useful contribution. However, a more thorough introduction and more explicit organizational rationale – one that assumes less fluency in the field – would have enhanced the collection's value as a teaching tool, particularly at the undergraduate level. The copy-editing errors peppered throughout the text will likely prove distracting to readers of all levels. Such quibbles notwithstanding, however, *In the Days of Our Grandmothers* is a timely "progress report," indicating strides made and challenges remaining for the intersecting interdisciplinary fields of Aboriginal, Canadian, and women's history.

*A Passion for Mountains: The  
Lives of Don and Phyllis Munday*

Kathryn Bridge

Surrey, BC: Rocky Mountain  
Books, 2006. 240 pp. Illus.  
\$26.95 paper.

KAREN ROUTLEDGE  
*Rutgers University*

IN LATE DECEMBER 1923, North Vancouver mountaineers Don and Phyllis Munday lived with their two-year-old daughter in a canvas tent near the summit of Grouse Mountain. They were building a cabin and digging their tent out of early season snowstorms. This was only the beginning of their adventures together. From the 1920s to

the 1940s, the Mundays were at the centre of the local mountaineering community and pushed the limits of climbing in the Coast Mountains. Kathryn Bridge's biography is a compelling portrait that makes extensive use of the couple's own words and images. As such, it conveys not only Don and Phyl Munday's passion for climbing, but also the ways in which they saw and experienced the mountains of British Columbia.

The book is divided into eight chronological chapters, which give equal space to Don and Phyl's accomplishments. Chapters 1 and 2 examine the couple's individual childhoods, their earliest hikes and climbs in the Lower Mainland, and their experiences of the First World War at home and abroad. The third chapter focuses on Don and Phyl's meeting in 1918, their marriage two years later, and the birth of their only child, Edith. Chapter 4 recounts the couple's years in their cabin on Grouse Mountain and their exploratory climbs together, including the first ascent of Blackcomb Mountain in 1923. The following chapter chronicles Don and Phyl's increasing involvement in the Alpine Club of Canada and their club trips to the Rocky Mountains. Chapter 6 focuses on the Mundays' decade-long fascination with the area surrounding Mount Waddington in the central Coast Mountains of British Columbia, while Chapter 7 details Don and Phyl's last expeditions together in the 1940s. The short concluding chapter discusses Don's final years and his death from pneumonia in 1950, and Phyl's continued involvement in the climbing community until she died in 1990.

Bridge's biographical research is impressive and provides the first complete sketch of the Mundays' joint climbing career. She consulted archival records across Canada, newspapers, climbing journals, and several indi-

viduals and their private collections. She has recovered personal details absent from the climbing record; for example, Don's war experience and previous marriage, and the Mundays' attempts to reconcile raising a daughter with their commitment to month-long climbing expeditions. Don and Phyl's photographic talent is also beautifully showcased in this book, which contains over 100 images. Most were taken by the Mundays on their expeditions, but the photographs range from childhood portraits, to domestic and camp scenes, to the arresting glacier views that first introduced the Mount Waddington region to the Vancouver public and to climbers around the world. Every one of the images is captivating; together they represent both a deeply personal vision of British Columbia, and an exceptional public record spanning over forty years of changing climbing techniques and local landscapes.

While this book aims to recount the Mundays' stories rather than analyse them (12), some additional contextualization would nonetheless have been useful. Bridge uses secondary literature to place the couple within the framework of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Canadian mountaineering. However, while her footnotes enable interested readers to locate her original primary sources, in some places citations of secondary information are lacking or incomplete. Given the prominence of the Mundays' first-hand accounts in this book, a more thorough discussion of linguistic and photographic conventions would also have been welcome. Bridge includes a sidebar about the genre of mountaineering literature (94), but elsewhere she assumes that Don's adoption of this "matter-of-fact" style mirrored his inner thoughts (52). She also lists the Mundays' "official" naming of the landscape as one of their

major legacies, without discussing their opinions about and interactions with local people, both indigenous and resettled (222). A short explanation of camera equipment and the tradition of expedition photography would have been equally helpful for interpreting the images.

Still, this book is intended to appeal to a wide audience and it deserves to find one. Of special interest to climbers anywhere, it is also a fascinating text on the history of recreation in the Coast Mountains. Bridge's inclusion of a map and her notations whenever place names have changed make it easy for Lower Mainland readers to situate themselves in the stories about hiking and climbing in the Cheam Range, the Garibaldi area, and the North Shore mountains. As Phyl Munday wrote of her cabin on Grouse Mountain, southwestern British Columbia was for her and her husband a place "out on the very edge of the world ... out where you felt you could look out and face the world" (114). Kathryn Bridge's work effectively conveys the Munday's love of this region and reminded me of my own depth of feeling for it.

*Practical Dreamers:  
Communitarianism and  
Co-operatives on Malcolm Island*

KEVIN WILSON  
Victoria: British Columbia Institute  
for Cooperative Studies, 2005.  
246 pp. Illus. \$21.95 paper.

DAVID BREEN  
*University of British Columbia*

THE FINNISH SOCIALIST utopian community on Malcolm Island has fared better than most smaller BC

communities in the number of books, articles, theses, and films devoted to the telling of its history. Still, the new book by Kevin Wilson is a welcome and important addition to this literature. *Practical Dreamers* is primarily an examination of Malcolm Island's cooperative and communitarian heritage, which began with the arrival in 1901 of the small band of Finnish settlers determined to create the socialist utopia envisioned by their charismatic leader Matti Kurikka.

A joint project of the British Columbia Institute of Cooperative Studies and Sointula Museum, this nicely illustrated book boasts a strong foundation of archival sources supported by an impressive number of oral interviews that give prominence to the islanders' own voice, especially in the more recent decades covered in the concluding chapters. Progressing chronologically and organized by subject and theme, the book begins with an examination of the economic and intellectual environment in Finland that inspired Matti Kurikka's vision and the Kalevan Kansa joint stock company organized by Finnish immigrants in the Nanaimo area to translate the vision into reality. An account of the efforts of the two hundred-odd Finnish settler-shareholders on Malcolm Island to build a viable community, consistent with their socialist and cooperative ideals, follows. In assessing the community's evolution, Wilson pays particular attention to the founding and management of the Island's Co-op Store. Remembered by one resident as the "heart of the community," its well-being is a matter to which the author consistently returns. Other topics addressed include the role played by Malcolm Island Finns in the transformation of the BC fishing industry, how socialist ideology

guided their participation in local political and labour movements, and the community's conflicted loyalties during the Second World War. The book also considers how the community grappled with the enormous changes that came in the wake of the war, including the arrival of new Finnish immigrants (who strengthened Finnish language and culture but challenged some of the existing socialist values) and the later arrival of American draft dodgers (who contributed a new version of left-wing communal ideology that eventually blended with that of the earlier settlers).

A topic touched upon but then regrettably set aside for "further study" (101) is the relationship with the large First Nations community at Alert Bay, their near neighbours on Cormorant Island. Given the author's principal interest in the communitarian-cooperative ethos and its influence on shaping how the Finnish settlers responded and adapted over time to the challenges imposed by the physical, social, and economic environment, it is curious that the opportunity for a close and instructive look at the settlers' ongoing relationship with the long-established communitarian-cooperative society next door has been largely passed over. While Matti Kurikka seems to have been dismissive of his Aboriginal neighbours, his colleague Austin Makela, who assumed leadership after Kurikka's departure in 1904, recognized Native people as natural socialists. As an informed, outward-looking community of committed socialists, its relationship with its Aboriginal neighbours can be seen as a measure of islander adherence to certain socialist core values, and it would, therefore, be instructive to learn where Aboriginals fitted into the community's utopian vision and socialist embrace.

Perhaps the most revealing part of *Practical Dreamers* is contained in the chapters dealing with the period since 1980. In the discussion concerning the deterioration of Malcolm Island's logging industry in the early 1980s and the even more devastating impact of the federal government's reorganization of the Pacific coast fishery (Mifflin Plan) in the 1990s, the book breaks new ground. Exploring islanders' attempts to cope with economic devastation, Wilson observes that the search for creative solutions drew heavily upon traditional cooperative and communitarian values. Their search for cooperative solutions, even if faltering or unsuccessful, is the common thread connecting the first settlers with contemporary residents, and Wilson believe that it is this that marks the community's defining characteristic and, perhaps, its hope for the future.

While the focus here is upon a particular community's struggle towards a better future, *Practical Dreamers* speaks also to a much larger audience than that simply interested in the visionary socialist experiment on Malcolm Island. It sheds revealing light upon an important larger story concerning the decline of fishing- and forestry-based communities across the province. The well-recorded debate among Malcolm Islanders concerning their search for a future offering more than service jobs for tourists and wealthy part-time residents reflects a deep anxiety that will resonate with all who live in, or care about, small communities.



*Power and Restructuring:  
Canada's Coastal Society  
and Environment*

Peter Sinclair and Rosemary  
Ommer, editors

St John's: ISER 2006. 336 pp.  
Maps, illus. \$29.96 paper.

NATHAN YOUNG  
*University of Ottawa*

IT IS SOMETIMES FORGOTTEN that rural Canada is on the front lines of some of the most important changes and challenges facing this country. By now, we are accustomed to hearing about looming crises in Canada's urban centres as cities struggle to cope with unprecedented growth. Advocates argue that cities are shouldering the costs of Canada's experiments with free trade, globalization, and multiculturalism. But "big forces" are colliding in rural areas of the country as well – often in ways that are more dramatic and fundamental than in urban centres. In rural regions, the emerging themes of the twenty-first century – economic globalization, environment, Aboriginal rights, and neoliberal governance – are exceptionally raw, and they are driving major political and economic changes of deep significance to the country as a whole.

Peter Sinclair and Rosemary Ommer's edited volume makes an important contribution to our understanding of the causes and consequences of change in rural and resource regions. The book is the first of a planned four volumes to report research from the Coasts under Stress project – a major SSHRC- and NSERC-funded research initiative examining social and environmental change in Pacific and Atlantic coastal regions. The emphasis of this book

is on questions of power, agency, and resistance in the face of economic and environmental change. Coastal regions are particularly significant in this regard. Blessed with abundant natural resources, for much of Canada's modern history both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts served as the economic cornerstones of regional development. Recently, however, these coastal areas have suffered severe environmental and economic shocks caused by resource depletion as well as the rise of low-cost resource-producing regions in an increasingly integrated global economy. On both coasts, traditional fisheries and forest industries have declined precipitously, shedding employment, shrinking communities, and raising the spectre that all possible futures will involve radical breaks with the past.

One strength of *Power and Restructuring* is that the chapters demonstrate an awareness of the larger issues at play. Much of the research presented is based on on-the-ground participatory fieldwork, and this gives the volume both a firm empirical basis and a "localist" perspective on particular challenges. However, the editors and contributors are to be credited for foregrounding theoretical considerations that are often overlooked in community-based studies. Of particular note are the attempts to broaden and synthesize conceptualizations of power. There is a strong tradition in Canadian scholarship of examining how rural industries and regions are shaped by the demands of far-away actors and markets. Sinclair and Ommer's introductory chapter makes a convincing case that these considerations ought to be combined with more recent advances in network theory. The latter has become very popular in efforts to understand how social and "natural" resources (in this case, with reference to specific objects



and environments) are mobilized and patterned in the exercise of power. Thus, several essays directly consider the role of social networks and “actor networks” in both power relations and prospects for resistance. While some chapters apply these theories better than others, the effect is a nuanced analysis of the complex intersections of structure and agency in vulnerable places. Indeed, a minor complaint against the volume is that its enthusiasm for theoretical synthesis means that it neglects to make the full political economy case regarding restructuring in Canada’s coastal regions. For instance, while themes of globalization run through many chapters, the key role of global economic integration (and particularly the rise of competing low-cost resource-producing regions) as a fundamental and overarching cause of coastal change is never directly considered.

As with most edited volumes, the chapters presented in *Power and Restructuring* consider a range of sometimes disparate topics. However, the overarching theme of the book is change. In this light, the editors’ choice to open the book with several historical chapters is ultimately a good one as it sets current events in a continuum of upheaval, injustice, and political contestation on both coasts. At the same time, the chapters on contemporary issues demonstrate the uniqueness of present challenges to coastal regions and communities. Coasts remain rich resources and important contributors to the Canadian economy. However, it is increasingly clear that future coastal industries will operate very differently than did those in the past. The chapters on commercial fisheries, aquaculture, and offshore oil and gas demonstrate that future industrial development will be less labour-intensive, more corporate, and less community-grounded than in

prior economic eras. As a consequence, coastal communities are being forcibly changed. As these chapters make clear, such changes are encouraged by federal and provincial governments that are eager to revive coastal economies while minimizing commitment to coastal communities. The raw force of these changes is best captured in the chapter by Martha MacDonald, Barbara Neis, and Brenda Grzetic (“The Struggle to Stay”), which presents poignant qualitative research into household strategies to simply “hang on” in the face of economic decline. This is a space where “the lines between coping, resistance, and resignation are blurred” (205) as families attempt to adapt to economic and policy environments that no longer consider coastal residents and communities to be vital economic actors.

The strength of Sinclair and Ommer’s *Power and Restructuring* is its treatment of the complexities of change in coastal regions. As mentioned, this is done in a manner that links local experiences with broad economic and political trends. At the same time, it also recognizes that even radical change proceeds inconsistently and in contradictory ways. As considered in an important chapter by Kelly Vodden and John C. Kennedy (“From Resignation to Renewal”), the same forces that are challenging traditional coastal industries are allowing First Nations groups to elbow their way into resource, land, and marine management issues. Rural and resource regions continue to occupy a strange place in the Canadian and British Columbian economies, being at once vital and peripheral. These are paradoxical places, where the effects of big forces like economic globalization, resource depletion, and the Aboriginal rights movement are magnified. These are Canada’s issues for the twenty-first century.

*Far West:*  
*The Story of British Columbia*  
 Daniel Francis

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour  
 Publishing, 2006. 176 pp.  
 Maps, illus. \$36.95 cloth.

ROBERT A. CAMPBELL  
*Capilano College*

WHEN I RECEIVED THIS BOOK by this popular and prolific writer, I thought it was a coffee table history of British Columbia. While *Far West* is large and glossy, I quickly realized that *BC Studies* had sent me a history book for kids. Since I am not a parent, schoolteacher, or an expert in children's literature, I was taken aback at first. After reading *Far West*, however, overall I was impressed. While the promotional material says the book is directed at readers as young as nine, Francis does not sugar-coat British Columbia's past. He may not exactly use this vocabulary, but he does not shy away from racism, class struggle, political corruption, and environmental degradation. If one reads carefully, even historiography lurks between the lines. For example, the author does not specifically mention the controversy surrounding Samuel Bawlf's *The Secret Voyage of Sir Francis Drake, 1577-1580* (2003), but he concludes: "Some say he [Drake] reached Vancouver Island. Others think he got all the way to the Queen Charlotte Islands [and beyond says Bawlf]. Others say he did not reach British Columbia at all" (33).

The book begins with a discussion of coastal and interior First Nations cultures. Francis includes a special section on Nuu-chah-nulth whalers on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The hunt is vividly described: "A wounded

whale reacted with a violent slap of its tail ... If the canoe was too close, it could easily be swamped or smashed to pieces" (21). Francis's discussion of the maritime fur trade reinforces the interpretation that has dominated the literature for the last thirty years: "The Aboriginal people were smart traders. They were used to trading among themselves and knew how to drive a hard bargain" (37-38). He also emphasizes the ravages of European diseases, especially the smallpox epidemic of 1862. Yet, he is very circumspect – to the point of elision – about the abusive role played by alcohol in European-Aboriginal relations. Rather than confine Aboriginal people to a chapter or two, they are interwoven throughout the book.

As one might expect, the chapters generally proceed chronologically, with titles based on a big event of the time period covered, such as "Gold Rush!" and "Joining Canada." A partial exception is the chapter entitled "Resources and the Economy." Here we get a discussion of fishing, forestry, shipping, mining, and railway expansion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The prose is lively and informative, and Francis deftly interweaves the class, gender, and ethnic dynamics of a resource-based economy. *Far West* concludes with the debate over the 2010 Olympics and the challenges facing the province in the twenty-first century.

In terms of content, I have only quibbles about dates and facts, but a few things troubled me. Francis includes a section on rum running to the United States during American prohibition, but he says nothing about prohibition in Canada. Such an omission reinforces the stereotype that prohibition was only an American experience. I was also puzzled, for a couple of reasons, about

the section on politics entitled “Bennett Too” (150). It implies that Bill Bennett succeeded W.A.C. Bennett; the first NDP government is not mentioned in the text. Second, the section title is either a sophisticated pun or perhaps is meant to be “Bennett Two.” I also wondered about a quotation concerning BC Ferries: “It is often said that BC has the largest navy in the world” (143). I have never heard that said before. Maybe Francis means the largest navy in Canada. Finally – and perhaps I am asking too much for a young reader – Francis makes no distinction between federal and provincial responsibility for residential schools (150).

This book has many fine additional features. It is lavishly illustrated with photographs, maps, and drawings. Most impressive are the paintings by Vancouver artist Gordon Miller. Many are stunning, and some are reproduced over two facing pages. The book also contains a variety of sidebar material: “In Their Own Words,” “BC people,” “BC Creatures,” and “Fast Facts.” Perhaps Judge Matthew Begbie acquired his reputation as the hanging judge from this quotation: “Those who don’t want law and order can git. For boys, if there is shooting, there will be hanging” (66). At the end is a good timeline, and the index is comprehensive. I was surprised, however, that neither a bibliography nor web links were included.

*Far West* is a good book, and not just for young readers. I intend to give my copy to a recent immigrant from China who wants to know more about the province she now calls home. She will learn a lot.



## *The Woman in the Trees*

Gerry William

Vancouver: New Star Books, 2004.  
226 pp. \$21.00 paper.

THERESA KISHKAN

*Madeira Park, BC*

THE SOUTHERN INTERIOR of British Columbia is a landscape woven together by stories, from the geological chronicles of glaciers and mountains to the almost mute presences of kekuli pits, abandoned cabins, and weathered fence lines poised against the newer hypertexts of vineyards and organic farms. I’ve visited almost every museum in the region and learned to pay attention to the way communities choose to present the evidence of long occupation. There are almost always cases of fossils, a collection of Native baskets with their own intricate narratives (some almost indecipherable as imbrication grasses and barks fade over time), a gold pan, a plough or a harness, helmets from the Great War, sometimes a mineshaft reconstructed in the dim display room or a collection of old saws, and, of course, the photographic displays that offer their poignant tableaux.

In a way, Gerry William’s novel is a synthesis of all these stories but from a new and original perspective, one located in the sere grasslands and pine forests of the Okanagan Valley just at the point of contact between the syilx, or First Nations people, and sha-mas (white settlers), priests, and others who came to settle the valley. Versions of this contact are known from the records of Father Charles Pandosy, the Oblate missionary who established the first permanent non-Aboriginal settlement in the valley in 1859; and from the recollections, often a generation or two removed, of men like Tom Ellis,

"The Cattle King of the Okanagan." But the quiet missing voices have been those of the people whose residency in a richly complex landscape was altered and displaced. We're beginning to hear more of those voices. I think of some of the texts published by Theytus Books and Wendy Wickwire's transcriptions of stories by the great Okanagan storyteller, Harry Robinson. And now we have Gerry William's strange and beautiful novel.

It is not a linear narrative, and, in that respect, it confounds the reader who might expect a formal plot-driven novel. Stories begin: a brigade cavalcade on its way to Fort Hope encounters a Native camp. Violence is done not only to people but to the carefully prepared food caches and the camp dogs. This particular story continues for a time and then changes, as weather changes. We are introduced to Enid Blue Starbreaks, the Woman in the Trees, whom we are told comes from "the other side of creation" (18). She appears to very few people, an abiding spirit with the power to rescue children in trouble, to console and to frighten.

There is also the story of Wolverine, a child born to Blue Dreams and Sky Woman, who communicates with animals in their own language and who never stops watching. His is the generation taken by the priests and taught English and the lessons of the Bible; quick to learn and quick to reject, Wolverine goes his own way and becomes, eventually, an intermediary between settlers who arrive to ranch and those who hope to create a version of Eden in the Okanagan Valley with apple trees brought from the east. This thread is vivid and resonant and involves a small-scale water war, brief meditations on weather cycles (particularly of interest to those charting the rate of global warming), and a considerable

amount of relevant ethnobotanical material.

One important element in this novel is the animating presence of Coyote, or Sn-klip, who says, "There are fifty ways to tell the beginning of everything, but only one ending. I was there when my people saw the first horse ... My way has no straight path to anywhere. No easy river sand to throw into the wind" (122). This teasing approach to narrative asks us to be flexible in our reading, to adapt to changes in points of view and voice as an animal might respond to obstacles in a path – go around, go through, go under. And we have an admirable guide after all: "He's rude, he's crude, he's a joker. He mocks and he questions ... His name is Sn-klip, and in one way, he is the story that follows, and every story that's told" (125).

In some ways, for example, in its machinery and cast, *The Woman in the Trees* resembles an epic poem. We are plunged into a world of action and consequence, where the gods oversee and interject in the affairs of mortals. As in the *Odyssey*, for instance, there is an intersection of mythology and history, of past and present activity, of heroic action and domestic quietude. Walking Grizzly Bear's summoning of the tribes to plan strategy to deal with the sha-mas, or white settlers, and Blue Dream's proficiency with a bow – "His aim stayed true, and he could hit a thin trunk from forty paces, five times out of six" (67) – carry with them echoes of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The themes of William's novel are archetypal and resonate within the rich tradition of world literature.

*The Woman in the Trees* is an important document, not only for its value as literature (and that is significant) but also for its ability to do what those museums in small Interior towns seldom succeed in doing. Gerry William has

woven together archival materials – history, fiction, poetry, geology, and the long genealogies of the Okanagan – to create a durable and evocative artefact that tells the story of not only what we knew, in part, but also, and more important, of what has been hidden from us, in plain view.

*Up-Coast: Forests and Industry  
on British Columbia's  
North Coast, 1870-2005*

Richard A. Rajala

Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 2006.  
294 pp. Illus. \$49.95 cloth.

DUFF SUTHERLAND  
*Selkirk College*

RICHARD RAJALA WROTE *Up-Coast* as part of the Communities Under Stress Project, which brought together scholars from both of Canada's coasts to study ways "to achieve a sustainable human relationship with coastal ecosystems in a global economy" (vii). *Up-Coast* examines the sad history of forest capital's exploitation of the forests and people of the north coast of British Columbia from the industry's beginnings in the 1870s up to 2005. This important and deeply researched book reveals that the coast had an incredible storehouse of forest resources that, exploited in an unsustainable way, did not contribute to widespread and lasting prosperity for the people of the region. *Up-Coast* details waves of capitalist development which hit the coast beginning, in a sustained way, in the early 1900s, gained force after the Second World War, and only began to abate in the 1980s and 1990s, leaving survivors to pick up the pieces.

Almost from the beginning, capital's exploitation of the forests of the north coast led to uneven development and underdevelopment. By 1907, the province had allowed companies to take control of the best forest lands. In the northern part of the region, this led to tie hacking, cedar pole cutting, and sawmilling, while on the mid-coast Pacific Mills developed the famous pulp and paper mill town of Ocean Falls. By 1918, Ocean Falls had 2,000 residents and the company controlled such enormous timber limits on the mainland and Queen Charlotte Islands that it could maintain very high cut rates and pay rock-bottom prices to impoverished loggers. Aircraft production during both world wars also led to intense Sitka spruce "drives" on the Queen Charlotte Islands, during which the emphasis on production and profit led to terrible destruction of the forests. Rajala points out that the Queen Charlotte Islands are an example of a broader pattern on the coast of the forest resource being "drained" to mills on the mainland and the south coast with little benefit for local people and communities. As in his earlier work on clear-cutting, Rajala demonstrates his superb knowledge of the way companies developed and employed technology such as A-framing and log rafting to accelerate production and reduce costs. At the same time, workers did fight to gain more for themselves and their families and communities through development of their union, the International Woodworkers of America. In his chapter on workers and unions, Rajala shows the important role played by loggers in the wartime Sitka spruce camps on the Queen Charlotte Islands in winning the struggle for union recognition and the benefits that flowed from it.

The post-Second World War boom saw forest companies accelerate their exploitation of the north coast. The provincial government's commitment to "sustained yield" through privately run tree farms allowed large south coast companies such as Alaska Pine and MacMillan Bloedel, which had depleted their local holdings, access to north coast forest resources. These companies then floated huge amounts of logs to south coast mills. The Queen Charlottes and the Bella Coola Valley continued to be sources of raw logs with very limited local manufacturing and employment. In 1947, Prince Rupert did get a mill after the provincial government granted the Celanese Corporation the famous Tree Farm Licence No. 1, which included large parts of the Skeena and Nass watersheds. This licence led to local development and jobs; it also led to unsustainable cut rates and dramatically reduced access to forests for small operators, communities and First Nations people. Companies opened more mills at Prince Rupert and Kitimat in the 1960s. However, new logging and mill operations provided limited employment as companies modernized production to reduce wage costs and increase output. As Rajala describes it, the crisis for this unsustainable capitalist project on the north coast came in the 1970s and 1980s. During these decades, the postwar boom ended, and environmental and community groups, along with First Nations, began to publicize and resist industry overcutting and tried to protect what remained of the resource. This change set the stage for the intense land-use conflicts of the 1990s. Meantime, Ocean Falls closed permanently in 1980 and the huge Prince Rupert operation, now known as Skeena Cellulose, struggled along until recently. As Rajala points out,

Skeena Cellulose's troubles and their impact starkly revealed the dependence of the people and communities of the region on the forest economy. Today, the people of the north coast are left to try to forge a new forest economy out of the remnants of the old.

*Up-Coast* is an important work which deserves to be widely read in British Columbia. Not only does it provide an immense amount of material on an understudied region, it also makes significant points about the pattern of 20<sup>th</sup>-century resource development and the impact of the postwar boom on the province. Rajala describes well the inequalities that were part of forest capital's exploitation of the north coast: First Nations people were further separated from their traditional lands, companies held enormous power in towns and surrounding hinterlands, and people and communities received relatively few long-term benefits from an enormously valuable resource. These are not necessarily new points in the writing of British Columbia history but Rajala adds to our understanding by providing a great deal of detail on a single region from the industry's origins to the contemporary scene. *Up-Coast* also undercuts a long-held belief in British Columbia that postwar provincial governments and industry rationally developed resources to create an integrated and widely prosperous province. In fact, *Up-Coast* details a government-industry partnership which allowed companies to disregard forest science and to overexploit the resource, and which contributed to a pattern of economic development that, in the long run, benefited the south coast of the province at the expense of up-coast. In this light, the efforts of northern First Nations to protect traditional lands and assert rights, of loggers to build a union to gain more for their work, and

of communities like Bella Coola and Hazelton to challenge company control of the forests are admirable.

*Empire's Edge: American Society  
in Nome, Alaska, 1898-1934*

Preston Jones

Fairbanks: University of Alaska  
Press, 2007. 158 pp. Illus.  
US\$19.95 paper.

WILLIAM R. MORRISON  
*University of Northern  
British Columbia*

HOW MANY CANADIANS know exactly where Nome is? Yes, we know it's in Alaska, though the author of this book may not be confident that all readers will know, since he names the state as well as the town in his title. Yes, there was a gold rush there, and it must be on the ocean somewhere since the books all refer to gold being found "on the beaches of Nome." But how many could locate it on a map? In fact, Nome is on the south shore of the Seward Peninsula, on Norton Sound, an inlet of Bering Strait, 240 kilometres south of the Arctic Circle, about the same latitude as Fairbanks. It's about three hundred kilometers east of the nearest point of Siberia, and, surprisingly, more than eight hundred kilometers in longitude west of Hawaii, making it the most westerly as well as one of the most isolated towns for its size in North America.

In this charming and informative book, Preston Jones examines not the history of the famous Nome gold rush of 1898 (despite the dates in the title) but, rather, the history of the years after 1900, when the rush dwindled and excitement drained out of the town. These were the

lean years, when the town struggled to maintain its prosperity and even its very existence. And what the people of Nome created out of this struggle was a piece of the United States in a very unlikely location: "In the process of wrenching order out of chaos, Nomeites did something extraordinary: they built an easily recognizable American community in a most uncommon environment. As a writer for *Harper's Weekly* put it, 'in the face of nature's most severe obstacles,' Nome's settlers had created 'one of the present wonders of Uncle Sam's domains.'"

So, according to Jones, although there was much about Nome that was unique, "the most striking thing about the city [was] its normality ... The city's mundane Americanness always struck, and usually surprised visitors." Interestingly, the same thing was true of Dawson City, Nome's Yukon twin, whose residents, after the gold rush ended, tried desperately to create an ordinary Canadian community in an uncommon environment. Laura Berton, Pierre's mother, in her fascinating autobiography *I Married the Yukon*, describes the rounds of teas and calling cards, and the importance of belonging to the local chapter of the IOOE. Much the same was true, mutatis mutandis, of Nome.

At the time of Nome's gold rush, there were rival communities on the Seward Peninsula and Norton Sound, and some had amenities – a good natural harbour, trees – that Nome lacked. Nevertheless, during the twentieth century, all but Nome shrank almost to the point of disappearance. *Empire's Edge* describes the town's anxieties that it, too, might fade away, and its attempts to avoid that fate through civic boosterism, public relations, enthusiastic participation in the First World War, self-congratulation, and

a rich variety of community activities. There were many of these: the town had five different Masonic orders in the second decade of the twentieth century – Elks, Shriners, members of the Order of the Eastern Star, and all the rest. The community had an active and engaged political life; in the municipal election of 1917, 98 percent of eligible voters cast ballots. Also – and this was somewhat ironic for the residents of a region that prided itself on self-reliance – they made repeated pleas to the federal government for assistance, particularly in improving harbour facilities.

The book is organized topically: Chapter 4, “Commentary,” for example, has the subheadings “Public Life,” “Dogs,” “Learning,” “Rhetoric [politics],” “Labor,” “Natives,” and “The Courts,” a scheme that keeps both author and reader focused. The only flaw in this book is that it seems too short: at 117 pages of text, plus endnotes and bibliography, it leaves one wishing for more information about this isolated community, different from Main Street America in many ways but (mostly through the efforts of its citizens), in its essentials, surprisingly the same.

*Hills of Silver: The Yukon's  
Mighty Keno Hill Mine*

Aaro E. Aho

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour  
Publishing, 2006. 317 pp.  
Illus. \$26.95 paper.

LOGAN W. HOVIS  
*US National Park Service,  
Anchorage*

AARO AHO'S BOOK serves several masters. First and foremost, it is the song of Keno Hill and those

who prospected, worked, and lived the life of the rich silver-lead mines. Silver ore was first discovered in 1906, and high-grade production began shortly thereafter. The first mill was constructed in 1925. With the exception of a few years during the Second World War, mining continued on a succession of small, rich veins on Keno, Galena, and Sourdough hills until 1989. Small, rich veins scattered throughout the area meant there was a series of smaller mines – the Number Nine, the Elsa, the Ladue, and the Sadie, to name a few – working the area over time rather than one large mine operating for an extended period of time.

Like many remembrances of the north, *Hills of Silver* is populated with characters that at first glance are the core of the book. Told over tea or over-proof rum, the stories ring true, as anyone who has spent time in remoter communities can attest. Human foibles and strengths take on a greater meaning when there are fewer people about to dilute the behaviour. The drunken undertaker, the Mountie who used his fists, and the taciturn mine manager who grubstaked so many prospectors to everyone's benefit are almost stock characters in tales of the mining camps. Some of the stories – consider a man who sat beside the road repeatedly trying to commit suicide as others walked by – underscore the geographical and human isolation of the region. Nonetheless, these tales told time and time again give personal meaning and a human face to what might otherwise be a depressing procession of events in a long winter's night.

Mining in the Yukon did not end with the gold rushes; industrial placer mining and the development of lode mines turned the short-lived, popular phenomenon of the turn of the last century into a sustained undertaking



that continues to this day. Silver from Keno Hill was one story among many. Others of note include gold and silver at Carcross, copper outside Whitehorse, lead and zinc in the Anvil Range and at Faro, as well as the ongoing placer mining operations. It is worth noting that Dr. Aho played a singular role in the discovery and development of the Anvil Mine in the 1950s. The Keno Hill narrative provides a detailed, if idiosyncratic, look at the problems of finding and financing mines, making them work, and moving the ore to market. Steamboats on the Stewart River play as important a role as do prospectors searching for another vein. Road construction and the opening of a government liquor store play roles equal to external finance and the fluctuating price of silver in the development of the district.

While there is little direct discussion of the technology of mining, anyone paying attention to the narrative will discover an interesting case study in the persistence of rude prospecting and exploration techniques in the district. In much of the area, bedrock was hard to find and the frozen overburden was deep. Early in the century, the only way to discern the value of a claim was to examine the rock directly. In shallow ground, trenches sufficed. To test deeper ground, someone has to sink a shaft or drive a tunnel through the permafrost. Boilers, steam points, hand winches, and sore muscles were the order of the day. Fifty years later, while much of the mining world was relying on geochemistry, geophysics, and diamond drilling to conduct mineral exploration, claimants around Keno Hill were still fashioning boilers from old fuel drums and sinking shafts by hand. Efforts to introduce more sophisticated methods into the area, even in the late 1950s, were haphazard

and usually less than rewarding. It was not until the 1960s that drilling methods were devised to successfully and, just as important, cheaply probe the subsurface.

Taken as a whole, *Hills of Silver* serves its various masters well. The residents of Keno Hill can continue to share their stories with each other and with their visitors. While many of the characters can be found in any mining camp saga, they need to be encountered somewhere if one is to have a fuller understanding of the day-to-day life of what is all too often presented as a romance. Anyone digging deeper into the stories can find the common threads that bind one camp to another and that make them all part of the larger world. Technically, exploration in the area had to overcome special problems associated with the deep, frozen ground. Once mastered, the techniques persisted long after other methods became available. *Hills of Silver* can be an amusing and informative read. How that happens depends on what the reader brings to the book.

*Salmon Farming:  
The Whole Story*

Peter A. Robson

Surrey, BC: Heritage House  
Publishing, 2006. 272 pp.  
Illus. \$19.95 paper.

DOROTHEE SCHREIBER  
*McGill University*

*SALMON FARMING: The Whole Story* is not the "whole story," but it is certainly the standard story that fish farmers like to tell of an industry maligned by "constant high-profile public opposition" (18). Peter Robson

presents himself as an honest broker who will provide readers with the facts they need to form their own opinions. He covers a wide range of topics, from the development of the industry on the coast, to how fish are reared, how fish feeds are produced, how fish farming sites are chosen, and how farmed fish are treated for disease. Approximately half the book is devoted to explaining the impacts of fish farming on wild fish and marine habitat through the transfer of disease, the release of waste and contaminants, and fish farm escapes. The final chapter evaluates the health impacts of eating farmed fish.

Despite this apparently thorough treatment of the topic, Robson uncritically presents a claim frequently made by fish farmers themselves: that it is in the operators' own best economic interest to operate on a sustainable basis. He also assumes that the high density of regulation surrounding the industry means that the regulations are ecologically and medically relevant. Robson makes much of the absence of proof for fish farming's negative environmental impact, but such proof will continue to be elusive as fish farming on BC's coast continues as one giant, unreplicated experiment confounded by many other factors such as overfishing, logging, urbanization, and climate change. Robson greatly downplays fish farming's environmental impacts without examining how the burden of proof, and the power to operate in spite of great uncertainty are socially distributed, or how the networks of research and regulation are socially organized.

This book does a great disservice to readers by relying on folksy notions of biology to construct common-sense arguments about fish farming and the environment. For example, Robson uses a familiar survival-of-the-fittest

narrative to imply that the wild fish who succumb to sea lice infection were stressed and unhealthy and destined to die anyway. In arguing thus, Robson sets up fish farming as a model for nature, of which the wild populations are only bad copies. Fish farmers, he claims, put their fish in the pens "100 percent pathogen free" (65), while migrating wild fish are sources of infection in the ocean (153, 161) and on the spawning grounds, where "disease is rampant" (116). From this point of view, the fish farm is also a field site for ecological study – a vantage point and a point of comparison, from which ecological changes can be confidently assessed. Robson therefore takes fish farmers' observations – such as their highly contextualized experiences with farmed fish, disease loadings, treatment options, and seasonal runoff conditions (161) – as reliable comments on the state of the environment.

The most troubling example of this book's tendency to misuse biological concepts is in its calculation of the transfer efficiency of fish feed to farmed fish production (107). Robson's informants (a pair of fish feed manufacturers) claim this rate is around 88 percent. Such a rate is unheard-of in the mainstream ecological literature, where transfer efficiencies for fish and other vertebrates tend to be on the order of 10 percent or less. The calculation Robson presents assumes that farmed salmon are vastly more efficient than wild fish in converting food into body mass because they do not have to expend much energy to search for food, migrate or spawn. But Robson and his informants do not take into account any of the energy used to capture, manufacture, and transport farmed fish feed, and assume that the refuse from the process is not wasted because it can be used to feed animals in other livestock industries. This is

creative ecological reasoning, to say the least.

The book is peppered with some interesting facts. Who would have thought that selenium deficiency in fish feed was nearly a showstopper in the early days of the BC salmon farming industry (34)? Or that the early maturation of male salmon – known as “jacking” in the wild – also takes place in the fish farm environment (75)?

For the most part, however, readers interested in an overview of salmon farming issues would be better served by reading *A Stain Upon the Sea: West Coast Salmon Farming*, by Stephen Hume, Alexandra Morton, Betty Keller, Rosella M. Leslie, Otto Langer, and Don Staniford, a volume that is openly critical of fish farming, but that is more honest in its assumptions and more careful in its treatment of government and industry facts, studies, and regulatory regimes.

*Whiskey Bullets: Cowboy and Indian Heritage Poems*

Garry Gottfriedson

Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 2006.  
95 pp. \$14.95 paper.

CONNIE BRIM

*Thompson Rivers University*

THE COVER OF Garry Gottfriedson's book promises us a collection of traditional cowboy poetry. Exposed on a wood-grained surface are a pair of silver spurs, feathers, leather collar, and two bullets, one of which is submerged in a shot glass filled with golden whisky. Because illustrator William McAusland's images are reminiscent of those found in so many twentieth-century westerns, we anticipate poems

about riding the range, drinking whisky and playing five-card stud at the dusty saloon, and a rousing shoot-em-up between “cowboys and Indians” – all in the standard language and metre favoured by cowboy poets such as Sid Marty, Harvey Mawson, Thelma Poirier, and Mike Puhallo.

The cover art, however, could not be more deceptive. Gottfriedson certainly incorporates into his second collection of poetry images such as cowboy hats, weather-beaten saddles, and cracked halters so central to western Canadian life on the range. He also refers to legendary Hollywood cowboys such as the Lone Ranger. But, in “Tonto and the Lone Ranger,” Gottfriedson unmasks the Lone Ranger as a figure of fantasy from “hallucinating reality tv” (46), and in “Feminist's Thought” the narrator explores the code of masculinity that compels cowboys to participate in rodeo/ranching activities that include “ride'n wild bareback slide'n / spurs shoulder long until the knees / jerk delight” (27). *Whiskey Bullets* pays tribute to traditional cowboy poetry in its broad borrowing of the genre's standard images, but it dramatically revises it: replacing the lone, silent, white cowboy are Aboriginal cowboys who crack the whip, observe council politics, lecture on alternative histories, participate in rodeos, speak of love, and write poetry.

*Whiskey Bullets* consists of seventy-two poems divided into four sections: “Koyoti Indian,” “Copenhagen Cave,” “Whiskey Bullets,” and “Shadow Walk.” Scattered throughout the latter two sections are brief lyrics of love, several of which explore the nature of the narrator's relationship with the mythic Horsechild. Another recurrent and central figure, this one loosely uniting all four sections, is Koyoti, the ubiquitous shapeshifter, who,

according to “Koyoti Moon Story,” “can turn himself into anything / including words” (35). Most of the poems, however, offer insight into the world of the working Aboriginal cowboy/poet, and here Gottfriedson’s commitment to ranching and writing prevails.

A member of the Secwepemc First Nation, Gottfriedson is a Kamloops-based rancher, arts educator, and political activist, and *Whiskey Bullets* attests to both his heritage and his passionate political interests. Gottfriedson’s father was of Danish/Okanagan descent, a professional rodeo cowboy, and he taught the cowboy code to his son – a crucial lesson Gottfriedson acknowledges in “Cowboy Up,” when he recalls that he has “never forgotten / dad showed me / all the secrets to / being a cowboy” (60). His mother was French/Secwepemc, and from her Gottfriedson acquired the language of this Shusway tribe. Secwepemc is used sparingly in several poems, but the presence of both Secwepemc and English in these poems reminds us that hybridity may be not only racial and professional but also linguistic.

Most provocative in *Whiskey Bullets* are the poems with a political, even polemical, sensibility. From these poems emerges the voice of Gottfriedson the political activist and Gottfriedson the educator who wishes to inform the audience about a marginalized people – and the political and social issues

still facing Aboriginal peoples today. Poems such as “Strep Throat,” with its exposure of the faith-breaking, “bad-mouthed Canadians” (33) who forced Aboriginals onto “land cramped by starvation,” (33) insist that we learn alternative histories – an idea playfully revisited in the collection’s only prose poem, “Caucasian Young Men Cattle Rounder-uppers (Cowboys) and First Nations (Indians),” in which the teaching narrator mockingly advises his audience to “resort to your dominant culture interpretive history texts” after he is overwhelmed by the demands of politically correct speech (23). If the dominant culture chooses not to learn, if it fails to effect change, Gottfriedson suggests there will be consequences. And so, in “Fly Spray,” the image of an Aboriginal observing a fly’s landing cryptically transforms into the appropriation of “Indian possessions” (20), only to end with the warning: “but remember / the cupboard is full of / Raid” (20).

*Whiskey Bullets* requires readers to engage with contemporary political issues, whether the poem’s subject is appropriation of Native lands, feminist bullies, disquieting band politics, postcolonial rhetoric, or the handless and murdered Anna Mae Aquash. And Gottfriedson demands that readers – all of us – engage with these issues, not intellectually, but emotionally, viscerally.