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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**

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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