

information about diet, traditional belief systems, economy, and adaptation to an intolerant society emerge from the collected archaeological material?

Lab analysis is ongoing at VIU supervised by Dr. Lim. At time of submission of this article, the site of Chinatown has not yet been impacted by the proposed development, and is on hold but may proceed at any time.

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support the discipline of archaeology and our endeavours as a society to protect the past.

Notes

1. In the 1947 air photo this residence is under construction.
2. Two small portions of Pine Street are still in use as fragments fringing where Pine Street used to run east/west through Chinatown as the main street.

Colleen Parsley has a B.A. in Anthropology and has worked as a heritage consultant since 2001 in Alberta and B.C. Colleen is currently president of the ASBC-NB and has served on the Board since 2003.

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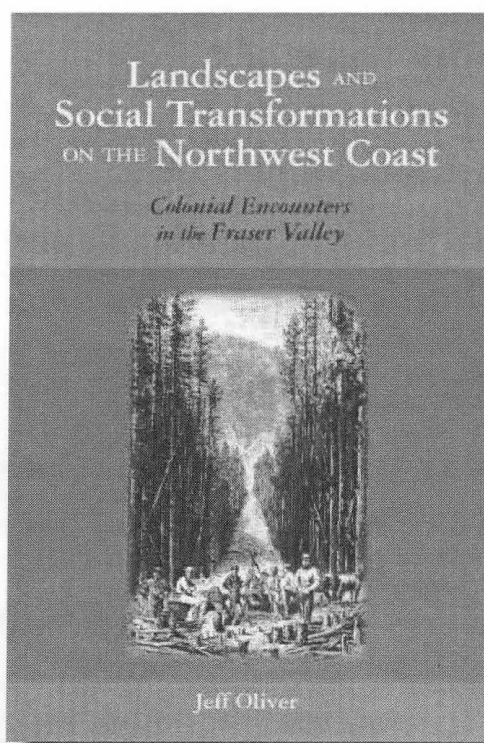
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BOOK REVIEW: "For a More Human Dialogue between Peoples and Places: Transcending Colonial Boundaries on the Northwest Coast"

Landscapes and Social Transformations on the Northwest Coast: Colonial Encounters in the Fraser Valley

Jeff Oliver. University of Arizona Press, Tucson, AZ. 264 pp., illus., maps, figs., notes, biblio., index, ISBN: 978-0-8165-2787-8 (hardcover). \$55.00 US. 2010.

As we enter the Fraser Valley with Oliver, we are presented with an apt, remarkably holistic and theoretically sound synthesis of geography, cartography, historical ecology, ethnohistory, anthropology and ethnography. Oliver's account cuts across these different disciplines as he transcends the salient divides of landscape as an abstract phenomenon and landscape as part and parcel of lived experience. The latter includes Indigenous perseverance and colonial dominance, the pre- and post-contact boundary, past and present times and vastly different cultural understandings of a region that is now commonly known as the Fraser Valley—emblematic for a dominant, widely accepted and often unchallenged colonial perspective of places and people. Here, the predominant history of the Fraser Valley fully reveals itself as one story, one cultural perspective, one out of many assembled in this deep history of a landscape which many newcomers and Stó:lo people continue to call home. In this accomplished work on social change and landscape transformations in the Stó:lo territory, Oliver



aspires to “get closer to the landscape” (p. 9) as he advocates a “more human dialogue between peoples and places” (p. 5) and shows the engagement between people and their environment and the “diverse ways in which people became entangled in transformations” with major consequences for the (re-)making of “histories, identities, and senses of place” (p. 23). Throughout the entire book, Oliver shows a deep respect for Stó:lo peoples and their continued presence in the Fraser Valley.

Oliver succeeds at providing us with an appreciation of the Fraser Valley as a highly contested, lived and always transforming landscape. Following a chapter illustrating a broad historical and geographical context of the Fraser Valley from pre-contact and ancient times to the turn of the twentieth century, by which time “the Fraser Valley had been utterly remade” (p. 23), Oliver artfully engages a meaningful discourse on (the construction of) Aboriginal landscapes. Challenging the prevalent wilderness paradigm, Oliver illustrates that far from being a place inhabited by a primitive and uncivilized Other, a *terra nullius*—empty land—awaiting colonization, the Fraser Valley was a sentient landscape, a rich territory and a land managed through extensive social kin networks and ancestral persistence so common for Coast Salish peoples. The author effectively employs *Sxwǝxwiyám*, Myth Age stories, as essential element of Stó:lo cosmology and relational ontology, amongst other Stó:lo accounts, oral tradition and scientific studies on fire ecology and controlled burning. Together, they work to challenge representations of the Northwest Coast in the dominant colonial discourse and refer to distinct places, ways of knowing and shaping the land.

Oliver skillfully illustrates how stories are written on the land as he presents his understanding of the *Katzie Book of Genesis*, a text that is highly significant for Stó:lo people as the most comprehensive and detailed origin story ever recorded in the Halkomelem language by ethnographer Diamond Jenness in 1955 (p. 64). After describing and contextualising the story, Oliver concisely notes that it shall be seen as “a product of social transformations and historical recombinations that articulate local power struggles as well as broader-scale influences” (p. 73). Through the book’s first half, Oliver makes a valuable contribution to the discipline as he manages to put forward ample evidence that landscape is not an abstract concept but rather a “medium through which social worlds were actively constructed” (p. 78). It is here that the book provides a real sense of lived, embodied and subjective experience in the engagement between people and the environment. This is well supported by eloquent voices of local informants.

In the second half of the book, Oliver’s writing is increasingly important but complex as, at times, his language is unnecessarily technical. In examining geographical and cartographic knowledge production, Oliver urges us to adopt both Indigenous and colonial perspectives when considering historical writing, colonial documents, and processes of marginalization and deterritorialization. Such knowledge of the landscape through colonial maps, for instance, merges local and global views on the Fraser Valley with severe social consequences. Thus, when Oliver explores nineteenth century land surveying, a popular and well-examined topic in the history of British Columbia and Canada, he critically argues that such practises must be seen as a “colonization of opinion” (p. 111). Such land survey prac-

tices were entirely reflective of European agendas and surveyors’ domination as they provided powerful “frame[s] for conceiving of and possessing the Fraser Valley” (p. 135). Cartography and colonial maps functioned as tools to produce and mediate a form of knowing—an imperial and totalizing gaze—which was to be shared with future settlers and helped to appropriate Indigenous space. Not surprisingly, Indigenous maps were radically different: they “tended to manipulate physical space according to embodied encounter” (p. 109). Oliver effectively shows that such knowledge production processes were not coherent and homogenous at all. Here, Fraser, Vancouver and explorers of the Hudson’s Bay Company, who all sought to dominate the Fraser Valley through the maps they produced, are adequately exposed as very different in their methods, the relationships they engaged in locally and the representations they created globally of the landscape.

The concluding chapters unravel how subjective and lived experiences often impacted and impeded these abstract ways of representing the world. From this we learn that land was actually highly disputed between newcomers, who not only sought to transform the landscapes according to their notions of change and advancement, but also according to a connectedness with tradition and heritage, for instance, motivated by the English garden aesthetic. Coast Salish peoples persevered and skillfully resisted racist assumptions of their inferiority and countered the Indigenous “apartheid” (p. 189), the segregation imposed on them through the establishment of the Indian reserve system, by successfully engaging in farming and establishing functional agriculture networks. As the well-chosen example of the respected Sepass (K’HHalserten) family shows, this was achieved by adopting aspects of European culture while conforming to Stó:lo culture and history.

Oliver cogently demonstrates how these on-the-ground social processes and interactions disrupted colonial agendas of landscape transformations and dominant discourses of ‘progress,’ which so often successfully mask the social transformations that occurred in the Fraser Valley. Oliver continues the powerful legacy left behind by Franz Boas who advocated a cultural relativism that accepts “culture” as pluralized and dynamic *cultures*, rather than as a singular form. Thus, while Oliver displays great awareness for colonialism and its social consequences, he also manages to show that “Native values operated within a very different cultural logic” (p. 27). We are left with a more ‘human’ dialogue about Indigenous and colonial history, providing a new perspective on the Fraser Valley and the Coast Salish world.

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