

They could exert influence in other ways, such as hosting “at-homes” and organizing voluntary associations. For example, CPR manager Henry Abbott and his wife Margaret “quickly assumed the mantle of social leadership” (p. 70), with Henry founding the Vancouver Club and serving as president of the Boating Club and the Lawn Tennis Club, and Margaret acting as hostess to their friends and distinguished visitors.

After analyzing the wealthy business and professional class, McDonald turns to the artisan “or moderately well-to-do” class and, finally, to “the immigrant section,” although as he points out, the lives of less wealthy and prominent members of society were not as well documented and can therefore be more difficult to trace. Fortunately, photographs from the City Archives help provide a visual record of Vancouver’s work force, including bakers, longshoremen, telephone operators, loggers, fishermen, and construction labourers. These photographs speak volumes about the living and working conditions of Vancouver’s less fortunate inhabitants. I found it strange, however, that McDonald discusses native people in the chapter on immigrants! To be fair, he mentions them earlier in the book as well, and it could be that in “The Immigrant Section” he is comparing native people to non-British immigrants in terms of how they were all marginalized by white society.

McDonald also draws on Vancouver Police Department Prisoners’ Record Books, which “often tell more about perceptions of law and order at any given point than they do about actual criminal behaviour” (p. 227). They also reveal a certain “social anxiety,” for example, “periodic outbursts of concern” over such issues as prostitution; McDonald astutely observes that arrests made during these “outbursts” are “better described as ‘arrest waves’ than ‘crime waves’”. As such they usefully illustrate social attitudes” (p. 227).

McDonald is a good writer, although his prose style tends to be rather dense at times; there is much to think about here, and his book is worth a close examination. *Making Vancouver* is a welcome addition to the study of this west-coast, uniquely Canadian city.

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Working Light: The Wandering Life of Photographer Edith S. Watson. FRANCES ROONEY. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1996, 123 p. ISBN 0-88629-273-5.

I sat down to review Frances Rooney’s *Working Light: The Wandering Life of Photographer Edith S. Watson* with considerable interest, having never before heard of this turn-of-the-century woman photographer. According to the summary on the front end flap of the book, Watson travelled across Canada from

the 1890s to the 1930s photographing labourers and rural workers, particularly women. In the company of her partner in life and work, Victoria Hayward, Watson recorded images from Newfoundland to British Columbia. The summary promised that the book would "raise as many questions as it answers for social, photographic and feminist historians." It also claimed that *Working Light* is Watson's story. It was with these expectations in mind that I approached Rooney's book.

Working Light is divided into approximately one-third text and two-thirds photographs. The text includes a preface and introductory essay, with an additional page devoted to a discussion of the photographs which follow. The images reproduced in the photographic portion of the book are all Canadian, despite Watson's other travels, which took her to most of the eastern United States, Nassau and the Bahamas, Bermuda, Cuba, Mexico, the Yucatan, and Europe. Interspersed throughout the text are additional illustrations, mainly of Watson and her family, and of other trips Watson took with Hayward. All of the photographs reproduced in this book include brief captions, taken largely from inscriptions that Watson or Hayward included with the images. A selected bibliography occupies the last three pages of the book.

In her preface, which is nearly a quarter the size of her introductory essay, Rooney discusses the trials and tribulations she encountered while attempting to gather information on Edith S. Watson. Having an enthusiasm for research and history in art, I read this portion of the book with great interest. Rooney's account of the geographical and distant familial connections she shared with Watson, and the coincidental incidents she encountered throughout her research since 1977, proved intriguing. Nevertheless, when I began reading the introductory essay, I felt as if I were starting a completely separate book. Understandably, the tone of a preface will differ from the main text. Yet I found Rooney's discussion of her research easier to connect with than the information she provides in the essay. Undeniably, she presents a very factual, detailed, and interesting biography of Watson in this latter section. Unfortunately, however, Rooney devotes very little time to expanding upon, and thereby generating discussion about, the Canadian photographs and the reasons why Watson photographed the subject matter that she did, particularly her supposed focus on women.

I was surprised to find that, throughout the book, Rooney neglects to provide clear references. Although she paraphrases, and sometimes even quotes verbatim, information found in newspaper articles, diaries, etc., in her introductory essay, she does not footnote her sources. Her selected bibliography lists a number of textual sources on women in photography, social histories for the time period in question, and books and articles relating to various places in and topics about Canada, but most are general studies. Rooney does include two short paragraphs at the beginning of the bibliography describing what the Watson collection encompasses and also lists, by title only, the newspapers and

magazines she consulted. She neglects, however, to reveal where the Watson material now resides. According to the preface, when Rooney first encountered the collection in 1981, it was in the possession of a Watson relative. Whether the material remains in the same hands is not indicated. As for the newspaper and magazine articles, Rooney only provides the years which she consulted (sometimes encompassing nearly forty years), instead of exact dates. Finally, and notably, although some of Watson's Canadian photographs were included in the 1983 exhibition *Rediscovery: Canadian Women Photographers, 1841-1941*, and were listed in the exhibition catalogue as "modern silver prints" from the "Frances Rooney Collection" (London: London Regional Art Gallery, 1983, p. 32), Rooney does not mention this important source in her book. By failing to provide clear references, Rooney has made further study on Watson much more difficult for the researcher.

Ninety-six of Watson's Canadian images are reproduced in the photographic portion of this book, and an additional twenty-one photographs illustrate the preface and introductory essay. Gathered together at the end of the book without any text, save for their inscriptions, the ninety-six images led me on a journey across Canada from the east coast to the west, divided primarily by province, and covering trips which span the 1890s to the 1920s. Rooney states that the photographs were reproduced from Watson's personal albums and emphasizes that each image was "scanned and digitally processed without additional manipulation so as to preserve its original character, including flaws, as faithfully as possible" (p. 24). However, she neither includes dimensions for the images, nor mentions whether they have been enlarged or reduced. Furthermore, having examined the three (Rooney incorrectly notes only two) original Watson albums of her 1913 trip to Newfoundland and Labrador held by the National Archives of Canada, and having perused Watson and Hayward's publication *Romantic Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1922), I made some additional discoveries. Rooney fails to note which of those photographs in *Working Light* also appear in *Romantic Canada*. In comparison with the images in the 1922 publication and similar photographs found in the original 1913 albums, all of the reproductions in Rooney's book are enlarged, lack tonal range, and are cropped differently. Indeed, the three 1913 albums contain photographs that are all approximately one-fifth the size of the reproductions found in *Working Light*. Rooney claims that "what was needed was a way for them [the photographs] to tell their own tale" (p. viii). Yet, by grouping the images by province as Watson and Hayward did in their publication, Rooney seems to have created another *Romantic Canada*, rather than allowing the images to speak for themselves, as Watson may have wished, by organizing according to album order. Furthermore, having chosen ninety-six images out of a possible 1700 extant Canadian photographs without revealing her selection process, and appearing to have changed their dimensions for this publication, Rooney has, in point of fact, imposed her own narrative on the images. Perhaps

Watson designed her personal Canadian albums to tell a story different from the one she presents in *Romantic Canada*. Rooney also claims that the images were difficult to date. Yet of the photographs in both the *Rediscovery* catalogue and *Working Light*, exact dates are provided in the former publication, but left out in the latter. Apart from a brief and general treatment of Watson's place in photography in her time, as well as some commentary on her compositional techniques, there is little critical examination of the images, save for the one page that discusses minor details about the photographs.

Despite all of the valuable factual information *Working Light* provides, it did not raise, for me, the questions and answers that the front end flap summary promised. Although in *Working Light* Rooney claims to want to encourage further research on Watson, this may prove difficult for other researchers because of a lack of clear references. By neglecting to discuss the photographs critically, by changing their size for publication, and by imposing an order and unknown selection process on a small number of Watson's Canadian images, Rooney presents only part of Watson's story. Rooney explains that she had originally planned to make the book "a full-length biography with twelve photographs," but that she settled instead on its current format because "a book about Edith—especially the first book—that is all tell and almost no show would clearly be going about the whole thing backwards" (p. viii). I would have preferred greater insight into a more select group of photographs. Such a book would have allowed readers to come to know Watson in context. This book may be good as a popular biography, but Rooney's statement that her book is not as "academic" as other books (p. viii) does not excuse the fact that she has made it difficult, even for a member of the general public, to get a full picture of Edith Watson, her life, and her work. Rooney claims that the format she chose for the book was a "tradeoff" that was "worth it" (p. viii). Ultimately, I question whether it was worth it for the reader or for the legacy of Edith S. Watson.

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Guide to Oral History Collections in Canada/Guide des fonds d'histoire orale au Canada. NORMAND FORTIER. Ottawa: Canadian Oral History Association/Société canadienne d'histoire orale, 1993. Text in English and French. 402 p. Index. ISBN 0-9697895-1-3.

Samuel Johnson, arguing the case for oral history as a way of documenting the 1745 rebellion, once stated, "You are to consider, all history was at first oral." Events documented by oral history would often be documented less thoroughly, if at all, in other forms. This is especially true of aboriginal cultures. To