BOOK REVIEWS

Leaving Paradise: Indigenous Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest, 1787-1898

Jean Barman and Bruce McIntyre Watson

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i
Press, 2006. 513 pp. Illus.
US$45.00 cloth.

Jennifer Brown
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In this book, Jean Barman and Bruce Watson tell a remarkable and little-known story – that of the many hundreds of Hawaiian Islanders who, for more than a century, came to work in the Pacific Northwest. Barman and Watson have organized massive amounts of detailed and often fragmentary material into a clear and insightful narrative. This book is a comprehensive study of the indigenous Hawaiians who came to the Pacific Northwest from the late 1700s to 1898, when Hawaii was annexed to the United States. Scholars of the western fur trade are familiar with the terms "Kanaka" and "Sandwich Islanders," which refer to the Hawaiians who worked for the North West Company (NWC) and, later, for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in the early to mid-1800s. But until now they and other students of Pacific Northwest history have had no means of grasping the dynamics and scale of the Hawaiian presence in the region during this period.

The first half of the book consists of nine chapters that track the Hawaiians in the northwest from the earliest maritime arrivals to the sojourners and residents who found themselves in either the United States or British territory after the Oregon Treaty of 1846. At first, a few Hawaiians joined the ships' crews of explorers, and then of entrepreneurs, who exploited the sea otter trade in the early 1800s. Others joined the early land-based fur trade to work for the short-lived American trading enterprise at Fort Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1811-12. When the NWC took over that post in 1813, it acquired and benefited from the productive labour of the twenty-two Hawaiians who were serving there (54). The book effectively lays out the social changes and pressures in Hawaii that encouraged these men and their successors to "leave paradise" as missionaries and other newcomers challenged and changed lifeways and traditional governance and socioeconomic structures on their home islands.

When the NWC and the HBC merged in 1821, the NWC Hawaiians were "seamlessly absorbed into the HBC's workforce" and praised for their usefulness. Often employed as guards against possible hostilities from Aboriginal people, the Hawaiians were seen as ethnically distinct from the latter, even though they themselves were lumped together, unnamed or known only by nicknames, owing to their employers' inability to comprehend their language (63-64). Although numbers of Hawaiian men eventually established families with Aboriginal women, the groups were distinguished from one another both by observers and by their own members.

From the 1830s onward, Hawaiians increasingly found work in the mission stations that began to be founded in the Pacific Northwest. American missionaries had been busy converting Hawaiians in their home islands, but in this region the missions were focused on Aboriginal people with whom relations were sometimes hostile. As it turned out, the Hawaiians in this region, rather than being objects of conversion, were often "the missionaries' protectors against the very people they were there to save" (132).

The Oregon Treaty of 1846 imposed a new dynamic on the Hawaiians who had made the region their home as they found themselves under two rather different regimes. The HBC was obliged to move its main base from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River to Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island. Incoming American settlers in the Oregon Territory had negative views of the local Hawaiians, owing both to their former British HBC connections and to their perceived racial features. "Dark Hawaiians," as they were described in the US Census of 1850, were uneasily lumped with Native people or blacks (or both), and prejudice flourished (138-39). To the north, the British authorities and their successors (British Columbia became a province of Canada in 1871) did not impose the racial laws that prevailed in Oregon, but newcomers during the BC gold rushes and after brought racial views that had high costs for both Hawaiians and Aboriginal people.

The authors follow their comparative study of conditions south and north of the forty-ninth parallel with a conclusion entitled "Moving across the Generations." Here they trace, through documents and interviews, descendants who have maintained family memories and Hawaiian identity to varying extents over the following century. The second half of the book, "Hawaiians and Other Polynesians in the Pacific Northwest," presents about eight hundred biographical entries documenting all the individuals whom Barman and Watson have been able to trace in the period up to 1898. Both scholars and descendants of these people will value this treasury of information on individuals who never got to record their own stories in their own words, yet who proved themselves to be resourceful survivors. In times when the indigenous population in Hawaii was being decimated and submerged by outside forces, the men who came to the Pacific Northwest found new livelihoods and established families and communities that still endure. Their story needed telling, and this book does a wonderful job of doing so.

The Many Faces of Edward Sherriff Curtis: Portraits and Stories from Native North America

Steadman Upham
and Nat Zappia

Seattle and London: Gilcrease
Museum and Thomas Gilcrease
Association, Tulsa, in association
with University of Washington
Press, 2006. 160 pp. Illus.
US$60.00 cloth, US$40.00 paper.

Mick Gidley
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I MUST DECLARE AN "interest" in this book. Its pictorial dimension consists of reproductions of superb sepia prints made from original glass negatives sold to the Capital Group Foundation by James Graybill, grandson of their maker, Edward S. Curtis. In the autumn of the millennial year, some of these prints were exhibited for the first time at Claremont Graduate University (CGU) (see *Edward S. Curtis: Contemporary Prints from Original Edward S. Curtis Glass Negative Plates*, published in 2000 by CGU's Galleries and Special Exhibition Programs). And, in celebration, CGU hosted a wonderful symposium at which I was privileged to speak, and during which participants were treated to a fine, festive meal at the home of the then CGU president, Steadman Upham, senior compiler of *Many Faces.*

As was the case for the original CGU exhibition, there is no doubt that *Many Faces* deserves commendation for its efforts to grant access to material that would otherwise be lost to sight in the darkness of a vault, to enhance Curtis's already formidable photographic reputation, and to foster interest in the cultures of Native American peoples. There is much about the efforts of Curtis and his team still to be discovered by scholars: it would be good, for example, to have a much more detailed chronology of the years, or the parts of years, that Curtis, E.A. Schwinke, Edwin Dalby, and others spent on the coasts of British Columbia, when they both collected data and made films and photographs (see Bill Holm and George Irving Quimby, *Edward S. Curtis in the Land of the War Canoes* [Seattle, 1980]). And there is much information that scholars have already uncovered that should be more widely known.

But *Many Faces* goes only a little way towards meeting these needs. It has two main elements, the visual and the verbal. The visual consists mainly of a wonderful array of portraits of eighty Indian individuals, broadly arranged by age, from the youngest, "Apache Babe," through a series of proud youths and such images as "A Young Mother – Taos," to the steady gazes of such mature figures as "Cheyenne Woman" and "A Zuni Governor," until our eyes come to rest on the faces of venerable figures, including "Chief Joseph – Nez Perce" and "A Southern Miwok Woman." Most of these images – like the few landscapes and depictions of everyday activities presented to set the scene, as it were – were originally printed in the pages of the monumental twenty-volume text, accompanied by twenty portfolios of large-size photogravures, that Curtis published as *The North American Indian* (*nai*) (1907-30). These are now readily available on the web at the American Memory site and in the Taschen book entitled *The North American Indian: The Complete Portfolios* (Koln, London, New York, 1997). However, some appear for the first time, including a haunted-looking young woman whose portrait is given the quizzical title "Unknown – Selawick Girl?" and an arresting likeness of the aged Angeline, daughter of Chief Sealth, or Seattle, from whom the city took its land and name. The latter, like others here, is a variation of a well-known Curtis portrait captured at the same time. It is a pity that the compilers of *Many Faces* do not distinguish these "new" images from those already in circulation. Nevertheless, visually this is a rich collection that gives both a sound representation of Curtis's style as a portrait maker and – except for being relatively sparse in its reproduction of Plains portraits and very weak on Northwest Coast peoples (to whom Curtis himself devoted considerable effort) – adequate coverage of the many indigenous culture areas and populations of western North America. And in beauty of presentation it rivals the various Curtis volumes produced in recent years by Christopher Cardozo, such as *Sacred Legacy* (New York, 2000).

The primary verbal element of *Many Faces* – the reproduction of myths and stories from *nai* – exhibits similar virtues and drawbacks to the visual dimension: this is wonderfully engrossing stuff, but the compilers have not identified from which volumes individual items were taken and, since a number of anthologies have been published to circulate material extracted from *nai*, including my own *The Vanishing Race: Selections from the North American Indian* (Seattle and London, 1976, 1987), it would have been helpful to know something of their more recent publication history. On the other hand, except for a discernible bias towards the mythology of California Indians, understandably beguiling as such stories are, the selection is taken from a goodly number of the original twenty volumes, most of which have a section set aside for myths and tales. Thus we get fascinating origin myths, accounts of the exploits of legendary warrior figures, and, as should be expected, quintessential Trickster tales featuring Coyote in all his deviousness. From the Northwest Coast there is an exciting Bella Bella Grizzly Bear story and an Aesopian Clayoquot fable entitled "Why Wolves Do Not Eat the Stomach of a Deer."

This mythopoetic material is printed exactly as it appeared in *nai* and, of course, it is immensely valuable, but this should not lead us to share the compilers' unproblematic view of it. They claim that, because it was recorded phonographically it did not rely "on potentially inaccurate translation and transcription" (40), as though we are being granted unmediated access to an indigenous essence. But it *was* transcribed and translated – however beautifully – by the North American Indian project, especially the principal ethnologist William E. Myers, who (rather than Curtis) was the main writer of the word text of *nai*. (For more on Myers, see my *Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian, Incorporated* [New York and Cambridge, 1998], and for other writers of *nai*, see my *Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian Project in the Field* [Lincoln, NE and London, 2003]). As many authorities on ethnopoetics have been concerned to inform us, translation – across languages, between different cultures, between the oral and the written – is hugely problematic (see, for example, Brian Swann's recent compilation *Voices from Four Directions: Contemporary Translations of the Native Literatures of North America* [Lincoln, NE and London, 2004]). *The North American Indian* is no exception. That said, it is good to have these stories in easily accessible book form. But it must also be regretted that, in marked contrast to the situation for their original readers, we are given no contextualizing information other than the name of the people from whom the material was collected.

The other verbal aspect of *Many Faces* consists of the essays provided jointly by the compilers. These are characterized by a tendency towards assertion rather than evidenced argument, at both macro and micro levels. At the macro level, they do contextualize the North American Indian project – but only in the most general terms, by invoking the historical sweep of colonialism worldwide, by outlining US policies towards indigenous peoples, and by giving a brief retelling of the ethnological endeavours of the Curtis team. Here, in contrast to their view of the mythopoetic material, they do mention that Curtis's photographs have been the subject of some controversy, and, while it would have been better to have a thorough airing of their reasoning rather than mere statement, I accept their ultimate estimation that his images are cultural artefacts of immeasurable value. The portraits especially – though always freighted with the ideology of conquest and sometimes framed to transpose their subjects into a dreamtime beyond the machinations of history – can grant an almost uncanny sense of an individual's ontological presence, and, as Upham and Zappia imply, they frequently intimate the capacity of embattled cultures to endure.

At the micro level, there are several points that, given more space, I would dispute, but there is one that must be mentioned because it has inflected the very title of the book: the spelling of Curtis's middle name, which was the maiden name of Ellen Sherriff, his mother. Upham and Zappia correctly print it with two *r*s, whereas many previous writers – including Curtis's daughter Florence Curtis Graybill, in the title of her book with Victor Boesen, *Edward Sheriff Curtis: Visions of a Vanishing Race* (New York, 1976) – give it only one. (I confess that, on checking, I find that I have been inconsistent myself.) Documentary evidence for their view exists, including a family tree in the family Bible inherited by Curtis's niece, but it is typical that Upham and Zappia offer only a footnote acknowledging James Graybill as their source. *Many Faces* is a beautifully designed coffee table book; increased rigour could have turned it also into a contribution to knowledge.

Maps of Experience: The Anchoring of Land to Story in Secwepemc Discourse

Andie Diane Palmer

Toronto: University of Toronto
Press, 2005. 260 pp. Maps, illus.
$50.00 cloth, $24.95 paper.

David Dinwoodie
University of New Mexico

Presented as a discourse-centred approach to understanding land-story relations in Secwepemc experience, *Maps of Experience* provides candid and powerful insights into contemporary First Nations experiences. The book establishes a place for itself in the remarkable ethnographic tradition that runs from James Teit through to Elizabeth Furniss (via Hugh Brody, Robin Ridington, Antonia Mills, and Julie Cruikshank). The book includes a preface, seven chapters, and an appendix including select transcriptions. Among the chapters are an introduction outlining the relevant theoretical literatures and a chapter sketching out the historical background. The historical chapter marshalls primary sources in its effort to address responses to colonialism. Photos (18), maps (7), and figures (2) are distributed effectively throughout.

The original ethnographic-discursive material is in Chapters 4 through 6. "While travelling past specific places on hunting and gathering expeditions, travellers from Alkali Lake often comment on the features of the land, and relate what is remembered about those places" (88). Such commentary is presented in Chapter 4, "Maps," by way of reference to eight key cultural sites along a historic and heavily used Fraser Canyon route through Secwepemc territory – Dog Creek Road. Passing one such site while riding in the author's car, for example, Angela George observes, "This is a place, too, they call it Nuklawt [stress over a]. That's where we get wild rhubarb in the springtime" (106). George then elaborates on the use of rhubarb. Palmer documented enough material in her travels to prepare several commentaries for each place. Many are brief and to the point; some are lengthy.

In Chapter 5, "Story," Palmer addresses the shifting circumstances in which the residents of Alkali Lake summon cultural narratives. The decline of narrative traditions was an issue in even the earliest major ethnographic study, which was conducted in 1909. And, as Palmer notes, much of contemporary life seems devoid of Secwepemc cultural narrative. Still, she finds that, in the presence of children as in the shadow of death, the tradition reasserts itself vigorously. David Johnson and Angela George relate cultural narratives in such circumstances; Palmer's transcriptions are meticulous and her interpretations are modest, careful, and insightful.

In Chapter 6, "Memories," Palmer discusses two distinct narrative styles employed in the telling of life histories, "one [of which] is a stylistic adaptation of a non-Indigenous form and involves the careful retelling of a life story in a chronologically linear style with minimal audience participation":

> Liquor was open for four years for
> the Indians before I
> started drinking and four years
> because everybody drinks
> [eight lines deleted]
> it was over and over
> my life
>
> But now that I stayed sober for
> ten years
> and I see lots of things
> Lots a nice things that I seen lots
> of good friends …
> when I hear that drumming
> my heart goes dancing first before
> my feet goes dancing. (146-47)

Angela George calls the other "'telling my life.' In it the listener is invited into the interaction and is engaged in many discrete segments, each strongly linked to place" (136). Passing Joe's Lake, where she and her husband once encountered bears, George observed:

> Angela:
> One time me and Jimmy was
> going around in there hunting
> we was on foot and the one bear
> had three little ones there playing
> on them trees them. He had two
> black ones and one white one I
> would like to get the white one
>
> AP:
> *Yeah*
>
> Angela:
> But Jimmy wouldn't want to kill
> him. Oh, he say, "He must have
> like his kids just like you."

> [*laughter*]
> I wanted the white one they were nice and small yet. He say, "That bear loves his little ones just like you." [151]

On another occasion, a week later and apparently on another route, this time with two of George's grandchildren in the back seat, she returned to the theme of shooting bears:

> Angela:
> My mom musta shoot some bear in there. Round there there were two bears and he kill them. My stepfather wasn't supposed to kill it and my mom kill it herself. She shoot it with a big rifle.
>
> AP:
> How come he wasn't supposed to shoot it?
>
> Angela:
> Just like in olden days. Jimmy didn't believe it you're not supposed to kill a bear and he did kill a bear and our boy died. It's supposed to be like that. (153)

Palmer makes no attempt to ascertain precisely what events underlie this narrative chiastic couple, one of the more powerful if indeterminate verbal gestures to appear in the recent ethnographic record. Quite apart from any theoretical or methodological orientation, it is her ability to listen, her commitment to hearing the people of Alkali Lake, that brings these reflections to light.

With its careful transcription of speech-in-context (primarily Secwepemc English), and with its delineation of location as a communicative factor, the *Maps of Experience* certainly contributes to discourse-centred ethnography and to the burgeoning ethnographic literature on space and place. Beyond these immediate emphases, the work shows the influence of the new ethnography, as the approach is described in Harold Conklin's entry, "Ethnography," in the 1968 *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Palmer uses the basic principles of the new ethnography lightly and effectively to highlight patterns of talk and many remarkable departures therefrom. She does this without ever succumbing to the idea that human behaviour is meaningful only insofar as it follows rules. As a result, in some stretches of remarkable observation and writing, the reader shares privileged glimpses of living experience.

Switchbacks: Art, Ownership, and Nuxalk National Identity

Jennifer Kramer

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006.
168 pp. Maps. $85.00 cloth,
$29.95 paper.

Judith Ostrowitz
New York

Jennifer Kramer's book describes some recent negotiations of public representation and the incipient construction of national identity through the disposition of works of art by the Nuxalk people of Bella Coola, British Columbia. This book appears during what may be described as a "post-celebratory" phase of scholarship regarding artistic revival in the Northwest Coast region. Many anthropological and art historical works have been dedicated to the identification of proper standards of authenticity for Northwest Coast art since the mid-1960s.[1] The delineation of stylistic criteria was considered necessary when art professionals first sought legitimization for these works in order to honour the achievements of master artists of the region and to ensure their inclusion among venerated art traditions the world over. However, since the 1990s, greater agency has been claimed by Aboriginal players, resulting in greater scholarly attention to the powerful influence of transcultural negotiations within complex social environments on artistic production.[2] In *Switchbacks*, Kramer focuses upon such negotiations among contemporary Nuxalk people as they struggle to conceptualize a new type of sovereignty – namely, the authority to regulate the proper context for works of art in traditional style for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal consumption.

Kramer discusses a "fear of theft" that has developed among the Nuxalk in response to historical loss not only of works of art but also of language, ceremonial practices, the land itself, and a generation of children. The latter was "lost" to the residential schools, where children were distanced both physically and mentally from their origins under the supervision of non-Aboriginal authorities. Today, contemporary Nuxalk artists must consider these histories and their consequences when faced with the opportunity to display and sell their work to outsiders under the sharp (and sometimes critical) gaze of their home community, whose members have powerful memories and opinions. One result is that Nuxalk chiefs, both elected and hereditary, now take their roles as custodians of traditional territory and as the proper arbiters of cultural representation quite seriously.

Kramer carried out fieldwork in the Bella Coola Valley over a sixteen-month period, observing as the Nuxalk

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[1] Foremost among sources for the delineation of formalist criteria for Northwest Coast art are Bill Holm, *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965); Peter L. Macnair, Alan L. Hoover, and Kevin Neary, *The Legacy: Tradition and Innovation in Northwest Coast Indian Art* (Vancouver and Toronto/Seattle: Douglas and MacIntyre/University of Washington Press, 1984); Steven C. Brown, *Native Visions: Evolution in Northwest Coast Art from the Eighteenth through the Twentieth Century* (Seattle and London: Seattle Art Museum in Association with the University of Washington Press, 1998). Several contributions by Robin K. Wright focused upon delineating stylistic evidence for works of traditional Northwest Coast art by particular master artists. Among these are "Anonymous Attributions: A Tribute to a Mid-19th-Century Haida Argillite Carver, the Master of the Long Fingers," in *Box of Daylight: Northwest Coast Indian Art*, ed. Bill Holm (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 1983); and "Two Haida Artists from Yan: Will John Gwaytihl and Simeon Stilthda Please Step Apart?" *American Indian Art Magazine* 23, 3 (1998): 42-557, 106-7.

[2] A great many works that have provided new insight into social contexts for the production of Aboriginal art and strategies for public display, not just in the Northwest Coast region, might be mentioned here. Among these are James Clifford, *Routes: Travels and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1997); George E. Marcus. and Fred R. Myers, eds., *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Judith Ostrowitz, *Privileging the Past: Reconstructing History in Northwest Coast Art* (Seattle and London/Vancouver: University of Washington Press/UBC Press, 1999); Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* (Seattle and London/Montreal and Kingston: University of Washington Press/McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998); and Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, eds., *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

made and remade aspects of their own public identity. Most interestingly, her experiences caused her to consider the possibility of cultural appropriation as an aspect of her own research and writing project. In *Switchbacks* she fearlessly examines the implications of her own processes. Some community members had insisted that she justify her work. They suggested that the information she sought would become her own valuable property to be used to earn her university degree and, ultimately, to qualify her to earn a good living and to claim a prestigious title. She was also required to address accusations related to any profit that she might eventually gain by publishing her book (an unlikely scenario for an academic book, no matter how positively received). Her introspection about these matters grew as she observed the strategies of community members who knew the power of information and the repercussions of its dissemination. Kramer came to understand the meaning in silences as well as she understood the information that was shared with her. As she succinctly puts it, "How did I deal with Nuxalk reactions of avoidance, anger and silence? I made them the centre of my study" (21). Her understanding of these processes as "content" is at the core of *Switchbacks*.

Kramer concludes that her writing about Bella Coola is indeed a type of theft (21), and this results in a great deal of reticence on her part. She decided not to include any photographs in the book and to omit personal names unless an individual was deceased and had already been mentioned in earlier publications (22). This strategy is difficult to evaluate. Kramer's scrupulous avoidance of appropriation, acts of disrespect, and, of course, public censure is laudable. Yet images of specific objects are unique and important historical markers of the cultural processes that she describes, and they would have provided an added dimension to *Switchbacks*, although they certainly would have been problematic. However, it is possible that, through a process of respectfully negotiating permissions, additional insight might have been gained. In addition, when specific objects are not illustrated and individuals are not named, a certain generalization about "the Nuxalk" is constructed, as though there were consensus among them (Kramer clearly conveys that this is not the case). This parallels the development of a national identity, a process that is now usefully embraced by the Nuxalk themselves and allows them, as Kramer shows, to achieve important goals. However, any suggestion of unity or of the anonymity of particular artists or other culture-bearers in ethnographic literature is a different matter and an inadvertent product of this approach. For example, Kramer uses the outdated term "informant" rather than naming her sources, and this is reminiscent of the unfortunate absence in the historical record of the names of individual Aboriginal artists and other participants who made important contributions to the publications of anthropologists in the nineteenth century as well as to the cultural practices of their own communities – yet another kind of theft that has since been justly criticized. Interestingly, on page 105, Kramer herself discusses this approach as a historical phenomenon, making it clear that she is well aware of the loss of information consequent upon its use. At the very least, as a result of Kramer's decisions, some nuance is lost in the historical documentation of shifting notions about ownership among specific

Nuxalk thinkers during the last decade of the twentieth century.

Strategic generalization of identity among the Nuxalk themselves is a different matter. Kramer reports some new public presentations of hereditary dances as common property in Bella Coola. For example, play potlatches are held for educational purposes at the local school. In this environment, some dances have been treated as though they were communal property. Although there is no consensus on this topic, some Nuxalk fear that restricting dance display at these events according to traditional prerogative might cause proscribed examples to be forgotten entirely. Kramer also suggests that excessive emphasis on the exclusivity of crest art prerogative and dance privilege might reflect what are actually Western academic definitions of Nuxalk art – definitions that are more relevant to the evaluations of authenticity made by outsiders than they are to the Nuxalk (10). It is worth noting that preservation of traditional criteria for such prerogatives varies greatly from group to group in the region. It remains a central concern for many.

The current use of collective ownership as a strategy for nation building among the Nuxalk themselves constitutes genuine cultural practice. Tactics like these reflect legitimate efforts by community members to become more effective gatekeepers, although they may be inconsistent with traditional practices. However, Kramer astutely observes that gatekeeping itself is somehow conceptually related to traditional ideas and practices of privileged access to images, songs, and dances among important groups and individuals on the Northwest Coast. In doing so, she provides her readers with additional insight into the contemporary translation of traditional cultures among First Nations of the region. At each turn in these ongoing processes, circumstances are rigorously negotiated because they are considered crucial by members of living communities. Kramer's observations on these vital activities and opinions are enlightening, challenging, and exciting to read about, even as circumstance change before our eyes.

Haida Gwaii: Human History and Environment from the Time of Loon to the Time of the Iron People

Daryl W. Fedje and
Rolf W. Mathewes, editors

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005. 448
pp. Maps, illus. $95.00 cloth,
$39.95 paper.

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Simon Fraser University

This edited volume, which consists of sixteen chapters plus two forewords, a preface, and a conclusion, has twenty-nine contributors. Its focus is the Parks Canada Gwaii Haanas Archaeology and Paleoecology project, which reports primarily on the late Pleistocene and Early Holocene history of human occupation and the environmental context of the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve on the islands of Haida Gwaii (the Queen Charlotte Islands). Some material on late Holocene-age archaeological sites is presented, but this is not the focus of the book. The time period is the last 15,000 years of environmental history, over which is superimposed approximately 10,500 years of human history. This range involves research from several paleoenvironmental disciplines, and this ensures that *Haida Gwaii* offers a genuinely interdisciplinary methodological approach to its material. The volume is divided into three parts: paleoenvironmental history (six chapters), Haida traditional history (two chapters), and archaeological research (eight chapters). It is rich in descriptive data and research questions pertaining to early Holocene human and environmental history, and it includes very high-quality maps, graphs, and photographs.

The chapters of Part 1 present data and interpretations of the archaeological-paleoecological project with a view to understanding the environmental context of a late Pleistocene coastal migration route, including the chronology and extent of sea level change, the potential for fauna and vegetation refugia, and the development and evolution of the marine and terrestrial ecosystems of the Islands with regard to their human use. Barrie et al. present the Late Quaternary geology; Fedje et al. identify paleoshorelines; Lacourse and Mathewes evaluate the potential for a coastal migration route on the continental shelf; Hebda et al. construct a vegetation sequence from Anthony Island and identify anthropogenic changes; Reimchen and Byun evaluate data for endemic species as they pertain to identifying glacial refugia; and Wigen identifies faunal evidence that indicates long-standing rich marine ecosystems for the islands for at least the last 9,500 years.

There are just two chapters in the second part of the volume, and they explore Haida oral history as it is related to past environmental events. The first chapter, by Wilson and Harris, addresses the nature of oral history and provides examples of how environmental events (sea level rise, climatic cooling and warming, ice advances, vegetation change, earthquakes, and tidal waves) are found in the oral histories of the Haida people. Ethnographers recorded most of the stories in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The second chapter by Young, a traditionally trained Haida historian, relates the story of Haida origins and rejects the idea of an Asian origin for his people. It is unfortunate that this part of *Haida Gwaii* is not integrated into the final interpretations and conclusions of the volume.

Part 3 focuses on the archaeology of the project area, addressing questions surrounding cultural chronology, the nature of maritime subsistence over time, the significance of the microblade technology on the northern coast, and settlement patterns. The chapter by Fedje et al. describes the site of Kilgii Gwaay, which contains several perishable and non-perishable artefacts as well as an important faunal assemblage indicating a diversified marine subsistence economy. In their chapter, Fedje, Magne, and Christensen present the testing undertaken at raised beach terrace sites, including the Richardson Island site, which shows the well-stratified and dated transition from bifacial (Kinggi Complex) to microblade (Moresby tradition) lithic technology that occurred around 8900 BP. The beginning of shell midden deposits after 5200 BP, and the appearance of ground stone technology at the Cohoe Creek site, is discussed by Christensen and Stafford, along with faunal remains that include caribou. The last three chapters in this section of the volume focus on the Middle to Late Holocene Graham Tradition, such as found at the Blue Jackets Creek site, and move into the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with a discussion of changes in settlement patterns as population declined and villages amalgamated after European contact.

A separate concluding chapter by Fedje and Mathewes provides a succinct overview of the results of the various paleoecological and archaeological studies, indicating that, in Haida Gwaii, cultural adaptations to changing environments were conservative. It suggests that adaptations in technology, resource utilization, and settlement patterns are reflective of in situ cultural modifications rather than population replacement. *Haida Gwaii* as a whole is well-written and dense with data. It is geographically specific to one important region of the larger Northwest Coast culture area (the Queen Charlotte Islands), and it presents a valuable case study of interdisciplinary research in the paleoenvironmental sciences and archaeology. This is a book that should be read by all scholars of Northwest Coast prehistory. It would also make a useful supplementary case study text for courses in Pacific coast prehistory, environmental archaeology, and the anthropology of indigenous maritime societies.

Public Power, Private Dams: The Hell's Canyon High Dam Controversy

Karl Boyd Brooks

Seattle: University of Washington
Press, 2006. 250 pp. Maps, illus.
US$35.00 cloth.

Tina Loo
University of British Columbia

This is a book about why something did not happen. It is not quite counter-factual history, but it is an approach that works to remind us that nothing is inevitable. In the postwar Northwest, nothing, according to Karl Boyd Brooks, seemed more inevitable than the Hell's Canyon High Dam on the Snake River in Idaho.

A project of the United States Department of the Interior, Hell's Canyon was designed to meet the insatiable demand for electricity. Delivered by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), another federal agency, the electricity generated by the dams on the Columbia River powered the rapid economic growth of the region in the 1930s and 1940s. From the BPA's perspective, it seemed only logical and desirable that hydroelectric development be extended to the Snake River basin, the Columbia's largest tributary. Damming the Snake at Hell's Canyon would also have the added benefit of watering millions of acres of high arid land, making them cultivable. But it was not to be; instead, after a long administrative hearing, three small dams were built on the Snake by the privately held Idaho Power Company.

Karl Boyd Brooks wants to know how and why this happened. His answers bear the imprint of his background as a lawyer and Idaho state senator turned environmental historian. *Pubic Power, Private Dams* is a largely chronological rendering of the protracted battle over the Hell's Canyon High Dam, characterized by a close attention to detail and a careful narrative style.

While the controversy pitted a variety of interest groups and personalities against each other, Brooks argues that Hell's Canyon was the victim of a conservative backlash against the increasing federal government control over resources that occurred as part of the New Deal. Federal bureaucrats got into the business of electricity generation in the 1930s, during the Great Depression, building the Grand Coulee Dam as a public works project. Pearl Harbor and what followed only deepened federal government involvement: the US war machine ran on electricity, and it was in the public interest that Washington centralize and coordinate it. While two crises helped expand the federal state, Americans came to view its involvement in resource development as almost natural and certainly good.

The New Deal forged a political consensus that made it possible for entire river basins and their fish to be federalized without opposition. By fusing social reform with economic benefit, the electricity generated by Grand Coulee and the Tennessee Valley Authority (the other great hydroelectric initiative of the time) lit the way for continued and greater federal government control in the postwar years.

Supporters of Hell's Canyon invoked the legacy of those two projects, portraying public power as more responsive than private power to the needs of ordinary people. Only a project of this scale could meet growing consumer demand for electricity and serve the interests of irrigators. In the end, however, Idaho Power won the ideological battle, arguing that the only interests supporters of public power served were their own: Hell's Canyon would deepen federal government control over natural resource and economic development. Despite assurances to the contrary, irrigators could find their water rights seized and agricultural interests subsumed within those of electricity. Big dams were a tool of big government, designed to take away local control.

The debate over public versus private power spilled over into the 1952 presidential election, which Brooks argues was a referendum on the New Deal and its relevance in the postwar period. Eisenhower's victory sounded a death knell for Hell's Canyon and signalled a fundamental shift in Washington's role. Thereafter, the US federal government would no longer be in the business of generating power but would seek partnerships with private enterprise.

Equally important, Brooks suggests, the conservative victory in 1952 and the shelving of Hell's Canyon in 1957 marked the beginnings of modern environmental politics. With hydro expansion slowed, but demand for electricity met, Americans had space to reflect on the assumptions underlying the debate over public versus private power and New Deal resource policy. Ecological values, marginalized in the previous thirty years of discussion, came to the fore and, eventually, would play a central role in defining public interest.

Brooks's book should be of interest to this journal's readers for, despite the different political and constitutional context within which his story unfolds, several aspects of the debate over public versus private power resonate in British Columbia. One of its most interesting insights regards the social, economic, and environmental effects of public power. In the Hell's Canyon debate, Idaho Power took issue with government projections of electricity demand, suggesting that federal agencies like the BPA had a vested interest in inflating demand, raising the spectre of electricity shortages, brownouts, and slowed growth to convince citizens of the need for its ambitious program of dam-building. In the Northwest, government agencies like Bonneville Power used supply to create demand, artificially suppressing the price of electricity as a way to cultivate residential, commercial, and industrial consumers.

While economic development did occur as a result, the legacy of cheap, available electricity is much more mixed. Brooks argues that vast supplies encouraged overuse, noting that the rates of electricity consumption in the Northwest are among the highest in the United States. Private companies, he argues, would have generated electricity more in proportion to demand, selling it at a price that reflected the real costs of generation. Perhaps economic development in the Columbia Basin would not have been so extensive (and that might not have been a bad thing) but neither would the environmental destruction that accompanied it. Nor, moreover, would there have been a sense that cheap power was a birthright. Until the hidden costs of electricity generation are revealed, Brooks suggests, public power will continue to occupy a moral high ground it does not entirely deserve.

These are provocative arguments – and ones that are relevant within the context of the current debate about electricity supply in British Columbia. However, the emphasis on the merits of public versus private generation can oversimplify the issues now at stake. Private power may indeed have been the more environmentally sound option within the context of the existing possibilities for the Snake River in the late 1950s and 1960s. But that does not mean that it is always better. I would suggest that the issue is not so much who generates hydroelectricity as it is the kind of regulatory regime that governments – and ultimately citizens – put in place to manage that generation, whether it happens to be carried out by the state or by a private-sector provider.

Arthur Erickson: Critical Works

Nicholas Olsberg and
Ricardo L. Castro, with essays
by Edward Dimendberg,
Laurent Stalder,
and Georges Teyssot

Vancouver/Toronto and Seattle:
Douglas and McIntyre,
Vancouver Art Gallery, and
University of Washington Press,
2006. 192 pp. Photographs, sketches,
models, plans, sections,
perspectives, elevations. $75 cloth.

Jill Wade
Thompson Rivers University

No postwar Canadian architect is as widely known as is Arthur Erickson. Some commentators refer to him as an architectural star and a Canadian icon. Still others argue that, while many in this country revere him and while the international architectural press has covered him since the mid-1950s, he is not appreciated to the same extent abroad.

This splendid hardcover book, published concurrently with the Vancouver Art Gallery's exhibition of the same title, firmly establishes Erickson as an important player on the West Coast, in Canada, and on the international stage. Last year's exhibition was the third, the largest, and the most critical show of Erickson's work assembled by the gallery, and the book, which appeared simultaneously in Vancouver and Seattle, is the first critique of Erickson's best built work. Nicholas Olsberg and Ricardo L. Castro, the architectural historians responsible for both book and exhibition, chose to work with three international critics – Edward Dimendberg, Laurent Stalder, and Georges Teyssot – all with ties to

Olsberg through Quebec's universities and Montreal's Canadian Centre for Architecture. Olsberg introduces the book with an overview of Erickson's life, work, and influences. Thereafter, each of three symmetrical sections contains an essay by Olsberg, a portfolio of spectacular plates of selected works photographed by Castro, and a closing review by one of the three critics.

The critical dimension of the book is a vital and timely addition to the literature by and about Erickson. Until now, we have had a glowing biography by Edith Iglauer, two handsome books by the architect himself, an impressive number of articles in the national and international journals and in the Canadian media dating back over fifty years, and even some negative press, as the Vancouver journalist Donald Gutstein revealed in 1974 in the first issue of *City Magazine*. The nation's prominent architectural writers, such as Harold Kalman, the architectural historian who wrote the classic *A History of Canadian Architecture* (1994), and Lisa Rochon, the Toronto *Globe and Mail* critic who recently published *Up North: Where Canada's Architecture Meets the Land* (2005), have featured Erickson in their books. The fully researched monograph by Olsberg and Castro reinforces the renewed interest in and intense scrutiny of the modern movement in this country as seen in the abundance of new books about Canadian modernism (some of which Douglas and McIntyre have also published) and in several architectural historical conferences, including one in 2005 at the Erickson-designed University of Lethbridge. Thus, the first truly critical book about Erickson has arrived at an appropriate moment.

For Olsberg, what distinguishes Erickson is his conceptualization of architecture within the context of time and space, whether landscape or cityscape, and of culture. Olsberg centres the book upon twelve "critical," or architecturally significant, projects according to three "horizons" in time and space – namely, infinity, enclosure, and affinity – and he reveals the cultural references of each project. Thus, the space through which one walks in the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology leads to infinity and recalls memories of a Haida longhouse, whereas, at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, the pattern of movement through time and space is enclosed and raises cultural references to physical exercise, social exchange, and knowledge as varied as Pergamon and Oxford. Then again, at Robson Square in downtown Vancouver, the horizontally configured Law Courts, provincial government offices, and Vancouver Art Gallery convey ideals of a transparent judicial system, an administratively discreet state, and a free yet ordered civic artistic life, while the pedestrian passageways join the square's various components and interact with the urban surroundings. In each instance, the idea from which the design process flows through models and drawings to realization is invariably powerful, and, as many would assert, that concept transcends the particular to reach some universal truth. In other words, Erickson is as much an artist and a philosopher as an architect.

In the opinion of Olsberg and the critics, the local and international influences on Erickson's perception of space, time, and culture are of great formative consequence. Those influences include the West Coast landscape, the early intervention of the artist and theosophist Lawren Harris, the encounter in Vancouver in the 1950s with the modernist Richard J. Neutra, and the First Nations traditions of coastal British Columbia. As a young man, Erickson came across illustrations of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, and he became familiar with the work of other masters of modern architecture through his teachers, particularly the design instructor Gordon Webber, in the architecture school at McGill University. Of utmost importance were the journeys afforded to Erickson through his service in the Second World War, his travelling scholarship from McGill, and his opportunities to visit and work in Japan and the Middle East.

In the end, the critics confirm Erickson's singular importance as an architect at home and abroad but cannot agree on whether Erickson is a late modernist in the tradition of Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, the renowned international masters of modern architecture, or whether he is a regionalist like Étienne Gaboury in Saint Boniface, Manitoba, or a West Coast modernist like the early Ron Thom in Vancouver. Georges Teyssot rightly observes that still another master of modern architecture, Alvar Aalto, who responded to the landscape (and, I would add, the culture) of Finland, is sometimes wrongly viewed as a regionalist, and he argues that Erickson is "a late modernist of the third or fourth generation" (111). As Edward Dimendberg concludes, Erickson is not easily categorized. Yet he is very much a uniquely modernist architect, whether on the regional or the international stage.

Birthright

Constance Lindsay Skinner

Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press,
2005. 84 pp. Illus. $16.95 paper.

Adele Perry
University of Manitoba

In the last half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, intimate relationships between indigenous women and settler men were freighted with a complicated and at times conflicting set of meanings in British Columbia. Children of mixed descent were said to inherit the worst of both races, whatever that was; white men were thought to be morally and physically endangered by Aboriginal women; Aboriginal women were said to be abused and denigrated by capricious settler men who represented all that was wrong with modern society in general and patriarchy in particular. It is worth stating that these bits of racial and gendered knowledge – sometimes seemingly benign examples of the racialized schemas of the day but, more often, gratingly vicious ideas premised on deep double distrust of women and Aboriginal peoples – had precious little to do with the lived experience of people whose intimate lives spanned and challenged racial boundaries. But such lives were invariably lived in the long shadow of these discourses. Constance Lindsay Skinner's 1905 play *Birthright* provides an example of some of this swirl of ideas of racial mixing in motion and, at times, in contestation. Skinner's play is now published for the first time and is put into context through an introduction by historian Jean Barman and an afterword by literary scholar Michelle La Flamme. The result is that a valuable and revealing archive is made newly available and understandable.

The publication of *Birthright* builds on Barman's 2002 biography, *Constance Lindsay Skinner: Writing the Frontier*. In it, Barman reconstructs the life of an almost forgotten figure and, in so doing, adds to what we know about women's history and reminds readers of the transnational context of BC history. Skinner was born to a white fur trade family in Quesnel in 1877. In 1900, the appeal of living as a "new woman" and earning a living as a writer would take her to Los Angeles, the first of a series of large American cities in which Skinner lived for the remainder of her life. She was a journalist, a popular historian, and a relatively successful playwright. *Birthright* played in Chicago and Boston in the 1910s. Despite Skinner's persistent efforts to find more audiences for this particular play, it was never performed again.

In her introduction, Barman suggests that *Birthright*'s lack of circulation can be related to its portrayal of mixed-race intimacy. Much of Skinner's corpus deals with the frontier world of her childhood, and *Birthright* is no exception. Set on British Columbia's north coast in 1905, the play tells the story of Precious, a young woman adopted by a white missionary family. Early in the play it is revealed that Precious is of mixed heritage, and the rest of the play is devoted to exploring how this knowledge refracts through her family and the local community, both Aboriginal and settler. Skinner is especially interested in how Precious's shifting racial identification conditions her romantic relationships with men. As La Flamme argues, Skinner uses *Birthright* "to represent a range of views toward interracial unions" (73). What is most unusual is the ending: Skinner turns the usual narrative conventions of the day on their head by having Precious kill her racist and fickle white suitor, Henry.

Birthright reminds us that perspectives on mixed-race intimacies and womanhood were multiple, subject to contestation, and by no means uncomplicated. This situation tells us something about the late nineteenth-century British Columbia where Skinner grew up, but it also might tell us something about the spaces where she lived and worked as an adult. Skinner's adult life was lived in the metropolitan centres of the United States. It is tempting to treat Skinner as a repository of BC local knowledge, but surely the literary words she conjured up also reflected the Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York in which she lived, wrote, and socialized, and where her work was seen, read, and evaluated.

It is something of an understatement to say that I am not the best person to determine whether *Birthright* is – or ever was – a very good play. On the rare occasions that I go to live theatre, I spend an embarrassing amount of time hoping that someone will turn the house lights on so as to allow me to pass the time reading my program. As a historian, I am ambivalent about the decision to "adapt" *Birthright* in an effort to make it more palatable to "a modern audience" (xi). Moderating some of *Birthright*'s more extreme racial language and correcting Skinner's clumsy faux-Tsimshian dialogue does not succeed in making the play contemporary. *Birthright* still reads as a textbook example of early twentieth-century middlebrow popular culture: stiff in style, rich in stereotypes, and long in melodrama. Ultimately, Joan Bryans' unmarked editorial interventions obscure the particular language that allows us to analyze what this play is rather than what we might think contemporary audiences want it to be. The upshot is that *Birthright*'s value as a revealing archive of the convergence of racial, gendered, and sexualized thought around the turn of the last century is diminished, and that is a shame. Barman's fine introduction and La Flamme's equally fine afterword provide readers with the interpretive cues they need to be able to interrogate *Birthright* for what it is: a window into the loaded, pervasive, complicated, and contestable ideas about intimate relationships across racial lines in North America.

Finding Memories, Tracing Routes: Chinese Canadian Family Stories

Brandy Lien Worrall, editor

Vancouver: Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia, 2006. 83 pp. $10.00 paper.

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THIS BOOK IS A product of the first Family History Writing Workshop sponsored by the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia to encourage and facilitate the tracing of Chinese Canadian collective history, which has hitherto been neglected by professional historians and official records. While the preface, introduction, and afterword are written by academics (Barman, Worrall, and Yu), this edited volume is not a polished product of professional historians or creative writers; rather, it details the process whereby eight Chinese Canadians from diverse family and occupational backgrounds come together in the workshop, encouraged by the organizer and one another, to write their own family history for the first time. In less than ten pages, each author uses various sources (childhood memories, memories of family members, old photographs, archival and/or onsite research) to trace the unique experience of his/her elders or her/himself. As the author's note at the end of each contribution indicates, they all found it challenging, yet enriching and therapeutic, to write family stories as a way of reconfirming their cultural identity while leaving a legacy for their descendants. In the end, they were inspired to continue with this endeavour.

Yet the significance of this edited volume goes beyond the personal fulfilment of the contributors. In recreating the voices of their parents, grandparents, uncles, or aunts, and in retelling the stories behind family photographs, these authors succeeded in making Chinese Canadian history come alive. They brought into public view the pains of split family existence caused by legalized Canadian racism and the troubled history of China. As Yu (73-82) points out, recent Canadian government apologies for head taxes imposed upon early Chinese immigrants is only a symbolic act. We, as Chinese Canadians, need to start moving the Chinese presence in this country from the margin to the centre. Only then can we break the silence of the past and begin to reclaim our lost history. Only then can we rediscover the central role played by the Chinese as early settlers of this province, before being dislodged by Caucasian latecomers who rewrote history to claim their status as the "dominant society."

While recognizing the significance of this book in the making of micro and macro histories of Canada, I have a few minor squabbles. First, the editor should explain the use of the term "routes" instead of "roots" in the title. Second, despite the fact that the three academics – Barman, Worrall, and Yu – all point out that there are different historical truths, none gives any specific examples of discrepancies between accounts derived from official documents and those derived from individual memories and images. Third, while trying to extract commonalities among the diverse accounts in the volume, Barman sometimes goes overboard. In my view, there is not enough material in the volume to illustrate the essential role played by early Chinese Canadians in the Canadian economy (iii), nor are there enough convincing examples to illustrate the failure of Chinese Canadian elders to show the deference expected of them by the dominant society (iv-v). As this book is meant for a general audience, the preface should focus more specifically on placing the life experience of each Chinese elder within the context of Canadian history. Last, on a more frivolous note, it is rather repetitious to have every contributor expressing his/her gratitude to the workshop organizer. It sounds like Chinese peasants thanking Chairman Mao for their "liberation"!

All in all, I strongly recommend this volume to academics and the general community. It provides inspiration for ordinary Canadians (as well as professional historians) to collectively contribute to national histories by recording our own unique but diverse family and personal experiences. Acquiring this book has an added advantage: the proceeds go to a much-needed scholarship fund established by the Chinese Canadian Historical Society to encourage education and research on Chinese Canadian history.