People without legal training often need to refer to texts that explain various legal concepts and principles. However, too often these texts are too technical or employ too much legalese to be useful. Shin Imai, Katherine Logan and Gary Stein have helped to alleviate such problems with their new text, *Aboriginal Law Handbook*. This book is written in a clear, concise and easy-to-understand style that will be of tremendous use to Aboriginal officials such as chiefs, councilors, band managers and agency officials. It will also benefit university students in Native Studies who have no legal training. Each chapter is very short and gives the reader a good introductory understanding of the various aspects of Aboriginal Law in Canada.

The handbook adds to the existing literature not so much in substance but in form. Indeed, lawyers and serious scholars would still be wise to consult the textbooks by Morse, Woodward, and Cumming and Mickenberg, leading legal articles, statues, and regulations. However, the form these sources take is very technical compared to the format the Handbook uses. By adopting a “plain language” approach to Aboriginal law, the Handbook reaches a wider audience and thus is beneficial for the majority of officials within Aboriginal communities who are not legally trained. Furthermore, any addition to the field is a welcome addition since there are so few textbooks on Aboriginal law.

The Handbook can also help lawyers or serious scholars. A great introductory text, it enables one to get a quick understanding of the law in various areas of Aboriginal law. The endnotes contain the leading cases, legal articles and related literature, which can be pursued by the serious researcher. There is also a table of cases, a bibliography and a twelve-page subject index to aid those who wish to delve deeper into the subjects. Additional interesting and useful materials are included as appendices to certain chapters; these will help students understand the subject and provide researchers with leads to additional sources.

The main context of the book concerns self-government powers. The majority of its chapters describe the powers and methods available for the functioning of a band or Aboriginal community. While moth other Aboriginal
law books concentrate, for the most part, on treaty and Aboriginal rights, land claims and the constitutional framework, the *Handbook* devotes only the first four chapters, totaling 59 pages, to these issues. The *Handbook* commits eighteen chapters, totaling 233 pages, to existing powers and possible methods to govern the community. The last two chapters address the considerations raised in obtaining legal advice and the issues surrounding injunctions and blockades.

The *Handbook* covers a vast area. Some of the major topics include the constitutional framework, Aboriginal and treaty rights, land claims, self-government, economic development and Aboriginal justice systems. Many of the practical subtopics include regulations with respect to elections, membership, the formation of corporations, child welfare, contractual relations, employment relations and paycheck deductions.

One criticism is that the self-government powers explored in the *Handbook* are primarily based on powers delegated from Parliament through the *Indian Act*. This reliance on delegated powers flies in the face of the idea of the “inherent Aboriginal right” to self-government. The majority of Aboriginal peoples hold the view that self-government is inherent and that it has always been there within Aboriginal communities. The right to govern themselves existed before contact with Europeans. Just because some other nations came along and used legal fictions to assert some claim to sovereignty does not mean that the inherent right of self-government was magically “extinguished.” Although the book focuses on delegated powers, it can still be used by Aboriginal peoples. Using these *Indian Act* powers as a means to an end does not necessarily signify any relinquishment of an inherent right on the part of Aboriginal peoples. The use of *Indian Act* powers was and is merely one means to reach the ends of self-governance.

Having the knowledge and understanding of *Indian Act* laws and regulations does not necessarily ensure the betterment of Aboriginal peoples. Indeed, as Brenda Small states, “We cannot pretend that just because we have learned the white man’s law, we are in a better position to enhance the survival of our people.” She warns, “that doesn’t mean that we ought to become instruments or vehicles for the intrusiveness of the white man’s law.” Aboriginal peoples have increasingly become quite adept at using the “white man’s law” to their advantage. Knowledge and understanding of these laws cannot ensure the betterment of Aboriginal peoples, but they may be a means to that end. Thus, the *Handbook*’s exploration of delegated powers is important insofar as it presents some means of asserting the inherent right to self-government that Aboriginal governments still retain.

For this reason, the *Handbook*’s devotion to delegated self-government
laws and regulations is therefore of considerable benefit. It spells out the powers existing at the band level. It illustrates to provincial and federal officials that self-government is occurring and actually has been all along. This can allay the fears of government officials who fear self-government for Aboriginal peoples because they do not know its exact definition.\textsuperscript{10} Furthermore, the *Handbook*’s devotion to self-government is also beneficial to band officials and community leaders interested in studying the powers at their disposal. It is of great practical use because many of the essential services and business regulations are described in language that is understandable to the layman. This focus is timely also, since the “move to self-government is inevitable.”\textsuperscript{11}

Another problem is that the authors present the powers as defined under the traditional paradigm of the *Constitution Act*. However, they also present conflicting perspectives—that is, Aboriginal perspectives—throughout their discussions of the issues. For example, the authors state:

> Aboriginal peoples may have a very different perspective on their relation to the constitutional framework. The Haudenosaunee, for example, do not see their society within the structure of the Constitution of Canada, but as a structure of its own, parallel to the Constitution. [p. 4]

It is important today for Aboriginal perspectives to be presented since they have historically been ignored by the Canadian courts. The authors take care to highlight Aboriginal views in the debates on various issues.

Finally, the *Handbook* is not historical enough in that it fails to illustrate the historical relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the British, and later the Canadian, governments. Readers unfamiliar with these historic relationships may find it difficult to understand the present concerns being voiced by Aboriginal peoples. In defence of the authors, it was likely beyond the scope of their intentions, and the result might have been chapters that were not so clear and concise.

Overall, this is a welcome addition to the literature on Aboriginal law. It presents a quick introduction to the various legal issues affecting Aboriginal communities that is in plain enough language for the layman to understand. It primarily presents the delegated sources of power, but that is all right. Aboriginal communities have been exercising their inherent right to self-government in spite of federal and provincial claims to exclusive and exhaustive powers. This *Handbook* clearly and concisely describes the delegated powers available to Aboriginal communities in order to self-govern in practice, if not in principle. Frank Cassidy and Robert Bish have stated:
This, then is the emerging nature of Indian government in practice while seeking a change in the basic design of Canadian federalism, Indian peoples and their governments have taken advantage of the possibilities in the current federal-provincial framework to realize and extend their vision of Indian government.12

This is what the *Handbook* helps Aboriginal governments do. It helps them understand the powers at their disposal so that they can provide the necessary services to community members. Indeed, “Children need to go to school. Sick people need medical care. All people need housing and community services.”13 In exercising such powers, Aboriginal peoples are not necessarily relinquishing any inherent rights to be self-governing, as some legal minds in the Canadian courts would have us believe.

Notes
7 R.S.C. 1985, c/ 1-5.
The failure of the First Ministers’ Conferences resulted from such fears by many first ministers.


Ibid.


review by James B. Waldram

Tuberculosis began to emerge as a serious public health problem in Canada in the late 19th century. By the mid-20th century it had become clear that the Aboriginal population in Canada was suffering extensively from this disease, more so than the non-Aboriginal population. Initially, the response of health officials was the institution of sanatorium therapy, consisting primarily of bed rest and fresh air. It is not possible to determine exactly how many Aboriginal people spent time in these facilities, but today it is clear that the experience, for many, was traumatic.

Grygier has examined the tuberculosis issue with respect to the Inuit. Employing primarily archival materials, including fairly accurate data on the numbers of Inuit institutionalized, the work documents an important era of medical history in Canada. Perhaps more important, the book documents the extent to which Inuit society was disrupted by the extensive evacuation of tubercular patients to the south. The scandalous treatment of these people is clearly detailed: they were all but kidnapped in some instances; the government frequently lost track of which institutions they were in; some were returned to the wrong communities, often poorly dressed and poorly prepared for reintegration into the arctic and Inuit life-style. The trip south, often in overcrowded ships, was traumatic. Their experiences in the south were difficult at best, because most Inuit patients did not speak English, and the treatment staff did not speak Inuktitut. Loneliness was pervasive, resulting in the occasional suicide. Some Inuit children were billeted with non-Aboriginal families, often for years, so they began to lose their language and cultural orientation. Some were simply adopted without the permission of their parents. And back home, families often found it difficult
to get news of their loved ones down south. When patients died at the sanatoria, they were simply buried nearby and not returned to their communities where their families could properly grieve and inter the bodies.

The extensive use of archival materials to document these incidents is excellent. Grygier has pushed the story perhaps as far as it can go using these sources. While he has included material from some interviews with government officials and a few Inuk patients, what is clearly lacking is any sense of the effects of the epidemic and the sanitoria treatment on the Inuit from the viewpoint of the patients and their families. The oral history of Aboriginal peoples contains much rich information on these experiences, but this history remains largely untapped.

Grygier also fails to place the tuberculosis issue in a broader perspective. Canadian government officials viewed sanitoria treatment as an opportunity to facilitate the assimilation of Aboriginal peoples. Diamond Jenness and Duncan Campbell Scott were both known to have expressed such a view. One can sense from Grygier’s account that cultural change certainly ensued, but there is no suggestion of the link between the epidemic and the assimilation policies extant at the time. Indeed, the author discusses assimilation (without using the term) as a “side effect” of treatment, which allowed the Inuit to learn more about southern, non-Inuit society through “a form of total immersion” that, while producing “great culture shock” was also “a boon to many younger people” (p. 183). The text reads as if the author is completely detached from the story, as if the politics of health care is not relevant and as if cultural change was, by and large, a good thing. To some extent, Grygier comes across as an apologist for the government by viewing things from the perspective of doctors, nurses and government officials. A Native Studies readership is likely to be critical of the work for its conservative analysis in support of the status quo.

Given the extensive use of archival and historical sources, I would consider the omission of the link between the epidemic and assimilation policies to be a flaw of the work. These materials would be readily available to the author. On the other hand, attempting to do justice to the Inuit oral tradition on the epidemic while also exhausting archival sources would be impossible in one work. Grygier’s efforts are important in covering one-half of the data on this story. One can only hope that soon a work on the Inuit view of the epidemic will also surface.
In the last decade, the main university presses in Canada have made increasing efforts to include Native histories in their repertoire. Kerry Abel’s *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History* is the second volume dealing with Native history published in the McGill-Queen’s University Press Ethnic History series; the first was Ken Coates’ volume on Native-White relations in the Yukon territory. The publication of these two books suggests McGill-Queen’s Press wants to integrate Native history into the field of Canadian ethnic history.

Abel, an historian at Carleton University, sets out to write a sweeping academic history of the Dene from prehistoric times to the present. In her own words, the book “is an attempt to readjust the balance of historical writing”—to write a regional history of the north beginning with the people who have been there since ancient times: “the Dene” (p. x).

In Abel’s view, her book neither represents a “traditional” history, nor an anthropological study. Abel also denies offering a new interpretive framework for understanding the history of the north; her aim is “not to prove or disprove particular theories of culture change or to establish or challenge models of social structures and functions” (p. x). Instead, the aim of the book is to “reconstruct” “how these northern people have been able to maintain a sense of cultural distinctiveness in the face of overwhelming economic, political, and cultural pressures” (p. xi). Consciously avoiding reference to models of culture change and social theory, Abel’s central thesis holds that, over time, the Dene were able to maintain their culture by accommodating change.

*Drum Songs* is divided into eleven chapters in addition to a preface, an introduction, illustrations, tables and maps. Several interesting historic photographs are presented at the beginning of the volume, and the maps and tables are well integrated into the text of the book. Finally, the book also possesses a good general index, and the bibliography is substantive, though in need of updating.

Chapter 1 is a standard traditional approach to Dene “prehistory.” It begins with the “origins” of the Dene in the Mackenzie-Western Subarctic region, and chronicles Dene life prior to direct European contact. The first chapter presents primarily linguistic and archeological evidence supporting standard theories of human origins in the subarctic, and suggests that the first human inhabitants resided in the Yukon area beginning 14,000 years
ago. Unfortunately, only towards the end of the chapter does the author attempt to integrate these scientific interpretations of Dene early history with Dene oral traditions. Despite the existence of much interesting writing on subarctic peoples and oral traditions (by Julie Cruickshank and Robin Ridington, among others), Abel uses only a small fraction of this information, and then only in cryptopositivistic attempts to correlate unique elements from the oral histories to dateable events.

Chapter 2 continues the description of Dene society on the “eve” of contact with Europeans. Its main focus is on Dene family life, hunting and fishing techniques, social structure and material culture. Most of the material for this discussion comes from the descriptions of various Subarctic peoples made by early European explorers, traders and missionaries, including Alexander Mackenzie, Samuel Hearne, and Fathers Morice and Pettitot. From the evidence of Dene society provided by these European sources, Abel speculates that flexibility and adaptability were “perhaps” central characteristics of Dene society (p. 18).

Chapters 3 through 5 discuss Dene involvement in the fur trade. Though Abel covers much important primary material in these chapters, her portrayal of Dene culture as flexible yet resistant to change is not only contradictory, but romanticized. According to Abel, the Dene were initially indirectly involved in the fur trade because the Hudson’s Bay Company posts were distant from their homelands. Gradually, however, they were drawn into a trapping economy through their own middlemen and the encouragement of European traders. However, despite the inroads made by a foreign economy into Dene territory, Abel asserts that many Dene chose not to participate in the trade. They resisted manipulation by fur traders, according to Abel, and they “continued to prefer the more leisurely life of hunting, fishing, and gathering” (emphasis added) (p. 112). To suggest, without reference to Dene primary sources, that leisure figured in Dene economic considerations is not only highly suspect, it reflects a romantic interpretation of Dene culture.

Chapter 6 is perhaps the most substantive chapter in the book and deals with the effects of Christian missionaries on the Dene. Abel claims that the activities of the missionaries among the Dene in the nineteenth century have been misunderstood. Though the exact nature of this misunderstanding is not clarified by the author, Abel offers the interpretation that both the Anglican and the Catholic missions in the north accommodated their work to fit the lifeways of the Dene, rather than “encouraging culture change in an unrealistic and improbable direction” (p. 118). The Dene, in turn, responded to these strangers and their ideas by initially showing great interest in Christian teachings, but later adhering only to those elements
deemed most useful and practical to them. According to Abel, missionaries in the north did not cause significant change in Dene communities, and the Dene world view was not undermined “completely” because the Dene refused to “accept the European compartmentalization of various aspects of human endeavour, such as politics, economics, and religion” (p. 143). This is but one example of the type of cultural generalizations Abel uses to support the thesis of her book.

Chapters 7 to 11 survey the Dene’s entry into the modern era. This is an era in northern and Dene history that is perhaps the most complex and least analyzed to date. These chapters focus on the changing economy of the north; Abel is concerned here with how the Dene remained distant from this southern-oriented, natural-resource-based economy and provides some interesting insights into the rise of the Dene as a political force in Canada. Throughout this discussion, Abel continues to emphasize the Dene’s ability to remain flexible and adaptable in the face of incredible change brought on by increased government involvement in the north after the Second World War.

Abel has made an admirable attempt to write an all-encompassing regional history that involves the Dene. Her book is highly readable, is well organized and touches on many of the central issues that concern historians interested in Native origins in North America, fur trade history, mission history and aspects of Indian-government relations in the twentieth century. For the beginning student, the book serves as a basic introduction to standard issues in Native and northern history. On the other hand, its simplistic, positivistic and romantic undertones should serve to alert a more sophisticated reader to its shortcomings.

For an academic audience, the book is seriously deficient in a number of aspects. The book’s first obvious weakness is its failure to deal substantively with related secondary literature. Many of the interpretations contained within the book are derived from other sources that are not acknowledged. Abel’s system of footnoting recognizes primary sources almost exclusively, and the book does not orient readers to the complex academic perspectives that have evolved in the last ten years around the seemingly simple questions Abel purports to address. For example, in her discussion of the role of the Dene in the fur trade, no attempt is made to address the historiography that has emerged specifically around questions of Native involvement in the trade, either in the pre-modern or modern eras. Arthur Ray’s *The Canadian Fur Trade in the Twentieth Century* is remarkably absent from these discussions, for example. As a result, the discussion remains shallow and limited to generalizations. This error of omission makes the chapters on the fur trade appear as if they were the first
and only ones written on the subject—a misleading appearance indeed.

A second, perhaps more serious, weakness of the book is its claim of presenting Dene perspectives when Dene sources are conspicuously limited if not completely absent. Though *Drum Songs* is not meant to be written according to the Dene definition of history (p. x), it does attempt to represent the Dene point of view. Abel offers a variety of Dene perspectives on issues ranging from their views on Treaties 8 and 11 to their perceptions of the value of mission schools and their ideas pertaining to game management. None of these discussions, however, acknowledges or references Dene sources, so Abel’s claims are unsubstantiated. Does this author have a privileged perspective of the Dene collective mind? If not, what Dene sources contributed to her understanding of the Dene’s views? Had Abel used existing historical methods to collect and document the views of her subjects, the book and its theses would have a great deal more credibility.

Thirdly, despite claims in the introduction that *Drum Songs* is not concerned with theories of culture change, social structure or developing new interpretive models, the thesis of the book focuses on the Dene and their historic ability to maintain their culture in the face of change. It is not clear to this reader how Abel justifies or can support such a thesis without reference to theories of culture, or even an explanation of the concept of cultural maintenance. Since there exists an extensive body of literature on the subject of cultural maintenance, it is surprising that Abel makes no specific reference to it. It appears that Abel’s neo-conservative approach to history precludes the use of theory.

Finally, it is critical that the inclusion of *Drum Songs* in McGill-Queen’s Ethnic History series be noted. McGill-Queen’s also published a Native and Northern Studies series and it is surprising to this reader that *Drum Songs* was not published there. The decision to publish *Drum Songs* in this manner implies that this press, representing the academic standard, considers Native history to be ethnic history. Those concerned with Native history and its place within Canadian historiography will find such a view surprising; the publishers have unilaterally decided that First Nations’ histories are comparable to those of Canada’s other minorities. This seemingly innocent point of view belies other subtexts: that Native history can and will be integrated (assimilated?) into Canadian historiography without question, and that this “normalization” of Native history is desirable.

In conclusion, *Drum Songs* will likely appeal most to a general audience. It provides a variety of interesting comments on a range of issues, and gives a good overview of northern Canadian history. For an academic audience, however, the book is deficient. It is noteworthy that Abel has attempted to write a regional history of the north, including the Dene as the
main characters; however, the book’s lack of sources undermines its conclusions. The result is that the reader is left, indeed, with only “Glimpses of Dene History.”


review by Frank Tough

This is a large tome with a massive amount of information on Kwakwaka’wakw. It is also the first volume in UBC Press’s Northwest Native Studies series. The book begins with contributions from Gloria Cranmer Webster and Jay Powell concerning the politics of research and the Kwakwaka’wakw language. Powell provides a very readable and terse explanation of Kwakwaka’wakw orthographies. This is required because Kwakwaka’wakw place names, as documented by oral traditions, ethnographies and written documentation, are central to understanding the Kwakwaka’wakw settlements. As an overview essay, Galois then provides an intricate account of Kwakwaka’wakw settlement patterns between 1775 and 1920. Considerable knowledge about the Northwest Coast and the specifics of the history of Aboriginal title in British Columbia is assumed. Readers will need to know the main contours of the maritime fur trade, who Douglas and Sproat were, the purposes of the McKenna-McBride Commission, etc. A detailed gazetteer, organized along regional lines, follows. The book also includes forty-eight pages of appendices (population data, abstracts from the voyages of Vancouver and Galiano, the Nahwitti incidents of 1850 and 1851, salmon canneries operating in Kwakwaka’wakw territory and place names in the U’mista Cultural Centre Orthography). The book includes sixty-one maps, nineteen tables and five other illustrations.

Most of the book (305 pages) is a gazetteer devoted to the reproduction and explanation of the Kwakwaka’wakw place names. The Kwakwaka’wakw gazetteer is organized by regional groupings of tribes (Gilford Island, Knight Inlet, Kwakiutl, Lekwiltok, Nahwitti, Nimpkish, Northern and Quatsino Sound). Each site located by Galois has been assigned a bold-face alphanumeric designation Histories and descriptions of the sites are also provided. The gazetteer includes information on English and Kwakwaka’wakw place names, the general location of the site, survey information if the site became a reserve or if the site was requested. In each
of the gazetteer chapters, maps showing the territory of these regional tribes and their places or sites help the reader appreciate the specific gazetteer information. The cartography is clean and simple. The maps show old villages, winter villages, forts, resource sites with buildings, other resource sites and burial places. However, the gazetteer maps only show Galois’ alphanumeric designations and not the place names. Kwakwaka’wakw stories, relevant to place names, are included in the narrative accompanying the gazetteer. In fact, the general accounts of the regional tribes included with the specific gazetteer chapters are more interesting than the overview essay. More details of claims and reserve surveys give a better sense of the effects of Canadian and British Columbian policies towards Kwakwaka’wakw lands than the overview essay. In these regional gazetteer chapters, Galois also provides historical population data.

The sources for the gazetteer include records from the Colonial Office, the Hudson’s Bay Company, the Department of Indian Affairs and missionaries. The Indian Reserve Commissioner (1876-1910) and the McKenna-McBride Royal Commission (1913-1921) records were consulted. Cartographic sources include maps and hydrographic charts, and official maps and survey records held by Canada Land Survey records. Galois also makes use of the published and unpublished ethnographic materials of Boas, Duff and Drucker. His individual descriptions for a site often make reference to Boas’ manuscripts. Galois offers and documents corrections to the ethnographic literature. A gazetteer is a wonderful means to synthesize locational information from different sources and such projects provide new methodological challenges. In terms of methods, this book is relevant to ethnohistory and applied claims research.

All too often, the author overemphasizes his concerns about uncertainties of the data. His story includes parenthetical inserts such as: “The picture is obviously incomplete, and, as usual when dealing with this period, a number of qualifiers apply,” (p.57) or “… is of uncertain reliability, reflecting gaps and unresolved contradictions in the data” (p. 51) and “Although the data are fragmentary and sometimes contradictory, it is possible …” (p.237). This sort of scholarly stoicism in the face of imperfect data is best left to footnotes. For readers who have not been through all of the same primary sources as the author and have not mused about all the possible interpretations, these frequent flaggings of data problems make for a distinctive discourse. This impinges on the narrative. Since qualifications were introduced frequently, any sense of how Kwakwaka’wakw settlement patterns changed or what forces shaped the new patterns are difficult to appreciate.

The book suffers from some organizational problems. Between the gazetteer and overview essay, duplication and repetition occurs. For example,
demographic issues are discussed in his overview essay, in the individual regional chapters making up the gazetteer part of the book and in a special appendix on demographic data. It can be appreciated that there are advantages in presenting the demographic fragments at different regional levels, but the analysis is blurred. The demographic data are interesting—population declines similar to those in the highlands of central Mexico are indicated. And here Galois’ scholarship is finest. Yet despite all the attention to the bits and pieces of censuses preserved in archives, little sense is made of them. In many respects the demographic data are a separate theme for this book. Habititation sites and population numbers are related, but this never comes through. With this data, delving into a little historical geography was possible. Locational and demographic data should have supported some cross-sections depicting the spatial system or the hierarchy of the Kwakwaka’wakw settlement patterns. To what extent did the ranking or social hierarchy of the Kwakwaka’wakw have a spatial expression? In this sense, neither his essay or the gazetteer explain settlement patterns.

In some respects the organization and presentation of the book tends to understate the research that has been carried out. The site numbers assigned by Galois do not provide a point of entry for searching for place names. The gazetteer needs a separate index; the Kwakwaka’wakw place names should not have been mixed in with the general index for the book. The use of capital letters or truncated abbreviations instead of headings in the tables makes it very difficult to appreciate the data. More significantly, the five appendices at the end of the book do not provide an appropriate means to conclude this study. The overview essay that precedes the gazetteer chapters should have been split into an introduction and a conclusion. The basic background information that the reader needs to know about Kwakwaka’wakw history and geography could have preceded the gazetteer material as an introductory overview. A conclusion, in which the large issues concerning the effects of disease, territorial expansion, changing seasonal rounds, merging of tribal populations and the outcomes of state policies, would have provided a means to bring the specific information of the gazetteer to a focus. The book ends with no definite statement; the research just trickles away.

To some extent and despite the extensive research, some readers will feel that the potential of the project has not been reached. At the start, Galois points out that “These settlement patterns … are a culture’s inscription upon the landscape—a record of a people’s interaction with their environment” (p. 19). Similarly: “For Native peoples in a ‘settler colony’ such as British Columbia, this interaction has involved coming to terms with the influx of a non-Native population Native settlement patterns, in this context, are one index of the people’s participation in the contact process.
These patterns manifest both adjustment and persistence, change and continuity” (p. 19). The author has named the conceptual issues. Galois’ identification of external forces really escapes analysis; one would barely know from this book that a commercial fishing industry ever existed in the region. For no apparent reason, an appendix lists locations of canneries. Seemingly, the commercial fishing industry and state management had no discernible or specific impacts on Kwakwaka’wakw resource use. Given the extensive nature of his research, Galois’ few pages in the overview essay on the late “contact” period does not get at “a peoples” participation in the contact process. As a result, he leaves us with this sort of cautious statement: “While it is impossible to be categorical, given the problems of data and the difficulties of establishing an ethnographic baseline, it seems probable that the pace of change increased after contact” (p. 62). Probable, but not categorical, change after contact! Other assertions are made: “After about 1875, the alien logic of the Euro-Canadian world narrowed Kwakwaka’wakw room for manoeuvre” (p. 63). What is really meant by “alien logic” or “room for manoeuvre” is not spelled out, so we cannot be sure what Galois’ research tells us about the late 19th century. Rolf Knight’s Indians at Work claims a serious role for Northwest Coast Indians in the frontier capitalism of the late 19th century, but Robin Fisher in Contact and Conflict purports to show a complete marginalization for the very same Indians. While it is not necessary to enter actively into such debates, there are few hints about the place of this study. Galois concludes that, during the first century of contact, “there is no reason to doubt that the Kwakwaka’wakw controlled their own cultural and economic agenda” (p. 62). What choices existed? Is there a difference between control over one’s agenda and making the best of a bad situation? Can this assertion really make sense with such horrendous depopulation occurring during the same era? Galois’ findings do not break with the conventional wisdom of apprehensive ethnohistorians seeking some sort of balance between change and continuity (p. 62).

Part of the reason that this study falls short of the potential of the records is that some of the key issues have not been diagrammed or mapped. In many respects, the cartography has the look of the conventional ethnographies (simple maps depicting territorial ranges of a tribe). The information on the seasonal round of the Kwakwaka’wakw should have been presented as a diagram (pp. 25-26). Another seasonal round for the late 19th century, showing the involvement of new frontier industries, would provide a means to compare. Some interesting locational changes are discussed (pp. 58-59). A map showing the reserves confirmed by 1920 against all the sites requested would have been useful reference for the reader. In this sense the
Map 1.5 showing the Kwakwaka’wakw territory in 1920 is potentially confusing in light of the state’s land policies and competing land uses. Even the demographic data could have taken a graphical form, the huge declines suggested are not always evidenced by numbers in tables. Similarly, the data in Table 1.6 on sex and age should have been depicted as a population pyramid. While Galois refers to the White economy, we have little data on its geographical presence. In Hugh Brody’s *Map and Dreams*, the various encroachments on Indian lands are depicted in an imaginative manner. The Kwakwaka’wakw involvement in the “contact process” has not been captured. The study should have made use of reserve survey plans and photographs to provide a sense of place and landscape.

This book is the product of extensive and exhaustive research, and is a different sort of publication. To date, there have been few serious efforts to create a gazetteer of the lands of Indian nations. Few readers will appreciate the enormous amount of tedious work that is entailed in the interpolation of ethnohistoric and ethnographic data onto modern base maps. More of this sort of research should be attempted. The cautious presentation of the book, the author’s angst about archival records and reluctance to generalize support a very objective scholarship. To this end, it will be a source that courts will have to take seriously. At the very least, an important and useful effort has been made to preserve, if not also to resurrect, Kwakwaka’wakw toponomy.