

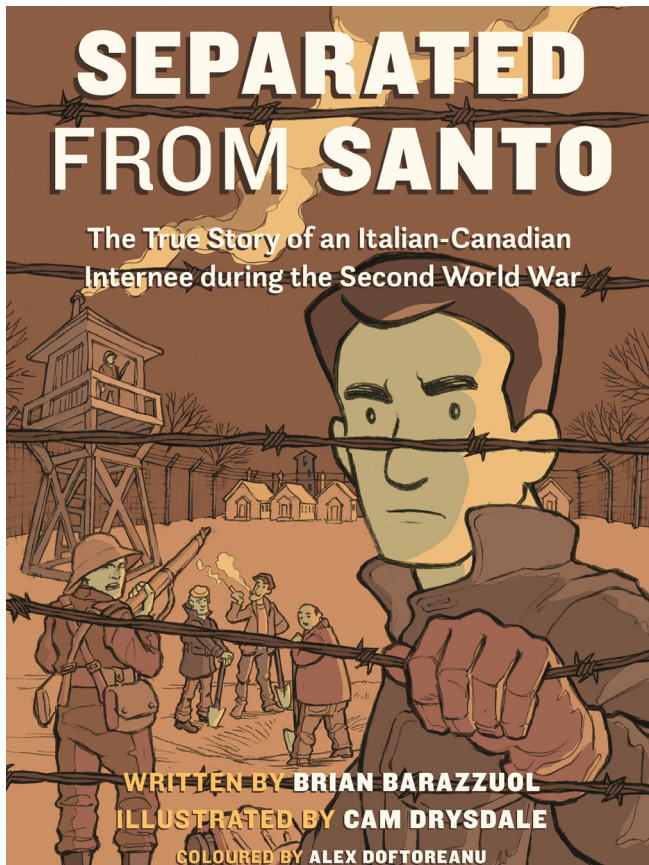
Summer Reading Club – Not Just For Kids!

For years my sons participated in our local library's summer reading club program. They tracked their progress on reading logs, won cool prizes, and ended the summers with shiny medals around their necks, celebrating their reading gains with big grins and unabashed pride.

I have good news for you; summer reading clubs are not just for kids anymore! Adults can also join in on the fun and pursue their own reading goals. Many public libraries offer summer reading programs where adults can foster their own love of reading. Whether it's a bingo card with prompts, a checklist of challenges, or just encouragement to tackle your to-be-read pile, participating in a summer reading club can be a great way to discover new authors or to experiment with new genres or formats (and maybe even win a prize for doing it).

Whatever your reading goals might look like, if you are building on intentions you set in January for the year ahead or if you are working on a reading challenge designed specifically for the summer, I hope you find yourself reading diverse and interesting stories about British Columbia's history.

Dalys Barney



Separated from Santo: The True Story of an Italian-Canadian Internee During the Second World War, by Brian Barazzuol, illustrated by Cam Drysdale, coloured by Alex Doftoreanu, foreword by the Hon. Frank Iacobucci (Victoria: Heritage House, 2025). \$24.95

"It's important to understand the stories of those who came before you"—a poignant message included in Brian Barazzuol's dedication that really gets to the heart of the graphic novel *Separated from Santo: The True Story of an Italian-Canadian Internee During the Second World War*.

Heritage House's debut graphic novel depicts the story of Barazzuol's great-grandparents Santo and Alice Pasqualini. In the book's opening chapter, Barazzuol is depicted sharing his great-grandparents' story with illustrator Cam Drysdale, who is captivated. Just like Drysdale, many readers may not realize that during the Second World War, "of the 110,000 Italian Canadians living in Canada at [the] time, approximately 600 were interned and 31,000 were considered 'enemy aliens'" (p. 6).

After leaving Italy in 1933, the Pasqualinis settle in Vancouver. They start a family, open a bakery, and "life was beautiful and the decision to move to Canada, despite the heartache of leaving Italy behind, was finally paying off" (p. 15).

But on June 10, 1940, things change dramatically. Because he had signed a document "joining" an Italian club called Circolo Giulio Giordani, the RCMP accuse Santo of being a fascist, and he is arrested and detained. Readers follow Santo's story as he is held at the Canadian Immigration Building with no trial or opportunity to explain his situation.

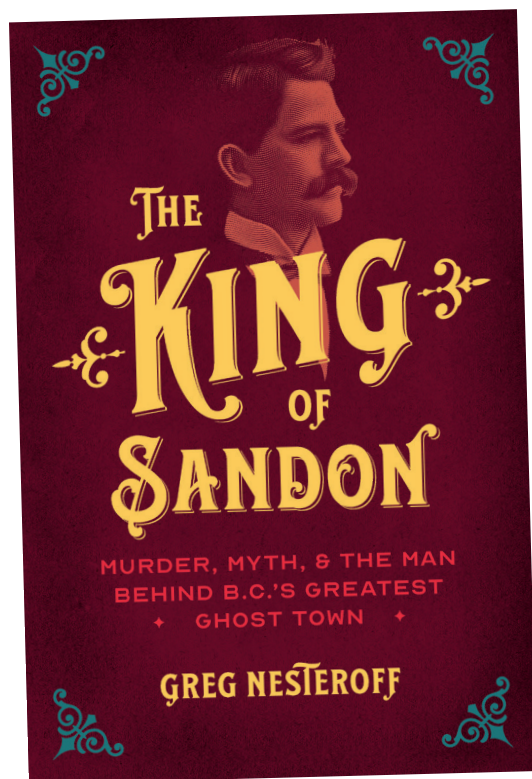
After leaving Vancouver, Santo is first sent to "Camp K" in Kananaskis, Alberta, and then later to "Camp P" in Petawawa, Ontario. Despite never being charged for any crimes, Santo is imprisoned and can only communicate with his family and plead

his case through letters. The family's time apart is a heartbreaking and confusing time for the Pasqualinis.

Back home in Vancouver, Alice struggles with the stress of Santo's imprisonment. The bakery has to close, bills go unpaid, and she ends up being hospitalized for a mental breakdown. The Pasqualini children, Lena and Lino, are sent to live with other families. The Pasqualinis are completely separated, and it is two years before Santo is released and they are reunited.

Separated from Santo "portrays Santo and Alice's hardships, the generational impact of the internment, and the eventual redress campaign, in which apologies were issued to the family many years later" (p. 85). The book adds to the narrative about an often overlooked piece of Canadian history and is a worthwhile read for anyone interested in understanding more about the Italian Canadian experience during the Second World War.

Excerpts from *Separated from Santo: The True Story of an Italian-Canadian Internee During the Second World War*, by Brian Barazzuol, illustrated by Cam Drysdale, coloured by Alex Doftoreanu, foreword by the Hon. Frank Iacobucci (Victoria: Heritage House, 2025). Reprinted with permission of the publisher.



The King of Sandon: Murder, Myth, & the Man Behind B.C.'s Greatest Ghost Town, by Greg Nesteroff (pub. by author, 2025). \$40

Interested in trying his luck as a prospector, John Morgan Harris left Wallace, Idaho, in 1892 with his sights set on the West Kootenay region of southeastern British Columbia. This decision would change the course of the rest of his life. Styled as the "Paris of the West" and the "Monte Carlo of Canada," Sandon was an important part of the 1890s silver rush that brought Harris and many others to the Slocan Valley in search of galena ore deposits that also contained silver. Harris found success and "he practically owned all of Sandon: the townsite itself, as well as most of the principal buildings, the power plant, and the waterworks, all paid for through his various mining interests" (p. xiv).

In *The King of Sandon*, historian Greg Nesteroff follows Harris's entire life, from his childhood in rural Virginia to his early business ventures in Idaho and his over 60 years in the Slocan. "His story is Sandon's story: part colonial imperialism, part Old West melodrama, part boom-and-bust saga, part cautionary tale, part rebirth and restoration" (p. xiv). With aliases, remade identities, and dark secrets, there's plenty of intrigue and twists and turns in *The King of Sandon*, making it an enjoyable and informative read.

Nesteroff has successfully pulled together over 20 years of in-depth research to chronicle the highs and lows of both Harris and Sandon. The book is illustrated with photographs from both archival and personal collections and with pictures of related postcards, memorabilia, and ephemera.

As well as being an extensive and well-researched biography of Harris, *The King of Sandon* also includes other aspects of the West Kootenay's past. Before the discovery of silver brought a rush of miners to the area, the mountainous landscape had "long been home to both the Sinixt and the Ktunaxa (Kootenay) First Nations" (p.15), and Nesteroff details some of the impacts the silver rush and the subsequent influx of settlers would have on the Indigenous Peoples of the region. Chapters on Sandon's use as an internment camp for Japanese Canadians during the Second World War and efforts by Bill Barlee and Hal Wright to preserve and commemorate Sandon's history are also included and add depth to Sandon's story.

The King of Sandon is an entertaining read, and I, for one, will definitely be putting Sandon on my British Columbia bucket list.



War Resisters: Standing Against the Vietnam War, by Joline Martin (Qualicum Beach: Caitlin Press, 2025). \$26

"HELL NO DON'T GO" is emblazoned on the protest signs featured on the cover of Joline Martin's book *War Resisters: Standing Against the Vietnam War*. As Martin details, this and other "slogans coined by the anti-war movement were colourful and plentiful" (p. 85). Even though Canada was not directly involved in combat, throughout the 1960s and '70s, the Vietnam War and its associated resistance movement had a significant impact on this country. As Martin explains: "Though the exact number may never be known, approximately 100,000 US citizens fled their country seeking a peaceful life in Canada" (p.66).

War Resisters includes the personal stories of 12 Americans who settled in British Columbia after leaving the US to avoid military service and the war. Readers follow the story arc of ten men and two women who left behind their friends, families, and communities to make a new start in Canada. In chapters devoted to each resister, Martin highlights their backgrounds and value systems, attitudes about the war, how they got to Canada, and what they did with their lives after resettling.

In interspersed chapters, Martin also provides

valuable context on the Vietnam War's timeline, its relationship to the Cold War, the American draft system, significant anti-war protests and demonstrations, the role of media on the home front, and the organizations that supported American war resisters wanting to enter Canada.

Historically, stereotypes have not been kind to those that avoided the American draft by seeking safe haven in Canada, portraying them as cowardly and unpatriotic. With this book, Martin attempts to shift the discourse, intentionally using the term "war resisters" rather than the shame-based labels of "draft dodgers" or "deserters." The stories shared in *War Resisters* "challenge the long-held myths and assumptions about what it meant to be a Vietnam war resister" (back cover) and are a welcome addition to the narrative about those who crossed the border in search of refuge.

Excerpts from *War Resisters: Standing Against the Vietnam War*, by Joline Martin (Qualicum Beach: Caitlin Press, 2025). Reprinted with permission of the publisher.



Author Joline Martin

Photo:

Peter O'Reilly diaries

Peter O'Reilly (1827–1905) was the Indian Reserve Commissioner in BC for 18 years, from 1880 to 1898, and during this time he was responsible for allocating and modifying Indigenous reserves across the province. An avid diarist, O'Reilly frequently recorded details about his travels and his work to reduce, expand, or establish reserve boundaries. His original diaries are kept in the BC Archives, but volunteers from the Vancouver Island Local History Society have transcribed them and partnered with the University of Victoria to make the transcriptions available to everyone at UVicSpace, the university's open-access digital archive, at hdl.handle.net/1828/20808.



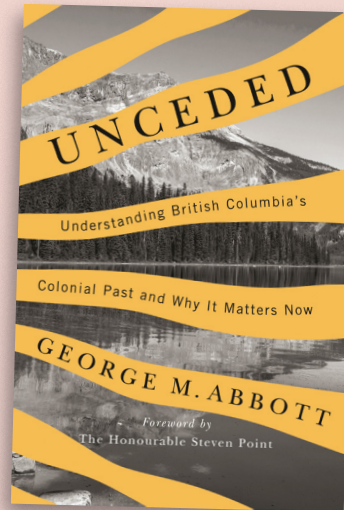
Hawaii Mars: Dreams as Big as the Sky, by Jen Wright (pub. by author, 2025). \$20

Memories of the iconic red-and-white Martin Mars water bombers are held in the hearts of many Vancouver Islanders. I still remember the day an impossibly massive plane seemed to take up the entire sky over my backyard when I was a child, and I'm sure many others could share similar recollections of watching the *Hawaii Mars* and her sister, the *Philippine Mars*, do their firefighting work. They were more than aircraft—they were legends.

Hawaii Mars: Dreams as Big as the Sky, by Jen Wright, is ideal for sharing with the younger readers in your life. The full-colour, 32-page picture book follows the *Hawaii Mars*'s story as narrated by the plane itself. Readers can follow along on the incredible journey of the *Hawaii Mars*: from its early years as a "proud, busy, and happy" US Navy cargo plane, to being "tied miserably to the ground" when no longer needed, to a new role as one of the largest water bombers in the world and "feeling brand new and revelling in a shiny new suit of red and white paint." The book concludes with the *Hawaii Mars*'s last flight over "crowds who cheered us on with gratitude and appreciation" and a well-deserved retirement to the BC Aviation Museum, where the cherished piece of Vancouver Island history is "looking forward to many more years of telling stories about firefighting, teamwork, and the courage to answer big challenges."

A delight for any young aviation fans and a nostalgic read for anyone familiar with the iconic Martin Mars aircraft, *Hawaii Mars: Dreams as Big as the Sky* helps keep the story of the legendary water bombers alive.

BOOK MARKED!

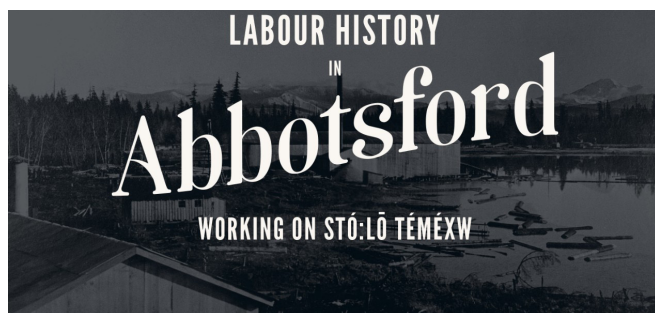


Unceded: Understanding British Columbia's Colonial Past and Why it Matters Now, by George M. Abbott, foreword by The Honourable Steven Point (Vancouver: Purich Books, 2025). \$29.95

Since the BC Supreme Court recognized the Quw'utsun Nation's claim of Aboriginal title to a 780-acre piece of land on the Fraser River, the *Cowichan Tribes v. Canada* August 2025 decision (and the BC government's subsequent announcement that it would appeal the ruling) has frequently been in the media, generating opinions and sparking debate about Indigenous land rights in this province. It would seem like an opportune time for British Columbians to learn more about issues related to Indigenous rights and Indigenous title.

Unceded: Understanding British Columbia's Colonial Past and Why it Matters Now, by George M. Abbott, offers a means to do so. Abbott, a current BC treaty commissioner and former BC MLA, chronicles the historical timeline of "the BC government's relationship with Indigenous Peoples, from early 'land question' disputes to current reconciliation efforts" (back cover). Abbott's aim is "to better acquaint British Columbians and Canadians, particularly [his] fellow settlers, with how and why our province's history of Indigenous relations unfolded as it did" (p. 6).

Read it to deepen your understanding of how Indigenous land issues have been handled in this province and to gain insight on how we got to where we are today.



Labour History in Abbotsford: Working on Stó:lō Téméxw—A new virtual exhibit

Explore the labour history of the Abbotsford region with a new virtual exhibit from the Heritage Abbotsford Society that features a digital timeline sharing information about the multicultural history of work in Abbotsford.

The Labour History in Abbotsford: Working on Stó:lō Téméxw timeline currently contains information about Indigenous, South Asian, Japanese, and British/Anglophone experiences and contributions, but it is a

living document and more stories about other cultural groups (such as Chinese, Mennonite, and Scandinavian communities) are anticipated to be added over time.

Starting with the establishment of Fort Langley in 1827, and spanning into the 2000s, the timeline weaves together diverse but connected stories, reflecting a cultural mosaic. The exhibit is described on the Heritage Abbotsford website: “People from many cultures came to the area, bringing their own ideas, traditions, and ways of life. One of the main ways all these groups interacted with each other was through work. Incoming cultural groups would take up leading roles in certain industries, only for new groups to come in and take their place. Using the history of work, this project brings together these connected stories. By sharing them, we hope everyone can better understand Abbotsford’s past.”

Visit Heritage Abbotsford Society at heritageabbotsford.ca for more information, or view the timeline at hasexhibit.ca.

Recently Released

Bushrat of the St. Mary's Valley, by Larry Shannon, foreword by Keith G. Powell (Cranbrook: Wild Horse Creek Press, 2025). \$21.95

Craigdarroch Reconstructed: The Story of the Castle's Design and Construction, by Jim Wolf (Victoria: Craigdarroch Castle Historical Museum Society, 2025). \$49.99

Echoes Beneath the Earth: The Forgotten Souls of Vernon's Pioneer Cemetery (Vernon: Vernon and District Family History Society, 2025). \$35

The Fort George Murders of 1823: Crisis and Coexistence in New Caledonia, by Geoff Mynett (Qualicum Beach: Caitlin Press, 2026). \$26

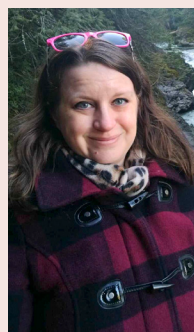
Foundations of a Frontier City: Prince Rupert British Columbia, by Susan Harper (pub. by author, 2025). \$19.99

John Hart: A Businessman in British Columbia Politics, by Patricia E. Roy (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2025). \$34.95

Keeping the Books: The Life and Times of a Peace River Homesteader's Daughter, by Ross Peck (Cranbrook: Wild Horse Creek Press, 2025). \$21.95

Young Readers

The Cedar Mother, by Hetxw'ms Gyetxw (Brett D. Huson), illustrated by Natasha Donovan (Winnipeg: HighWater Press, 2026). \$24.95



BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORY

Dalys Barney is the Digital Collections Assistant at the Vancouver Island University Library. She grew up in South Wellington, a small coal-mining community just south of Nanaimo, and currently lives just across the river in Cedar. She is a member of the Nanaimo Historical Society and maintains her own local history blog, Van Isle History Explorer, at vanislehistoryexplorer.ca/.

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