

section on the care of pottery collections: how to display, store, repair, even how to ship pottery when lending pieces for exhibition. If further evidence were needed that Canadian pottery has come into its own, it would be Newlands's advice to private collectors to lend anonymously. Canadian pottery is now in the unfortunate realm of articles worth stealing.

The study of ceramics contributes to a variety of disciplines: archaeology, history, economics, sociology. It has, for instance, been possible to investigate a few pottery sites in Ontario. Use has been made of this material, as well as of documentary sources. The economic aspect of the potting industry has been explored (few Canadian industries have ever been free of the brooding shadow of foreign imports and potting was particularly vulnerable). The place of these modest wares in the world of their day has been gone into and their decline noted, as the stoneware pickling crock gave way to the icebox and the milk-skimming pan to mechanical separators on Ontario farms. Here is a book which advances Canadian material history a long way.

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Handy Things to Have Around the House. Loris S. Russell. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979. 176 p., ill., biblio, indexes. ISBN 0-07-082781-8. \$19.95. Reviewed by Hilary Abrahamson.

Despite its dimensions, glossy cover, and casual title, Handy Things to Have Around the House is no conventional coffee table book. The author, Loris S. Russell, is a distinguished scholar and a Curator Emeritus of the Royal Ontario Museum. He has sought in this work to trace the origins and describe the development of North American household applicances from their most primitive to most complex. This is accomplished without resort to nostalgia-laden prose on the joys of the nineteenth-century home or even a hint of idle antiquarianism. The result is a highly detailed and informative piece, but definitely not easy reading.

A scientist with a strong interest in social history and domestic technology, Russell has acquired a first-hand familiarity with the use of antique appliances through the accumulation of a large personal collection. In researching Handy Things he has also turned to major museum collections including those of the National Museum of Man in Ottawa and Washington's National Museum of History and Technology. He has made excellent use of pattern information to reveal the date and location of the manufacture of household innovations and provide a chronology of their development. A thorough examination of primary and secondary sources has permitted the author to describe the social origins of the major inventions, for instance, the emergence of the mass-produced apple parer from the competitive energies of the local paring bee. Insights are provided into the growth of the North American consumer culture and its devotion to convenience and modernity in the home. The resourcefulness of the nineteenth-century entrepreneur, so active in all aspects of North American life, is also indicated.

Russell has applied his knowledge to the full range of household equipment from basic stove utensils to the most bizarre of labour-saving devices. Many dimensions of domestic life are considered: the preparation and preservation of food, the creation and care of clothing, the lighting of the home. The modern nineteenth-century housewife, equipped with cast iron stove and oven, meat grinder, egg beater, vegetable and fruit parer, had the time and ability to explore new culinary delights. The sewing machine allowed a wider variety of home clothing creations while the washing machine relieved much of the drudgery of laundering. The proliferation of kerosene and gas lamps in myriad types and designs indicated the eagerness of the Victorian family to extend their productive day by the use of effective artificial illumination.

The focus of Handy Things is the description of major examples of innovations. The Timothy Earle egg beater, the Bay State apple parer, and the Wright washing machine are all examined in exhaustive detail. Indeed the thoroughness of the descriptions, while impressive, is apt to leave many readers bewildered unless familiar with the object under discussion. The following information on the operation of the Lazelle geared apple parer of

1853 is typical:

In this the basic part is a semicircular horizontal rack, at the centre of which a frame ("Lever") is pivoted. Near the other end of the frame is a small pinion wheel which meshes with the rack, and is axially attached to a large gear outside the rack. This meshes with a pinion which drives a shaft at the upper part of the frame, terminating in a fork for the apple.(p. 60)

The photographs, diagrams, drawings, and other illustrations which accompany the text are simply presented in black and white. They are not intended as purely decorative illustrations, however, as they are often necessary for a full understanding of the descriptions. In addition, they provide a useful depiction of the evolution of the applicances discussed.

Museum curators and professional staff will find Handy Things a welcome source of information on the origins and operation of artifacts in their collections, or as a general reference in the field of household technology. The work should also prove an invaluable tool to all those currently collecting antique appliances or considering entering the hunt. While Russell strongly discourages any nostalgic attachment to a mythical "good old days," there may be some practical value in re-examining the virtues of the primitive appliance. The current energy crisis and the approach of post-industrial society may well prompt a return of the Bay State apple parer to the North American kitchen.

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