

Book Reviews

Vancouver Defended: A History of the Men and Guns of the Lower Mainland Defences, 1859-1949, by Peter N. Moogk (assisted by Major R. V. Stevenson). Surrey, B.C., 1978. Pp. 128; *illus.*

The University of British Columbia has an intimate physical connection with the Second World War. Throughout that conflict a 7-inch coast defence battery occupied a position near the western tip of Point Grey and within an arrow's flight of the main campus. Now the pedestal of the No. 1 Gun has been marked off and preserved from the omnivorous appetite of the new Museum of Anthropology. It is no coincidence that the leader in preserving this link with wartime service has now produced a most interesting and informative account: *Vancouver Defended: A History of the Men and Guns of the Lower Mainland Defences, 1859-1949*. The author, Professor Peter N. Moogk of the university's Department of History, has had the enthusiastic co-operation of many veterans and others, including Major R. V. Stevenson, historian of the parent unit, now the 15th Field Artillery Regiment.

Moogk properly begins his narrative with the surveys for the first military reserves on Burrard Inlet in 1859 and carries the story forward to 1949, by which time the last of the guns in the Vancouver defences had been removed. It is a measure of the author's careful perspective that nearly half the text is devoted to the period before the outbreak of war in 1939.

The original defences of the Lower Mainland long antedated Vancouver, the Seymour Artillery Company having been organized at New Westminster in 1866. There were continual reorganizations over succeeding decades. It is fascinating to think that when, in 1878, Disraeli and Gorchakov disputed British and Russian interests in the Near East, echoes of their argument at Berlin revived interest in strengthening the defences of our remote West Coast. In those early days it was difficult to get uniforms and equipment, let alone guns. One could sympathize with the

officer who reported in 1880 that "an artillery corps without guns is an anomaly most difficult to sustain. . . ." As late as 1889 the gunners of New Westminster fired a "royal salute" on Victoria Day with two borrowed anvils and a small charge of gunpowder! It was not until 1894 that No. 5 Company, British Columbia Battalion of Garrison Artillery/5th (B.C.) Regiment, C.A., was organized at Vancouver. After further reorganizations the 15th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, appeared in 1920, and it was this unit that was converted to the 15th (Vancouver) Coast Brigade, Royal Canadian Artillery, in 1938.

Even before Hitler marched into Poland the 15th Brigade had taken up its defensive positions: the 31st Heavy Battery at Ferguson Point in Stanley Park and Narrows North (under the north end of the Lions Gate Bridge); the 58th Battery at Point Grey, with a detachment at Steveston to guard the mouth of the Fraser River; and the 85th at remote Yorke Island, covering the northern approach to Vancouver through Johnstone Strait.

In spite of all preliminary planning, the mobilization of any unit in wartime is often a difficult process, requiring much improvisation. This was particularly true of the 15th Brigade since it had so recently been converted from a mobile to a static role. It is, therefore, pleasant to recall that the Brigade assumed its wartime duties with a minimum of dislocation. Credit for this was undoubtedly due to the unit's senior officers: the commanding officer, Lt-Col. G. Y. L. Crossley, a veteran of the First World War; his second-in-command, the almost legendary Major C. K. ("Rosie") Rosebrugh; and the original battery commanders, in particular, Major J. E. Piercy, Captain F. W. Guernsey and Captain (later Brigadier) R. T. Du Moulin. Very green and inexperienced junior officers (such as the present writer) have good cause to remember the invaluable guidance they received while struggling to master simultaneously details of gun drill, fire discipline, mess etiquette and the Manual of Military Law.

One of the most interesting chapters is entitled "Going Yorkey: Yorke Island, 1939-1945". Here we have the story of those unfortunate members of the Brigade (rotated, from time to time, with personnel in the Vancouver forts) who had to man the guns on this small, rocky island some 150 miles northwest of Vancouver. Morale was always a problem on "Little Alcatraz". As expressed in a gunner's song:

If you're on this Island long, tho' you think your mind is strong
You'll soon be climbing trees and walls.

The main armament in the Vancouver defences was located at Point

Grey (originally two, later three 6-inch guns) and Stanley Park, whose two 6-inch pieces were traded with Yorke Island's two 4.7-inch guns after Japan struck at Pearl Harbor. Two 12-pounders had an anti-Motor Torpedo Boat role at Narrows North and two obsolete 18-pounder field guns provided a farcical defence at Steveston. Point Grey Battery was primarily intended for counter-bombardment — that is, engaging hostile ships outside the immediate defences of the harbour. But the maximum range of its guns, bearing the dates 1899 and 1902, was only 14,500 yards. Initially, also, Point Grey functioned as the Examination Battery in close co-operation with the Examination Vessel (manned by the Royal Canadian Navy) which controlled marine traffic entering the harbour. Veterans of the early days at Point Grey will recall the “emergency” which arose when one of the transpacific “White Empresses” was reported to be shadowed by an enemy submarine while approaching the harbour. The battery “took post”, the gunners manned their pieces and observers strained their eyes through the range-finders, although it was never quite clear how the guns would engage a submerged submarine or, for that matter, why it would not have attacked its prey far out in the Strait of Georgia. It was another story in the summer of 1940 when the battery's 6-pounder fired many “heave to” rounds ahead of small craft (including American yachts) who rounded Point Grey blissfully unaware that they were in a “war zone”, contravening Examination regulations.

As the war progressed there were many changes in the Vancouver defences, including improvement of the Examination Service facilities and provision of anti-aircraft guns and more powerful searchlights. (The original anti-aircraft defence had consisted only of Lewis light machine-guns mounted on tripods!) The historian has not neglected some of the more colourful incidents in the wartime history of the 15th Brigade, including the bizarre sinking of an innocent freighter in 1942 by a “heave to” round that ricocheted across English Bay.

Although this excellent history is primarily concerned with the defences of Vancouver, it is a matter of regret that room could not have been found for some indication of how these defences were integrated with other fortifications on our west coast, notably those at Victoria-Esquimalt and Prince Rupert. The 9.2-inch armament at Albert Head was the most powerful armament we had on our coast; this, together with a wide variety of lighter equipment, was eventually supplemented by American 8-inch railway guns at Christopher Point in close co-operation with American coast artillery on the southern shore of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Something might also have been said about the later careers of certain gunners who left the Vancouver defences for overseas — such as Captain H. B. Carswell, who won the Military Cross in the Dieppe Raid, and Major E. A. Royce, who commanded the 1st Canadian Rocket Battery in Europe and who afterwards became a Vice-President of the Bank of Montreal.

Some errors have crept into the text. The Anglo Japanese Alliance dated from 1902, not 1911. Mackenzie King would not have been pleased to find his name hyphenated. In 1939 the popular Colonel H. F. G. Letson (later Adjutant General of the Army) commanded the 14th Infantry Brigade and Vancouver Area Defences, not Military District No. 11. It is also distressing to find a reference to “Juan de Fuca Strait”! Sixty-pounders are not properly classified as “field” guns, and no sailor would ever refer to the “near” side of a ship. There are also mistakes in page references given in the index.

On the credit side tribute must be paid to Professor Moogk for the excellence and profusion of the illustrations and diagrams, which are quite outstanding. It may be noted that some of the sketches were done by the war artist O. N. Fisher, who later accompanied and recorded the D Day assault of the 3rd Canadian Division in Normandy.

Carleton University

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The Squire of Kootenay West: a biography of Bert Herridge, by Maurice Hodgson. Saanichton: Hancock House Publishers, 1976. Pp. 232; *illus.*; map; index; bibliographical note.

This is a delightful book about a delightful human being. Having thus violated the reviewer's code of never saying anything completely positive, I'll have to backpedal furiously to redeem myself.

Maurice Hodgson, at the time a lecturer at Selkirk College, was commissioned to produce a biography of long-time politician and “character”, H. W. (Bert) Herridge. He had the man himself at his elbow and, as he says, the book is largely Herridge's story as Herridge remembered it, with the easy informality of the subject shining through the pages. One would need therefore to look elsewhere for a documented account of the political

life of the times. Nevertheless the volume has its own indisputable merits.

The biggest battle of Bert Herridge's twenty-seven year tenure in political office was his fight against the damming of the Columbia River and the submerging of his own homestead behind the High Arrow dam. James Wilson, the planner who worked for B.C. Hydro during the relocation, has in his book *People in the Way* accused Herridge of "a virulent personal hatred" (p. 23) for Hugh Keenleyside, the Hydro co-chairman who directed the power authority's implementation of the Columbia River Treaty. But Herridge's biography makes clear that this was no mere personal antagonism. Herridge saw in the High Arrow proposal, as neither the cool professional nor the worldly diplomat could, the death of a community with which his whole life was bound up. For Herbert Wilfred Herridge was a product of the early twentieth century promotions that drew would-be farmers into the narrow valleys of the West Kootenays in the wake of the silver-lead boom of the 1890s and left them there as mining activities died away.

Bert's parents, Willie and Charlotte Herridge, the younger son of the Methodist minister from Bournemouth and the upwardly aspiring lady's maid from rural Hampshire, were almost archetypes of the settlers who were before World War I lured to rural British Columbia. They were drawn by the prospect of establishing themselves in a social position not open to them in England. The promoters, promising fruit "ranches" which would enable them to support themselves on this scale, dumped them into a raw pioneer land to sink or swim. The elder Herridge swam with difficulty, but not even the "Great War", which released many from their disappointments, made them give up. The war, however, sent young Bert overseas to be wounded and to claim the bride who would reinforce the "Englishness" of the older generation.

Once the sober realization set in that the orchards in the agricultural pockets along the Arrow Lakes, while productive, were not about to become a second Okanagan, the Herridges, senior and junior, set about surviving. In this difficult task, Bert Herridge was aided, paradoxically, by the very wounds that partially crippled him. In a generation when "veteran's preference" has faded out, it is hard to realize the advantage of being a wounded "returned man" in the 1920s. Herridge never had to depend solely upon the income from his fruit-growing operations since his pension was supplemented by a series of government jobs, dispensed through the traditional patronage practices of provincial politics.

It therefore helped that Herridge's political views almost mirrored political changes of the time — a brief flirtation in 1921 with a Progressive

MP, hesitation in 1924 between the Provincial Party and the Liberals, active support and local office in the Liberal Party until 1934, then conversion to the newly formed CCF. Herridge, like many others, moved to the Left under the impact of the Depression and, in his case, disillusionment with the operation of patronage. To his new party he brought the pragmatically progressive views he had developed in the fruit-growers co-operatives and as a Reform Liberal, and these were to stay with him throughout his political life.

Although Herridge had been identified with the people of the Arrow Lakes and Slocan rural farming communities, his electoral base was among the smelter workers at the huge CPR-owned Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company plant in Trail. In 1941 they elected him to the provincial legislature and in 1945 to the House of Commons, and their support continued until he retired in 1968. His political career almost paralleled the existence of the revived Mine, Mill Smelter Workers Union — at first the International Union of Mine Mill and Smelters Union (IUMMSW), “Canadianized” to Mine Mill and Smelter Workers Union of Canada as the United States wing crumpled. He fought as an MLA in the early 1940s for the union’s right to be recognized as a bargaining agent and he left politics in 1968 just after it was absorbed by the United Steelworkers of America.

Herridge’s support from the big smelter Local 480 presented certain problems to him and to the CCF, for the IUMMSW was one of the groups of unions expelled on charges of “Communist domination” in the late 1940s, first from the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the United States and later from their Canadian affiliate, the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL). The jurisdiction of the Mine Mill and Smelter Workers was turned over to the giant United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and in 1950 the Steelworkers began a prolonged attempt to raid the Trail local.

It is easy to see the conflict in the terms presented by Hodgson — the struggle against “Communist domination” — that legendary and seemingly miraculous ability of a handful of party members to hold large numbers of unwilling non-Communist workers in thrall. But this political variant of the “possession by demons” theory, so popular in the Cold War years, seems even less applicable than usual to Trail. Far more relevant was the dogged resistance of a strongly developed localism to the interference of “outsiders”. The episode of the “People’s CCF” was a forerunner. The provincial CCF hierarchy “at the coast” in Vancouver was unable, in spite of expulsions, to prevent the members in the West Kooten-

may from nominating and electing their own choice, Bert Herridge, even though he was ineligible under party rules. When Herbert Gargrave, the voice of the provincial executive in that fight, later turned up in Trail as organizer for the Steelworkers, the battle was on again.

At stake in the Trail raid was as much the strong independence of Kootenay people as any ideological clash between CCFer and Communist. Neither the minuscule Communist group in Trail nor Harvey Murphy himself could have rallied the Trail workers without the affront to their regionalism from the Steel raid. Murphy, though himself an outsider, had negotiated for Local 480 for some years. Bert Gargrave, taken on the Steelworkers' payroll after his defeat as an MLA, was completely "from the coast", known only for his role in the 1945 affray. Once again local people rallied against interference from "outside".

As the 1950s drew along, Local 480 occupied a position in the Mine Mill and Smelter Workers Union very favourable to its autonomy. Elsewhere Mine Mill weakened under constant attacks from Steel, and other locals steadily lost their certifications. The Trail local and its sister units at Kimberley and Riondel provided the overwhelming majority of members in the B.C. District union. Even though headquarters remained in Vancouver, the bulk of union energy went in providing help in negotiations with CMS, and Harvey Murphy and other district leaders were proven and skilful negotiators. In fact, in some ways the situation reverted to the days of the Workman's Cooperative Committee — negotiations were mainly between the local managers of CMS and their workers, the difference being the help of "outside experts" from both company and union.

Even after 1967, when Harvey Murphy performed his last obeisance to Communist Party policy and led Local 480 into the Steelworkers, the independence bred by isolation was not dead. A split-away group tried to take the smelter workers out of the continent-wide international union with its hierarchical structure and its far-away and unknown support staff. They acted in the name of Canadian unionism, but the attempt to recreate the previous autonomy suggests that there was more of regionalism in their actions than of nationalism.

In this light, the struggle at Trail in the 1950s can be seen as a precursor of what became in the 1960s and 1970s a common phenomenon in the one-industry "company" towns of British Columbia — workers breaking away from the big international unions to create locally controlled unions. The pulp and paper workers, non-ferrous metal miners and Kitimat smelter workers have all taken this route. These workers see as

alienating not only absentee and foreign management but also absentee and foreign union leadership. The direction of the company may be out of their control, but winning back the local union can restore at least some measure of influence over their work environment.

It is one of the strengths of Hodgson's work that his richly textured study of a major Kootenay political leader opens up such questions. Another half dozen similar books on politicians in the B.C. Interior — say, on Harry Perry in Prince George, Ed Kenny in Terrace, Tom Uphill in Fernie, and not forgetting W. A. C. Bennett in Kelowna — would help us begin to analyse the character of regional political differences within British Columbia.

University of British Columbia

H. KEITH RALSTON

John Veillette and Gary White, *Early Indian Village Churches: Wooden Frontier Architecture in British Columbia* (University of British Columbia Press, 1977) pp. xx + 195, illustrated, cloth \$25.00, paper \$19.00.

The current enthusiasm for all things Canadian has not necessarily produced the best results. Untalented amateurs have frequently undertaken projects very much beyond their capabilities or professional knowledge. However, despite this caveat, excellence does sometimes ensue and this present volume is a first-rate example of what can be done by persons of taste, sensibility and verve. In the domain of history of architecture neither John Veillette nor Gary White can be considered amateurs but neither are they professionals. Rather they have that rare quality of perceptivity which cannot be taught but at the same time is not unlearned and this has enabled them to produce a handsome and attractive book, one that seeks to portray the consequences of Christianity and the Indian people in a form that is visible in its architectural remains.

A volume that is essentially pictorial poses problems because it is not easy to ascertain whether it should be considered as a work of art or of scholarship. Certainly, in this instance, one has no difficulty in praising the high calibre of the illustrations. Many of the photographs were taken by Messrs. Veillette and White who use their camera not only to be able to portray the actual buildings that are still extant but at the same time, they manage to evoke a mood or *ambiance* which is quite unique. Those photographs that they have selected from other sources are generally of an equally high standard.

Ecclesiastical buildings in British Columbia — both those which survive

and those which are lost — are infinitely varied. There is really no set external design for any denomination; it is only in the interior arrangements that Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, for example, vary considerably. A Salvation Army hostel is perhaps the most unusual survivor of a more varied external style, being rather more highly decorated than is customary. What is quite astonishing is the elaboration of detail that is possible in what are or were essentially simple buildings. Relatively unskilled carpenters “rang the changes” with simple fretworks, shingles, tongue and groove and the like, often with the happiest of results. The interior furnishings are frequently less interesting although some of the Roman Catholic edifices are quite sophisticated, for example the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Sugar Cove. What is amazing, especially in this age of conservation, is how many of these early buildings are almost totally neglected — probably they have become redundant through population shifts and changes in social moves — and the semi-derelict structures — the Holy Cross Church at Pinchi would serve as a good illustration. There are poignant reminders of the hopes of an earlier age. A goodly number of early wooden churches were destroyed by fire and not all were re-erected.

The captions accompanying the illustrations are well written and informative. Enough text is provided to answer most queries, certainly those of a non-professional architectural historian, but at the same time the principal focus is on the pictorial. The two brief essays by Robin Fisher and Warren Sommer — the former writes on the role of the missionaries and the Indian people, the latter on the more technical aspects, church architecture and building methods — set the pictures in a proper context. The two essays have very real connections in that they illustrate the optimism of the early clerical figures both in their aims and in their contributions. The third essay by Messrs. Veillette and White themselves is a sort of recapitulation of their own sentiments on the contemporary scene. The semi-idyllic past is gone, the innocence has departed but the historical impact of the church in its communal setting still cannot be ignored. “Perhaps as they put the last century into historical perspective and decide what they choose to accept and what was forced upon them, the Indian people of British Columbia may decide that their churches are, after all, an important — though adopted — aspect of their culture.”

In conclusion the University of British Columbia is to be complimented not only for having the imagination to publish this book but for the handsome appearance of the format and the elegance of the printing and illustrations.

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