

capital. For those less inclined to rely solely on a class-based analysis, the larger picture includes the colonial relation of Native peoples to the immigrant population. That larger picture Knight continues to leave to others.

Note

- 1 Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), p. xi, acknowledges Knight's influence on his work. "Although my focus is on politics rather than economics, my approach and intent are similar to Knight's." Diane Newell, *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: U of T Press, 1995), p. 25, suggests that Knight's work "deserves special mention, for it exposed Indian participation in the early industrial economy to re-examination in ways that continue to stimulate Canadian scholarship in the 1990s." Frank Tough, *As Their Natural Resources Fail: Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1879-1930* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996) p. 299, describes *Indians at Work* as a "pioneering, but most influential work in the area of Indian economic history."

David V. Burley, J. Scott Hamilton, and Knut R. Fladmark, *Prophecy of the Swan: The Upper Peace River Fur Trade of 1794-1823* (Vancouver UBC Press, 1996) 213 pp., index.

review by Frank Tough

Burley, Hamilton and Fladmark have made a notable empirical contribution to fur trade ethnohistory. This clearly written and well-illustrated study provides a synthesis of the archival and archaeological records for the Upper Peace River area. Essentially their research covers posts of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies during the competitive era. The authors proposed: to provide an account of the early fur trade history through archaeology and archival record, to describe the physical features and artifacts of the trade, and to tell the story of the research project (p. xx). The authors strove to make this an interesting narrative and they did bring some life to the individuals who participated in the trade.

The book is organized into eleven chapters and three major appendices. The contents include: a description of the Peace River region and early human habitation; an ethnographic description of the Beaver Indians or Dunne-za and the Sekani or Tsé-'kéh-ne; a more-or-less traditional recounting of fur trade history with an emphasis on the opening up of the Athabasca and Peace countries; an account of the archaeological field work done in the mid-1970s, which started up again the mid-1980s; descriptions of life,

events and archaeological remains for several major posts in the region (Rocky Mountain Fort, which began in 1794; Rocky Mountain Portage House; St. Johns); and descriptions of the artifacts of the trade. They then conclude their study by explaining the "massacre" at St. Johns in 1823 in which five fur traders were killed after the decision to close the post was communicated. (The persistent application of such terminology to an instance in which a large number of individuals were not killed is curious.)

This book provides a solid contribution to regional studies of the fur trade by sorting out the locations of various posts in the region, by integrating the archaeological and archival records, by publishing post journals—NWC Rocky Mountain Fort Journal (1799–1800) in Appendix A, and HBC St. Johns Journal (1822–1823) in Appendix B—and by providing an interesting and accessible analysis of the archaeological record for non-specialists. The details of the archaeological efforts are presented in Appendix C concerning artifact assemblages. In particular, chapter 9 provides an interesting and useful discussion of the origin and uses of several major categories of trade goods. Too often, archaeological research is inaccessible since many site reports are merely filed and because the material is written up with tedious and myopic details, of interest only to true enthusiasts. Moreover, the authors noted the importance of HBCA records, arguing that "this documentation was critical to any archaeological interpretation" (p. 42). Burley, Hamilton and Fladmark have integrated archaeological and archival information, thereby making the archaeological field research relevant to ethnohistory and consequently enriching fur trade history. Chapter 6 on the Rocky Mountain Fort illustrates the advantages of integrating analysis of a post journal with archaeological field research. Not only have the authors made their archeological research accessible, but they have also conveyed a sense of regional historical archaeology, which is typically missing from unpublished site reports.

There are few really firm conclusions emerging from this study, although the authors provide an interesting interpretation about the conflict at St. Johns:

Fur-bearer scarcities, a Native economy in part reliant on European goods, and the insensitivities of a company concerned with maximizing profits strained relations between the Europeans and the Beaver and propelled them inescapably toward the events of 2 and 3 November 1823. The St. Johns massacre may have been a specific incident resulting from a well-defined and well-recorded motive, but to fully understand it requires more than an accounting of the facts. These facts must be examined within the context of fur-trade history and its effects on the peoples and environment of the Peace River valley. [p. 136]

Similarly, Burley et al. derived a contemporary lesson from their efforts: "Sadly, as is attested to by our society's persistent acceptance of monetary and individualistic gain over environmental consequences, the lessons of this history have yet to be learned" (p. 138). Despite the very useful information about the Peace River District, there is little effort to relate this research to any of the existing interpretations about Native People and the fur trade. However, the authors belatedly engage Peter C. Newman, seemingly not realizing that his profitable work on the HBC was essentially ephemeral (pp. 24, 34, 60, 68 and 96).

The opportunity to reflect on Native people and the fur trade seems to have succumbed to the reality that "Archaeological fieldwork is laborious, methodical, and slow, and it can lead to long periods of boredom" (p. 40). The placement of an insight by Robin Ridginton concerning the fur trade next to a summary of Hugh Brody's essentially ahistorical work (the impact of mercantile colonialism is dismissed *a priori*) indicates that the authors lack concern about theoretical or conceptual issues that fall within the realm of regional ethnohistory (p. 15). And while Burley, Hamilton and Fladmark give generous credit for the various participants associated with the project, the recounting of their story gets petty at times. We probably could have been spared the long narrative justifying the handing over of a single bright red glass seed bead to a tourist/volunteer (p. 113). The telling of the research story should have been balanced with some evaluation of the existing perspectives of the fur trade and Native people.

Dynamic Traditions: "Cannery Days" Exhibit at Vancouver's Museum of Anthropology.

review by Dianne Newell and Kathleen Paulsen

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The new approaches to the history of production technology view technological change as a dynamic social and cultural process, one in which class, gender, and race intersect. Recently, these ideas found their way into a temporary exhibit, "Cannery Days: A Chapter in the Lives of the Heiltsuk," at the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia. The curator of this exhibit, Pamela Windsor (now Pamela Brown), is a Heiltsuk woman from the Indian village of Waglisa (Bella Bella), British Columbia; she undertook the project as a component of her graduate degree