

Kingston newspapers. It would be unfair to insist that a localized study be based on a tremendous diversity of sources, but those seeking to test Akenson's findings might do well to start with a close examination of primary sources. His assertions about the nature of pre-1812 society, for instance, are based largely upon the papers of Joel Stone. There may be no further sets of papers of members of the local élite for that specific time period and that specific region, but comparison to other prominent local figures across the province would be interesting. Likewise, generalizations on militia involvement in the War of 1812 are based mainly on the Stone and McDonald-Stone Papers. Although the McDonald-Stone Papers contain the Leeds militia records, one wonders whether the conclusions drawn would be reinforced or modified by use of the British Military Papers (RG 8 I C Series) and the correspondence of the Adjutant-General of Militia at the PAC.

While Akenson is most careful to make clear that his conclusions relate to a local study, that his chosen region is not necessarily "typical," and that his study neither gains nor loses in significance on the basis of typicality, some of his more enthusiastic readers are likely to lose sight of his cautions and generalize from this study to the province as a whole. Whatever caveats one has to offer, however, there is no gainsaying that this is a study of the first significance, a rare one in the study of Ontario, where even the individual footnotes should provide meat for further study.

The second book under review, Akenson's *Being Had: Historians, Evidence and the Irish in North America* is largely an adaptation of the arguments in *The Irish in Ontario* to place them within the context of American historiography and an expansion on some of the ideas there presented — the impact of the Irish National School System on Egerton Ryerson and the school system in Ontario, for instance. It will make interesting further reading for those intrigued by Akenson's arguments.

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Harvest of Stones: The German Settlement in Renfrew County. BRENDA LEE-WHITING. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985. xii, 323 p. ISBN 0-8020-2562-5 cl. 0-8020-6580-5 pa. \$24.95 cl. \$9.95 pa.

This book is the second recent study of the German settlement in the Upper Ottawa Valley; however, it covers far more thematic territory than Peter Hessel's *Destination: Ottawa Valley* which focused on the movement from Germany. Brenda Lee-Whiting moves beyond the facts of immigration to explore the material culture of the Renfrew County Germans — their buildings, tools, textiles, and especially their furniture — and various themes connected with their history in the new land. The author attempts to provide answers to most of the questions a historian might pose, and even provides some indication of the destinations of out-migrants by noting the residences of children which appeared in the obituaries of local residents. She delves far beyond the picture-book level in exploring material history and performs a valuable service in identifying the stylistic features of individual furniture-makers. Her biographical sketches of the latter make the point that even the skilled cabinetmakers among these people pursued the trade as a sideline to supplement agricultural income or to provide the initial stake with which to buy a farm. Though furniture factories had appeared in eastern Renfrew County by 1872

(p. 141), Lee-Whiting regards the activities of the part-time rural furniture-makers as survivals of the old hand-tool technology, serving a purely local market, often a single concession. This sort of operation appears very different from that of a documented western Ontario village cabinetmaker (identified in Lilly Koltun's *The Cabinetmaker's Art in Ontario, c. 1850-1900*) who used machine as well as hand tools in his work and who imported parts and even whole furniture from the Toronto factories for resale. Lee-Whiting conveys a very different picture, though she does not address the issue of urban influence directly.

Though the breadth of topical coverage is impressive, the depth of treatment is of necessity uneven. Education, religion, and agriculture are dealt with far more briefly and in the context of the major themes. Educational issues, for example, are discussed in a three-page excursus to a study of log school buildings. Relations with other ethnic groups, notably the Irish, are discussed cursorily, and one especially wishes for further discussion of the extent of cultural affinities with the Kashubs who came to Renfrew County contemporaneously from much the same region as these eastern Germans. Lee-Whiting alludes to certain stylistic Kashubian or Polish influences in furniture (pp. 197, 206) but does not explore the question. She does discuss at some length local anti-German feeling during the First World War, drawing heavily upon newspaper evidence, but merely notes that the experience was not repeated during the Second World War.

Lee-Whiting musters an impressive array of sources: printed departmental reports and Sessional Papers, newspapers, obituary notices, census and assessment rolls, parish registers, deeds and mortgages, and, refreshingly, the furnishings located in homes and at auction sales and names on gravestones, which she uses to trace movements and original settlement locations and intermarriage between ethnic groups. Far too few historians use artifacts and relict features in the physical landscape as evidence of man's past activities, though W.G. Hoskins showed us how three decades ago. Aside from some elementary manipulation of census figures these sources are used impressionistically rather than statistically, and while this at times leaves the reader uneasy about the validity of the author's generalizations, Lee-Whiting's judgements appear generally to be sound and rooted firmly in a sensitivity to individual humanity. She makes much use of oral evidence, though here she exercises less critical judgement: most historians would question a descendant's assertion that his ancestor was a son of the Kaiser's coachman. (p. 29)

A major limitation of *Harvest of Stones* results from the purely North American focus of the author's research. Lee-Whiting does not read German and as a result is forced to quote general descriptions of German economic conditions; her major sources on Prussia are nineteenth-century encyclopaedias. A study of specific regional emigrant groups such as this one should inform and revise our generalizations rather than draw conclusions from them.

Similarly, when Lee-Whiting moves into material history she briefly contrasts buildings in Renfrew County with those of German communities in southern Ontario and Pennsylvania, and accounts for the most obvious differences by concluding that the poverty of the environment in eastern Ontario prevented the natural progression in building materials from wood to stone from taking place. It is important to recognize that the local environment was at times a greater influence on material culture than were imported traditions, but investigation of the homeland would have permitted a more definitive answer to the question of relative influences. It would have been enlightening to have compared the buildings of Renfrew County with those of the home communities in

Pomerania and West Prussia, areas Lee-Whiting has stated were settled and cleared only in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. One would therefore expect the emigrants to have been more familiar with log construction than their British counterparts. A comparison of log construction styles, floor plans, and carpentry techniques in Canada with those at home, such as that undertaken by Terry G. Jordan in *American Log Buildings: An Old World Heritage*, is still needed.

Nonetheless, *Harvest of Stones* is a considerable achievement and a stimulatingly original study of a long-ignored immigrant group.

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The Prairie West: Historical Readings. DOUGLAS FRANCIS and HOWARD PALMER, eds. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1985. xiii, 660 p. ISBN 0-88864-048-X \$21.00 pa.

In the past few years quite a number of collections of articles on the history of Western Canada have been published. Most of them were the outgrowth of conferences, principally the Western Canadian Studies Conferences; others were collections produced as a tribute to the contributors' teachers; while still others have been collections of the "best" articles from a specific journal. With all this activity in the publication of collected articles on Western Canadian history one can, with some justification, ask why the editors of *The Prairie West* felt it necessary to put together yet another collection. The answer is that this is a collection with a difference. It was created to be used as a text for an introductory course in the history of the prairies. Unlike most of the other collections limited to a conference theme, an epoch in history, or the scholarly interests of the students of one professor, this publication presents a selection of essays which encompass the recorded history of the prairies. As such it is intended to provide "students with the latest scholarship on major topics of interest in a survey course on the history of prairie Canada." (p. xiii)

Of the thirty-two articles in this collection all except the first one, Gerald Friesen's "Recent Historical Writing on the Prairie West," have been published previously in a variety of books and periodicals. While most of the articles were originally published in the 1970s and 1980s, the earliest "The Evolution of the Social Credit Movement" by John Irving was first published in 1948 and three others appeared in the 1960s. Nevertheless the editors' claim that the book presents the latest scholarship on major topics in prairie history appears to be fully justified. The list of contributors is a veritable "Who's Who" of Western Canadian scholars, though inevitably there are some names one might have expected to appear that are not among the chosen few. No doubt some will find fault with the selection but on the whole the editors have done a good job and have brought together an impressive collection of articles.

In order to assist the student, the book is organized chronologically into fourteen sections, each of which is introduced by a short article. The introduction places the section in its historical context and provides an overview of the articles included in the section as well as a comprehensive and useful bibliography of other articles relating to the field. The book begins appropriately with a section on historiography and ends with sections on the modern West, its politics, economics, literature, and art. The remaining sections are arranged in chronological order and provide a good overview of the history of the prairie