

*The Introduction to*  
***WARRIORS OF THE NORTH PACIFIC***  
*Missionary Accounts of the Northwest Coast, the Skeena*  
*and Stikine Rivers and the Klondike, 1829–1900*

Edited and Annotated by  
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## INTRODUCTION

### I

At any given moment we are all part of the past, and the present, and the future. We cannot escape. Police officers involved with missing persons claim many of these people keep their initials when changing their names. A well-known Pacific Northwest writer of the 1940's and 1950's told the story of a Seattle man who narrowly escaped death on his way to work one morning. Not hurt, though badly shaken, he spent the day at his desk thinking about his mortality. He was quite happily married and genuinely fond of his children, but as he drove home that evening he made up his mind: He would change his life. So he drove by his house, drove out of Seattle, into the future. When detectives finally tracked him to the ground several years later, they found him quite happily married and genuinely fond of his children; his job was very similar to the one he had left, and he was living within a few hundred miles of his first family.

A good deal of romantic nonsense has been written about men and women escaping into the future. Such tales make fiction bubble, rarely anything more. Like the perfect criminal, the person who disappears into the future leaves no clues. This fact does not deter North American writers and readers; the escape theme is a perennial favourite, and the reason lies bone-deep in our mythology. By birth, by heritage—we are all fugitives. The first North American settlers were escapees, as are today's tourists dashing madly east and west. Our ancestors escaped from England and Europe, Asia and Russia, later from the confines of the eastern seaboard, then from one "east" after another into the unrolling western frontier. Our time has writ the names of these escapees large: The Noble Pioneer.

History tells us how they moved west, building a new world for themselves and the generations to follow. The nobility of these men and women is our heritage. That these Noble Pioneers were often the unhappy and unwanted members of society is seldomly discussed, nor is the essential fact that, to create this new world of their dreams, they had to usurp the people who owned the land. As soon [10] as these landlords were dead or driven off, the pioneers built homes and towns exactly like those of their parents'; and frequently the pioneers named these new towns and villages after their hometowns. Governments were then formed, laws passed, schools and churches built, and in each instance they were modelled after familiar examples. The unhappy and unwanted men and women in these new centres became the next wave of Noble Pioneers. Step by step across the face of an already inhabited continent these escapees rebuilt the old world in the new. Whenever and wherever possible, the pioneers made sure this world was suitable for white, Anglo-Saxon protestants—people identical to themselves.

Now that there is no longer a western frontier, we are slowly recognizing the American "melting pot" and the Canadian "mosaic" for what they are, stewpan and collage. Also, we are learning our ancestors rode roughshod over the land with little consideration for the future. They took the land, built their towns and villages, and then, knowing they had civilized a new world, died. What we are no longer sure

of is our own place in this new world of theirs. The question asked by Margaret Atwood in *Survival* belongs to all of us: "what do you do for a past if you are white, relatively new to a continent, and rootless?"

Personally, I doubt anyone will answer Atwood's question satisfactorily. The wording is too exquisitely subjective, every answer leads to a new question. A maze this large and confusing suggests we no longer believe in the Noble Pioneer, this creature has gone the way of the Noble Democrat and the Noble Savage—older myths created by earlier North American historians. If this is so, is it not possible that the history we have learned from our textbooks, this history we call ours, may be ambiguous?

## II

Theoretically we depend on the historian for our knowledge of the past. He is one of the honest figures in our society, traditionally; above prejudice, using academically and time-honoured techniques, the world's knowledge at his fingertips, and working long and lonely hours in his study, he recreates the Real Past for us. It is a virtuous profession. No doubt untold generations of teachers have felt the weight of this righteousness on their shoulders as they drove "history" into their students' heads. I know most of my history teachers felt this way; I also know my head was a real [11] challenge—they had to work when I was in the vicinity. The topic was dull, the presentation usually boring, and history classes always followed lunch. Half-asleep and worlds away, I generally missed much of what was being taught.

History took on a new meaning for me the afternoon a study hall teacher caught me reading *The Communist Manifesto*. Minutes later I was standing before the school principal's desk. Unluckily for me this happened in the United States, and the year was 1959; luckily, the principal was a thoughtful man. I was angry. A history teacher had told our class the *Manifesto* should be burned, this was the duty, he implied, of every American. That alone made the book sound worth reading, but I knew better than to use this approach with the principal; to him I proclaimed my right to read a book before burning it. He heard me out. Then he began talking about history; the ways of looking at it, the methods historians have developed, and how, in turn, philosophers and politicians have used the historians' conclusions. That afternoon is only a small moment in one corner of my memory, except for the one thing he warned me never to forget: Every man has his own version of history.

Afterwards, as so often happens when a simple truth is made obvious, everywhere I looked the principal's axiom was true. And nowhere was it so clear as at the University of Alaska several years later. There the professor teaching Alaskan history rarely admitted the existence of the Alaskan Panhandle, that narrow strip of coast running south from Haines to the Canadian border. Consequently we learned much about central and northern Alaska; that area's economic and political history was the professor's major theme, and his asides concerned the various gold rushes. We learned next to nothing about the British, Russians, Spanish and Americans on the Northwest Coast; nothing about the British influence; nothing about the canning or logging industries, and little of Alaska's position in western frontier history. Many of us in that class were from Southeastern Alaska, and this professor's history was not ours; we felt like aliens.

Since then I have read many other versions of Alaskan history. It seems to me that all of these authors have been hobbled by their research. Their imaginations cannot reach beyond the libraries and the classrooms, their grasp has been amputated at the wrist. Happily, for those of us who see history as the story of men and women played out against the background that is a living [11] landscape, historians rewrite themselves every generation. Today's facts and theories will be hopelessly out of fashion in ten or twenty years' time. What will not change are the stories some of us were lucky enough to hear on log booms and street corners, in ghost towns and libraries, on boats and beaches, in bars and fly camps the real guts of history. Some of it was autobiographical, some biographical, there were tall tales and tales

of the grotesque, a few spiteful legends mean enough for Dante, and a great deal of genial leg-pulling. Whether fact or fiction, and the listeners learned the difference quickly enough, the colours, smells, sounds, were real. The actors, their stories, and the landscape were one. Bernal Diaz and Francis Parkman would have appreciated this, but would they appreciate the anemic versions found in books today?

The last generation of storytellers was elderly when I began listening. Most were dead by the time I reached my early twenties then there was no one to carry on the traditions. The inheritors had spent their youth fighting in Europe, the South Pacific, then Korea; they returned home demanding the time they had lost, the land owed them everything and they had no time for tradition. Or so it seemed to me in the small backwaters of Southeastern Alaska. My notebooks from the period tell me I was thinking along these lines, but my language was vague as my sense of loss was strong. When the last of the real old-timers died, my sounding board vanished, and I began to drift—tired of the coastal rain, the back-breaking work, which so often began in the heroic mode and ended in boredom... As Joe Hosch, a friend and fellow traveller, so aptly put it: "The heroes are dead." Shortly afterwards he went to Asia and I went to Europe. When I returned, spiritually, it was to a booming ground on the Fraser River; shortly afterward I went up coast as a faller and machine operator, then spent most of the next ten seasons working and travelling the length of the B.C. coast. There the real old-timers, the men of the 1890's, were also gone: yet there were men who had listened well, they honoured their traditions and told the stories properly, unlike the men who had gone overseas in their youth.

Winters, in the most aimless manner imaginable, I read my way through the University of British Columbia's collection of Pacific Northwest history and literature. During this time I began writing poetry, and from the very outset I believed what I would later write in the Introduction to one of my collections: "Either a poet is born with a landscape, or he spends his life searching for one. Happily I [13] count myself among the former." My reading, directionless as it was, was not only appeasing my curiosity, reading was an act of affirmation.

Except for my own poetry, and some later journalism and bibliographic work, all of this experience and reading was for naught. Writing history was not a goal of mine, nor was teaching; my creative powers had all they could do to deal with the poetry I was writing and the poetry I wanted to write. Thus my aimlessness might have continued indefinitely had not a publisher asked me to read Father Brabant's *Reminiscences* with an eye to preparing a second edition.

Missionaries and their work on the coast were aspects of Northwest Coast history I had largely ignored. True, I knew Reverend Young's *Alaska Days with John Muir*, Mrs. Willard's *Kin-Da-Shon's Wife*, and probably a few books on the Reverend Sheldon Jackson. My library contained a copy of John Arctander's *The Apostle of Alaska*, but my interest was personal, not spiritual; I knew the Alaskan country he wrote about, and the grandfathers of friends were mentioned in the book. While none of these books, nor the missionaries I had encountered in coastal towns, or in fiction and history, had caused me to think seriously of the missionary record, two things did lean in my favour: Metlakatla, Alaska was near my childhood home. Everyone in that area, European and Indian, Christian and non-believer, referred to the founder of that town as Father Duncan—even when he was the butt of an off-colour joke. There he was a saintly and honoured figure, yet in Canada, where the body of writing about his work continues to grow, and where he is supposedly honoured, the historical impact of his work is nowadays considered largely negative. Knowing this strange imbalance existed gave me a sense of proportion: And, quite coincidentally, I had read a copy of Robert Louis Stevenson's *South Seas*, which someone had left behind in a cabin near Telegraph Creek. In that book the author writes: "those who have a taste for hearing missions, Protestant or Catholic, decried, must seek their pleasures elsewhere than in my pages. Whether Catholic or Protestant, with all their gross blots, with all their deficiency of candour, of

humour, and of common sense, the missionaries are the best and the most useful whites in the Pacific."

Objectivity was not a question to arise while I worked on the text later published as *Mission to Nootka*, Brabant's isolation had been almost complete and I had to rely largely on what he wrote. Nor [14] was this a concern, later the same year, as I edited a memoir of Father Vullighns (*Paths Our Ancestors Walked*), a pioneer missionary on Vancouver Island's Saanich Peninsula. However, objectivity was a major problem while editing and annotating Archdeacon Collison's *In the Wake of the War Canoe*. Collison had been a colleague and friend of William Duncan; he had dealt with the problems caused by the proximity of the Haida, Tlingit and Tsimshian to each other, and then there were Catholics on the upper Skeena, Presbyterians close by in Alaska, as well as Methodists at his very doorstep. These Methodists were not just any Methodist group, they were led by the ever-present, the powerful and hard-working Thomas Crosby. The contentions all of this caused could be felt in every page of the original text; sorting it out made me realize how human, how all too human, these men had been. I also saw how difficult it had been for Collison to tell his truth.

At this point I also began to rediscover something of my own heritage. Beaches where Collison had found refuge during his travels, had been my campsites early on in my own wanderings; he knew the Queen Charlotte Islands Edenshaw family, I had worked with Alaskan Edenshaws and knew well their pride of heritage, and if Collison had watched battles between Haida, Tlingit and Tsimshian, I knew better than he how long their grudges could last, having watched them fight in Ketchikan schoolyards. In a roundabout way I was returning to my home acre. And the longer I remained there, the stronger the half-lost voices became.

There was nothing supernatural about these voices. My imagination and memory were working, functioning as they had not since the publication of my last substantial collection of poetry three years earlier. Even then my concentration had been elsewhere; the old and their stories were not part of my thinking that winter, and since then I had sought a new direction. Had I looked for an older coast? I doubt it, but there is sometimes a great deal of truth to the saw: A writer often writes to discover his own thinking. At any rate, Collison gave me a coast my imagination and memory recognized. Many of the old-timers I had known looked back at men like Collison and Crosby as the real frontiersmen; some spoke of Duncan with awe; he had arrived in 1857, less than a lifetime after Vancouver and Quadra explored so much of the coast. Sitka was the capital of Russian America; between Nanaimo and the northern end of the Alaskan Panhandle there were no Europeans [15] except for a few British and Russian traders and their camp followers, and great areas on coastal maps were blank. In the published writing of Collison, Crosby, Ridley, Harrison and others I found the old-timer's coast—the real coast as it existed before historians and politicians, journalists and the authors of potboilers forced it to fit within the narrow confines of this century.

After a two-year hiatus I returned to Crosby and the others with some apprehension: Would the books still be valuable? Were they worth republishing? My own view, after almost daily contact with them for the past few months, is that they are even more unique than I first believed, but only partially for the reasons outlined above. In the next section I outline another rationale for republishing the heart and soul of these volumes. This laying on of hands I have described may sound either poetic or preposterous, yet, if Atwood's question can be answered, this is a step in one direction leading to the construction of an answer.

### III

Not since Hubert Howe Bancroft began publishing his histories has a historian attempted to write a true history of the Northwest Coast. His company produced *The Northwest Coast* (1884), as well as monumental studies of Alaska (1886), *British Columbia* (1887), and *Washington* (1890). Almost a hundred years later these books remain the standard reference works for anyone wanting a detailed

account of Northwest history up to the time Bancroft finished his project. Much of what has appeared since is long on scholarly detail, short on scope and proportion. And the rest, the textbooks, the regional and local histories, the journalese, is written with the hope that the death of the Noble Pioneer is only a rumour.

Without readily available histories, where does the person curious about the Northwest Coast go in his search for information? Almost anywhere else in the world, this rhetorical question would have an equally obvious answer: The area's literature. Men and women still travel the Mediterranean with Homer as their only guide, as others walk the streets of London with a favourite volume of Dickens in their pocket, as I have cruised the San Juan Islands of Puget Sound with Norman McDonald's *Song of the Axe* and walked the streets of *Sitka* with Barrett Willoughby's *Sitka*. Since these two books have been out of print for decades, and no library I have ever visited owns both books, the curious may never locate [16] them. Sadly, this is also true for most of the finest books about the Northwest Coast. The generation that fought World War II and the Korean conflict had no time for their heritage, and their children—my generation—grew up culturally illiterate.

The books did survive, I am looking at them on my shelves as I write. N. C. McDonald's *Fish the Strong Waters* (1956) and *Witch Doctor* (1959) head my list of historical *fiction*; Stewart Edward White's *Wild Geese Calling* (1940) may be the only accurate story of coastal pioneers who came to stay; *Annie Jordan* (1948) by Mary Brinker Post is invigorating for what it attempts, as are the first 90 brilliantly written pages of Ivan Doig's *The Sea Runners* (1982), the only contemporary novel worth noting. Robert Lund's *The Alaskan* (1953), although about a town north of the Panhandle, can, when shifted slightly south, be read as a savage inditement of Northwest Coast morality, as true today as when published. Currently, only *The Sea Runner* is readily available; for various reasons most of the others are not even available in large public or university libraries.

With the exception of *The Alaskan*, all of these novels are concerned with the coast before World War I. McDonald knew the coast before the turn of the century; White knew men and women who had been on the coast since the 1860's, Post and Doig have dug deeply into paper documentation and the landscape. Today we are at a three generation remove from the pre-war coast, and at the other end of history the Exploration Fur trade period is well documented, as is the Fraser Gold Rush era. It is the period falling between the gold rush and the war, roughly 1860-1910, that is so enigmatic. The overview presented by textbooks, the many articles and collections of essays dealing with these years, lull us into believing we know this period. Still, there is no definitive history of the expansion of Northwest Coast logging, nor does an adequate history of the fishing/canning industry exist. Coastal mining has likewise been ignored. Nothing has been written about prostitution or tourism, the latter has given us some of our earliest accounts of coastal life and played a large role in popularizing the beauty of the Inside Passage, while the former was a major economic factor in towns such as Ketchikan and Victoria—if oral history is trustworthy.

It is understandable that the industrialists did not leave a record. Their aim in life was to make money. Few, if any, spent more than the summer months on the coast; their centres were London, New York and San Francisco. The one exception is [17] Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, originally an entrepreneur and later a civil servant, who wrote *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*—out of print since 1868. Recently a Montana novelist described strip miners as men who "don't know land or the love of land," and how perfectly this description fits those early day industrialists on the North Pacific Coast. They came to loot the land and the sea, and when their operations were no longer profitable, they closed them down. If their stories exist, they will be found in account books.

Although farmers had begun to settle in the Lower Fraser River Valley and along the lower east coast of Vancouver Island early in the 1860's, and three groups of northern Europeans had settled at Bella

Coola, Sointula, and Cape Scott in the 1890's, few of these people left published records. They were too busy clearing land, building houses and raising families; writing was a luxury few could afford. When they did write, late in life, their memoirs were for their immediate families, not the public. The pioneer testimony we possess concerning that period from 1860 through to 1910 was written, or told by – in the case of published oral history – the sons and daughters of the pioneers. Honest as these reports can be, they are the products of the twentieth century; furthermore, as few of the second generation stayed on the land, much of what they have to say is either tinged with nostalgia or downright bitter. The reasons behind these viewpoints can be found in Marie Sandoz's *Old Jules*, Vardis Fisher's *In Tragic Life*, N. C. McDonald's *Song of the Axe*, James Stevens' *Big Jim Turner*, and the many other first rate novels written by those who fled the frontiers. The most revealing account of frontier life in the Pacific Northwest is Betty MacDonald's *The Egg and I*, a book too often praised only for its humour; critics admit it's a good read, but will admit nothing more. This book repays a careful reading. While it took place in the 1920's, the semi-civilized world Betty MacDonald found on the Olympic Peninsula was the world many pioneers endured years on end. Small wonder they did not write.

Obviously there were other groups that might have left a record. Some did; accounts by hunters and travellers abound, and several of these do not deserve the oblivion they now inhabit, especially the history-travel books by Ella Higginson and Eliza Scidmore. Finally, however, most of the earliest accounts are only glimpses—"Kodaks" of the coast. Except for Hjalmar Rutzebeck's *Alaska Man's Luck* and *Woodsmen of the West* by M. Allerdale Grainger, I am aware of no other labour accounts that bear reading. Barrett [18] Willoughby's *Sitka* (1930) is the first study of the genius loci to come from the coast, and it is made more unique by the evident influence of D. H. Lawrence and Norman Douglas, two other students of the spirit of place. This makes *Sitka* the first Alaskan book to be influenced by twentieth-century literary trends. The book has been out of print for decades, regrettably, for the author grew up on the North Pacific Coast and loved the land. Not until the publication of M. Wylie Blanchet's *The Curve of Time* (1961) was there a sequel to Willoughby's study.

All but a few of the coastal books mentioned above share a common trait, no matter how disparate they may be otherwise. The Indians, here for thousands of years before the European explorers, are rarely mentioned. *Alaska, Past and Present* by Clarence C. Hulley, once the standard textbook on Alaskan history, deals with the Aborigines of Alaska in 16 pages. In British Columbia, the standard text is Margaret Ormsby's *British Columbia: A History*; she does not even have a chapter on the Indians, but her Index suggests she mentions them 16 times.

Now we have reached the point where we can examine the historical value of the Northwest Coast's missionary literature. Obviously the most important fact is the written record they left us. The Protestant record begins in 1829 with Green's *Report* and the Catholic in 1841 when the Reverend Demers, later Bishop of Vancouver Island, reached the mouth of the Fraser River. The following 60 years of coastal work has been recorded in such books as *Notices and Voyages of the Famed Quebec Mission to the Pacific Northwest*, the Reverend A. G. Morice's *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*, the historical issue of the British Columbia *Orphan's Friend*, Sister Mary Mildred's *The Apostle of Alaska*, and my edition of Reverend Brabant's memoirs, *Mission to Nootka*. Although their earliest travels extended along most of the Northwest Coast, the Catholic church did little coastal missionary work north of Vancouver Island. The Protestant church did little true missionary work on the coast between Green's visit in 1829 and the arrival of William Duncan at Port Simpson, and Thomas Crosby's initial work at Nanaimo in 1862. By 1880 the Canadian Protestants had established missions at various points along the coast, on the Skeena and Nass Rivers, and regularly visited points as far north as Wrangell, Alaska. This work opened up the newly acquired American territory of Alaska for the Presbyterian Church, which began work at Wrangell in 1874. All of this has been recorded in [19] detail, often by

the missionaries themselves, sometimes by admirers.

This work is of uncalculable value to the Northwest Coast. Not only is it the best collection of coastal autobiographical literature extant, it contains the best social commentary concerning the 50-year period following William Duncan's arrival. These books are the only eyewitness accounts of indigenous Indian life as the people travelled those horrendous last miles of their way from prehistory into the twentieth century. And while this was happening, disease was decimating the Indians, trade continued to destroy their social and economic structures as did seasonal employment in the canneries, which also destroyed their food-gathering patterns, while the industrial influx was usurping their traditional land holdings.

All of this was duly recorded by journalists, government functionaries, ethnologists, travelers, and various historians, yet none of these writers lived with the Salish, Kwakiutl, Haida, Tshimshian, and Tlingit on a daily basis, year after year. Only the missionaries wrote from this very valuable perspective.

The missionaries and various government agencies were destroying the Indians' social and religious organization, it is true. The potlatch, the hereditary power of the upper classes, slavery and shamanism were seen as evils to be eradicated, and often it did not matter that the baby went out with the bathwater. The missionaries admit this and try to explain why. What they wrote is another version of history. Consciously or unconsciously each writer left out a great deal; they were opinionated, as they were often blind to the results of their own actions, and, obviously, much of their reporting must be tested against documentation elsewhere. This is not a unique situation; much historical research amounts to nothing more than checking and rechecking facts, balancing one testimony against another so evidence can be presented coherently. The missionaries were human and their testimony is humanly flawed. This should be no surprise to anyone, but what is surprising is the general accuracy of their versions, where and when comparison with other paper documentation is possible. This indicates much of what they said, details impossible to double-check today, may also prove to be accurate.

Consequential as the missionary record of this transitional period is, these books may have other even longer lasting values. The Northwest Coast's history may be brief in European terms, it may have moved with a startling rapidity, even when compared to the [20] development of the eastern seaboard—but coastal history is not as poor as many of our writers would lead us to believe. Nor does coastal history lack the "colour" so often associated with frontiers elsewhere. Theme after theme is mentioned by Green, Crosby, Harrison and Ridley, which historians and novelists have only touched lightly, if at all. In 1829 Green saw the early results of the whisky trade, he visited the Russian capital, and was witness to the early ravages of smallpox. Crosby wrote of the liquor problems, destruction by sailors on shore leave in an Indian village, and the slave trade. Ultimately, Harrison is more portentous as a person than a writer, few men fall as far as he did, fewer rise from their own ashes; he is unique as that college graduate John Muir and S. Hall Young encountered in a Tlingit village. Ridley's book is loud with characters waiting for their call. There is enough "colour" in these four books to have satisfied Balzac. As there is only one credible novel about Northwest Coast missionaries, *Huldowget* (1926) by B. A. McKelvie, as there is only one psychological novel studying the first encounter between the Haida and the "Boston Men," N. C. McDonald's *Witch Doctor*—we may be colour-blind.

In his *Contact and Conflict*, Robin Fisher tells us "The missionaries demanded even more far-reaching transformation than the settlers, and they pushed it more aggressively than any other group of whites." Outwardly this is a calm and valid statement, one that, to the best of my knowledge, no one has questioned publicly. Fisher's time frame for this statement is 1774–1890. "Settlers" suggest settlements, an influx of pioneers clearing land, building homes and villages; if so, where was this taking place? As well, this statement suggests the frontier of the Northwest Coast was a continuation of the North American westward expansion. The truth is rather different. When the Noble Pioneer reached the Pacific, he immediately turned his back and did his utmost to ignore its presence: It was a different type

of "pioneer" who moved north up along the Inside Passage. William's *British Columbia Directory* 1892 lists 110 men living between Alert Bay and the British Columbia Alaska boundary. Although there is no way of knowing the accuracy of this figure, as the population was highly transient, so far as year round inhabitants are concerned the census is probably relatively accurate. Of these 110, 18 were missionaries; 58 were cannery employees, teachers, government employees, and businessmen; many of the remainder, such as the gardeners, boat builders and fishermen, were at least seasonally involved with the canneries. In [21] Southeastern Alaska the population was a great deal larger: 1,900 whites were living in Sitka, Douglas Island, Juneau, Killisnoo and Wrangell in the summer of 1886. Among these men there would have been a substantial number of miners, otherwise there is no reason to assume the employment patterns would have been different than the British Columbian. What can be assumed is the bloated nature of this Alaskan census; it was taken in the summer when the population was at its height. A contemporary map shows Fort Wrangell, Juneau and Sitka as the only white villages.

If these figures and employment patterns do not disprove Fisher's statement, they certainly force us to question his logic. The frontier beyond the southern half of Vancouver Island and the fertile lower valley of the Fraser River was radically new. There were few if any "settlers," in the traditional sense, on the Northwest Coast prior to the Norwegian-Americans who settled in the Bella Coola Valley in 1894. The population consisted of men involved in exploitative industries, trading and business, and missions, and all but the latter exploited the Indian. The canning, logging and mining interests were only concerned with them as a source of cheap labour; the traders and businessmen, or to draw a clearer distinction: private enterprise and Hudson's Bay Company employees, saw the Indian as the mainstay in the economy, and to think either of these major groups wanted the Indian to change is to think with two left feet. When the Russian American Company and the HBC agreed to stop the use of whiskey in trade, it had nothing to do with their concern for the Indians' health and welfare. They were trying to save their own skins, having discovered the hard way how dangerous a drunken Indian village could be. Throughout the work gathered here, the major complaints are the liquor trade, the slave trade, and the influence of disorderly Europeans. This was basic in the "far-reaching transformation" demanded by the missionaries. To turn this around, as Fisher has attempted, is sophistic.

With the exception of a few far-sighted travellers and military men, the missionaries were the only group to think of the future of the native peoples. Anyone who cares to examine the statistics will discover the Indian as a race had almost lost its will to live, even as early as the 1860's. Then came the great epidemics, and in answer to this the missionaries introduced vaccine, sanitation, proper housing—over the protests of the HBC and others, who had profited by the Indians' weaknesses. Despite all their mistakes, history makes one thing very clear about the missionaries during [22] this crucial period: They, and they alone, taught the various tribes survival techniques.

If the missionaries set the brakes on a people racing towards the vanishing point, they did something equally unique by remaining on the coast. Father Duncan arrived in 1857 and died on the coast in 1918; Archdeacon Collison died at Kincolith after 49 years with the Haida and Tsimshian; Reverend Crosby was on the northern coast for 45 years, Charles Harrison spent 40 on the Queen Charlotte Islands, while many others lived out the final 30 or more years of their lives on the coast. No group and few individuals can equal this record. It could be argued that a few of the HBC men, Sir James Douglas, John Work and others, spent most of their lives on the coast, and this is true—but latterly in the comfort of the rapidly growing city of Victoria, quite a different proposition than Masset, Kincolith, Metlakatla and Port Simpson.

By this time all of us are wondering the same thing: If the missionary record is so valuable historically, why has it been ignored? Actually, this is not the case, though it may seem so. Historians, sociologists, religious writers, and anthropologists have mined these books for decades. Antiquarian



book dealers know the value of this literature, and their prices reflect a knowledgeable clientele. Beyond this, two answers emerge as major considerations.

A realistic view at the time, reinforced by subsequent international evaluations, would have maintained the missionary work in the North Pacific was of slight national or international curiosity. The work done in the Far East and Africa caught and held the public imagination, and there are more than one or two reasons to believe the work done there had more lasting consequences. The publication of local missionary memoirs suggests people were interested, that these books went out of print almost immediately proves this audience was not large. Another consideration, so far as reprinting is concerned, is changing morality. The Northwest Coast, like the rest of North America, was a different world after World War I. Before the war thoughtful men and women had valued the missionaries as a buffer between the totally demoralized Indian population and modern civilization, but this respect began to dwindle as the coast opened up to immigration. The newcomers were not interested in the missionaries or their vision; this, the changing morality of the 1920's and the deaths of the major missionaries, all coincided. The missionaries developed into the scapegoats for a new enlightened generation, more interested in [23]imitating popular thinking of the day than in thinking for themselves. It was a slow process, one which has picked up speed and credibility as a new generation of historians have begun publishing their opinions of the Christian influence on the coast.

The views of these historians carry a certain amount of weight, due more to our profound respect for historians and his or her academic position, than to the credibility of their work or their profundity as thinkers. Two Canadian historians who have recently written about Northwest Coast missionaries are Jean Usher and Robin Fisher; the former has written a book and at least one article about William Duncan, and Fisher's fascination with Duncan permeates everything he has written about the missionaries. Both have an enviable dexterity when handling facts, though the way they fondle them is embarrassing. Worse, these "favourites" fail to substantiate the authors' conclusions. Throughout Fisher's writing his superficiality is a nuisance, yet he makes up for this in his determination to prove William Duncan misguided. However, to do this, Fisher must resort to *ex post facto* arguments—a gimmick that distorts his critical focus. Objectionable as this is, Fisher's work is model history compared to Jean Usher's near-complete lack of historical objectivity. In *William Duncan of Metlakatla* she writes of the collapse of Duncan's experimental village of Metlakatla, British Columbia: "The Christian utopia could no longer be the symbol of moral and secular progress for the Indians of the north Pacific coast." In making this statement she effectively discounts Duncan's exodus to Alaska with over 900 followers, the creation of a new Metlakatla, its lasting success, and the town's national and international symbolic importance.

The degree of inversion displayed by these historians is remarkable. This cartoon of the past, with the aforementioned changes in morality, has done much to discredit the missionary labours on the Northwest Coast. Judging the actors in history by our own standards, with the added blessing of hindsight, is an easy and flatulent method of handling the past—much better to return to the past itself. Is there a history text concerning the North American frontier that is as informative, as readable, and as alive as Francis Parkman's *Oregon Trail*, and what about Mark Twain's *Roughing It*—or Sir Richard Burton's *The City of the Saints*? The past is a landscape the truly curious will always want to explore. Whatever else the missionary writing collected here may be, it constitutes a segment of our past. Without knowing the role these missionaries [24] played in our story, as well as the parts belonging to other actors, we will flounder, we will never know: "what do you do for a past if you are white, relatively new to a continent, and rootless?" Culturally we will be identical to the man driving out of Seattle: Doomed by our ignorance of the past to an equally vapid future.

## IV *Textual Notes*

Due to the value of Northwest Coast publications, and the concurrent fad for collecting books of coastal interest, there is a rapidly developing philosophy or view of the book as object. True, there are books of far more value as art than as literature, others have a certain importance because of their provenance, and many are only valuable due to their authors' place in history. But to lock away books of general interest, whatever their price tag, in private libraries or the Rare Book Rooms of major libraries, where they are usually confined to an academic audience, is medieval.

The four works under this cover were written for a widely scattered international audience, only lately have they come to be treated as objects, and usually only by collectors, librarians and book dealers. There is little evidence to prove the majority of men and women in any of these groups actually read books. To bring these books back to the world of the interested reader might have taken a variety of directions. I have not attempted to create a scholarly edition of these books, nor did I want to do a facsimile edition; the first I leave to academics and the second to printers, they have the qualifications. Creating an anthology or selection of missionary work was tempting, it would have meant a far wider range of material; yet there is something androgynous about even the best anthologies. Ultimately, I decided that, with cautious but severe editing, these four books might fit under the one cover, where I have long felt they belonged.

My editing of these books has been drastic, some will say heavy-handed, not only for the reason above, an equally demanding concern has been the creation of a clean and readable text. The rationale and scope of my editing is outlined book by book below. Beyond this I have omitted nothing, nor have I modified anything that might conceivably cast the authors in a light different than what they themselves created. Beyond this there are only two [25] aspects that warrant elaboration, the spiritual and linguistic.

Concern has been voiced, publicly and privately, that any editing of what one reader of *In the Wake of the War Canoe* called "spiritual meditations," creates a false impression of missionary Christianity. To whatever extent they may have meditated privately, we cannot know, and this remains a tempting mystery; publicly, as recorded by themselves, meditating was an awkward and unfamiliar task. If their written "meditations" could be measured by anything on the scale between St. Francis and the post-Zarathustran questions posed by Nikos Kazantzakis, I would have deleted nothing. The Christianity these missionaries believed and practiced can be traced back to Jesus speaking to his 11 disciples on a mountain in Galilee: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This was not a meditative, cloistered Christianity, it belonged to the frontiers; the missionaries were hard-headed and bold, resembling the Moses of Thomas Mann's *The Tables of the Law* more than the clergy of North America in the latter half of the twentieth century. This blunt approach, wrote one English writer, "has been justified by the voice of history."

Originally, I had thought to provide footnotes explaining the words written in Coast Salish, Tsimshian, Haida and Tlingit. As this would demand their current spelling, I dropped the idea. Few of the early writers agreed on the spelling, few agree today. I am told the current phonetic systems devised by linguists are functional; be that as it may, the systems are only useful to those who know how to use them. So far as these experts are concerned, remember the missionaries were speaking and writing the languages years before Franz Boas and his followers arrived—I am reminded of a story told by N. C. McDonald. Captain Levy, a friend of McDonald's, who had been born and raised at Fort Wrangell, was hired by the government as an interpreter. At one point the government began to suspect part of

"the whole truth" was disappearing in the captain's whiskers. They called in the experts, the Tlingits switched to Tlingit slang, "and the experts had to ask Levy what the Indians were talking about."

*North-West Coast* originally appeared in *The Missionary Herald, 1830-1831*, published by the American Board of Foreign Missions. In 1915 a limited edition was printed by Chas. Fred. Heartman, with additional material from early issues of the *Herald*, edited by Edward Eberstadt. In preparing this edition I have deleted all [26] material not written by J. S. Green, including the linking narration by the unknown editor who prepared the text for publication in the *Herald*. As well, Green's concluding pages dealing with his impressions of California have been omitted, interesting though they are, California is outside the geographical limits of this book. Other than a few grammatical changes, the only major editing done to create this text has been to move three of the original editor's footnotes into the text where they belong logically, as they constitute part of Green's narrative; and to delete 98 lines that are deeply religious, crucial as these reflections may have been to Green, they add nothing to his story or our knowledge of Green.

My selection of *Among the An-ko-me-nums* instead of *Up and Down the North Pacific Coast*, which covers Crosby's years at Port Simpson, may seem a strange choice to some, geographically. In recent years a great deal has been written about the Port Simpson-Metlakatla area, and most of this material is available, while little has been written about the mission to the Coast Salish. The power of Crosby's eye-witness account, the similarity of the problems he faced at Nanaimo with those missionaries farther north had to deal with, outweighed all other considerations.

I have excerpted chapters four through fifteen, pages 42-168 out of the 243 pages of the 1907 printing by William Briggs, Toronto. This was the only edition of *Among the An-ko-me-nums*. The first and last chapters are not particularly coastal; the first deal with Crosby's early years, the last are primarily concerned with the Fraser River. From the 127 pages dealing with Nanaimo and the Gulf Islands, I have made frequent deletions, these range in size from a word or a sentence to complete paragraphs and occasional pages. Head notes in the form of quotations, subtitles where they were obstructive, brief historical overviews or explanations that are no longer necessary, and some ethnological data concerning the Salish of the Fraser River has been deleted. The religious commentary excised amounts to less than 500 words. This material was cut because Crosby had said the same thing better in earlier or later pages, and a similar redundancy accounts for the longest cuts. The author enjoyed telling stories, although they are all interesting I have retained only the best examples, or, in several cases, those that are historically the most revealing.

Between 1911 and 1913 Charles Harrison published a long series of rambling articles in *The Queen Charlotte Islander*, and these, as well as the material he published in church publications and two [27] articles that appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* (1892), constitute the first publication of *Ancient Warriors of the North Pacific*. If this book is judged against the newspaper articles, one can only conclude that the C. W. Hobley, who is thanked in Harrison's preface, "for advice, assistance, kindly criticism and correction of the manuscript" was the stylist who put the book into its existing form. Although I have read all of Harrison's writings, that work was not consulted; this text is based strictly on the 1925 edition as published by H. F. & G. Witherby, London. As with Crosby's book, there was only one edition.

This text constitutes chapters three through nine, or pages 37 through 130 of the book's 222. Harrison writing about the life and world of the Haida deserves to be reissued, but not Harrison on the history, natural history and geology of the Queen Charlotte Islands; on Haida legends and their "Tradition of the Creation" he is misleading, this writing, like that of his Appendix and Glossary, will be of little general interest. None of this adds anything to the text in this collection, and "The Haida Pantheon" suggests the manner in which the author saw Haida myth and traditions.

I have excised Harrison's philosophical and historical musings, and a few paragraphs where he quotes or paraphrases other writers. A few sentences that are asides, or references to other portions of the text have been deleted, as has some linking commentary.

*Snapshots from the North Pacific* was compiled and edited by Alice J. Janvrin, Church Missionary Society, and the second edition from which I have worked is dated 1904. The first edition was published in 1903, there was no third edition. Ms. Janvrin worked from various published letters of Bishop Ridley's. Pleasant as her commentary is throughout the book, today it detracts from the freshness and power of Ridley's writing. I have deleted her commentary, head notes, and chapters I, IV, VII, XI, XIII and XIV from her edition. Little is said in these chapters not to be found elsewhere in the text; and, touching as Chapter XI is, as the Bishop writes of his wife's death, she is hardly a major figure in his book; and once the author's rhetoric is pared down, little remains of Mrs. Ridley's death. To this portion of *Snapshots* I have added *Klondike and Its Approaches* and *New Mission to the Miners on Atlin and Bennett Goldfields*; the first was published in *The Mission Field*, the latter in *The Gospel Missionary*. From the above I have eliminated most of the business references regarding the CMS, religious [28] meditations in various forms, and references to people and place only of CMS importance in Britain and elsewhere.

Throughout this book information inside square brackets are my additions. All the footnotes, unless followed by initials, are mine. Occasionally I have changed the spelling of place-names; to note that Naas is now Nass, or Fort Wrangle is today's Wrangell is a waste of time, made worse for Wrangell should be "Wrangel" and "Nass" was Vancouver's spelling in 1793.

\* \* \*

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### Charles Lillard (1944-1997)

Charles Lillard was raised in Alaska, where he attended the University of Alaska. Later he studied in Germany and at the University of British Columbia. Lillard is the author of five volumes of poetry, editor and co-editor of several anthologies, and has written numerous articles and essays on the Northwest. His previous work in B.C.'s religious history includes *Mission to Nootka*, *Paths Our Ancestors Walked* and *In the Wake of the War Canoe*. Lillard has taught at the universities of British Columbia and Victoria.

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