

Field presents a brief history of O'Keefe's early Indigenous family as well as biographies of local, notable acquaintances, although the connections between O'Keefe and these men were not particularly close. O'Keefe's social relationship with his business partner is not as thoroughly developed as it could be. The Oblate correspondence provides details about the time O'Keefe's young niece, Elizabeth Coughlan, decided to marry the older, Protestant Thomas Greenhow. When O'Keefe refused his permission for the marriage, the two men became sworn enemies, a situation that lasted until Greenhow's death in 1889 (see Richard to d'Herbomez, letters written between 10 June 1879 and 19 June 1880, Library and Archives Canada, Records of the Oblate Mission of British Columbia).

Field's book is a good read, well organized and well written. A few minor errors exist, however – O'Keefe's partners Wood and Greenhow were from Newfoundland and England, respectively; Charles Houghton's land grant and Thomas Wood's pre-emption were not accurately located; and the Catholic bishop's name was Durieu, not Durien. The use of proper titles and their capitalization is problematic, with titles such as the "chief commissioner of lands and works" and the "superintendent general of Indian affairs" mishandled.

Field's biography of Cornelius O'Keefe is a welcome addition to the study of the one-generation cattle ranching era in the Okanagan, especially because his experience was representative in many ways. Like others in the "cattle oligopoly," he benefited from early entry to the industry, the ability to control access to water and exclude new entrants from the neighbourhood, free access to Crown grazing land for years, a good market for his cattle at a critical time, and, ultimately, dramatically increased land values.

This Was Our Valley

Shirlee Smith Matheson and
Earl K. Pollon

Calgary: Frontenac House, 2019.
424 pp. \$29.95 paper.

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THE 2019 edition of *This Was Our Valley* by Shirlee Smith Matheson and Earl K. Pollon continues a long-standing conversation about the impacts of large dams in northern British Columbia. This story, told in three acts, renders a detailed account of life along the Peace River in the vicinity of Hudson's Hope over the past one hundred years. Whereas much of the recent writing on this subject has focused on the social and political turbulence surrounding the construction of the Site C Dam (Sarah Cox's excellent *Breaching the Peace* [2018] comes to mind), the reissue of *This Was Our Valley* begins at a time when hydro power on the Peace was a distant fantasy. This long historical view of life along the Peace (i.e., settler colonial life) captures the breathless transformation of the river from a place of trappers and gold panners to a fully infrastructuralized landscape within the short span of a mere half-century.

Part 1 of the book is told from the perspective of Earl Pollon and chronicles the life and times of a young man in Hudson's Hope from the 1930s to the mid-1960s. Over the course of fourteen chapters interspersed with poems, Pollon offers an intimate, if perhaps occasionally disjointed, recollection of life along the Peace. Part autobiography, part travelogue, Pollon sketches a series of vignettes that introduce the reader to the landscapes (many now submerged)

and the characters (most long deceased) of the river prior to the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. To the contemporary reader, Pollon's warm reminiscences feel somewhat outdated in the context of current conversations regarding the trauma of colonialism and industrial extractivism. Yet his recollections succeed in conveying to the reader a deep and melancholic nostalgia for a way of life drowned under the Williston Reservoir.

Part 2 of the book is told by Shirlee Smith Matheson, and it describes the myriad consequences following the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon Dams. Drawing together interviews, archival research, and her own first-hand experience, Smith skilfully weaves diverse narratives of labour unrest, natural resource mismanagement, bungled infrastructure projects, geological instability, and Indigenous dispossession (among many others). What differentiates her account from other writing on the industrialization of the Peace River is her ability to contextualize high-level political and economic machinations within the lived experience of local citizens. Smith sketches a vast and complex geography that could have been better supported by clearer maps and visual documentation, yet she nonetheless provides the reader with a comprehensive account of the impacts wrought by large dams in British Columbia during the latter half of the twentieth century.

Each edition of *This Was Our Valley* responds to the construction of a new dam along the Peace, and the 2019 reissue offers valuable context and information for the ongoing Site C Dam project. Like previous editions, Part 3 frames the nuanced and often highly politicized discourse surrounding Site C through the lives of everyday people who are directly and indirectly affected. While some

perspectives are conspicuously absent – what of the construction workers, engineers, or local proponents? – the 2019 edition remains true to the spirit of Earl Pollon's original project by giving voice to local residents who, all too often, feel relegated to the periphery. While the saga of the Site C Dam may be far from over, *This Was Our Valley* provides essential reading for researchers, activists, or concerned observers who are interested in the social and environmental history of the Peace River and the countless schemes to exert control over British Columbia's landscapes.

REFERENCES

- Cox, Sarah. 2018. *Breaching the Peace: The Site C Dam and a Valley's Stand against Big Hydro*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Love of the Salish Sea Islands: New Essays, Memoir and Poetry by 40 Island Writers

Salt Spring Island, BC:
Mother Tongue Publishing, 2019.
216 pp. \$23.95 paper.

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THE SALISH SEA is an international ecosystem that features an amazing array of gorgeous and largely tranquil islands. Tourists and residents enjoy the rural simplicity of the islands and, from most appearances, the living is idyllic. As with many places, the history of the Salish Sea islands is one of white settlers displacing First Nations and attempting to erase their culture – this is true on both sides of the US–Canada border. The authors featured in *Love of the Salish Sea Islands* are settlers, transplants,