

Scientia Canadensis

Canadian Journal of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine
Revue canadienne d'histoire des sciences, des techniques et de la médecine

Scientia
Canadensis

Clio's Warriors: Canadian Historians and the Writing of the World Wars. By Tim Cook. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006. 352 p., notes, index. ISBN 978-0-7748-1256-6 85 \$ hc 978-0-7748-1257-3 29.95 \$ pb.)

Ryan Touhey

Volume 33, Number 1, 2010

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1000854ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1000854ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

CSTHA/AHSTC

ISSN

0829-2507 (print)

1918-7750 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Touhey, R. (2010). Review of [*Clio's Warriors: Canadian Historians and the Writing of the World Wars.* By Tim Cook. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006. 352 p., notes, index. ISBN 978-0-7748-1256-6 85 \$ hc 978-0-7748-1257-3 29.95 \$ pb.)]. *Scientia Canadensis*, 33(1), 136–139.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1000854ar>

Copyright © Canadian Science and Technology Historical Association /
Association pour l'histoire de la science et de la technologie au Canada, 2010

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

d'elle-même, doivent souvent, lorsqu'ils s'aventurent à théoriser, émigrer sur un terrain et user d'outils conceptuels avec lesquels ils sont moins familiers. La non inclusion de textes de philosophes ou de sociologues est d'autant plus discutable que l'attribution, dans la première partie du recueil, du label « d'historien » à des ecclésiastiques (Olivier Maurault) ou des romanciers (Léo-Paul Desrosiers), apparaît d'une excessive générosité. Par ailleurs, la variété des thèmes abordés par les textes aurait exigé une organisation thématique, plutôt que chronologique, afin de mieux marquer l'évolution de la réflexion sur tel ou tel sujet.

Ne soyons toutefois pas trop chagrins et réjouissons-nous de l'existence d'une telle anthologie, précieuse pour qui s'intéresse à l'évolution de l'investigation historique et de ses résultats. Par ailleurs, ce recueil constitue en lui-même un témoignage du passé en ce qu'il présente ceux qui ont, à leur époque, été jugés aptes à définir la pratique légitime du métier d'historien – au risque, comme toute anthologie, de reléguer encore davantage dans l'oubli ceux qui en ont été exclus et de n'élever au panthéon que quelques étoiles dont le scintillement est ainsi relayé par-delà leur lueur d'origine.

PATRICE REGIMBALD
Cégep du Vieux-Montréal

Clio's Warriors: Canadian Historians and the Writing of the World Wars. By Tim Cook. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006. 352 p., notes, index. ISBN 978-0-7748-1256-6 85 \$ hc 978-0-7748-1257-3 29.95 \$ pb.)

In *Clio's Warrior's*, Tim Cook has produced an intellectual military history akin to Carl Berger's famous *The Writing of Canadian History* (University of Toronto Press, 1976). Berger assessed the evolution of historical writing and the professionalization of the historical craft in Canada. *Clio's Warriors* focuses on a much more specific theme: how the key historians who wrote the official military histories interpreted events, developed their work, and how they gained access to and controlled a myriad of primary sources. At a young age Cook has established himself as one of Canada's pre-eminent military historians. He is a former archivist with the Library and Archives of Canada, and a senior historian at the Canadian War Museum War.

Divided into six chapters spanning from 1914 to 2000, Cook argues that the official histories that emerged out of the First and Second World Wars "form the canon of Canadian military writing" and have prompted the study of those wars. Concomitantly, the production of the official

histories would not have occurred without the rich collections of archives and war records that were created to document the war efforts. These same sources continue to allow “for the writing and rewriting of the world wars” (p.255-256). But, as Cook illustrates, the official histories were arduous affairs for the historians involved. Complications developed over political interference, access to records, and in the case of the original First World War official history, its central author became bogged down in the material precluding him from completing the project.

Before the writing of an official history for the First World War was conceived came the effort to collect the war records. This was spearheaded by Canadian press baron Sir Max Aitken, later Lord Beaverbrook. With a mandate from Ottawa, Aitken established the Canadian War Records Office (CWRO) utilizing a small team to collect war records and to publicize the Canadian Corps. He also succeeded in gaining control of the records from the British that became essential for detailing the history of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF).

The efforts of Aitken and the CWRO facilitated the production of an official history of the CEF. In 1921, the military appointed Colonel Archer Fortescue Duguid to write an official history. An engineer and decorated artillery officer, Duguid had no training as an historian but senior officers saw his CEF service as more important to the project (p.43). Duguid proved to be careful with the evidence presented to him, insisting “on seeing every document, evaluating it, and putting it into a complicated series of cross-referenced outlines” as well as creating detailed indices. This method proved untenable as he became bogged down in the records and in planning. At the same time, Duguid kept strict control of the records meaning that the “burgeoning historical profession” had no access to them discouraging study and contribution towards the writing of Canada’s First World War military history. There was increasing public and political dissatisfaction as the process languished, particularly as the Australians and the British churned out official histories at an impressive rate. One of the strengths of Cook’s study is his ability to place the writing of the Canadian official histories into a broader comparative international context. Cook is sympathetic of Duguid’s efforts stressing that it is essential to understand the pressures and constraints that the first generation of postwar historians faced, such as minuscule resources. But ultimately he concludes that Duguid’s desire to have all the evidence before putting his conclusions to paper created dreadful delays that overshadowed his legacy. Thousands of Canadian veterans died before the only volume that Duguid ever produced was published in 1938. It was not until 1962, long after Duguid was off the project, that an official history of the CEF was completed (p.89-90).

With the advent of the Second World War, senior military officials – seeking to avoid the pitfalls from the last war – authorized the establishment of service historians to collect war records for a future historical program (p.93). These historical sections were strengthened throughout the war laying the foundation for the postwar official histories as well as future Second World War writing. The military also sought a trained historian to lead the project, selecting Charles P. Stacey. Stacey became the pre-eminent military historian of his era and receives extensive treatment in Cook's study. Stacey's superiors were supportive of the writing of he and his colleagues and in their efforts to gather interviews and records from the field, from Ottawa and even in gaining access to high-level British documents. The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) historians also worked to obtain materials for their wartime projects and future official histories. But in the postwar era of retrenchment and shrinking budgets, the RCN and RCAF historical services were cut deeply, affecting their ability to produce their own works. Indeed, Stacey had to use his own contacts to ensure that the official history program was not scrapped (p.142).

After the war, Stacey was tasked to write the army official histories. In one of the more fascinating aspects of the book, Cook examines the efforts of the Minister of Defence, Brooke Claxton (a First World War veteran), who sought to influence the portrayal of the wartime Liberal government in the histories. This was also tied to Claxton's support of the Chiefs of Staff decision to cancel the histories as a budgetary necessity. Stacey challenged Claxton accusing him of "breaking faith with the veterans" and the Minister acquiesced, restoring the army series (p.142).

Despite political machinations, budget cutbacks, and even the generals who took an interest in the official histories, the army published three operational histories under Stacey's guidance. Stacey was measured in his judgements, remaining far from a court historian. Cook argues that these histories had "an enormous impact on the discipline of Canadian military history, and the interpretations by the official historians would remain largely unchallenged until at least the 1980s" (p.162). This was also influenced by the fact that the official historians still controlled the war records and access was gradually loosened throughout after 1945.

Stacey and his colleagues had also provided a "scholarly legitimacy and academic respectability" to the field of military history in Canada as they helped train many historians who departed the historical services to teach in universities. From the 1960s onwards these new scholars and their students examined the world wars and challenged existing interpretations utilizing government archives. Cook examines the rise of this new military history in the final chapter. By the 1980s, almost every interpretation of

the two world wars stemmed from the official histories and new official histories of the RCAF and RCN were completed. Despite their flaws, the official histories “rank with the finest historical works ever produced in this country” (p.199-200). Cook concludes that the “work of academic historians...have refined and strengthened the canon of world war history in Canada” but “official history will still have an influential role in reconstituting Canada’s military past, even if it is in close partnerships with academic historians” (p.246).

This is a well-written and thoroughly researched book utilizing government and personal archival collections. If there is a minor fault to the book, it is that at certain points, Cook assumes that the reader already knows the significance of specific topics such as the Canadian defeat at Hong Kong, ULTRA, Operations Spring and Totalize and he does not fully expand on them. The book is, therefore, ideally suited to fourth-year and graduate seminars and to those keenly interested in the historiography of Canadian military history. Just as the official histories continue to influence contemporary academic military history writing, *Clio’s Warriors* will be regarded as an essential contribution in understanding the complementary nature of the official histories and the development of post-1914 Canadian military history.

RYAN TOUHEY
St. Jerome’s University

The Americanization of Social Science: Intellectuals and Public Responsibility in the Postwar United States. By David Paul Haney. (Philadelphie : Temple University Press, 2009. xii + 283 p., bibl., notes, index. ISBN 978-1-59213-714-5 \$25.95).

L’ouvrage de David Paul Haney propose une analyse historique du destin de la sociologie américaine entre l’après Seconde Guerre mondiale et le début des années 1960, en s’intéressant à la dimension publique de la discipline. En revenant sur les principaux acteurs, les principales œuvres ainsi que les transformations intellectuelles de la sociologie en développement aux États-Unis, il dresse un portrait d’une discipline à la fois en expansion et en quête d’identité professionnelle et scientifique.

Le premier chapitre, introductif, s’interroge en préambule sur le manque de visibilité publique d’une discipline censée se consacrer largement à des questions qui touchent directement les problèmes sociaux majeurs de la société américaine, après une période, celle du New Deal et même de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, où elle avait pu jouer un rôle relativement important. La thèse défendue dans le reste de l’ouvrage est que cette marginalisation publique de la sociologie s’explique largement par le