

While the authors say that they “have taken great pains to ensure the accuracy of the book,” it is obvious that more research is needed into Miner’s escape from the B.C. Penitentiary. As for Miner’s crimes committed in the United States, without exhaustive research it is difficult to determine how accurately they are covered by Dugan and Boesenecker.

In handling Miner’s escape from the B.C. Penitentiary, the authors relied extensively on newspaper accounts of parliamentary debates rather than on *Hansard*. In particular, they fail to mention the crucial debate of 18 May 1909 when the Minister of Justice discussed Dawson’s report on Miner’s escape in detail. This oversight seems rather peculiar because the endnotes and bibliography indicate that the work is generally well researched. It is based on prison records, court documents, correspondence, as well as books, articles, newspapers and some interviews.

The layout of *The Grey Fox* is well done. The book contains a generous array of carefully selected photographs and illustrations of Miner and the institutions in which he was held. A comprehensive index is included, along with maps tracing Miner’s movements through various American states and in British Columbia.

Overall, *The Grey Fox* is a comprehensive portrayal of a bad man of the American “Wild West” who is remembered in the United States and Canada for his many daring exploits. It also covers conditions in various prisons which to Miner were a second home. In Miner, the authors had to deal with an incorrigible liar who liked to tell tall tales and make misleading statements about himself. They probably had a hard time separating fact from fiction. In spite of the difficulties in finding accurate accounts, they have succeeded, for the most part, in writing an interesting and reliable biography.

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The Capital Years: Niagara-on-the-Lake, 1792-1796. RICHARD MERRITT, NANCY BUTLER, and MICHAEL POWER, eds. Toronto and Oxford: The Niagara Historical Society, Dundurn Press, 1991. 256 p. ISBN 1-55002-149-4 \$19.95.

On 10 December 1990, Rosario Marchese, then the new Ontario Minister of Culture and Communications, delivered a speech to his staff. He spoke of the provincial anniversaries which his Liberal predecessors had dubbed as Ontario’s “Heritage Years.” He noted:

I would like to work with you to mark [the] heritage years with a series of special events, programmes, projects, and productions proposed to us, and produced by various communities that will bring out the richness and complexities of our own legacies....

One of the anniversaries to be marked was the bicentennial of the first sitting of the provincial legislature in 1792. *The Capital Years* was written in honour of that occasion, and deals with the period in which Neward (present-day Niagara-on-the-Lake) functioned as the first capital of the new province of Upper Canada. While the Government of Ontario failed miserably to highlight this and other anniversaries, the Niagara Historical Society has succeeded admirably in marking their celebration with this effort.

Nine essays trace aspects of urban development, politics and patronage, military life, religion, clothing, food, household goods, inns and taverns, and health. Dealing with this five-year period so intensely, the authors treat their single efforts expertly and thus emerges a collective image of a frontier community at a very exciting time in Ontario's history. The articles generally speaking either deal with specific information on the subject or are generic, giving extrapolations of what late-eighteenth-century Upper Canada was like and therefore the likely historical setting for the first capital.

J.M.S. Careless sets the perspective on looking at the Niagara region in his foreword. "Building a Town: Plans, Surveys, and the Early Years of Niagara-on-the-Lake" by Joy Ormsby addresses the difficulties in establishing something out of nothing in the wilderness. Bruce G. Wilson's earlier work on Robert Hamilton is reflected in "Patronage and Power: The Early Political Culture of the Niagara Peninsula," while Brian Leigh Dunnigan gives a reasonably thorough discussion in "Military Life at Niagara, 1792-1796." Michael Power traces the development of various denominations in "Religion and Community." Social history is detailed rather well in the next four articles: "Muslin Gowns and Moccasins" by Elizabeth Severin, Dorothy Duncan's "Vic-tuals and Viands in the New Province of Upper Canada," "At Home in Early Niagara Township" by Peter Moogk, and Richard D. Merritt's "Early Inns and Taverns: Accommodation, Fellowship, and Good Cheer." The text finishes with "Health, Disease, and Treatment in Early Upper Canada" by Charles G. Roland. Useful notes on contributors and editors and a good index complete the work.

The layout of the book is pleasing. Of particular note to the Canadian heritage community as a whole are the illustrations for this volume. Not limited to maps and documents, they include contemporary or actual Neward artefacts. Furniture, tableware, clothing, maps, surveys, architectural plans, documents, sketches, portraits and engravings all work well together. The added illustrative strength of both kinds of moveable cultural properties reinforces the necessity of understanding the interdependence of museums, historic sites, and archives in the preservation and interpretation of our heritage.

Notes at the close of the various articles show the impact of a lengthy process of documentary editing, going back past the turn of the century. Many of the volumes used were originally published by the Niagara Historical Society itself. Any student of the subject knows the work, for example, of General E.A. Cruikshank as an editor.

The Capital Years is essentially good local history. It deals with a Loyalist settlement's brief time in the rising sun of what would become Ontario. One of the unfortunate aspects of the work is that it is somewhat introspective; the relationship of the capital to the rest of the new province is not fully explored. There is a limit to the reader's interest in Niagara Township surveys. Some of the articles more closely associated with social history mitigate against this criticism by bringing in wider eighteenth- and nineteenth-century themes as they applied to Upper Canada in general. Others, such as Michael Power's "Religion and Community," examine linkages which are often overlooked or oversimplified.

It is ironic that this work stands virtually alone as a well-produced volume celebrating one of the non-existent "Heritage Years" anniversaries — ironic because this is exactly the group which finds least government favour in today's multicultural heritage milieu, and yet it is the group which has the energy to complete this work.

The final analysis of this book is relatively simple. If you like Loyalist and late-eighteenth-century history, you will like it. If the reader wants to find out more about late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Upper Canadian social history, there are some good pieces here. For those who do not like this time period or subject, the work will not appeal, for there is not a whole lot new here, except the configuration which gives the book its depth. Then again, *The Capital Years* is not Loyalist apologetics but a Niagara celebration.

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