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Bell, John, ed. *Ottawa: A Literary Portrait. Lawrencetown Beach: Nova Scotia; Pottersfield Press, 1992. Pp. xxviii, 224. \$15.95 paper*

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would profit by reference to those published in Canada (e.g. as cited by Ley). The fact remains that the book is already over 550 pages of well-ordered, valuable material with very extensive reach and no significant redundancy. It is an outstanding \$25-worth, unquestionably of benchmark reference value for urbanists outside geography, and absolutely indispensable to those within that discipline. It is the Gerecke volume's misfortune to appear simultaneously, but that may be poetic justice.

References

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**Bell, John, ed. *Ottawa: A Literary Portrait*.
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On a parlour table in Victorian Ottawa, one might have found a stereopticon offering the visitor views of the city—the Ottawa River seen from the bluffs behind the Parliament Buildings, the Chaudière Falls, Rideau Hall and Colonel By's Canal. In *Ottawa: A Literary Portrait*, editor John Bell offers us thirty-one views of the city in prose and poetry. He has not restricted his selections to the picturesque, for in the selections we catch glimpses of the pollution created by the lumber mills of nineteenth-century Ottawa and the life of the poor in Norman Levine's Lower Town Market area and in Brian Doyle's Uplands, site of an emergency shelter in the Second World War.

For all the beauty of its setting at the meeting of the Ottawa and Rideau rivers, further graced by the curve of the Rideau Canal and the blue vista of the Gatineau Hills, Ottawa—the "subarctic lumber village turned into a political cockpit" in Goldwin Smith's contemptuous phrase—has not always enjoyed a favourable press. And, as Sandra Gwyn intimates in her introduction, many an Ottawa resident has often seen him or herself as a transient, a bird of passage subject to the caprices of political, diplomatic or journalistic terms of tenure. Accordingly, it is fitting that *Ottawa: A Literary Portrait* offers selections from some of the city's famous visitors. In 1861, visiting English novelist Anthony Trollope commented on the new Parliament Buildings, then under construction, with Victorian solemnity:

... I have no hesitation in risking my reputation for judgment in giving my warmest commendation to them regarding beauty of outline and truthful nobility of detail (p.36).

Fifty years later, William Dean Howells, whose sister Annie married into Ottawa's francophone literary circles, praised the Market area and deplored the sawdust and effluvia of Ottawa's lumber mills. One gets a little tired of the repeated praise of the bluffs of the Ottawa River, but overall Bell has succeeded admirably not only in giving a sense of the nineteenth and twentieth-century city but of the various approaches to it: along the Ottawa River from Montreal, down the Gatineau Hills, or along the Rideau and past the Hog's Back Falls.

The social makeup of the city is also covered in the anthology. Lumbermen, merchants, vice-regal society ladies, soldiers, and even a tramp (none other than novelist Jack London) are encountered in its pages. Yet when one com-

pares this volume to Bell's *Halifax: A Literary Portrait* (1990), one realizes that the more amorphous a city, the more difficult it is to capture in a volume of this sort. From lumbering days, Ottawa has always had a large francophone population. Bell points out that there is an equivalent French language anthology for the capital—*Bing sur la ring, bang sur la rang; l'anthologie française de l'outaouais* (1979) and he provides us with two works by francophones Robert Fontaine and Naim Kattan, the latter in translation. But there is an unavoidable feeling of partialness to a unilingual anthology in a bilingual community. Bell, moreover, does not supply any literary portraits of Ottawa from the Italian or Lebanese communities, two important groups in contemporary Ottawa, perhaps because these communities have not yet produced a chronicler of the sort Norman Levine is for the Jewish community of Lower Town or Arthur Bourinot for the woods of Kingsmere. Unlike the Halifax Explosion of 1917, Ottawa's Great Fire of 1900 (a lesser catastrophe to be sure) produced no memorable descriptions like those of Hugh MacLennan or Thomas Raddall in Halifax.

Bell has included those quintessential literary Ottawans, the local branch of the Confederation group of poets, with works by Duncan Campbell Scott, Archibald Lampman and Wilfred Campbell as well as their gifted female contemporary, poet and fiction writer Susie Frances Harrison. Yet, because Bell's selections from these four writers are all brief poems, the view of Ottawa gleaned from them is slight and impressionistic, and out of proportion to their impact on the literary life of the city. For a solid prose picture of Ottawa, Bell might have turned to Scott's *Untitled Novel* (published nonetheless) with its depiction of a strike at the mills.¹ One writer who is very much missed here—Elizabeth Smart—has given us in her journals something of the froth and

frustration of a debutante's life in the Ottawa of the Thirties—during which she reveals what an oasis of culture the Scott home near Lisgar and Elgin represented:

Last Thursday I had tea alone with the Duncan Campbell Scotts at their house on Elgin St. The nice big room and the contented atmosphere and the sane language. I felt at home, although they were both polite to me—she especially asking about my foreign travels and other things which made me suspicious lest she be trying to make conversation and thaw me out or something else incompatible with mutual friendship. Left loving them both and walked all the way home in the cold. He lent me a book on the Rossettis, Morrisises, etc.²

One wishes also that, instead of Arthur Bourinot's brief poem "Night on the Ottawa River," John Bell had included an excerpt from his nostalgic autobiographical poem *To and Fro in the Earth*³ (1963), a superb evocation of the Ottawa of early in the century, and the perfect companion piece for Joan Finnigan's poem "Ottawa and the Valley," that the editor wisely included here. Finnigan's poem, with its descriptions of middle class Centretown during the Depression, touches on one of the great mysteries of Ottawa life:

... the girl across the street
with the "good job in the government"
is home from "her good job in the
government,"
looking as sad about it as ever. (p.108)

There is a certain flat affect in Ottawa that emanates from its bureaucratic heart, and no literary work, to my mind, has yet transported us to the centre of paralysis—the Ottawa government office and the minds and hearts of the civil servants at work. Ottawa awaits its Joyce—that much is clear. But there is one astonishing omission in the book. The

omitted writer is a presence in some selections, and he wrote perhaps the quintessential Ottawa document. I refer, of course, to the diary of William Lyon Mackenzie King, whose presence haunts the city like that of no other man. Reminders of King are everywhere—from the statue of Sir Galahad he erected to his friend Henry Harper in front of the Parliament Buildings to the eerie maternal portrait in Laurier House to the synthetic ruins of Kingsmere—the classic Ottawa outing. One wonders on what editorial principle an excerpt from the King diary was excluded, for this is like a portrait of Paris without Proust or London without Pepys.

Even without Mr. King, *Ottawa: A Literary Portrait* is a worthwhile book, and should find a place on the bookshelf beside John Taylor's fine *Ottawa: An Illustrated History* (1986) and Sandra Gwyn's estimable *The Private Capital* (1984). But Ottawa is a harder portrait to paint than that of Halifax. Of Bell's two anthologies, I must quote Joseph Howe, who appears in both anthologies, about the Ottawa volume:

...although I prefer [the] City of Halifax, with its varied aspects, and fine sea views, still ... it is richly endowed and not unattractive to the eye. (p.43)

References

1. Duncan Campbell Scott, *Untitled Novel, ca. 1905* (Moonbeam, Ontario: Penumbra, 1979).
2. Elizabeth Smart, "Ottawa, 1933-34," *Necessary Secrets: The Journals of Elizabeth Smart*, ed. Alice Van Wart (Toronto: Deneau, 1986), 61.
3. Arthur Bourinot, "To and Fro in the Earth: An Autobiography in Verse," in *To and Fro in the Earth* (Bourinot: 1963), 29-37.

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Greer, Allan and Ian Radforth, eds. *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-nineteenth-century Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992. Pp. Xii, 328. \$22.95 paper.

Unfortunately for historians of cities, *Colonial Leviathan* has less to say about the local state than about higher levels of government and public administration. Admittedly, in Radforth's article on Lord Sydenham's reforms, the apparatus of local government is assigned its proper importance among the administrative innovations of the 1840s. But only Greer treats a specific activity of urban public administration—policing—and this only in his literature summary preceding a discussion of rural police. As the editors point out, however, stimulation rather than comprehensiveness was their object. And undoubtedly, urban historians will find much that is suggestive in this nicely assorted sampling of recent historical writing on state formation between 1830 and 1870.

In spite of the usage "state formation" in the sub-title, neo-Marxist sociology is not uniformly the book's unifying perspective. For instance, Douglas McCalla's piece on railways and economic development criticizes the "defensive expansionism" thesis simply in empirical terms, without altering the conceptual frame to take in matters of moral regulation and political legitimacy. Nor does Michael Piva speak to theoretical debates about bureaucratization in his masterful technical discussion of crisis-driven improvements in public finance administration. Peter Baskerville, discussing railway regulation, actively takes as his target Corrigan's and Sayer's "long waves" of revolution in government" whose conceptual presence is palpable in an essay such as Brian Young's broadly integrative piece on class and state formation in Lower Canada. With amplification by Greer's and Radforth's