

History of Tofino and area a remarkable achievement

**Tofino and Clayoquot Sound:
A History**

By Margaret Horsfeld
and Ian Kennedy
Harbour, 622 pp., \$36.95

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Tofino has become one of the most popular destinations for tourists, from near and far, along our coast. They are drawn by the raw beauty, the closeness to nature and the climate, among other reasons.

Yet most visitors will have no idea about the rich history of the community and its surroundings.

This book would change that, if only we could convince all of those people to carry home a book as thick as this.

Let's look at this in

Margaret Horsfeld and Ian Kennedy

TOFINO and CLAYOQUOT SOUND



another way. Local history books come in all shapes and sizes and quality can vary widely. This is especially true when the authors try to be as comprehensive as possible, giving fair treatment to the many

twists and turns in the life of a community.

In that regard, this book by Margaret Horsfeld and Ian Kennedy sets the gold standard.

Tofino and Clayoquot Sound: A History is a remarkable achievement, offering many comprehensive stories about the area. Oh, and it is highly readable, as well. The quality of the research and the quality of the writing help to push this book into the top tier of local history works.

It includes several maps, about 100 photographs and a 10-page timeline covering the high points. There is something here for everyone.

The authors set the stage in the first chapter, offering us the basic geology of the

area. This history begins 200 million years ago, more or less.

Clayoquot Sound is home to three Nuuchah-Nulth First Nations, the Heskiaht, Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht. The book describes how these people lived before and after contact with new arrivals from Europe, and deals with the establishment of reserve lands and residential schools.

From there, Horsfeld and Kennedy take us on a fascinating journey through time, dealing with the arrival of traders desperate for seal otter pelts, and much later the development of the industries based on the ocean's rich resources.

The Second World War

had a huge impact on the community, with the establishment of an air-force base.

Some of the history included in these pages is quite recent. Road access between Port Alberni and Tofino is one example; the gravel road was opened to the public in 1964, and paving was completed in 1972. That highway helped bring more and more people, and the community was well on its way to becoming the destination of today.

Pacific Rim National Park was established. Hippies arrived. The prime minister surfed at Long Beach. Logging in the area meant jobs, but also conflict.

The War in the Woods, a

fight over the trees of Clayoquot, resulted in the largest mass arrest in Canadian history, with grandmothers being taken away in handcuffs.

One thought that emerges in reading this book is that while we might think of the area in terms of protests, or float planes, or beaches, or First Nations, or so on, it is much, much more. The rich history of the Tofino area has many more sides than one might expect.

It's not hard to understand why a book of this size was needed to properly tell all the stories. As works of local history go, this book is a masterpiece.

The reviewer is the editor-in-chief of the Times Colonist.