

indebted to NARA for taking the chance to go ahead with this project. I praise them for allowing us to see the results as I have benefited from this tremendously. This report also confirms our own studies at the National Archives of Canada. We decided not to go ahead with a large textual record optical disc project based upon the information we obtained from using NARA's system; otherwise we may have spent tremendous amounts of scarce resources on a quixotic chase for the perfect replacement for microfilm. Optical disc technology can compete with traditional technologies in the storage of some types of records but not in the case of textual records typically found in large archives. My final comment is that archivists should wait a few more years before starting a project to copy textual records onto optical disc.

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**Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites.** C.J. TAYLOR. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990. xviii, 246 p. ISBN 0-7735-0713-2.

The meta-narrative of C.J. Taylor's monograph is drawn from a detailed examination of "the politics of historic sites," and seeks, ultimately, to lay bare the dynamic "relation between the state and society, regional and national perspectives, and history and national identity" that coalesce around the negotiated issues of historic site selection and development (p. xiii). This thoroughly researched and comprehensive history of the development of Canada's historic parks and sites programme features a host of largely conflicting and competing personalities, organizations, and forces jockeying for control of what would become, by the late-1960s, an important federal cultural programme. The non-human characters in this drama include the national heritage movement in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (both regional and national components), three modules of the federal government (the cabinet, the administration of the National Parks Branch, and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board (HSMB)), as well as a cast of literally dozens of federal government employees and academics. The thesis of the monograph is neither complicated nor unexpected: Taylor contends that the competition between this multitude of conflicting interests and organizations, a fragmented and unempowered bureaucracy, and the physical dimensions of the various sites prevented the creation of a rational, national heritage policy for the "the selection, preservation, and interpretation of heritage places" (p. xvii) in Canada.

In spite of Taylor's avowed purpose, this monograph is an utterly satisfying administrative history spanning four decades (the 1920s to the 1960s) of the activities of the two lead players of the federal historic sites programme, the HSMB and the historic sites programme within the parks branch. While the narrative seems, at first glance, to be overly preoccupied with the history of the HSMB, this in fact reflects the failure of the federal government to intervene forcefully in this area, to develop coherent policies, and to provide funding for a programme within the parks branch to administer it. This fixation with the HSMB is averted near the end of the monograph, during the era of the mega-project and the eventual ascendance of the historic sites programme.

In the course of the presentation of his arguments, Taylor addresses a number of very important heritage issues and topics. The most interesting point, from my perspective as

least, involves, rather ironically, the marginalization of the HSMB and its failure to initiate a coherent heritage programme. In spite of the board's positioning at its formation in 1919 on the cutting edge of the national heritage movement, the personalities of the various board members and their representative constituencies, its emphasis on commemoration rather than preservation, the board somehow consistently failed to step into a series of heritage areas and opportunities.

While not an apologist for the HSMB, Taylor devotes much of the book to a presentation of a series of compelling arguments for why the board failed to resolve its internal differences, meet its mandates, and why it ultimately failed to move strongly into policy or programme areas that were badly in need of its direction and guidance. First, the origins of the board, its creation, and the expectations it was designed to address placed it in an untenable position. With no clear direction provided by the federal government in the area of heritage policy development for a variety of economic and political reasons right into the mid-twentieth century, the HSMB became the terrain on which the aspirations of local heritage movements and associations collided head-on with a burgeoning national heritage movement, as well as the ambitions of the department and the branch.

Ultimately, Taylor argues that the HSMB was never able to transcend its constituent parts and fashion a national historical consensus within the confines of its own meeting rooms. Tensions and personality conflicts, in other words, persisted within the HSMB and contributed to the failure of the board. Deeply committed to, or the products of, certain traditions, board members often found themselves at odds with each other or working at cross-purposes. As products of differing regional, cultural, and ethnic traditions, board members even argued about the root role of the HSMB. Should the HSMB define, identify, promote, commemorate, or glorify the activities of a founding people, and if so how? Should the HSMB respond to and support a particular form of nationalism? As a result of disagreements and the ensuing confusion, some board members often found themselves defending positions that were diametrically opposed to the interests of other board members representing other provinces and regions.

Another theme developed by Taylor, that he suggests led to the further marginalization of the HSMB, had to do with the position adopted by the board *vis à vis* the commemoration-versus-preservation issue. Commemoration, the erection of perhaps a monument and an accompanying plaque offering an interpretation of the events or the historical significance of a place, allowed for the intellectual glorification of a selected incident and appealed to a board with little in the way of operational funds. This position was favoured by the HSMB representatives from Ontario and Quebec and hence dominated. Preservation, on the other hand, was supported by Maritime interests who were apparently in a position to develop historic sites more fully, almost as parks, offer interpretative services, and make the sites accessible to the public (p. 33). The lack of leadership on the part of the HSMB and its unwillingness to address the issue of preservation allowed a rejuvenated historic sites programme within the parks branch to move into this vacuum during the 1930s; the parks branch was able to obtain federal relief funds to restore a number of historic fortress sites during this period.

While the influence of the board on the development of heritage sites was circumscribed by the expansion of other federal cultural agencies in the 1950s, the growth of regional heritage agencies, and ultimately the creation of an historic sites programme

within the parks branch armed with “legislation, money, and policy” (p. 138), the HSMB was able to influence broad areas of heritage policy. In spite of this allegation by Taylor, the focus of the narrative at this point in the study shifts rather dramatically; the preoccupation of the monograph centres on the struggle between technical and historical units within the parks branch for hegemony of the programme. The final era covered by Taylor, a modern era characterized by big projects and an increasingly complex historic sites programme, is defined as the ascendancy of the engineers who are able to take control of the mega-projects at Louisbourg and Dawson.

New directions and influences that have taken place or developed within the field and the Canadian Parks Service during the 1970s, not surprisingly, confuse the author. He concludes his narrative by lamenting that the HSMB has been largely ignored in favour of professional planners within the Canadian Parks Service. The department, with the death of the “big projects,” seems to be moving towards a role that largely coordinates and encourages the conservation of cultural and architectural heritage. What will happen? In the case of the HSMB, given the acrimonious and often puerile quarrels between board members, and the inherent inability of the board effectively to engage heritage issues, and given Taylor’s engaging narrative, one can only ask, “Who cares?”

This publication is not an easy read. A tangled and necessarily complicated administrative history which hops back and forth between two stories, that of the parks branch component and that of the HSMB, is not served adequately by a simple chronology. Nor is it an easy literary task to keep the narrative ball in the air and at the same time orchestrate the supporting roles played by a host of regional and other peripheral players. I was confused, however, with Taylor’s notion of negotiation that was alluded to in the title of the book. Who does the negotiating in this monograph — the HSMB, the federal government, elements within the parks branch? The arguments presented are unclear, and there is little evidence in this study that suggests that the process, as conventionally understood, actually took place. Indeed, the evidence seems to indicate, and historical experience bears this out, that it is not so much negotiation as the application and administration of power or the lack thereof. The final point that needs to be simply mentioned is that the book is not overly concerned with placing the study within the broadest possible social history context. To be fair, however, there are other studies that perform this task and this was not a goal of the work.

That being said, this work is clearly indicative of both Taylor’s status as a professional researcher and his own professional development. Taylor is an accomplished Canadian Parks Service researcher and his study reflects both wide experience in the field and good fortune. I mention experience, because the work reflects the research agenda of a mature professional. With an eye for a good narrative, a manageable research topic, and a broad understanding of the research universe in the field of heritage, parks, and conservation studies, Taylor has been able to mine extensively a limited amount of research material. I mention good fortune, and this is from the reader’s point of view, because Taylor had been presented with the chance and the opportunity to work in an area in which he possesses a demonstrable expertise. In other words, Taylor is perhaps the perfect person to undertake such a study; as an insider and as a employee close to sources of information unknown to other practitioners, he was able to identify and locate a good story idea and exploit it. I must also mention that, to his credit, he is at the same time able to generate some objective distance from the

subject in spite of the fact that he was, and continues to be, an employee of the Canadian Parks Service.

Taylor has examined the manuscript papers of a number of early HSMB members, the political papers of a few politicians and civil servants, the minutes of the HSMB and the National Battlefield Commission, the operational and policy records of the Department of the Environment's Canadian Parks Service, a wide selection of government documents including annual reports, royal commissions, and debates, and finally, an appropriate collection of related secondary material. Most of this information, aside from brief forays into manuscript holdings in Vancouver, Saint John, and London, Ontario, has been garnered on site in the Ottawa area.

Beyond these rather cursory observations on my part, in terms of archival dimensions there is little else to report. Taylor's use of archival sources is comprehensive and thorough, although there is little offered here that is either innovative or ground-breaking. I should add that the book includes an index, a fine collection of footnotes and a very useful bibliography. In the end, the study represents a much needed and much appreciated entrée into a subject area that has long been ignored and offers other researchers, students, and scholars a doorway from which to launch other equally important studies.

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**The Administration of Dominion Lands, 1870-1930.** KIRK N. LAMBRECHT. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1991. x, 405 p. ISBN 0-88977-049-2 \$40.00 (pa.)

This unique work is a comprehensive reference to the laws passed by the federal government in its early administration of the lands that today constitute the western provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta; the Peace River Block and the Railway Belt of British Columbia; and the Yukon Territory.

The study is broadly divided into three main components. The first part serves as a brief introduction to the legislation and regulations adopted by the Canadian government over the sixty-year period from 1870 to 1930. It discusses federal land use policy under fourteen separate subject headings, such as settlement, school lands, Hudson's Bay Company lands, forestry and ranching. This eighty-page essay establishes the historical context for the laws and regulations that are discussed by Lambrecht in subsequent sections of this work.

The essay is by no means a comprehensive analysis of federal policy. For such a study, readers must still refer to Chester Martin's *Dominion Lands Policy*. It does, however, feature an excellent bibliography of secondary sources and a selected list of the major federal statutes that applied to Dominion lands administration. I have found both of these sections to be very useful, even though the latter is somewhat incomplete. For example, I was unable to find reference to the statutes that passed responsibility for the management of natural resources from the federal government to the western provinces (20-21 Geo. V, c. 13, 1930, for Manitoba; 20-21 Geo. V, c. 37, 1930, for the Peace River Block and the Railway Belt in British Columbia; 20-21 Geo. V, c. 3, 1930, for Alberta; and 20-21 Geo. V, c. 41, 1930, for Saskatchewan). These acts were