

proaches to religious education; certainly some Canadian churches were developing their own Sunday school materials well before the end of the nineteenth century. And did the milder response of the Canadian laity to critical views of the Bible reflect in some measure a different Sunday school history? About such questions, in the present state of Canadian scholarship, one wonders more than one knows. A reading of this book ought to encourage Canadian researchers to seek answers to them.

John Webster Grant  
Victoria University

**M. Brook Taylor.** *Promoters, Patriots and Partisans: Historiography in Nineteenth-Century English Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989. Pp. 294. \$45.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Historians have played an important role in the development of our national consciousness. They have shaped our past and in so doing provided perspective on our present and direction for the future. This task of shaping our identity was particularly important in the nineteenth century when the British North American colonies that would unite to form the nucleus of present-day Canada were beginning to take on colonial identities. That these four colonies of Upper and Lower Canada, Nova

Scotia, and New Brunswick (and shortly afterwards Prince Edward Island) united to form a nation was not, of course, preordained. In fact, this book emphasizes how strongly individualistic these colonies remained. Yet once they united, the historiography shifted from provincial and regional concerns and identities towards national concerns and a national identity. *Promoters, Patriots, and Partisans* studies the important role that earlier "historians"—antiquarians, gentlemen authors, promotional entrepreneurs, and politicians—played in developing initially provincial and regional and ultimately a national consensus.

Taylor's study is the predecessor in terms of time period to Carl Berger's *The Writing of Canadian History*. Historical writing about Canada did not begin with professional historians in the twentieth century, the subject of Berger's study. There was a century of historical writing by amateur historians who in a sense paved the way for the modern Canadian historian by suggesting the themes, although not the methodology, for writing Canadian history.

As the title suggests, Taylor sees nineteenth-century Canadian historiography as going through an evolution. The first writers were "promoters," who were interested in advancing themselves and their newly acquired homeland for potential investors and settlers back in England. Since they lived in colonies that were underpopulated and thus sheer wilderness, they naturally focused on the greatness and potential of the land. They had to look to the future as there

was no past, beyond that of the Indians with whom they could not identify, that they could emphasize. Even the French Canadians and the Acadians were de-emphasized. Their very presence detracted from the future greatness of the Anglo-Saxon race in British North America, the only subject of interest to these historians. The themes of their writings, then, were the greatness of the land, the potential of the people, the material progress of the colony, and the ultimate triumph of civilization in the wilderness.

The promoters were followed by a second generation, which Taylor labels "patriots." They were native-born as opposed to British-born, and were more interested in promoting the colony than themselves by writing about the potential of the people rather than the land. Taylor maintains that this generation was less prone to bombast because they did not have to prove themselves to people in the motherland. The mere survival and growth of the British North American colonies was evidence in itself of the potential of these colonies. Also these native-born historians were writing predominantly for a local audience that did not need to be convinced of the colony's future potential. The result of this generation of historical writings was the rise of regional identities and by 1867 a national identity (except in the Maritimes where local identities prevailed since nationalism was associated with the needs and aspirations of the Canadas only).

Patriotism gave way to partisanship in the late-nineteenth century as the new nation failed to live up to its expectations. Instead of inaugurating

an era of "peace, order, and good government," Confederation marked the beginning of economic stagnation, political scandal, and rebellion. As Taylor notes: "The continuance of traditional regional, racial, religious and political animosities, the inability to meet continental challenges, and the rise of new tensions in the western territory all combined to demoralize those who dreamed of a united progressive nation state" (p. 231). The inclination was to fix blame on others—one's opponents—and hence the partisanship that Taylor claims prevailed in the last phase of amateur historical writing on the eve of professional historical writing in 1896, marked by the publication of the *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada*.

The categories of "promoters, patriots, and partisans" help to bring clarity and order to what would otherwise be a random and inchoate collection of tracts, travelogues, and treatises. But they restrict as much as they describe. It is difficult at times to know why a particular work is placed in one of these categories as opposed to another. T.C. Haliburton's *A General Description of Nova Scotia* or his *Sam Slick*, for example, were as much promotional as patriotic literature, and Robert Gourlay's *Statistical Account* (for Upper Canada) was certainly partisan. And were not Charles Lindsey's biography of William Lyon Mackenzie and J.M. Dent's *The Canadian Portrait Gallery* written to foster patriotism by outlining the virtues of responsible government that was so strong a theme in their writings? In a sense the terms imposed by

Taylor do for these amateur historians what these nineteenth-century historians did to their subjects: they force them into categories where they do not really fit. Thus one comes away from Taylor's study with good insight into the ideas, themes, and topics of concern to these nineteenth-century amateur historians and with wonderful synopses of their writings (which one would not otherwise read), but not with any better understanding as to how these works form a pattern.

Part of the problem may be in the nature of the subject. I wonder if one can call the men (and they were always men, not women) that Taylor analyses "historians." They were not writing about the past so much as commenting on events that they had lived through or that had happened in the memorable past. History was a means to justify a current perspective which was inevitably partisan, patriotic, and promotional at one and the same time. This is not to deny, however, that the views of these writers are extremely helpful in shedding light on the mindset of nineteenth-century Canadian society. For this reason alone, *Promoters, Patriots, and Partisans* is valuable reading.

R. Douglas Francis  
University of Calgary

**Donald Soucy and Mary Ann Stankiewicz, eds. *Framing the Past: Essays on Art Education*. Reston,**

**VA.: National Art Education Association, 1990. Pp. 221. \$19.00.**

There has been a recent surge of interest in histories of education. With the interest has come a revision of accepted pasts and consideration of issues and topics not previously focused upon in historical work. For example, histories of school subjects have been relatively uncommon in the past. However, there are now a growing number of historical investigations into school subjects and art education is no exception. A new body of research in this area is beginning to develop, as seen in publications, conference presentations, and university courses on art education history.

*Framing the Past* reflects the new interest. It is a collection of historical investigations of art education from a variety of perspectives. This book is exceptional because it is one of the few edited books on the history of a school subject; its editors and publisher should be applauded for their innovative efforts. The book also provides examples of important issues that should be studied in any school subject history.

As the title states, the volume is indeed a collection of essays. Each chapter is presented almost as an independent paper, building on other chapters' information, but not broadening their contexts. In part, this is the case because nowhere in the book is there a chapter (introducing or concluding) dealing specifically with the common themes of the book. The Foreword, by Foster Wygant, author of