

This might not be a book to read from cover to cover like a novel, but it is a book that the reader can open at any section and immediately become immersed in the stories of the ordinary people who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company, the Archives of which contains an unending supply of material for interpretation and publication.

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**First Drafts: Eyewitness Accounts from Canada's Past.** J.L. GRANATSTEIN and NORMAN HILLMER. Toronto: Thomas Allen Publishers, 2002. 486 p. ISBN 0-88762-113-9.

Imagine you were to comb randomly through archives and libraries across Canada, pulling out entertaining and easily accessible diary entries, letters, and articles depicting a wide variety of events in Canadian history. Combine these pieces into one weighty volume, and the product of your efforts might resemble J.L. Granatstein and Norman Hillmer's *First Drafts: Eyewitness Accounts From Canada's Past*. Coming in at just under 500 pages, the authors have provided first-hand accounts of various historical events in both pre- and post-Confederation Canada from as early as 1497 to as recent as 2002, covering topics as diverse as dinner fare in a lumber camp and the 1972 Canada-USSR hockey series.

Unlike so many books published in the archival and historical sphere, this particular volume seems to be intended at least partly for the general population. Arranged chronologically rather than thematically, one does not need prior historical knowledge in order to enjoy and appreciate the articles, letters, and journal excerpts found within this book. Capitalizing on the public thirst for history from a more personal perspective, the authors claim they were "drawn to eyewitness records of events, the first drafts of history" (p. 3). As a consequence, many of the pieces are journalistic accounts taken from newspapers around the country. The style of this type of writing provides the reader with a short, concise and interesting perspective on any particular event. Archival sources such as letters and journals, written with a different purpose, still provide readers with a very personal viewpoint that allows them to connect with moments and events in history in a way other texts generally do not permit.

Eyewitness accounts, however, cannot be taken solely at face value; the context of creation interacts with what has been written to give a more complete perspective. Therefore, for each of these first-hand accounts, it is necessary to know when it was created, for what purpose, and by whom. At archival repositories, researchers are always advised to do secondary research first in

order to establish the wider context of an event or issue. Once they have this bigger picture in mind, pertinent archival documents can be read and given a certain significance based on the author and content. Much like assembling a puzzle, it helps to look at a picture of what the puzzle will look like before you start trying to put the pieces together. *First Drafts* has, in essence, given readers a bag of puzzle pieces with no picture. While many accounts have a very brief sentence providing some context, the majority have no contextual information about the author, leaving the reader to do further research to determine the surrounding events, key players, and the place of the author.

While the absence of contextual information restricts the usefulness of this book for research purposes, the limits imposed on its breadth and scope serve to give only a very partial view of Canada's past. Granted, the authors state that their intention was not to note every important event in Canadian life, nor to judge what was or is important (p. 5). However, obviously by making decisions about which sources will be included in this collection, the editors give significance to particular events and people, without making clear what criteria were used to decide what items would be included in *First Drafts*. A chronological arrangement such as this one does not build any links among documents, and on the whole it lacks a sense of cohesiveness, feeling instead like a random collection of information with no real message. Restricting the sources to first-hand accounts also limits the reader to reading only about those people and events that merited a written account at a given point in time. This eliminates the perspectives of many people who, for a variety of reasons, were not included in an analysis of society or did not participate actively in written culture, for example, third-party representations of Canada's aboriginal peoples rather than an "eyewitness account."

Another major issue involves the origin of the sources themselves, more specifically where the authors located each piece. Articles written by journalists came from a wide variety of newspapers, ranging from the *Toronto Daily Star* and *Ottawa Citizen* to the *Bracebridge Gazette*. Archival sources also came from many locations, but oddly enough, only a few were actual archival repositories; the majority of archival letters, journals, and musings were found in secondary sources and collections. Of a total of 247 pieces, only thirty were cited as being originally located in archival repositories. The remainder were either newspaper articles or archival sources already published and the original archival repository not cited. It is unfortunate that this book relies so heavily on documents already located and made known by other researchers, as it seems that more primary research in Canadian archives could have been done. As all archivists are aware, each collection contains documents that continually go unnoticed by researchers but that could be appreciated by both scholars and those outside academia. The use of archival sources culled mostly from books found in the library prevents Canadians from discovering previously unknown sources that could potentially shed new and interesting light on old subjects.

After some 465 pages of documents, we are presented with a bibliography of sorts entitled “Copyright Acknowledgments.” For any publication, a bibliography is an integral part that gives credibility and authority to what is written. A good bibliography is well organized and allows the sources to be easily identified with valid citations. Unfortunately this is not the case for *First Drafts*; the “copyright acknowledgments” is a single continuous paragraph covering twelve pages, separating the source of each individual document from the next citation only with a semi-colon. It is not divided into sections (thereby reflecting the general structure of the book) and no page numbers are given that would indicate where the documents are located in the book. Using the bibliography is an exasperating exercise that is compounded by the realization that the actual citations are often incomplete. Well known among archivists is the singular frustration of attempting to locate a document without benefit of collection title, series, or file references. This will be the experience of many researchers and archivists when it comes time to look at some of these *First Drafts* documents again. For example, for archival material there is no record group (RG) or manuscript group (MG) number, only the title of the collection. No series, file numbers, or volume references are provided. For those documents that were located through a Web site, the address is provided only in some cases, otherwise leaving the reader to find this information on their own.

So what is the purpose of this book? Given the scope it covers (hundreds of years of history) and the number of documents it contains, it obviously is not trying to present a comprehensive view of Canadian history, nor can it be considered a serious research tool because of its structure and the flawed nature of its citations. It does, however, present archival sources in an appealing way to a population that most likely perceives of archives as dusty and dark and practically useless. As more archives focus much of their efforts on accessibility, books such as *First Drafts* can showcase our documentary treasures while at the same time making history more interesting to those other than archivists and academics, without sacrificing the needs of any audience.

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**The National Gallery of Canada: Ideas Art Architecture.** DOUGLAS ORD. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2003. 464 p. ISBN 0-77352-509-2.

I do not quite know what to say about this publication. Initially, when asked to review it, I suggested that others with a background in architecture or museum studies could do it more justice. After I did agree, I struggled to make it