

comparaisons et comporte de nombreuses données fort intéressantes. Mais cette démarche personnelle comporte aussi des limites, tant au niveau des sources que des conclusions. Il faut enfin noter que les sources citées proviennent d'ouvrages publiés, ce qui semble indiquer que ce livre n'a pas bénéficié de recherches dans les dépôts d'archives.

Curieusement, la dernière phrase de cet ouvrage est un avertissement relativement sévère envers le monde en voie de développement : «Unless the developing world adopts policies broadly similar to those of China and

Japan, the spiral of population growth and lagging food production will be on a scale that would have dismayed Thomas Malthus.» Les sombres prédictions de l'auteur de *Essay on the Principle of Population*, publié en 1798, ne sont pas nécessairement périmées en cette fin du XX^e siècle, compte tenu de la situation alimentaire dans le tiers monde, mais il est permis de se demander si ses propos constituent une conclusion à l'histoire de la culture matérielle.

Thomas Melville Bailey, ed., *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography, Volume 1*

Francess G. Halpenny, ed., *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 12 (1891–1900)*

NORMAN R. BALL

Bailey, Thomas Melville, ed. *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography*, Vol. 1. Hamilton: Dictionary of Hamilton Biography, 1981. 244 pp., index, references. Cloth \$25.00 ISBN 0-9691023-0-5.

Halpenny, Francess G., ed. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. 12 (1891 to 1900). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990. 1305 pp., indices, references, bibliography. Cloth \$75.00, ISBN 0-8020-3460-8.

According to a librarian friend, reference books, by definition, are never read cover to cover. Yet the *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography (DHB)*, Volume 1, and the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB)*, Volume 12, so infected the reviewer with such compulsion to continue reading that the definition must be changed. Read these books cover to cover I will, but not in orderly or linear fashion. I will hop and skip about, even open pages at random. On more mission-oriented occasions, I will search assiduously and studiously for news of engineers, cotton mills, vinegar works, bridge companies, by-product coke ovens, wrecking and salvage companies, gas works and gas light companies or, more lightheartedly, company names beginning with *Great* or *Royal*. No matter how approached, though, I will have an enjoyable time.

As is expected, these books are significant organizational, scholarly and editorial

achievements. The surprise comes from many new perspectives on familiar landscapes, events and personages, wonderfully eclectic views of the past, breadth and depth as well as joy and sometimes sadness and dismay. In brief, they evoke numerous characteristics of life as displayed by the truly living. There is no video version, no 10-hour TV marathon with the de rigueur acres of period costumes, parades of vintage vehicles, nostalgic architecture and perfect landscapes. Nor will one find lasers, holograms or "plastic fantastic" design wizardry. The life comes from numerous glimpses, some deep, some shallow, some certain and clear, some more noted for what cannot be known or seen. And this is what life is; it is not all equally clear and evenly interpreted for a homogenous audience; life is variety and unevenness, mystery blended with certainty.

While dissimilar in project scale, book size, cost, selection criteria, types and detail of indexing, the overall effect is amazingly similar. *DCB* is national in scope; *DHB* covers Hamilton and region. Volume 12 of *DCB* is restricted to those who died between 1891 and 1900 whereas Volume 1 of the projected three-volume *DHB* is based on dates of public prominence and emphasizes the period before 1875. Both give sources at the end of each article and are indexed. The approximately 250-page *DHB* has a very good name index

which covers corporate as well as personal names but the reviewer, who would like to seek out groups such as engineers, inventors and manufacturers, sorely felt the lack of a subject index which would allow him to do so.

The *DCB* has four distinct information tools to add to the utility and manageability of its more than 1300 pages. The Alphabetical Listing of Subjects (pp. xxi-xxvi) is self-explanatory while the very extensive Nominal Index (pp. 1235-1305) lists persons mentioned anywhere in the text. The Index of Identifications (pp. 1189-1207) places the subjects of individual biographies in 30 categories, which include agriculture, architects, business, criminal, engineers, indigenous peoples, scientists, surveyors, and women. The Geographical Index (pp. 1213-1251) provides a very elaborate and imaginative analysis by place of birth and career locale for the subjects of biographies. The many benefits of these notwithstanding, the reviewer longed for a good corporate name index.

Both volumes represent government-assisted research and publication that delivers solid value for funds expended. The *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography* also benefited from some corporate funding. These two dictionaries of biography, which have produced similar types of enlightenment, enjoyable reading, and learning, are reminders that the best of scholarly funding will find room for both national and regional projects.

In addition to the time period covered, there is something warmly nineteenth century about such carefully prepared eclectic books of knowledge. Now that we are winding up the

twentieth century and admitting that it has not been managed perfectly, we are becoming somewhat more open-minded about the nineteenth. Its managers and participants did some things wrong, some right and were, in many ways, terribly human about it all; that is what one finds in these dictionaries of biography.

Everyone expects great things of the *DCB* staff, the contributors and University of Toronto Press and on these counts Volume 12 is not surprising. The *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography*, on the other hand, may very well surprise many people. It is an ambitious project very well done, very well done indeed. Perhaps it adds new meaning to that nineteenth-century phrase "Hamilton the Ambitious City," which originated in Toronto as a derisive slap aimed at a hustling, aggressive, emerging industrial centre that seemed to be getting a little uppity, perhaps pretentious and overly ambitious; it was a reminder that Hamilton should remember its origins, respect its supposed betters and be more modest about its achievements and aspirations. But the *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography* is no modest achievement; it makes "Hamilton the Ambitious City" intellectually respectable, admirable, interesting and worthy of the words of that famous phrase rather than its insulting intent. The reviewer has chequebook in hand and anxiously awaits the next volume, which is scheduled for publication in 1991. He will read it cover to cover but in a disorderly, non-linear and thoroughly enjoyable fashion.

C. J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites*

DANIEL T. GALLACHER

Taylor, C. J. *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990. 288 pp., 16 illus. cloth \$32.95, ISBN 0-7735-0713-2.

In searching for our national identity, Canadians have long seen the vital need for historical preservation. The growth of official involvement in this movement, and the means whereby the federal government in particular has satisfied public demand, is the subject of this scholarly narrative. In scope it covers the

period 1880 to 1980 and, as the title implies, describes and analyzes the rise of an important national organization. An historian with the Canadian Parks Service, C. J. Taylor has an insider's point of view which adds spice and sympathy to his observations on how the programme evolved. Yet he has avoided any narrow official version of the historic parks apparatus, for his approach rests as equally upon political considerations as on the bureaucratic features he outlines so well.