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Robert Brown and the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition. Edited by John Hayman. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989. 211 pages. \$29.95 Cloth.

In 1864 a twenty-one-year-old Scottish explorer was commissioned by a committee of Victoria's leading citizens to organize an expedition to explore the interior of Vancouver Island. Although the main goal of the expedition was to discover the likelihood of valuable natural resources—especially gold and coal—the journal of the expedition's leader gives us some glimpses of this early period of Vancouver Island history, including white and Indian relations.

John Hayman, the editor of this volume, has made available, for the first time in published form, the journal of Robert Brown during the time he was engaged in the expedition. In addition, Hayman has included some examples of Brown's published work on the native people of Vancouver Island, and the book is generously illustrated with the drawings of one of the expedition's members, Frederick Whympier.

As an ethnohistorian, I find the publication of primary sources like this a valuable addition to the literature on the Northwest Coast. The editor has provided ample footnotes for the text, and although the ethnographic sources are certainly not the best available, the supplemental historic research increases the usefulness of the Brown text.

The bulk of *Robert Brown and the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition* consists of the verbatim account in Brown's journal from 7 June 1864 to 14 September 1864 while he was engaged in exploring the river valleys and lakes of the southern half of Vancouver Island. Native groups he encountered during this trek include various bands of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth (Nootka) of southwest Vancouver Island and the Coast Salish groups of the southeast portion. Attached as separate chapters are an article Brown wrote for the *Victoria Daily Chronicle* in May 1864 that discusses what was known about the interior of Vancouver Island up until that time; Brown's account of a Nuu-Chah-Nulth potlatch he attended near Alberni; and a series of myths he collected from Kakalatza and Tomo, two of the native employees on the expedition. These latter two chapters previously appeared in Brown's little known book, *The Races of Mankind*, a four-volume ethnological work published in 1873.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of Brown's journal is the

detailed description of things normally overlooked by others of his time period. Although full of Victorian-era moralizing, Brown's accounts of native life are sensitive and informed. He attempted to understand the native point of view and often included the native beliefs concerning the origins of natural features he was exploring and describing.

As an historical resource this book is invaluable. The identification of native village locations, fishing sites, hunting grounds, and, perhaps more importantly, the references to the relationship between the increasing numbers of white settlers and the native inhabitants of Vancouver Island give us some insight into this period of British Columbia history. This book is a fine example of the increasing trend to make primary sources available outside of often-inaccessible archives. The original Brown journal is housed in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, where four other journals from the expedition are also kept. Anyone seriously researching this period would still want to access the originals; nevertheless, for those researchers looking at a broader data base, or for the reader interested in the period of white settlement on the West Coast, this work does provide a readily accessible, informative source.

Increasingly, as ethnologists look to historical data as more than just a supplement to ethnography, works like *Robert Brown and the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition* will be useful. In order to understand the situation of modern-day native people, we must understand the political and economic factors that have shaped their lives. Ethnohistory, or historical ethnology, by combining the methods of the historian with the theories of anthropology, can contribute to this endeavor. We cannot hope to understand the present without a knowledge of the past, but when that knowledge is based on incomplete information or an overromanticized perception of what "should have been," it does not give us an accurate portrayal of what actually was happening.

Brown's journal illustrates what was happening quite clearly. Although lamenting the passing of traditional ideology (e.g., in discussing "Indian Myths and Legends," Brown states, "Nowadays, as the young people affect to despise these idle tales, and only a few of the old people know them, they are dropping fast into oblivion . . ." [p. 179]), he sees the Indians' salvation in forcible assimilation. The work of missionaries, participation in the fur trade (fairly ended by Brown's time), the introduction of new

resource bases (like potatoes), and wage labor were certainly much in evidence in Brown's descriptions, and he made numerous suggestions to further what he saw as an inevitable process. Nevertheless, Brown is clearly interested in seeing that the Indian story be told. It is often this side of the story that is lacking.

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Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers. Edited by James A. Clifton. Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1989. 337 pages. \$12.95 Paper.

Studying American Indians through the lens of Western civilization's individualistic tenets presents the scholar with some interesting insights. James A. Clifton has gathered together a thought-provoking array of biographical essays that focus on American Indians or individuals who acquired American Indian identities in the last 250 years. Clifton and the other essayists in the volume see an emerging process of cultural marginality, new ethnic identities, and changing relationships for certain American Indian and non-Indian individuals on the "North American Frontiers." Such person-centered studies are informative from a psychological and individualistic point of view, but the insights that they give us into the cultures of the North American frontiers are variable.

Comments on the cover of the book by an historian (Richard N. Current) and an anthropologist (L. L. Langness) seem to assume that such biographical studies can be useful for "those in policy making positions" and that such studies can dispel "much of our nonsense about American Indians." With that kind of use, the book could well be abusive to American Indian people. Rather than caution the reader on the limits of biography, Clifton claims that biography can be a method "to improve [our] . . . understanding of a variety of social and cultural processes" (p. ix). Clifton believes that biography also can yield "more texture and intricacy" than what emerges in other types of "anthropological and historical studies" (p. ix). With these thoughts in mind, he has gathered together an impressive collection of biographical essays that speak powerfully to us as individuals, but the