

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
National Photography Collection
Public Archives of Canada

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 harpooned 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 Rockefellers 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.

Caragata describes external events that had their impact on Alberta labour. The inflationary cycle that began in 1896 and peaked first in 1913 and then, due to war pressures, in 1919 pressed labour, especially the unskilled segment, hard (although Caragata fails to distinguish the fluctuations and paints a uniformly gloomy picture of the cost of living). The national unrest and postwar hysteria of 1919 is well sketched but without much sympathy for the One Big Union movement. The desperation of the Depression times in Alberta helps fill in the national picture of a period not yet chronicled in Canadian history.

The single most important goal of labour, the right to organize, is still not unchallenged in Alberta. The police were involved in nearly all union activity and "hostile employers" and "unsympathetic governments" are still with us, we are told. In following Caragata's history of labour in Alberta we can identify the enemy but they are "they", the company, the police, the owners. With a few exceptions such as Pat Burns the meat packer, they have not been identified. Obstructive politicians such as William Lyon Mackenzie King or Robert Borden, E.C. Manning or J.E. Brownlee are more readily listed. True, this is a history of labour but some face should be put on the enemy. Perhaps one should not fault the author for what he has not done, when he has covered a large field, but little or no attention was given to the ethnic or female component of the labour force. The history of Alberta's labour is not all told yet but we owe a great debt to the first person covering the field.

To judge from the footnotes, it appears that a great deal of this book was written from the Public Archives of Canada's resources. The author has contributed a good number of his own interviews with those in the labour movement to the Alberta Archives but there are other repositories such as the Glenbow he does not seem to have touched. Caragata uses the work of A.R. McCormack and David Bercuson, two of the brightest lights among Labour historians, but he seems to have overlooked theses on Alberta labour history (and they do exist) which could contribute up to date research. The ninety photographs are excellently reproduced and diverse in scope. One wishes they could have been more integrated into the text rather than being simply illustrations but they do give evidence of some of the social aspects of the labour movement that the text could not cover.

When Susan Jackel, who wrote the introduction to *Wheat & Woman*, described the confusion among library cataloguers caused by the story of an English woman farmer who led a homesteads for women movement in Canada (one library in desperation classified it as British rural life), one sees why it might be reviewed with Alberta labour's "untold" story.

Women's drive for suffrage, women's assault on the professions and the labour force are well known themes, but whoever thought of a woman homesteader? Certainly not the Canadian government who never dreamed that a single woman would try to wrest free land from the Homestead Act. It opposed her all along the line. Farmers' widows yes, but single women farmers, no. Susan Jackel skilfully sketches in some of the background that brought Georgina Binnie-Clark to Canada in 1905. The boom in travel books, especially about Canada which was picturesque but understandable, and discontent in Britain with a social system which tried to sustain in genteel inactivity a large supply of spinsters may have prompted Miss Binnie-Clark to look abroad. Following a brother already in Canada was a familiar pattern but here Miss Binnie-Clark departed from the traditional model. After a season watching her brother's futile and often half-hearted attempts to master Saskatchewan farming, she determined to do it herself.

Wheat & Woman (first published in 1914) is the story, largely autobiographical, of the three years from 1905 to 1908 Georgina Binnie-Clark spent homesteading, yet denied as an unmarried woman the 160 acres of land offered under the Dominion Lands Act. Free farms were offered to any male eighteen years of age or over and to women

who were widows, divorcees or deserted wives responsible for dependent children. Georgina Binnie-Clark, Cora Hinds and a score of women asked why single women were excluded as "Homesteaders." The unrelenting government response was "she can't," women would fail as farmers. Georgina Binnie-Clark set out to prove she wouldn't, investing her own capital to obtain a farm. *Wheat & Woman* describes her troubles and triumphs: struggles with unreliable and unskilled hired hands on whom she must depend, weather, vagaries of marketing and even prairie fires but balanced by the support of neighbours and the fact that she survived. The book is full of her insights into her problems and her efforts. Susan Jackel tells the Binnie-Clark story beyond 1908. For the rest of her life until her death in 1947, Georgina Binnie-Clark moved back and forth from England to Canada, supporting herself by a career in journalism (not yet well documented) and farming. She is remembered by her neighbours in Lipton, Saskatchewan, as a fierce but kindly eccentric. Neither the federal nor provincial governments ever conceded that single women should be entitled to free homesteads; but by the 1930s free land was no longer given to anyone.

Georgina Binnie-Clark had already published in 1910 *A Summer in the Canadian Prairie* (London, Musson) — the fictionalized account of how she and her sister first came to visit their brother in the West. Although it is heavily larded with advice to emigrants, it is a livelier book than *Wheat & Woman*. The Binnie-Clarks suffered culture shock to find that they could not feel completely at home in a British Dominion. Like English gentelwomen from Susanna Moodie on, they are startled by the egalitarianism of Canadian society.

We can be grateful to the University of Toronto Social History series for producing many interesting reprints. One wonders why they chose this one. It is Binnie-Clark's weaker book. If it was chosen to illustrate the woman's homestead movement, the farmer of *Wheat & Woman* might be likened to the woman preacher in Samuel Johnson's epigram, "it is not well done but you are surprised to see it done at all." I doubt how much service this does to women's history. As Gerda Lerner said (in "Placing Women in History" in *Liberating Women's History* (1976) p. 357) ". . . history of 'notable women' does not tell us much about those activities in which most women engaged, nor does it tell us about the significance to society as a whole of women's activities." On the other hand, if *Wheat & Woman* is meant to illustrate an area where women could and did perform a male stereotyped function, let us look at some other such areas. Examples might be the Grenfell mission nurses performing medical services in the wilds or the women missionaries such as the Bishops' Messengers of the Anglican Church in the West who filled the priestly role. Such memoirs and letters may be languishing in an archives somewhere.

Shirley Spragge
Queen's University Archives

Exhibits. GAIL FARR CASTERLINE. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1980. 60 p. illus. (Basic Manuals Series) ISBN 0 931828 18 X \$5.00 Members, \$7.00 Non-members.

Gail Casterline's manual sets out the essential considerations of concept and design, preparation and mounting, publicizing and protecting, dismantling and evaluating an exhibition, with due attention to questions of funding and budgetary control. Vital factors of conservation and security are highlighted. The need for establishing controls during all stages and maintaining records, after the exhibit is dismantled, is identified but not emphasized. Appendices are used to list further details of locating funding sources, supplies and equipment, design assistance, etc., and a bibliography suggests further reading.