

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.

Over this period two key issues plagued the national historic sites movement. Foremost was how to distinguish national from regional significance; second was whether to reconstruct or merely commemorate a site. Taylor's thesis is that politics rather than any objective, systematic methodology became the basis for selecting or developing properties across Canada. Most of his volume deals with this theme, and while there are many references to specific historic sites, their nature, and how they became part of the national parks system, his main focus is upon the policy or organizational difficulties faced by the leading advocates of preservation. Thus its value to the material historian is mainly as background instead of being technically or curatorially instructive.

At the root of Canadian heritage sites recognition before 1905 were both imperialists who urged the commemoration of United Empire Loyalist activities and nationalists who promoted recognition of events that inferred ties between the regions. Each enlisted the Royal Society of Canada or other bodies to help shape government opinion, but the movement was elitist, often divided, and unable to move much beyond political or military subjects. Quebec was an exception.

By 1923 the federal government had committed itself to organizing and supporting a process of preserving and interpreting sites or events, but the effectiveness of its programme was still slight. That year only one per cent of the Parks budget went to historic sites, and since there was tremendous emphasis on developing Banff and other vast areas for tourism and nature conservation, new strategies for historical preservation were needed. An approach that cost little was to simply mark a site by a cairn or plaque. Such commemorative activity was preferred by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board and its chairman, Brig.-Gen. E. A. Cruickshank. Of the three bodies that ultimately shaped the system, the board was the most reflective of public opinion, yet the least influential in developing actual sites. The "executive" or ministerial level aimed usually at economic benefits while the administrative arm (or government branch) sought ways to control the proliferation of sites and the means to manage those that became its responsibility.

The system did not lack for leadership. Clifford Sifton, Arthur Meighen, Arthur Laing, and other powerful ministers took direct interest in historic sites during the time each oversaw the national parks system. Admittedly their emphasis was on regional economic

development or national unity as might be served through the rise of historic parks, but their attention nonetheless furthered the system's growth and importance. Perhaps more influential were senior bureaucrats like James Harkin and E. A. Côté who were the linchpins holding the executive, branch, and board together. Harkin, a dynamic proponent of heritage conservation, headed the administration between 1919 and 1936. Largely through his vision and efforts there arose a "national chain" of large-scale and popular sites that otherwise would have been a burden for other departments to manage. The old forts at Louisbourg, Halifax, Quebec, Churchill, and Esquimalt were incorporated into the system and became candidates for 1930s make-work projects. Côté, Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources by 1963, carefully monitored the nature and growth of the Branch's responsibilities. Earlier he had sensed how Louisbourg would be reconstructed and had been instrumental in deciding the course of other key sites. Thoroughly professional and highly experienced, Côté was the ideal senior official to steer the federal system during its period of greatest growth.

Because government had undertaken to develop, manage, and interpret the system of historic sites, the Board was confined increasingly to an advisory role. By the 1950s its character had shifted from antiquarian to academic. Archivists and university scholars had been replacing long-tenured amateur historians. Another reform was to appoint at least one member from each province. The board's original difficulties in finding definitions for national significance were ultimately resolved by accepting sites or events of particular regional importance and claiming that such an array constituted a coherent whole. Nor did the new breed of members seriously attempt to resolve the debate on site reconstructions; they left that for the branch's experts.

Taylor's account of the programme at its zenith in the 1960s and 1970s is thorough and exciting to read. He demonstrates clearly how each of the three arms acted in unison to finally create the nation-wide system envisioned by Harkin and others. For its treatment of ideas on the Canadian identity, this book is a key contribution to our intellectual history.

Negotiating the Past is also significant for the detailed description and sound analysis it brings to our understanding of how our national historic sites and parks system evolved. Taylor plainly reveals the interactions between government experts and their

counterparts in the outside history community over time. One could wish for a summary of the rise of the provincial historic sites systems as a comparison, but its absence does not weaken

this valuable contribution to our knowledge of federal government agencies or the heritage preservation movement in Canada.