

of *Collections Described in the Reports and Calendars Series, 1870-1980*. The latter is a guide to the 236 volumes of reports and calendars published by the RCHM since 1869, describing 624 privately owned collections.

Of the three volumes presently under review, *Private Papers of British Colonial Governors, 1782-1900* is likely to be of greatest interest to Canadians. The survey covers both those colonies administered by the Colonial Office and those originally established by companies for which the British government later assumed responsibility. Some 1,200 individuals were identified for consideration, of whom 353 were found to have left relevant papers. By my count, 117 of these were associated with British North America. Lieutenant governors of individual provinces after each province joined Confederation have been excluded. The guide gives coverage not only to British repositories, but to institutions abroad. Of the 711 groups of papers listed in this volume, 292 are in eighty institutions overseas, including seventeen in Canada. Researchers should note that, since the guide covers only private holdings, records at the Public Record Office are excluded. Its manuscript collections are included.

Entries in all three RCHM guides are nominal. They give birth and death dates, titles and offices with dates, and a brief summary of types of papers (correspondence, journals, diaries, and working papers), as well as extent of papers, provenance, location, call number, and NRA number or equivalent. The archival resources of the RCHM combined with the further research of its staff make the guide authoritative.

*Private Papers of British Diplomats, 1782-1900* includes coverage for boundary commissioners and consuls and agents as well as ambassadors, plenipotentiaries, and the like. The diverse papers of diplomats better known in other capacities, such as colonial governors, explorers, or men of letters, have also been included. The archives of the Foreign Office have been excluded. The holdings of five Canadian institutions are listed.

*Papers of British Churchmen, 1780-1940* covers all denominations and includes a few laymen whose papers are of particular significance to religious affairs. It excludes, however, colonial churchmen and missionaries except where their papers shed substantial light on British domestic affairs. Several of those included did receive significant amounts of correspondence from "North America" or Canada. Three Canadian repositories had papers of relevance. Official papers relating to the formal administration of churches were not included unless official and personal papers were intermingled.

All the volumes reviewed, then, add to our knowledge of British or Irish archival holdings. All are potentially of use to Canadian archivists and scholars. They represent a laudable effort by British and Irish archivists to make their material more accessible.

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**The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth: A History of Almonte United Church and Its Roots, 1821-1981.** WINSTON A. MacINTOSH. Almonte, Ontario: Almonte United Church, 1989. xv, 493 p. ISBN 0-9693600-0-2 \$25.00.

Win MacIntosh retired from the Directorate of History at National Defence Headquarters approximately five years ago following a career in the Canadian

Army and the civil service. Since that time he has been working on a labour of love: a history of his church in Almonte, Ontario. His book demonstrates the meticulous attention to detail that one might expect from an experienced staff officer who finished his career doing military history. The author and the church committee which oversaw the project, and indeed the entire congregation and population of the town of Almonte, should be proud of the published result, which gained its title from the Gospel According to St. John: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth...." While apt in many ways, the quotation chosen for the title is not apt in one respect: members of the United Church in Almonte now know whence their church cometh. This can be said with confidence because MacIntosh's book is much more than the history of one church or of one congregation. It is a history of several churches, in particular Presbyterian and Methodist as well as United, which pursued their separate existences in Almonte and vicinity before joining together at various times and in various combinations, ultimately becoming the present Almonte United Church. As such, it is a significant contribution to our understanding of the history of the town of Almonte, of Ramsay Township and that part of the Ottawa valley, as well as of the United Church of Canada.

The study is organized by church and then subdivided by individual ministers. This makes it useful as a reference work but tends to limit its readability. Many of the clergymen who received a call to one of the churches under study stayed only a short time. This tendency, coupled with the lack of sources for the early years of some of the churches, has resulted in some rather abbreviated sub-chapters. Perhaps the author might have broken the history of each church into separate chronological periods. He could then have discussed the ways in which the congregation attempted to come to grips with major issues and problems. Inevitably the comings and goings of clergy and key lay people would still be major themes, as would buildings and maintenance, church union, and what today would be called outreach. The book would still cover much of the same material, but it would be more readable. As it stands, one criticism of the book is that it reads too much like a medieval chronicle at times.

All historians are at the mercy of their sources, a reality that is clearly discernible in this book. MacIntosh discusses the problem at various times in his text, obviously reflecting the difficulty he encountered in his research. In the introduction to the chapter on Almonte Methodist Church, he points out the lack of local Methodist Church records in the nineteenth century. He found the sources only marginally better for the Presbyterians. The 1913 congregational meeting established a committee to "keep a record, to be continued from year to year, of the history of The Presbyterian Church, Almonte, a summary of the annals to be presented to the congregation at each annual meeting." Despite this commendable resolution, the author discovered that: "History was not mentioned at the annual congregational meeting in 1914. In 1915 one line gave the historical report: 'Historical Society reported that they were still alive.' While that may have been reassuring, they left no records of their achievements." One positive step was taken. The church records from 1834 to 1911 were deposited in the Customs House, Almonte. Unfortunately, "After that, as far as can be found, annual historical reports were forgotten." MacIntosh laments that, despite the value of church records to historians, "Clerks of Session and the secretaries of the various church organizations were imbued with the notion that brevity was their

goal, almost as if brevity was next to godliness.” When local church records exist, they are often found to be parochial and isolated. For example, MacIntosh regrets, when writing of the early 1940s, that “The existing church records of Trinity [United Church] of this period cover essential matters which are seldom the stuff of history. One would not realize from reading them that the Second World War was raging, how it affected the people of Almonte, nor that significant local church events were occurring periodically.”

The current church does not escape the author’s critical eye. When he reaches the present Almonte United Church, he admits the following: “On a few occasions our church records are incomplete — special congregational meetings not recorded — and in one case, inaccurate, owing to the Clerk’s desire to be kind and diplomatic. In the latter case, three independent oral statements have established the facts. Oral research has supplemented documentary research during this period and provides a more valid picture of the congregation’s joy of working and giving than the written word does.”

The various materials consulted are listed in an impressive bibliography which is a model for other authors, both in content and style. The archival sources are detailed by repository and the local church records are delineated in considerable detail by individual “book” and title. No less than a dozen newspapers and an impressive number of books have been used. The most serious omission this reviewer noted was John S. Moir’s *Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada*. The bibliography and citations reflect wide-ranging and imaginative research. One would have preferred, however, to see sources indicated by footnotes or endnotes rather than enclosed in brackets within the text. The information is there for serious readers and subsequent researchers, but it does tend to break up the flow of the narrative.

The appendices will undoubtedly prove popular with a variety of researchers, particularly genealogists. They include a list of subscribers to the minister’s salary, 1834-38; a roll of honour for the two world wars; complete baptismal rolls, 1925-81; a diagram of the roots of Almonte United Church (giving basic information about each of the antecedent churches since 1821); and a plan of the present church lot, showing additions to the building. Readers will appreciate the photographs of the churches and many of the ministers. The maps are useful, if occasionally a little unclear. The digressions on the town and on citizens who gained wider fame (such as James Naismith and Robert Tait McKenzie) expand on the church’s own story and place it in a broader context.

In brief, despite occasional lapses into mere narrative, Win MacIntosh and Almonte United Church have provided a useful contribution to our understanding of the development of the United Church in Ontario. With its index and appendices, this attractive hard-cover volume will be particularly appreciated by regional historians and genealogists. Any congregation contemplating a similar endeavour could benefit from a careful study of the way in which this history was researched and put together. All churches should ponder the comments about the paucity of written records. In addition to their more obvious Christian activities, congregations can leave a rich legacy to future generations by maintaining full and useable archives.

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