

with providing a quick and easy reference linking the content of the records with their provenance been obscured in the process of producing scholarly works of history? I suppose the researchers themselves could give part of the answer, but the relationship between provenance and content is also a problem of archival theory that archivists themselves should address. I suggest that this question could perhaps fit into the general discussion on the part of Public Archives archivists concerning the "history of the record" and its implications for producing effective finding aids. In the meantime, it would seem that the size of the administrative outlines as presently constituted at least warrants more access points than that provided simply by dates.

A word about format is in order. It is, first of all, good to see that the 8" × 11" format adopted in the early 1980s for a new blue-covered series of inventories has been retained. The earlier, green-covered, pocket-sized format was simply too difficult to read and did not stand up well to the abuse given them by frantic researchers. Those nifty little windows inevitably served as starting-points for the total disintegration of the front covers. Secondly, it is also heartening to know that all of these inventories have been stored on the new FEDDOCS computer programme to allow for quick and easy updates. Hopefully, this will also result in published revisions appearing more frequently than in the past.

**Richard Klumpenhouwer**  
Calgary, Alberta

**Dictionary of Canadian Biography Volume VIII: 1851 to 1860.** FRANCESSE G. HALPENNY and JEAN HAMELIN, eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Québec: Les Presses de l'université Laval, 1985. 1129 p. ISBN 0-8020-3422-5 \$60.00.

The appearance of volume VIII of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* is, like that of previous volumes, a cause for excitement. This particular volume includes the biographies of 521 people who died during the decade 1851 to 1860. The book is the ninth volume to be released in the projected series of twelve. It is a tribute to the level of Canadian historical and bibliographical scholarship that this project, which has involved hundreds of people, has been able to maintain its consistency and quality for so long. In this volume, the biographies of Samuel Peters Jarvis and Sir James Kempt are among those particularly sensitive to their subject and society. Also, Sylvia Van Kirk's biography of Letitia Mactavish Hargrave uses quotes from her letters and is so finely crafted that one imagines oneself a close friend receiving letters from her. Few of the individuals were as important as Robert Baldwin, and his long biography is a wonderful and touching account of his personal struggles and public life. The writers had access to previously unused sources, and Baldwin's life lends itself to biography. On the other hand, Robert Sweeny, in his account of Peter Gill, notes that his subject's life reveals the limit of biography in providing historical understanding.

Sweeny's reservations have implications beyond his essay and they will strike a chord with many people. Many Canadians, and not just historians, must both delight in many of the individual biographies and wonder about the limits of thousands of such biographies in providing insights into our history. No one would ever define history as the story of 521 people who may not have had anything in common beyond death in the same decade; rather it is the pattern of change, or lack of change, of social structures or patterns of

human interaction. The editors have recognized this problem, and have made one effort — with an “Introductory Essay” — to suggest what these men and women did share, and another effort — by four indexes — to let the reader find unifying factors in the diverse lives in the volume.

An introductory essay from the perspective of the centre of the empire is appropriate and helpful, especially in light of the great transformation of the British Empire in the 1840s. Phillip Buckner’s essay “The Colonial Office and British North America, 1801-1850” provides a good account of the evolution and significance of that office and, appropriately enough in a dictionary of biography, an equally good account of the individuals in the office, particularly Sir James Stephen. No doubt this office did affect all 521 lives to varying degrees. However, the important influence on these lives was not so much the Colonial Office as the deeper reality of commercial imperialism, which is not the essay’s subject. From this viewpoint the essay deals with the mere administrative surface of the forces that determined the social structures within which these men and women lived their lives. These forces cannot be identified in an essay that separates British North America and the Colonial Office from the rest of the Empire. Conditions in other colonies also had a significant impact on the Colonial Office and thus on British North America. Neither the decay of the principle of commercial reciprocity, nor the evolution of policies on emigration and settlement, nor humanitarian efforts to abolish slavery and to protect aboriginal peoples were related solely to Canada. Rather they were aspects of change in the empire as a whole. These 521 lives were linked not just by the Colonial Office but by shared membership and citizenship in a vast world-wide empire.

Most readers will use this book as a dictionary and thus will have a question in mind. For those readers the various indexes will be important. The first index is an “Index of Identifications” (pp. 1026-1042) and relates mostly to occupation or activity but also to special interest groups such as blacks and women. The second and third indexes are geographic — one based on the subjects’ birthplace and the other on their career locations. These three indexes are relatively new to the series: they first appeared in 1981 in a separate publication for the previously released volumes I-IV. At that time only one geographic index was created. The separate geographic indexes were introduced with volume V in 1983.

The editors continue to develop and refine these indexes: in Volume V, 128 men were listed under “business;” in Volume VIII, approximately three hundred individuals appear, but now they are divided into eight sub-categories. Similarly, “politicians” are now subdivided. One imagines that the researcher looking at the names of roughly 150 officials under “office holders” will wish that they too had been similarly divided, even if a miscellaneous or general sub-category were necessary. Smaller categories such as “artisans” could also be divided, especially when as in this case they do very different work. One may wonder why “gold and silver workers” are listed under “arts” in volume V and “artisans” in volume VIII. Indeed, what do the editors mean by “artisans” or the other categories? Perhaps the notes at the beginning of the index should be enlarged.

This index reveals that merchants and office holders, together with military men and would-be office holders, are more than half the people in this volume. Given the commercial and administrative character of the Second British Empire this quantification is hardly surprising. The two geographical indexes which follow (pp. 1044-1063) are equally significant. To those interested in a particular colony or region they are enormously helpful. Since few researchers do not have geographical limits in mind they make

the book much more valuable. One might wish they were even more precise. For at least the birthplace index, this detail could be very precise without altering the format of the index.

The fourth and last index — the “Nominal Index” (pp. 1067-1129) — has at least two significant differences from the previous three indexes: it is not new (all volumes have had one) and it includes not only the people whose biographies appear in the volume, but also everybody mentioned in all those biographies. Not surprisingly, it is the longest of the four indexes. Since it is the oldest of the indexes, it is the most stable in format. As in the texts, an asterisk appears with the names of those whose life is, or probably will be, in another volume. Unlike the text, the asterisks here are accompanied by the birth and death dates of the individuals — thereby revealing in which volume he or she appears. The editors would do us all a favour by adding these dates, or even better the volume number, to the asterisked names in the text of the last three volumes. Another oddity in both this index and the text is the usage of women’s names. They appear under their birth names, which are not necessarily the names by which they are known to history. Thus, we are told in the introduction that Anna Jameson is in the volume but she appears as Anna Murphy. She and her book are even referred to in the notes on page 832 as “Murphy, *Winter studies and summer rambles*.” In contrast, men who changed their names for social reasons, as did Peter McGill and John Halkett, are listed not under their birth names but under their better known adopted names. The result is to make women more difficult to find.

After all these limitations are considered, delight with the volume and excitement with the series remain. The quality of research, writing, and editing has been maintained and enhanced over the decades. That a single historical project launched in 1959, and conceived a decade earlier, could continue into the 1980s and 1990s to be so well done within the original plan is an indication not merely of the developed state of history in Canada, but of the developed nature of Canadian society. This achievement is even more remarkable when one considers the extraordinary changes in historical writing in Canada since the 1950s.

**Brian Murphy**  
Manuscript Division  
Public Archives of Canada

**The Prosperous Years: The Economic History of Ontario, 1939-75.** K.J. REA. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985. xiv, 287 p. ISBN 0-8020-2576-5 cl. 0-8020-6592-9 pa. \$27.50 cl. \$12.50 pa.

Between 1939 and 1975, real per capita personal income in Ontario tripled; provincial government spending quadrupled to just over one-sixth of the Gross Provincial Product in the 1972-73 fiscal year. *The Prosperous Years* — one of three volumes covering Ontario economic history from the late 1700s planned for the Ontario Historical Studies Series — is a hybrid, in part a descriptive survey of Ontario’s remarkable recent economic development, but primarily an ambitious account of the growth of provincial government activities in the economy. The book is *not* an attempt to “explain” Ontario’s economic experience. Not only does Rea believe that the use of modern macro-economic theory to analyze recent events poses “methodological conundrums” in that these economic theories were products of the period and “probably influenced the real-world events