

Book Reviews

Alaskan Voyage. 1881-1883. An Expedition to the Northwest Coast of America, by Johan Adrian Jacobsen, from the German text of Adrian Woldt. Translated by Erna Gunther. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977. Pp. xii, 266. Illustrations, maps, autobiographical appendix, notes, glossary of place names, bibliography and index. \$17.50.

When Franz Boas began his studies of Northwest Coast Indians in the late 1880s, a large proportion of the choice cultural artifacts of these people which had existed at mid-century had already disappeared from the area — bought by British American, Russian and, above all, German traders for resale to the great museums. The result has been that, at least until recently, the best collections of Northwest Coast Indian art were to be found in Europe and America and not in British Columbia. One of the earliest and most effective agents of this commercial plunder was the substantive author of this book, Johan Adrian Jacobsen.

Born on the island of Risø near Tromsø in northern Norway, Jacobsen early developed the strength, skills and taste for arctic travel. By the time he was twenty-four he was undertaking to supply Eskimo artifacts and persuade (virtually kidnap) Eskimos to leave Greenland for Germany — all for displays by the Hamburg showman, Carl Hagenbeck, in the interests of “scientific” ethnography. Later he went to Lapland for the same purposes, and in July 1881 was commissioned by Director Bastian of the Berlin Museum to make a similar expedition of several years to the Northwest Coast of America.

Jacobsen, even by the easy standards of the time, was not a trained ethnographer. His expeditions were really looting forays in which a large range of artifacts, good and bad, was secured at the lowest possible price, to be sorted out later in Germany. There are indications that he gradually grew to be able to distinguish some good pieces, though what was perhaps his greatest coup — the purchase of a fifty-foot totem pole carved

by “Edensaw [*sic*], head chief of the north part of the [Graham] island” — was a stroke of luck. Throughout his expeditions in British Columbia he constantly complains of the high prices charged for artifacts, which he attributes to the activity of other buyers, notably Dr. Israel Powell. Later, in Alaska, he notes with disapproval that the high price that natives could get for their furs freed them from the necessity of selling their tribal artifacts. His activities included grave-robbing, for both artifacts and human remains. This practice understandably annoyed the natives (not to speak of violating the Desecration of the Sepulchre Act in British Columbia), and forced Jacobsen into some rather messy attempts to preserve “ripe” human detritus. His attempt to inveigle representatives of the “long-headed” (cranially-distorted) Quatsino natives to go to Europe as part of an “enthographic” raree-show collapsed when his principal exhibit, the chieftainess of the Quatsinos, deserted him en route. Certainly the reader easily loses sympathy with Jacobsen in his main professional endeavours.

But he is far more attractive as an adventurer and observer. The first third of the account is devoted to his travels in British Columbia in three expeditions: the first from Victoria, via Bella Bella, Port Essington and Kitkatla to the Queen Charlotte Islands; the second to the Kwakiutl villages on both sides of the Johnston Strait and the Nootka villages on the north end of Vancouver Island around to Quatsino Sound; and finally to Quatsino and the west coast of Vancouver Island. The travels include a day-long wading through a swamp on the way from Alert Bay to Quatsino and a perilous winter journey down the west coast of Vancouver Island in an open boat, during which he was twice deserted by his Indian crews. But the great adventures occur in Alaska. From Fort St. Michael he undertook a 900-mile journey up the Yukon River in an open boat in the summer (blackfly season), journeyed to the western extremity of North America at Cape Prince of Wales in midwinter (and forty-below temperatures), crossed overland to Kotzebue Sound (the first white man to do so), and finally southward down the west coast of Alaska to Cook Inlet during break-up while suffering from snow-blindness and an injured foot that should have incapacitated him. During all these adventures he endures the most severe hardships with unvarying good humour and almost insouciant courage.

Jacobsen rarely loses an opportunity to comment on what he considers to be the fecklessness, lack of hardihood or lawlessness of the native people. The Haidas suffer from drunkenness and a high incidence of venereal disease; Indians and Eskimos, especially in Alaska, are inveterate and aggressive beggars and thieves; the Eskimos suffer illness (there was a

particularly lethal epidemic of influenza in Alaska in the early 1880s) because they wear too many heavy clothes and neglect to condition themselves to the weather (unlike Jacobsen, driving his dog team in his shirt-sleeves). Like many "civilized" observers of the "primitive", he notes with surprise that the tundra dwellers, currently "shy, cowardly, fearful, obsequious" and sunk in filth and disease, "formerly had a highly developed society", erecting elaborate monuments for their dead and building superior kayaks with artistic ornamentation. Jacobsen also regards Indians and Eskimos as constantly dangerous, and threatening to the life and property of the white man. He compares favourably the situation in British Columbia, where British gunboats keep the Indians from extremes of murder, rapine and cannibalism, with that in Alaska, where the American writ does not run effectively among the mixed populations of Russians, halfbreeds, Eskimos and Indians, and his only protection from the natives is "my energetic personality" (and going armed with revolver and knife). On the other hand he has a sympathetic understanding of the natives' feasts, dances and ceremonies. He records the practices of the *hamatsa* (ritual cannibals) and shamans (both Indian and Eskimo) with great fidelity; and he perceives the finely devised relationships between the ritual world and the economic life of the native populations and the ways in which European influence is in the process of destroying those relationships. Jacobsen emerges from this account as a cheerful, enterprising, observant adventurer with a strong streak of thoroughly nasty nineteenth-century ruthlessness toward other men and animals.

The narrative was originally written by his friend and amanuensis, Adrian Woldt, in German in 1884 and translated by Erna Gunther in 1977. Woldt may have done better for Jacobsen than Jacobsen could have done for himself, but the present edition and translation is by no means a finished work. In places the English is primitive and replete with the least felicitous of American stylistic variations; the notes are sparse and frequently uninformative; there is no adequate map of Jacobsen's journeys; and the editor/translator has chosen to omit Jacobsen's photographs and field notes and some of the original sections of the narrative "that reflect impressions so closely rooted in Jacobsen's own time and culture as to be irrelevant today". So much for historical significance!

University of British Columbia

JOHN NORRIS

Sound Heritage, Volumes 3-6, 1974-77. Victoria, Aural History Division, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1974-77. Volumes 3-5, \$6.00 for four issues; Volume 6, \$5.00 for four issues; Sound Program Tapes, \$2.50 each.

Sound Heritage began in 1972 as *Reynoldston Research and Studies Publication*, which grew out of an oral history programme begun on an LIP grant at the University of British Columbia Library. The programme was to train a team to tape interviews and prepare transcripts from the tapes. The team included an artist and a photographer to provide a pictorial background for the oral history. At the end of the LIP grant, the Oral History Project moved to Victoria and is now the Aural History Division of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, still under its founder, William J. Langlois.

Aural History has now become the oral history archives of the province. Besides their own active programme, they are building up a centralized collection from oral history projects throughout the province, and have acquired the large collection of tape recordings made by Imbert Orchard for his CBC programmes. Drawing on their large collection of interviews, with their related photographs and sketches, Aural History is bringing the people's history to the people through the journal *Sound Heritage*.

Sound Heritage is a quarterly journal which popularizes oral history by printing selections of interviews, articles on oral history, illustrations, and occasionally accompanying cassettes of stories or songs. The Provincial Museum's Linguistics Division and the British Columbia Indian Language Project have provided a couple of issues, adding our Indian history and culture to the oral record. Contents of issues vary considerably from a collection of miscellaneous articles to an issue devoted to one topic, and from historiography to a transcription of an interview or story. Four of the monographic issues have complementary sound programmes on cassette tape, which may be obtained with a subscription for *Sound Heritage* or may be ordered separately. The trend appears to be to have each issue a monograph with an accompanying tape.

The first issue under the title *Sound Heritage*, which begins with v. 3 in 1974, is a collection of articles on oral history, with the feature article by Imbert Orchard on "Tape Recordings in Radio Documentaries". The editor, Bill Langlois, in his "Comments on the Issue", says that "it is hoped that *Sound Heritage* will offer a greater diversity of articles to our readers". This aim is carried out in the next few volumes. The second issue contains "several articles which relate directly to the ongoing work

of Aural History [and] illustrates the result of the cooperative efforts of Aural History and industry in providing a fuller history of the Province". This issue begins a new practice of including reviews of books and sound recordings using oral history. The aim of the third issue is to "show both the wide range of aural history in writing, teaching, and research, and the value of producing sound documents as well as typescripts". The final issue for 1974 is the first of the monographic issues, and is devoted to the World Soundscape Project, an "organization dedicated to the study of the quality of the sound environment".

Volume 4, 1975, continues to expand the topics and interests included in oral history. The first issue covers the Canadian Aural/Oral History Conference, 1974. Number 2, *Aural History, Regional Studies and Literature in British Columbia*, is the second of the monographs on special topics, with a guest editor, David Day, who describes this issue as containing "a sampling of incidents, characters, social histories, and documentations relating to British Columbia's heritage that have been creatively examined". The last issue, combined nos. 3 and 4, is *Native Languages and Culture* with guest editor Robert Levine. The articles, based on tapes collected by Aural History and by the Linguistics Division of the Provincial Museum, represent two types of research: the recording and preservation of the history of British Columbia, and the recording and preservation of the disappearing native languages of British Columbia. This issue contains illustrations by E. S. Curtis and Robert Davidson, including a full-page Thunderbird design in colour by Davidson, and the cover design is by Francis Williams.

Three of the four issues in the fifth volume are monographs. The first, *Skeena Country: The People and the Landscape*, is based upon the Imbert Orchard Collection of tape recordings, originally used for CBC radio programmes, from which are drawn a regional history, edited by Allen Specht, and a short story based upon the reminiscences of an early settler, written by David Day. This issue is accompanied by a cassette: "Skeena: River of the Clouds," introducing sound into *Sound Heritage*. The second issue has a mixture of articles from reminiscences to book reviews.

David Day is guest editor for the third issue for 1976, entitled *Myth and the Mountains*. This issue "relates to the mountains of British Columbia and the men who explored, travelled, and inhabited them" and shows the powerful influence landscapes have on our art and literature forms. Much of the issue is poetry, but it also contains one excerpt from Fraser's journal, three Indian legends and two interviews. Day states that "the

entire issue is illustrated with early engravings of the British Columbia wilderness . . . a public and published art form, [which] did a great deal to shape our young nation's way of seeing itself". Many of the illustrations are not engravings but lithographs, and, despite their acknowledged importance, most of the artists are not identified.

The last issue in this volume introduces a new, smaller format. Compiled and edited by Derek Reimer, *Sound Heritage's* assistant editor, *The Gulf Islanders* is the second issue to be accompanied by a cassette tape, in this case "The Fortunate Islands". The history of the islands and their pioneers is drawn from interviews made by Imbert Orchard in 1965-66. The editor reminds the reader that "human memory is fallible [but] with careful use of corroborative techniques (talking to several witnesses, checking against other contemporary sources, and the like), an accurate overall impression can be achieved". This warning about the weakness of oral history applies to all forms of reminiscence as even the most honest of people, being human, have memories coloured by time and emotion. Corroborative techniques will not produce an *accurate* overall impression unless contemporary sources which do not rely upon memory are available and used. It might be advisable for the editor of *Sound Heritage* to insert a warning to the reader in each issue.

The first issue of the sixth volume is also the first official publication of the British Columbia Indian Language Project. *Lillooet Stories* is edited and revised by Randy Bouchard and Dorothy I. D. Kennedy. Following an introduction there are thirty-one stories related by five elderly storytellers, Baptiste Ritchie, Charlie Mack, Slim Jackson, Sam Mitchell and Francis Edwards, recorded between 1968 and 1973, and later translated into English by Baptiste Ritchie and Sam Mitchell. A computer edition was distributed to schools in 1972. The present edition, with deletions and additions, is completely revised and re-edited, and illustrations, including maps, have been added. All of the photographs and sketches are by Saul Terry, chief of the Bridge River Band. *Lillooet Stories* has a companion cassette with the same title.

The second issue of 1977, edited by Peter Chapman, is *Navigating the Coast: a History of the Union Steamship Company*, a company history composed of narrative interspersed with quotations from interviews with a number of captains and other former employees. It is well illustrated with photographs, and the cover design is from a painting by Ronald Jackson. The cassette complementing this issue is called "Echoes of the Past: Remembrances of the Union Steamship Company".

The third issue, *Men of the Forest*, is another monograph compiled and edited by guest editor David Day, who declares that this issue "is concerned with the history and literature that has grown from the sculpture of this Province's logging communities", and it is "a gathering of the poetry and voices, the histories, and myths of men who are able to write and speak about a life-style with the kind of knowledge that is born from direct, often rough, experience". The editor has achieved a better balance in this issue between history, literature and illustrations, with approximately one-third of each. Two contributions by Charles Lillard which should be quite useful to the serious researcher as well as to the merely curious are "A Chinook Gazetteer [*sic*]" and "Logging Fact and Fiction: a Bibliography". Two misspellings mar this issue: the table of contents refers to "George L. McInnes", but the text speaks of "George McInnis"; and "Gazetteer" is consistently misspelled.

The final issue of this volume, *Toil and a Peaceful Life: Portraits of Doukhobors*, is compiled and translated by Marjorie Malloff and Peter Ogloff. The latter took some of the photographs which illustrate this issue. Thirteen elder Doukhobors tell their story from the Burning of Arms in Russia in 1895 to the present in the Kootenay District of British Columbia. Much has been written about the Doukhobors, but little of it has been by Doukhobors. These glimpses of life in the commune and in exile are very refreshing. It is to be hoped that a cassette will be made to accompany this issue, containing some of the ancient psalms and hymns sung by the Doukhobor choir.

Sound Heritage is a very worthwhile publication, and its title has become more meaningful as half the issues of the last two years have complementary sound programmes, making the oral history audible as well as visual. *Sound Heritage* has changed in the four volumes under review from a quarterly journal about oral history, which included some examples of transcribed interviews, usually illustrated, demonstrating the importance of the visual aspect, and some reviews of books and recordings using oral history (found in v. 3 nos. 2-4, v. 4 no. 2, and v. 5 no. 2), to a monograph series issued more or less quarterly, demonstrating oral history in its very broadest sense. The monographs have become the printed, visual counterparts of the CBC programmes compiled by Imbert Orchard, and as such are a useful means of disseminating some of the valuable resource material now stored on tape in the Provincial Archives and the Provincial Museum. If this is the purpose, should poetry and fiction written for the occasion have a legitimate place in the programme? Has the ever-widening horizon of "aural history" expanded to such an extent

that it is no longer oral history, but merely a collection of miscellany on a given theme? Indian legends, songs and stories are an important part of our "sound heritage", and *Lillooet Stories* is a significant contribution towards understanding one group of people of this province, but "instant literature" such as appears in the three issues edited by David Day, while demonstrating one use of oral history, is not itself a part of anyone's past heritage, although it may be a part of the future. What is wrong with the poetry, legends, songs and stories already in our heritage? Even if some of the early miners and loggers were illiterate, they were not silent. Perhaps the editors would be better to draw on some of the resources of the other divisions of the Provincial Archives.

Illustrations, whether photographs, or published or original pictures, have played an important part in the Aural History programme from its beginning. The pictorial material is generally interesting and appropriate. However, despite the acknowledged value of the picture, the artist and the photographer are too frequently ignored, and many illustrations lack even a vague caption. Surely it is not too much to ask of a publication like *Sound Heritage* that it give a little more information about the illustrations it uses beyond merely acknowledging the institutions from which they were obtained.

In conclusion, *Sound Heritage* has become a valuable source for the study of British Columbia's cultural history, worthy of being in every library and school in the province, as well as being a showpiece for the Provincial Government, akin to *Beautiful British Columbia* and to the beautiful Provincial Museum. It is a pity that *Sound Heritage*, the journal, has been lost in the transition, but *Sound Heritage*, the monograph series, is a worthy successor.

University of British Columbia

FRANCES M. WOODWARD

Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame: The Story of the Japanese Canadians in World War II, by Barry Broadfoot. Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1977. Pp. xii, 370; illus.; \$12.50.

Using his well-developed technique of travelling across Canada with tape recorder and notebook, Barry Broadfoot has already collected and published recollections of such "great events" as homesteading, the Depression and World War II. This time he has concentrated on a specific group of Canadians, the Japanese who were evacuated from coastal British

Columbia in 1942. One of his reasons for telling their story is "for the lessons it teaches us about the kind of people we Canadians were, and perhaps still are." (p. vi). His conclusion, however, is an unanswered question, "Could It Happen Again?" (chapter 14).

A volume such as this must be judged both on its success in reconstructing images of the past and on its usefulness for other students of the subject. On the first count, relating the story as the Japanese themselves recalled it, *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame* earns very high marks. It is difficult to forget the poignant stories of the sickening conditions in the Hastings Park Exhibition Grounds where the Japanese waited to be sent to the interior, of the tragedy of interrupted schooling, of the crowded and cold conditions in the interior camps, and the trauma of property losses. Collectively, the interviews illustrate the diversity of experience and outlook within the Japanese community. Some were surprised by Pearl Harbor and the evacuation, others could feel it coming; some regarded evacuation with a feeling of *shikata-ga-nai* ("it can't be helped"), others tried to rebel and spent at least part of the war in prison camps; some accepted federal government advice and moved east of the Rockies, others, disillusioned with Canada, returned to Japan. Many Japanese remained bitter; indeed, only a white interviewee regarded the evacuation as a "blessing in disguise".¹

Although Broadfoot presents a variety of views, students of the Japanese in Canada must use this volume with caution. Oral history has many pitfalls. Not only is the human memory fallible but individuals are not always fully aware of their own circumstances. The recollections of several Nisei veterans demonstrate this well. According to several interviewees, the Canadian government insisted that any Nisei going overseas go as Canadians and in Canadian uniform even though they might be working with British forces in the Pacific theatre. (pp. 301, 307). In fact, the cabinet wanted the Nisei to join the British or Australian armies. It only consented to enlist them in the Canadian army when some Nisei refused to volunteer unless they could serve as Canadians and thus be guaranteed the right to return to Canada after the war.

No history is immune from difficulties created by selectivity. In a collection of interviews, the problem is highly visible. How did Broadfoot choose his interviewees? How many of them were there? (Internal evidence indicates that some are quoted under two or more separate headings.) Since the identity of many interviewees is apparent to anyone who

¹ Compare with Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. 362.

reads the transcript carefully or who is slightly familiar with the subject, why didn't Broadfoot specifically name all of his subjects? If some insisted on anonymity, he could have at least provided a thumbnail sketch of their background and supplied cross-references identifying all the extracts from a particular interviewee.

To his credit, Broadfoot was aware of the danger of the book becoming pro-Japanese and did speak to some whites who had a particular interest in the Japanese such as a teacher in the interior camps and the consul for Spain, the Protecting Power for Japanese interests, as well as a few ordinary citizens. Yet there is no evidence that he interviewed such important figures as former alderman Halford Wilson of Vancouver, one of the leading anti-Japanese agitators, or Dr. H. L. Keenleyside of the Department of External Affairs, the federal government's "expert" on the Japanese situation in British Columbia. In order to flesh out the story, Broadfoot has coyly had interviewees quote extensively from several government reports.

Broadfoot did not confine his work to interviewing, transcribing and editing but has provided a few paragraphs of introduction to the book as a whole and to each of its fourteen sections. However, he has not corrected minor factual errors. One example will suffice. Attributing an election slogan — "A Vote for the NDP is a vote for the Chink, the Jap" — to Ian Mackenzie is obviously incongruous (p. 92), since the NDP was not created until 1961, some years after the enfranchisement of Asians in British Columbia and the death of Ian Mackenzie. Though such an error is relatively trivial, there is no reason for not correcting it. Because of the problems inherent in the oral history technique, this book will not be the last word on the subject of the Canadian Japanese in World War II. Nevertheless, it will have served its purpose well if it reminds Canadians of one of the more unfortunate incidents in their history.

University of Victoria

PATRICIA E. ROY

British Columbia Chronicle 1847-1871: Gold and Colonists, by G. P. V. Akrigg and Helen B. Akrigg. Vancouver: Discovery Press, 1977.

This book sets out to tell the story of British Columbia's history from the signing of the Treaty of Oregon to the colony's entry into Confederation, and follows an earlier volume, published in 1975, which chronicled the period from 1778 to 1846. The narrative is presented in annual seg-

ments arranged chronologically over the twenty-five year period, and is episodic in nature, emphasizing the dramatic and colourful incidents of the colonial era. While the events and personalities discussed in the book have been chosen primarily for their potential as a "good story", certain historical themes do bring continuity to the loosely structured text. The principal of these are the evolution of governmental institutions on the Island and mainland; the numerous gold rushes of the interior, both large and small; the creation of communication and transportation links between New Westminster and Victoria and the white settlements of the hinterland; and the establishment of social order throughout the colonies.

As a literary piece this volume at times is very successful. The book is well written, and tales like those about the peripatetic corpse of the gold-seeker John "Cariboo" Cameron's wife (pp. 267-69) and about Mrs. Staines' well-remembered salad oil (p. 74) are a joy to read. Helen Akrigg's very commendable maps are an indispensable supplement to the narrative, and hopefully will be used to good advantage in future by the teachers of B.C. history.

As history the chronicle is less easily accepted. One reason is the authors' very selective use of sources. The Akriggs have examined a considerable quantity of primary material, but have been much less diligent in canvassing more recent interpretive literature. Scholarly essays published in sources other than journals have been almost entirely ignored. Particularly noticeable among the material overlooked are several post-graduate theses in history readily available at coastal universities, including Bob Smith's work on Governor Kennedy, Kent Haworth's on Governor Musgrave, Jean Usher's on the missionary William Duncan and Robin Fisher's on Indian-white relations in B.C. Is there some reason why John Arctander's sixty-year old study of Duncan should have been used, to the exclusion of more recent work (in both published and unpublished form) by Usher and Fisher?

While little effort has been made to put the events of British Columbia's past into a larger analytical framework, such an approach is logically consistent with the chronicle form of historical writing. Yet the implied neutrality of this kind of history is impossible to maintain in practice, and the Akriggs' *British Columbia Chronicle 1847-1871* is no exception. This book presents a very definite interpretation of B.C. history — an interpretation based unfortunately on long-outdated views of the colonial period. The Royal Navy, Governor Douglas and Judge Begbie are presented as heroes, working to create a white, stable middle class and emphatically British society on the Pacific coast, while the trouble-making Indians and

rabble-rousing Americans are presented as villains, working to retard it. Sources such as Paul Phillips' essay on "Confederation and the Economy of British Columbia" have not been used because the complex economic questions they examine are deemed unimportant to this central drama. Particularly slanted is the Akriggs' portrayal of the native population through negative stereotypes which emphasize the Indians' "larcenous" (p. 64), "savage" (p. 298) and "thieving and drunken" (p. 162) character. No attempt has been made to interpret the historical role of B.C. Indians between 1847 and 1871 as anything more than a "problem" (pp. 161, 205) for the colony-building whites. Surely such tired assumptions should not remain unquestioned in the year 1977, even in "narrative" chronicles.

Simon Fraser University

ROBERT A. J. McDONALD