

## Book Reviews

*Vancouver Island*, by S. W. Jackman. Toronto: Griffin House, 1972.  
212 pp., illus., \$8.95.

*The Unknown Island*, by Ian Smith. Vancouver: J. J. Douglas, 1973.  
174 pp., illus., \$17.50.

Two books about the same island, but poles apart in their approach to the subject and in their interest for the reader anxious to learn something about Vancouver Island. To be fair, Jackman's latter day Baedeker was, it seems, written for the Briton contemplating immigration and is at worst a graceless recitation of fact — and near fact — and at best a capsule guide to some of the more obvious features of town and country from Victoria to Port Hardy. It is, nevertheless, offered for sale in local bookstores despite its schoolmasterish tone and constant conversion of dollars into sterling. There are doubtless many who would learn something from its pages and it may be carried about by the determined explorer to some value, but only if the reader is cautioned that the facts are dated in many cases, the photographs in some instances antique (like the one of the old steamer at a Gulf Island wharf that is accompanied by the caption, "inter island communication still depends on the small boat . . .," or the rather dated picture of a floating logging camp), and that the dedication to Pembroke College, Cambridge — is surely a sly put-on.

Ian Smith, on the other hand, has written and illustrated, largely with his own photographs, a book that conveys with commendable restraint the mystery and the majesty of a landscape still largely unexplored by the recreational traveller. Unlike Jackman, Smith is concerned only with the natural environment: he has nothing to say about the cities and the industries. He writes instead about the forests, the mountains, the sea and the birds and animals that inhabit them. And he does so with the keen eye of a naturalist and, as far as I can tell, with the accuracy of one. But he is clearly not writing for the expert. The descriptions are simple, at times to

the point of tedium and on occasion needlessly repetitive, but for the most part entirely satisfying.

The photographs which make up a major portion of the book are outstanding and compensate for any deficiencies Smith has as a writer. They are mostly colour plates, admirably augmented by ink drawings done by Carl Chaplin, and reproduced to great effect. Obviously printers have mastered the art of colour reproduction for some time, it is nevertheless a delight to turn to page after page of photographs that are superb representations of their subject. Smith has chosen the plates well, they never fail to expand the subject and urge even the most sedentary to contemplate a week with a packboard invading the last untouched wilderness on Vancouver Island.

Although he is clearly on the side of the conservationists, Ian Smith seems to have more faith in the ultimate regenerative powers of nature than some of his more shrill colleagues. He is no apologist for the timber industry and the mines, but he does seem to have discovered a sense of the inexorable dominance of the landscape, especially in those cases where man has been able to exercise even the most modest amount of intelligence.

*The Unknown Island* is no lament for the lost innocence of the land. It is rather a testament to the majesty of Vancouver Island, tinged with rue for those parts that will not return to what they once were, but in the main charged with a recognition that change has been the pattern from the beginning, whether man intervened or not.

One need never go to Cape Scott or to the forest of the Tsitika watershed to get from this book some sense of excitement and grandeur of these places, but in all likelihood some of us will be led to strike out to see what it was like before it all began.

*University of Victoria*

WALTER D. YOUNG

*Bowen Island 1872-1972*, by Irene Howard, for the Bowen Island Historians. Victoria: Morriss, 1973. 190 pp., illus., \$7.95.

"This book is about the real island, and the island of the mind. It will tell the story of the people who have lived on one or the other, and of those who have tried to live on both."

With these words, Mrs. Howard introduces us to her approach to the history of Bowen. As the book unfolds, it is clear that she has been as

fascinated by the idea that islands have a distinct and unusual effect on the personalities of those living on them as she has been by the general march of events.

It is perhaps not surprising that the stories of individuals form so large a part of this history, for it may be argued that islands attract more than their share of interesting personalities and in small populations their special gifts and eccentricities seem more prominent than they might elsewhere. Undoubtedly also, the particular circumstances surrounding the writing of this book play a significant role in its final shape.

The publisher's foreword notes that the initial inspiration for writing the history of the Island rests with the Bowen Island Historians, a group of residents incorporated in 1969 to further their efforts to draw together material on the early history of Bowen. Concerned, in his words, to "make some permanent and useful contribution" with the masses of information collected, they approached Mrs. Howard in 1971 and she agreed to accept their commission. Undoubtedly she was fortunate in having the enthusiasm and energy of this collecting and fund-raising group to support her in her work, but certainly the materials she received must have leaned heavily in the direction of personal reminiscences and anecdotal social history.

Whatever the reasons for the emphases in this volume, it is local social history first and only incidentally a political, economic study of the Island's story. Within her chosen framework, Mrs. Howard gives us some very fine descriptions of individual characters, their families and island customs. Particularly good are the sections dealing with the George Cowan settlement at Cowan's Point and the story of Lieben, a home built by Einar Neilson and his wife Muriel, which provided shelter and solitude for quite a number of notable B.C. writers and artists. This latter passage may prove to be a very significant footnote to the understanding of some of the work of these artists, including Earle Birney, Lister Sinclair and Malcolm Lowry.

It would be unfair, however, to leave the impression that this is a series of unconnected anecdotes about individuals who had only a geographical location in common. Perhaps because she was very conscious that this was the first full length treatment of Bowen's history, Mrs. Howard does attempt to link the story of Bowen with events nearby on the mainland. Considerable attention is also paid to some of the more widely significant events in Bowen's history, notably the pattern of land settlement, resource exploitation, and above all, development of the Island as a summer resort for nearby Vancouverites. Chapter Four, entitled "Captain Cates and the

Terminal Steamship Company," is a very concise and very readable summation of this development, describing the establishment of the resort near Snug Cove that was to be the setting recalled with pleasure by thousands of Vancouverites of another generation as "the spot" for a good time in the summer.

Mixed with these achievements are a number of irritations which must be mentioned. Having made the decision to dispense almost entirely with footnotes, it is annoying and puzzling to find direct quotations such as the one near the end of the first paragraph on page 45 and others, that appear without any direct indication about their source. This same paragraph provides us with another persistent problem in this book, the non-sentence. Surely a more rigorous proof reading of the text would have caught this, and other grammatical errors.

A more serious difficulty involves what seems to be a tendency for the book to separate into sections with rather artificial transitions. This, despite the intention of the author that everything included in the book be held together by a good relationship with the central theme. If the quotation presented at the beginning of this review is paraphrased so that we realize the book will deal with events as they happened on Bowen as well as the effect of island living on a number of individuals, the difficulty is apparent. In essence, there are two themes. Their marriage, in this volume, is not always comfortable.

In spite of this, the final note must be a positive one. The usefulness of this history is enhanced by the addition of several appendices including one of brief biographies of additional Island personalities as well as a comprehensive guide to the sources. The guide could easily be the starting point for other local historians who may wish to delve more deeply into one or other of the aspects introduced by Mrs. Howard in this pensive account of Bowen's first hundred years.

*Centennial Museum, Vancouver*

ROBERT D. WATT

*Artifacts of the Northwest Coast Indians*, by Hilary Stewart. Saanichton: Hancock House, 1973; illus., \$12.95.

While archaeologists are struggling to keep ahead of the bulldozers and looters, they are continually hampered by an increasing number of amateur publications which directly or indirectly encourage the destruction of British Columbia's cultural heritage. Hilary Stewart's book is a wel-

come relief to this cluttered market of inaccurate and harmful publications. Her book will undoubtedly serve as a restraint to many would-be pillagers of prehistory.

The introduction is skillfully filled with necessary clarifying information, the lack of which so often causes the reader to invent mistaken ideas about the artifacts or the people who used them.

In Chapter I, "The Dig," Stewart expertly explains the importance of controlled scientific investigation of prehistoric sites and the damage that can be caused by those who are enthusiastic but lack the knowledge for proper information recovery. In describing from her own experience what might occur during an archaeological excavation she carefully familiarizes the reader with all the meticulous recording that is undertaken during such a project.

In Chapter II, "The Incredible Coast," Stewart provides an excellent description of the lifestyle and physical setting of a people who developed a unique culture on the coast of British Columbia. And, much to the gratification of archaeologists, she presents an artifact as a remnant of a human behavioural system rather than introducing it as a glorified marketable object.

In this chapter, however, there is one myth that is unintentionally perpetuated. This myth lies in the comparison between Coastal and Interior Indians. The statement that the Interior "tribes" had a "nomadic, ever-searching, wandering way of life" gives the impression of a people who wandered around hoping they might stumble across something to eat. It is a common myth (even among archaeologists whose studies have been mainly concentrated on the coast) that the Interior Indians were not as sophisticated in their adaptation to the physical environment as those on the coast. Rather than living an "ever-searching, wandering way of life," the peoples of the Interior lived in definable regions, were very familiar with the location of specific resources, and were equally sophisticated in their techniques of utilizing those resources.

In the following three chapters Stewart's numerous and well executed illustrations reveal how a wide range of artifacts were manufactured and utilized. Short, easy to read texts, explanatory notes, and many early historic photographs provide a fuller and more vivid informational background for the reader. A measurement is given for each artifact as well as a letter-number system which is keyed to an artifact provenance and location index. Some of the artifacts were re-drawn from out-of-print publications but most were drawn from the actual artifacts in a number of museums and universities.

Chapter III, "Artifacts of Stone," is the most extensive. It explains the diversity of stone utilization and its influence on the lifestyle of coastal Indians. This chapter will serve to dispel the many modern day myths about the manufacture and use of some common stone tools, such as the belief that Indians produced a finished arrowhead by simply dripping boiling water on it.

One case of shaky reasoning is presented on page 80 where the text implies that the reason the Indians "preferred" to make animal traps and snares was because they were "often reluctant to penetrate the dark and forbidding 'forest' in search of game." The more logical explanation for trapping rather than searching for animals (by a people who were familiar with animal behaviour) would be the fact that it is easier and more economical.

The suggestion on page 85 that the perforated stone disc was used as a fly wheel on a pump drill is a possibility, but this tends not to be supported by ethnohistoric information, including information from the southern Kwakiutl area where Stewart claims the pump drill was "known" to be used.

When referring to pipes on page 94 it is not accurate to use the terms "interior" and "coast" in making comparisons on the artistic quality of the pipes. The area where prehistoric tubular stone pipes have been found transcends the Coast-Interior boundary in only a small region of the southern coast. The problem of comparison is further compounded by the fact that tubular stone pipes were still being made and used in small numbers in the lower Thompson River region as late as 1891, whereas they were not being used in the "coastal" part of the pipe distribution area when the first Europeans entered in the early 1800's. This introduces the possibility that the "much simpler style" of the "coastal" pipes might be a result of a tendency for them to be older than the more elaborate of the "interior" pipes. There are also more elaborate pipe bowls from the southern Gulf of Georgia than those illustrated, but it is probable that, in fact, all of these pipes were made and traded from the Interior part of the pipe distribution area.

On page 93 the labelling of two labrets from the Yale area as "Novice Labrets — For A Child" is an inference based on poorly understood ethnohistoric information from the northern coast. The practice of labretifery is far more complex than is usually assumed. There was considerable regional variation in sizes and styles of labrets worn by different age groups and sexes on the extreme northern Pacific coast of North America

in early historic and prehistoric times. Archaeological evidence also indicates that the same diversity is true for the southern coast.

One incorrect statement on page 38 is in tradition with the usual confusion of geological terms that one finds in archaeological publications. It is true, as stated, that nephrite is "commonly called jade," but the addition "or jadeite" is misleading. Nephrite and jadeite are two mineralogically different rocks which are often lumped together under the ambiguous term jade. Since there are no sources of jadeite in B.C., all "true jade" originating in the province is actually nephrite. However, this by no means simplifies matters since even geologists often cannot make a visual distinction between nephrite and some other raw materials such as serpentinite. The failure to carry out the simple tests needed to distinguish one raw material from another has led many archaeologists, and Stewart, to assume that most celts were made of nephrite. Specific gravity tests undertaken at the Provincial Museum on a large collection of celts indicated that over half of them were made of serpentinite.

Chapters IV and V demonstrate the interesting role of bone, antler and shell in the material culture of coastal peoples. Whether the techniques shown in the utilization of these materials are accurate, such as in the case of the *pièce esquillée* (stone wedge), is still uncertain in the absence of adequate studies on the subject.

*Artifacts of the Northwest Coast* is an illuminating and praiseworthy publication that will undoubtedly fulfill Stewart's wish for the reader to "acquire a deep appreciation for the inventive thought and skilled craftsmanship that went into so many of these artifacts." And most important, for the reader to "gain a deeper understanding and a greater respect for the coastal Indian of today."

*British Columbia Provincial Museum*

GRANT R. KEDDIE

*The Struggle for Survival: Indian Cultures and the Protestant Ethic in British Columbia*, by Forrest E. LaViolette. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961; reprinted with additions, 1973. 201 pp., illus., \$3.50. (Canadian University Paperbooks No. 111).

Despite Professor W. E. Willmott's scathing review of F. E. LaViolette's *The Struggle for Survival: Indian Cultures and the Protestant Ethic in British Columbia* as both poor history and poor sociology (*B.C. Library Quarterly*, January 1962), the University of Toronto Press reprinted this

1961 work in 1973 without having the author revise the text or update the bibliography. Willmott's criticisms are still valid. The book lacks adequate definition or discussion of the Protestant Ethic, the views of Weber and Tawney on that ethic, the Indian cultures of British Columbia, and the economic history of Indian-White relations in this province. Anthropological and historical terms used by the socialist author in writing this "history" such as: acculturation, potlatch, the missionary, Indian nation, identity, survival, and Canadianized Indians are also not defined. LaViolette does quote some historical documents at length but, as Willmott says, "leaves out relevant passages to quote amusing or nice tidbits that have little bearing on the point under discussion."

In the dozen years since LaViolette wrote *The Struggle for Survival* anthropological and historical studies have appeared to magnify the scope of Willmott's criticisms as well as the potential for revising this work to deal with them. Professor LaViolette could begin such revision by consulting Wilson Duff and Michael Kew's "A Select Bibliography of Anthropology of British Columbia," in *BC Studies*, Autumn 1973, the journal *Ethnohistory*, and the August 1971 *Pacific Historical Review* articles on "The American Indian" in history and ethnohistorical theory. There are also primary sources which were not available when he wrote in 1961; for example, Record Group 10 Black Series, in the Public Archives of Canada, containing reports and correspondence of the Indian Affairs Department from 1873 to 1923.

Further, there are primary sources on missionaries and their methods in British Columbia; it is unnecessary to rely, as LaViolette does, on secondary sources, and on Anglican William Duncan's work for a basic interpretation of all missionary effort in nineteenth century British Columbia. Among other limitations, this leads him to ignore the important activities of Methodists in the area. Roman Catholic missionary records could enlighten Professor LaViolette on many points he misinterprets or neglects concerning missionaries, particularly Roman Catholics. For example on page 115 of *The Struggle for Survival*, he prefaces the quotation of a petition from the chiefs of Douglas Portage, of Lower Fraser, and of the other tribes on the seashore of the mainland to Bute Inlet, with the words:

Although we do not know which missionaries or other white people were instrumental in framing the following petition of protest addressed to Indian Commissioner Powell, it is obviously a more sophisticated document than the Indians themselves could produce: . . .

Since LaViolette does not list the signators by name it is not immediately



obvious which missionaries helped these Indians with this protest. However, the full text of this petition appears in the B.C. *Sessional Papers, 1875*, pp. 674-675 where it bears the signatures of Peter Ayessik, chief of Hope, Alexis chief of Cheam, and 54 other chiefs of Douglas Portage, Lower Fraser and Coast; thus 56 chiefs of Roman Catholic Indian bands in the Roman Catholic mission district of Saint Charles supported the petition. These chiefs were no doubt assisted in framing their petition — particularly point seven regarding their being hard working agriculturalists hoping to “enter into the path of civilization” — by Roman Catholic Oblate missionary bishops d’Herbomez and Durieu. Perhaps LaViolette did not in 1961 consult the Roman Catholic Oblate missionaries’ records because they were in French. Yet he might have consulted Reverend A. G. Morice’s 1910 *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada* which summarized in English the Oblate missionaries’ work in British Columbia from those records. Morice’s discussion of how the Oblate missionaries came from France and tried to teach the Roman Catholic religion, a temperant or sober, non-pagan way of life, the agricultural and industrial skills of “civilization,” and the English language to the Indians of the Fraser Valley, Georgia Straits and the Interior of British Columbia would not have supported LaViolette’s discussion of Indian cultures and the “Protestant” ethic in British Columbia.

Besides wondering why the University of Toronto Press reprinted *The Struggle for Survival* in its present form, I also wonder how they came to print this period piece in the Canadian University Paperbooks series. Does it not qualify as a history, or an investigation, or a polemic, or a tract fit for the Social History of Canada series? With a suitable scholarly introduction could not *The Struggle for Survival*, like other books advertised in that series, “enrich our knowledge of the past and lay the groundwork for future advances in scholarship and historical consciousness”?

*Douglas College*

JACQUELINE GRESKO

*Those Born at Koono*, by John and Carolyn Smyly. Saanichton: Hancock House, 1973. 120 pp., illus. \$12.95.

It is becoming increasingly evident that three schools of thought are emerging from what, up to this date, has been a formless group working with the undigested Indian material of the Canadian west coast. If we look at this “formless group” from an historical perspective, we find

Boas, Barbeau, Swanton and others doing their work; they are followed by writers such as Katherine Judson and Hugh Weatherby. Then there are the Indian artisans, such as Clutesi and Reid.

Of the three groups, the second can be excepted from serious consideration. Although there is a certain validity to keeping our interest alive through retelling stories, this style does not further our knowledge. It is time that our knowledge matured beyond those minds that equate simplicity with childishness.

One cannot respect the Indian artisans enough: this third group is fighting an uphill battle against society, education and history. But in 1974 it is difficult to respect the art to the same extent one respects the artist. Today their art is fashionable just as Eskimo sculpture is; and just as sixty years ago African art was the rage in Berlin and Paris. Tomorrow the Indian artist will face the problem that his grandfather faced when the missionaries "liberated" him from tradition. There is little to be learned from the carver working in traditional patterns.

The only group that is developing within itself and increasing our knowledge is the one headed by Boas and Swanton, followed by Barbeau and Wingert, then Holm. Now we can add *Those Born at Koono* to the list of necessary books for any serious study of British Columbian Indians.

Today Koono (Q'ona) is better known as Skedans, a village which once thrived on the eastern shore of Louise Island, in the Queen Charlotte group. Almost nothing is left at that spot which Emily Carr found to be so without "sham" in 1907. Even then it was a ghost village rapidly returning to the soil and forest. Today a logging camp is based where the town once stood, a few poles lean into the wind and nothing more.

It is probably safe to say that no one knows Koono better than John Smyly. In 1956 Smyly was commissioned by the Provincial Museum at Victoria to produce in replica three Haida houses and a representative group of poles — which he did at a scale of five-sixteenths of an inch to the foot. In 1957 he took part in a salvage trip to Koono and Ninstints. In 1965 Smyly became a permanent member of the museum staff and one of his first jobs was to build a model Haida village. He tells us that he chose Koono because of "the variety of its poles and the beauty of its natural setting."

In *Those Born at Koono* Smyly has built Koono again — with words and pictures. Beginning at one end of the village he has worked through the 27 houses and 56 poles known to be at Koono in the closing years of the last century. Fortunately Dr. George Dawson took photographs of Koono in 1878 when the houses were in use and the poles erect. In 1897

Dr. C. F. Newcombe photographed the site and in 1907 Emily Carr took a few photos. "Skedans," a chapter from Carr's *Klee Wyck* should be read in conjunction with *Those Born at Kooná*. If it were not for these pictures, and the notes kept by Newcombe and others, Smyly would have faced an impossible task. Kooná was built of wood; and very little survives the damp of the British Columbia rain forest, not even resilient cedar, the primary wood of the people of Kooná.

One of the more intriguing facts to emerge from this book is the house names. It has long been known that the totems are ideographic; the poles cannot be read, as was long believed, but each figure, no matter how small, meant something to the carver and to the owner of the pole. Because the Haida had no written language, the owner's exact knowledge of the pole died with him. In contrast, the mythology of the Haida, like the mythology of the other coastal tribes, was not ideographic, nor was it very cohesive. In fact it was as opposite to the formal visual art as can be imagined. In the light of this distinction between oral and visual art, it is interesting to find houses with names such as "Peaceful House," "Eagle-Leg House," "House Raven Found," "People Think of This House Even When They Sleep Because the Master Feeds Everyone Who Calls," and, best of all, "Clouds Sound Against It (As They Pass Over)." These names were given to John Swanton by Chief Skedans when he was already an old man with a fading memory. But we do know that each house had more than one name: "House People Always Think Of" was also known as "Raven House." Skedans itself was also known as Grizzly Bear Town due to the numerous bear appearing on the totems. These names are poetic and ideographic, just as the interplay of form and space in the totem is poetry. The awareness of this poetry, and the knowledge that more than we know or suspect may lie beneath the surface of the carvings, stories and paintings, give us a better appreciation of places like Kooná.

Volumes such as *Those Born at Kooná* will be important because they are our doorway into the aesthetics of the Haida. Today they are bought, as the art is, because "primitive" is fashionable and it all makes good conversation. But this curiosity will die, all fads do. And when that happens we will be left with a few solid pieces of art and less than a dozen books on what *Haida* meant.

From these books, from these pieces of art, we will be able to recreate the intellectual, social and artistic milieu which flourished when the totem and the myths began to grow from idle carvings and fire-side tales, into the art we have today. As Herschel B. Chipp and Carol F. Jopling are

proving in their work with primitive art and culture, the psychological depth lying beneath the surface of myth and art is staggering. Except for Barbeau, no one has really approached the north Pacific Indian cultures with anything near the imagination and insight of a Levi-Strauss or Robert Graves. Until this happens our appreciation and knowledge of the art and myth will not mature.

But all of this is still in the future. *Those Born at Koon*a is important for what it is today and not for what it may hypothetically lead to tomorrow. This is a strong book, and an extremely accurate one, but it too is brief. Between 1836 and 1841, John Work counted 738 people at Skedans and thirty-seven years later, in 1878, Newcombe found the village almost entirely deserted. Why? Smyly is correct to a certain degree in attributing it to smallpox, but the missionaries and canneries and salteries with their money had much to do with it as well. This is something which deserves more than the one sentence answer we find in *Those Born at Koon*a.

While it is recognized that no photos of Koon

a in its heyday exist, it would have been helpful if photographs of Skidegate, or another large village, had been included in this book. This would give the reader a sense of the village's true size. The feeling one receives from *Those Born at Koon*a, is one of space, tidiness and planned architecture. Nothing could be further from the truth. And, worse yet, the impression stays with us long after we close the book. It shouldn't. A village was a busy community, it was life. This is what we should remember.

The Smylys tell us that Koon

a was fortunate in that it was a peaceful village. From Swanton we learn that Koon

a had a firm relationship with the Tsimshian at Kitkatla, and that they imported stories and customs from them. It would be interesting to know why this village was so peaceful. It was rare for the different clans or phratries to get along well, not to mention their relationships with other tribes. But we are not told and we read on wondering.

The nature of the "whys" that continually come to mind suggest that the Smylys are hesitant to stick their necks out and become authorities. There is no apparent reason why they shouldn't become the experts on Koon

a. It is obvious that they know Koon

a as no one else does; and, even though much of the information is sketchy, they move with ease through Koon

a and the information surrounding the village. This refusal to come to terms with their knowledge, along with a certain self-deprecating note — which flows like a current through the book — is sounded quite early:

We hope that the errors and omissions we may have made will cause some Haida person to say, "I can do better than that," and set about the task as it should be done, written and illustrated by the descendants of those who once lived at Koonaa.

This attitude echoes a statement made to me a few years ago at Kitsigas, "You're a white man, how can you understand what we're doing?" This type of thinking would rewrite history, and what it would do to our cultural heritage simply defies the imagination. But it is not an accurate attitude. Art is art, and it's open to anyone with the intelligence and knowledge to study it. The same can be said about myth — is it possible that we should forget Frazer's work since he's not a Greek, or Levi-Strauss' because he's not a South American Indian?

*Those Born at Koonaa* would be an enduring classic had the authors taken a few drastic steps toward being the final word. As it is, the book is the best of its type — and it belongs beside the books of Boas, Barbeau, Swanton and Wingert.

*University of British Columbia*

CHARLES LILLARD