

sions but the Farvolden exit from Norway in the years following 1922 must have been a major operation. It seems that nothing was left behind and the numerous large crates that came with them contained not only the useful things needed to start a new life but family treasures and memorabilia of all kinds. What remains has now been given to the Alberta Provincial Museum in Edmonton and as most pieces have good documentation they provide a valuable resource for those interested in Norwegian decorative arts and costume. Disappointingly, nothing is recorded concerning the Farvolden's produc-

tion after arrival in Alberta. David Goa, in his introduction, tells of a baptismal blanket woven by Nona Farvolden, donor of the collection to the Museum and to whom this volume is dedicated, but in Schweger's article there is not a word of description and no picture – possibly the article is not photogenic but it was a bit of a let down that this piece of documented Norwegian-Canadian weaving was ignored.

In spite of this last small criticism, this is an excellent and interesting publication and one that deserves a wide distribution.

Paul Rutherford,

When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada, 1952–1967

JOHN E. TWOMEY

Paul Rutherford, *When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada, 1952–1967*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990. 637 pp., 66 illus. Paper \$25.95, ISBN 0-8020-6647-X. Cloth \$65.00, ISBN 0-8020-5830-2.

At long last students and scholars in the field of Canadian communications have an in-depth historical analysis of Canadian television programming even if limited to the prime time hours (7 pm to 11 pm) and the monochrome years (1952–67).

With the exception of the study of Canadian television drama by M. J. Miller, *Tune Up The Contrast: CBC Television Drama Since 1952* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1987) and F. B. Rainsberry's *A History of Children's Television in English Canada, 1952–1986* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1988) insights on television programming had to be fathomed from the published reminiscences and biases of on-air personalities such as Knowlton Nash, Peter Trueman, Alex Barris, Warner Troyer, and Roy Bonisteel.

Paul Rutherford, chairman of the University of Toronto's history department and author of several books on Canadian media history, states his book is an amalgam of three distinct subjects: 1. the story "of the noble experiment of a national programming service...that strove to supply viewers with a

made-in-Canada brand of entertainment, news and views;" 2. the "art of television ... broadly defined to include both the styles and the messages programmers and producers offered viewers;" and 3. the answer to the "McLuhan Question ... what happens to society when a new medium of communication enters the picture?" (pp. 5, 6).

Rutherford further tells us that his book is "a viewer's history" focused on "what people saw in the way of home-grown shows when they tuned in the TV set" (p. 6).

The first three chapters are on the structure of the Canadian system of television and how it was shaped by CBC/Radio Canada, CTV and other private broadcasters. The richness of detail in these chapters indicate that Rutherford and his team of researchers thoroughly mined the lode of historical materials on broadcasting found in periodicals of the time, government documents and CBC archives. More data was gathered via personal interviews and by monitoring recently created oral history tapes of public and private broadcasting decision makers.

The larger second part of the book consists of seven chapters on the genres of prime time programming. They are reviewed in chronological order as each genre attained prominence. Rutherford labelled his five genres: Information (newscasts, panel discussions, talk shows, etc.) where the viewer is

provided data about reality, Display (variety, the arts) where performers demonstrate their talents; Contests (sports, games, quizzes) where rules govern the performance of the participants; Storytelling (all fictional drama); and Commercials.

He calls his method of reviewing each genre "close readings," a technique of viewing analysis based on the semiotic technique described in Fiske and Hartley's "Reading Television" (London: Methuen, 1980). A research protocol on the "viewing analysis" technique is provided in an appendix.

Some readers will be disturbed by Rutherford's approach to his subject. Carefully measured terms of traditional historians are not to be found here. Paul Rutherford's style of exposition is personal, provocative, opinionated, unequivocal, and colloquial. For this reader, admittedly once involved as a CBC middle manager in the events Rutherford describes, his approach proved totally engaging. There simply are no dull moments.

In his opening chapter, "A Personal Journey," readers are given a hint that Rutherford's personal views will play a significant part in his book.

Readers will detect my sympathy for the CBC, especially the English service, which struggled to meet an impossible mandate as well as to satisfy public demands. I didn't begin with that view - but the evidence was convincing: while CBC made mistakes, its

stubborn persistence and efforts in the realm of programming were impressive (p. 8)...I trust that I've avoided the dangers of nostalgia, even if this book has the taint of a personal journey through my past. There's definitely a particular kind of pleasure, rare for a historian, in being able to talk about one's own experiences (p. 9).

A prime example of Rutherford's pointed rhetoric is found in his chapter "Expectations," which sets the scene for the beginning of television in Canada. Here a dozen pages headed "McLunacy?" contain a scathing critique of Marshall McLuhan.

McLuhan's gospel was too flawed to deserve favour. His letters show he never understood why...Perhaps more important, though, students and the fashion-minded public just got bored with a person whose insights, however outrageous, were no longer novel. He suffered, in short, the fate that awaits any pop star whose image becomes too stereotyped in the minds of the fickle audience (p. 37).

This is an important and timely book, as the future of CBC's television programming is once more the centre of debate. Paul Rutherford's encyclopedic work, 637 pages supported by dozens of charts, tables, and photographs, should be a major resource for anyone hoping to make a meaningful contribution to defining CBC's future role in Canadian television.

Garth Clark, Robert Ellison, and Eugene Hecht, *The Mad Potter of Biloxi: The Art and Life of George E. Ohr*

**American Craft Museum,
*George Ohr: Modern Potter (1857-1918)***

**Canadian Museum of Civilization,
*The Turning Point: The Deichmann Pottery (1935-1963)***

JOHN B. COLLINS

Clark, Garth, Robert Ellison, and Eugene Hecht. *The Mad Potter of Biloxi: The Art and Life of George E. Ohr*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1989. 192 pp., 300 illus. Cloth US\$65, ISBN 0-89659-927-2.

George Ohr: Modern Potter (1857-1918). American Craft Museum, New York City;

funded in part by the National Endowment for the New York State Council on the Arts, and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Dillenbergh, mounted at the Everson Museum of Art of Syracuse and Onondaga County, Syracuse, New York, 15 February to 14 April 1991. Curator: Dr. Martin Eidelberg