

When he writes of programmes or projects, he does so succinctly, getting right to the heart of the issue or controversy. With such major projects as the construction of the St. Lawrence Canals and the Intercolonial Railway, the administration of the removal of the seat of government from various cities prior to the selection of Ottawa as capital, the construction and reconstruction of the Parliament Buildings, or the removal of Ripple Rock, the reader is left with an understanding of the issues but, at the same time, with a desire to know more. Owram only deviates from his succinct style when he weaves into *Building For Canadians* a minor thesis on the role of the Department of Public Works in nation building in the period prior to confederation and dilates on the role of the Public Service generally, as it evolved an era of political control over departmental administration and a system of patronage.

Owram logically chose to close *Building For Canadians* in 1960, when there was a major shift in the priorities and goals of the Department of Public Works. The Department began to turn itself into an agency of real property management, as a result of the Glassco Commission recommendation. Public Works is now looking at the possibility of updating *Building For Canadians* to the end of the seventies. May it find as able a researcher and interpreter of events as Douglas Owram and may it do credit to the author by making it accessible.

Brian Hallett
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Photodiscovery. Masterworks of Photography 1840-1940. BRUCE BERNARD, with notes on the photographic processes by VALERIE LLOYD. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1980. 262 p. illus. ISBN 0-8109-1453-0. \$44.00.

Of the making of many books there is no end, wrote the author of Ecclesiastes several millenia ago. What was true for his time is no less true today of photographic books. My shelves creak and bow under the weight of volumes on photography which do little more than reproduce poorly the same old 'masters', or strive to present the work of an unjustly ignored genius with little more than a cursory introduction based on flimsy research.

Photodiscovery, though it is a book of pictures, is not one of those lamentable efforts. It is one of those rare books that shares the delight and excitement of discovery that has brought great pleasure to its author.

Bruce Bernard had a long association with photography as a newspaper photo editor, but he was familiar only with modern prints in their original form. Earlier work he knew only through book reproduction. This book began when he prepared a series of articles on the history of photography for the *Sunday Times* magazine. Looking at original photographs of a century and more ago he soon realized that published reproductions failed completely to convey the beauty and extraordinary range of colour he found.

Fortunately he began his search through the holdings of institutions and private collectors at a time when the explosion of interest in the history and art of photography had burst the early bounds established by the standard texts. He aimed "to demonstrate . . . the new historical and artistic perspective" opened up by this growth. He travelled widely, looked exhaustively and drew intelligently from sources which have often been ignored. As a result there are few familiar photographs here even though many of the photographers are well known. Surprises abound and interest is constantly renewed by Bernard's excellent selection and juxtaposition of images. The choice of photographs is highly personal yet illustrates the wide variety of uses to which the camera was put early in its development: art, medicine, science, record-keeping, souvenirs, reportage, erotic stimulus and symbolism to name just a few which the reader will find in these pages.

It is gratifying to see that Bernard has clearly identified the photographer, his birth and death dates, where he worked, the date of the photograph, the process used, the size of the image and the collection source. Notes at the back of the book are informal and interesting statements of his own response to the photographs. Even the acknowledgements — and this is difficult to believe — provide interesting reading. For the novice there are brief, useful descriptions of all the processes referred to in the book supplied by Valerie Lloyd, Curator of the Royal Photographic Society collection.

More often than not accusing fingers are pointed at miscreant publishers who destroy the impact of images by poor printing in an attempt to cut retail prices to appeal to a wider market. Here we can do nothing but applaud. The price is high, but the quality of the reproductions is superb. And every plate is in full colour! One of Bernard's aims is to show the range of colour to be found in monochrome photography, and you will be surprised at the stunning variety here: pink, purple, gold, brown, orange, blue, yellow. All of these are found in what we ingenuously call black and white photography.

In the Preface Bernard wrote, "My chief hope is that the pictures will show . . . that the invention which so excited and alarmed the world a hundred and forty years ago has produced a more exciting, and sometimes more alarming, variety of images than he or she ever thought possible." He has succeeded, producing a charming, fresh and sumptuous volume which cannot fail to please.

Andrew Birrell
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Alberta Labour: A Heritage Untold. WAYNE CARAGATA. Toronto: James Lorimer, 1979. x, 162 p. illus. index ISBN 0 88862 264 3 \$19.95.

Wheat & Woman. GEORGINA BINNIE-CLARK. With an Introduction by SUSAN JACKEL. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979. xxxvi, 313 p. ISBN 0 8020 2354 1 \$20.00 bd. ISBN 0-8020 6386 1 \$7.50 pa.

It would seem that Warren Caragata in his *Alberta Labour: A Heritage Untold* has harkened to two pleas of Canadian historians: to write regional history to celebrate our "limited identities" and to give us history of the overlooked sector, the working class. Caragata's history of Alberta labour (for labour, read unions) runs from the 1880s, with the coming of the railway and coal mining, to the 1950s when oil opened a whole new era. The story is not that of a triumphant march to union organization and power. From the first union, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, in 1886 the labour movement expanded through the early part of the century. Labour militancy peaked in 1919, then sharply declined in the 1920s to the point of being seduced into Social Credit in the 30s. The long climb upward began, wooed by the Communists in the 40s, to face new problems in sectors of the oil industry and the organization of government and service industries now so large a part of the economy. While the navvies that brought the railway west lived in deplorable conditions, it was commission reports and public outcry, not organized labour, that forced the passage of the Public Works Health Act of 1900 — the first act to make government accountable for housing conditions. It was in the coal mines of Alberta, starting with the Lethbridge strike in 1907 up through the Drumheller strike of 1916 and the Crowsnest Pass strike of 1932 right up to 1946, where the greatest labour action has been. Coal mining illustrates other problems besetting the labour movement: pressure for company unions such as Mackenzie King suggested to the Rockefellerers in his blueprint for industrial peace that would ultimately undercut unions and also the conflict between American-based unions like the United Mine Workers and the Canadian challenger, Mine Workers Union of Canada. As coal mining declined, union action (and management reaction) became stronger in the growing meat packing industry.