

Seward, Rudy Ray. *The American Family: A Demographic History*. Beverly Hills, CA., and London, England: Sage Publications, 1978. Pp. 223. Tables. \$7.95

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Ross, Leslie J. *Richmond, Child of the Fraser*. Richmond, B.C.: Richmond Centennial Society, 1979. Pp.xii, 238. Photographs, maps, illustrations. \$17.95.

On 10 November 1879, two islands at the mouth of the Fraser River were incorporated under the British Columbia Municipality Act as the Township of Richmond. Growing first as an essentially rural community supported by an extractive farming and fishing economy, the municipality urbanized rapidly after World War II. Population clustered initially in the Lulu Island fishing centre of Steveston and Sea Island farming village of Eburne. Now cleared of settlement, Sea Island has become the Vancouver International Airport. Lulu Island (known today as Richmond), while retaining features of its farming and fishing past, has emerged as a vast bedroom and commercial suburb of metropolitan Vancouver. *Richmond, Child of the Fraser*, written under the direction of the Historical Committee of the Richmond '79 Centennial Society, is a celebration of this unique community's first hundred years.

In keeping with its coffee-table-book format, the volume is handsomely produced and well laid out. Photographs and illustrations make up approximately one-third of the book. The sharply detailed photos present an exceptionally fine visual record of the municipality's social and economic life, documenting such diverse subjects as traditional Indian fishing techniques, cannery living and working conditions, and the community's built heritage. The text accompanying this pictorial testimony provides a comprehensive narrative of the municipality's development. Author Leslie Ross, who holds a post-graduate degree in American history and is herself from a pioneer Richmond family, has canvassed a wide range of sources bearing on the municipality's history, including local newspapers, municipal records, oral accounts of pioneers, and manuscript sources held in the provincial and city archives. Some errors of fact have crept into the story: Captain Cook arrived at Nootka on 29 March 1778, not in April (p.11); Robert Prittie sat as an M.P. for the New (not National) Democratic Party (p.198); and the C.P.R. (rather than the City of Vancouver) promised in the late 1890s to construct a road from False Creek to the North Arm of the Fraser River (p. 54). Generally, however, this history is well researched accurately portrayed, and properly documented.

Characteristic of local histories is their emphasis on the physical development of the community, their concern with the formation of important local institutions, and their fascination with the prominent role of founding families. *Richmond, Child of the Fraser* follows this traditional pattern. The dykes, roads, and bridges by which residents gained control of their landscape are accorded a central place in the narrative. The inception and early development of churches, schools, civic government, clubs, and associations are discussed at length, with less attention given to the subsequent history of these organizations. Stories about institutions and associations in turn provide a vehicle for the recognition of community leaders, especially those with ancestral roots in the area. Stressed in shaping Richmond's history is the influence of pioneer families, whether they be the "well-known settlers" who sat on the first municipal councils, the original Lulu Island and Sea Island landholders, or the early Steveston families whose names still "ring familiar" in Steveston and Richmond today. The genealogical overtones which permeate the book have not, however, been allowed to dominate it; for this the author is to be commended.

Less praiseworthy is the text's rigidly narrative style and episodic structure. With the exception of chapters on fishing and farming, the author tells the story as it unfolded chronologically. Details which fascinate in some instances become a burden in others. Discussion of the Lulu Island berry industry (pp. 136-140) exemplifies the former, description of Richmond's ward boundaries (p.61) the latter. Ross is clearly much less comfortable when interpreting historical developments than she is when describing them. This is the case in the otherwise excellent chapter on the salmon fishing and canning industry. On one of the few occasions when description gives way to analysis, confusion results. Thus, after suggesting by way of introduction that "others saw the mergers as an attempt to control the market," she then notes (presumably as a case-in-point) that David Reid explains the formation of B.C. Packers in 1902 as a desire for monopoly profits (p. 120). Yet the example doesn't follow logically from the generalization: the monopoly profit and market power arguments are different, one stressing the cost of inputs, the other the market for finished products. Also confusing is the statement in the same paragraph that "The securities market had expanded, removing the need for large amounts of capital. . . ." Hadn't B.C. Packers been formed precisely because the securities market had made possible the consolidation of smaller firms into one large, heavily capitalized corporation? Urban historians in particular will miss any attempt to relate Richmond's history to the larger North American phenomenon of suburbanization or to explain the underlying structural changes of a once independent community now become a metropolitan enclave. Tables presenting basic demographic and economic information about the municipality would have provided a useful introduction to these questions.

Disappointment that *Richmond, Child of the Fraser* has not been influenced by newer approaches to the writing of local history should not obscure the book's achievement in adopting older ones. The book brings together in one place a significant amount of information about, and provides an exciting visual record of, the Fraser River community of Richmond. References to appendices identifying municipal councillors and defining the ownership structure of area canneries will reward many future students of B.C. history. Lastly, this informative book will succeed in enriching local traditions and bolstering civic pride, both important functions of authorized municipal histories.

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Seward, Rudy Ray. *The American Family: A Demographic History*. Beverly Hills, CA., and London, England: Sage Publications, 1978. Pp.223. Tables. \$7.95.

In recent years, the field of historical demography has grown tremendously in North America. Major works dealing with local areas in a variety of specific times and places are now available, and the art of the discipline itself is now quite refined. Despite these developments historical demography has only partially entered the mainstream of social science research. A major reason for this failure has been the relative absence of works which synthesize established studies and make their findings accessible to those outside the field. In this context, *The American Family: A Demographic History* is a welcome addition to recent

studies. Rudy Ray Seward presents an overview of certain studies, contributes his own findings from an 1850-1880 national sample of the census, and speculates about what it all means. His approach and conclusions are open to criticism, but the book will certainly find a place in history and sociology courses and will challenge other scholars to make their own large statements.

Seward focused *The American Family* on two questions: "Has the American family made... a transition from the prevalence of extended families to a prevalence of nuclear families?"; and "What effect, if any, has the processes of industrialization and urbanization had upon family units?" After examining the work of Demos, Greven, Lockridge, Smith, and others for the colonial period, and his own evidence for the 1850-1880 period, Seward answers "no" and "very little," respectively. These responses are consistent with the thrust of recent thinking about the history of the family. Everyone now emphasizes the timeless dominance of the conjugal family unit. Earlier assumptions about families in traditional society had been based on an image of large extended units. This image has not stood the test of systematic research. It is now clear that the characteristic family structure has changed much less than traditionally thought, and the association of nuclear families with "modern" society is no longer tenable.

The catch-all concepts of industrialization and urbanization are dying a slower death. In recent years, they have been partially revived within the even more nebulous theory of modernization. Seward approaches this issue by examining census data drawn from the 1850-1880 enumerations. Using regression analysis, he rank-orders those aspects of family and household structure which are at least somewhat affected by measurable proxies for industrialization and urbanization. Specifically, Seward suggests that household size, number of children per family and family size were related to family characteristics such as parental occupation and real estate values, and community factors such as population density and percentage of the labour force in manufacturing. Since these variables only represent aspects of either the industrialization or urbanization processes, this analysis is far from complete, but Seward does apply sophistication and sensitivity to the nuances of family change within the general reality of continuity.

Unfortunately, Seward's examination of his own data composes only about forty per cent of the book (90 pages) and consequently leaves many possibilities unexplored and certain topics barely broached. For example, Seward does not enter the debate surrounding declining family size, and he bypasses the tremendous array of fertility studies on the nineteenth century. This lack of thoroughness may be considered the price of general statements about a topic, but a more rapid survey of the colonial literature and the deletion of a wandering final chapter on "quantitative social historians" would have lowered this price considerably. Nonetheless, it should be re-emphasized that this book will contribute significantly to the teaching of historical demography and in some measure should spark discussion in the field.

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Schiesl, Martin J. *The Politics of Efficiency: Municipal Administration and Reform in America, 1880-1920*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977. Pp.ix, 259.

James Bryce, the keen British observer who condemned American urban government in 1888 as corrupt and inefficient, had modified his views by 1911. Speaking to a group of New Yorkers, Bryce maintained that "Your forms of government are far better over the country at large than they used to be.... In nearly all the cities the sky is brighter, the light is stronger." Martin Schiesl's *The Politics of Efficiency* shares this bright assessment. By the end of World War I most American cities were immeasurably more honest, efficient, and beneficial for all of their residents. The central force behind this improvement was a broad-based progressive reform movement, composed of businessmen, lawyers, and other professionals. Despite the movement's weaknesses and contradictions, Schiesl concludes that by "securing the basic reorganization of municipal administration along the lines of middle-class definitions of democracy and efficiency," it "bequeathed to later officials better methods of meeting problems of social control and community welfare."

The Politics of Efficiency is concerned with the nature of civic government. The chief merit of the book lies in its narrative of the forty-year campaign by progressive reformers and officials to subdue the boss-ridden corruption, inefficiency, and narrowness of late nineteenth-century cities by reforming the structures and functions of municipal government. Throughout this period there was an unmistakable evolution of reform ideas and goals. The maturation of the movement mirrored the growing attraction of business and professional elites to centralization, bureaucracy, and technical expertise as means to entrench their power.

At first, in the 1880s and 1890s, this attraction was tenuous at best. In examining this period of urban reform, Schiesl focuses on the Mugwumps' campaign against the partisanship and patronage characterizing machine politics. Electing a man to civic office because of his party affiliation, wrote a history professor in 1890, was "about as sensible as to elect him because he believes in homeopathy or has a taste for chrysanthemums." The older Mugwump ranks were joined by new professional men motivated by occupational loyalties and imperatives. Together, these reformers fought for a non-partisan concept of urban politics, and for the replacement of the patronage basis of hiring and firing by strict civil-service procedures. Reform mayors Hewitt and Strong of New York, Low of Brooklyn, and Pingree of Detroit sought to institute these measures and to strengthen the executive's functions within city administration. But reformers were politically weak and often unsuccessful; moreover, their means and goals appeared increasingly inadequate.

By the turn of the century, then, reformers shifted their attention from "the problem of getting more upright men to take part in city administration to the problem of how these men would best be able to govern effectively." Structural reformers determined to alter the basis of civic government along the lines of a centralized and technical bureaucracy. This could be seen in the career of the National Municipal League and numerous reform-minded mayors, such as Tom Johnson of Cleveland. Fiscal procedures were centralized and rationalized to prevent waste, equalize tax burdens, and advance more socially useful spending. Research and investigative bodies were established, mo-