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Broadfoot, Barry et al. *The City of Vancouver*. North Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1976. Pp. 183. Illustrations. \$29.95  
Davis, Chuck, ed. *The Vancouver Book*. North Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1976. Pp. x, 498. Illustrations. \$10.95

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## BOOK REVIEWS

- Broadfoot, Barry et al. The City of Vancouver. North Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1976. Pp. 183. Illustrations. \$29.95.
- Davis, Chuck, ed. The Vancouver Book. North Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1976. Pp. x, 498. Illustrations. \$10.95.

No song writer has yet "left his heart" in Vancouver but love affairs with the city are common. These two, very different books are fine examples of such affection for Vancouver and its environs. Broadfoot's volume is a romantic picture book and laudatory essay; Davis's, a civic almanac. Both were designed for contemporary readers; for the urban historian they will be documents a generation hence. How likely are they to stand the test of time?

Photographs dominate the handsomely produced volume, The City of Vancouver. Brilliant blue skies, vivid orange and pink sunsets, dank rain forests and soggy streets honour many of the city's natural attributes but reveal little that is unique. There is no picture clearly showing the majesty of the city's mountain backdrop. Portraits of anonymous individuals and patterns of shadows and reflections demonstrate the photographers' artistic eyes but reveal little about Vancouver. The captions, perhaps appropriate in the salon, are of scant value to the student of the city.

Broadfoot's impressionistic and personal essay, however, well defines the ambiance which creates Vancouver lovers. Considering himself to be a "True Vancouverite", that is, one who has lost his perspective, he wonders if the city is a Babylon or Lotus Land but leaves the reader to decide for himself. Broadfoot rightly finds the sea and the mountains to be "inescapable facts of life in Vancouver", (p. 10) but he does not neglect human factors. "Opportunities" explain why so many people, including himself, have come to Vancouver. In words, he paints a picture of hard working immigrants improving their lot and becoming "True Vancouverites". Yet, he suggests the rootlessness of Vancouver residents may explain the absence of a sense of neighbourhood and friendliness he remembers of prairie cities.

Though laughing at the idea of a poor working class district or slums, Broadfoot does not ignore such ugly aspects of the city as persistent racism. Broadfoot's essay, in sum, offers a fuller picture of Vancouver than the purely artistic photographs which accompany it. Nevertheless, Broadfoot's impressions are not entirely confirmed by the data in the second book under consideration.

Chuck Davis, its general editor and instigator, calls The Vancouver Book an "urban almanac"; it is really an encyclopedia of the Lower Mainland. Davis, whose personality dominates the volume (sections are divided by sketches of him), admits to being a "list freak". The book is a feast of lists: almost two hundred individual contributors, note-worthy dates, public officials, sub post offices, ethnic societies, churches, cemeteries, public and private schools, hospitals and other health and social services, newspapers and magazines, sporting groups and on and on. A sampling of trivia also indicates the variety of information included: rabbits are the only food animals city dwellers may raise (p. 159), Vancouver is the home of Canada's only Player Piano Museum (p. 406), and the average Vancouver household produces 1.454 pounds of garbage per day (p. 191). As well, The Vancouver Book contains many eclectic and anecdotal sketches of incidents in the area's history and in the development of its public services, culture and ethnic groups. Vignettes of some of the city's more interesting characters ranging from the obvious choices of "Gassy Jack" Deighton and Mayor Gerry McGeer to such lesser known figures as Joe Fortes, the lifeguard, and Charles Marega, the sculptor, add colour and dimension. These tidbits make no pretense of being even the first step towards a systematic study of the city's history but, in their own way, they reveal more of the reality of Vancouver than Broadfoot's poetic essay. More information about the city's industrial base, however, would have provided a better balanced book.

The Vancouver Book is especially strong on neighbourhoods, though the term is used very loosely. Riley Park and Shaughnessy may be definable neighbourhoods but the large unfocussed suburbs of Burnaby and Coquitlam hardly qualify. The strengths of the neighbourhood sections

are the clear street maps and the detailed 1971 census statistics of each of the twenty-two "neighbourhoods" within the city limits. These statistics should lead Broadfoot to look again for poor neighbourhoods. In the Strathcona area, for example, 53.4 per cent of the population earned less than \$4,000 per year (p. 449). On the other hand, the statistics confirm Broadfoot's impressions of mobility; over forty per cent of the population of the city had lived in their present dwelling for less than two years (p. 446).

While some of the information in The Vancouver Book is already out of date (the Information Canada Bookstore, for example, is no more) the book is a handy reference for greater Vancouver residents and especially for newcomers. The city of Vancouver, the provincial government and the private individuals, businesses and foundations who subsidized it deserve commendation. Davis merits great praise for having conceived the idea and carried it out so well. Future historians of Vancouver will find this well-indexed volume a treasure trove. And, should they want further information, there are selected lists of books, maps and theses relating to the city. Together, the Davis and Broadfoot volumes present a contrasting but almost comprehensive overview of Vancouver and its people.

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McCann, L.D. Neighbourhoods in Transition: Processes of Land Use and Physical Change in Edmonton's Residential Areas. Occasional Papers #2. Studies in Geography. Edmonton: The University of Alberta, 1975. Pp. xv, 144. Maps. \$3.00.

While studies of city growth, population trends, and urban renewal as well as reports on real estate and housing abound, little attention has been paid to the fundamental urban process of neighbourhood