

offices, and other resource centres across Canada; a guide to materials available on microfilm for loan or purchase; and a commentary on access restrictions on records relating to Indian history and claims. McCardle explains in detail current terms of access to government-controlled information and speculates on the probable impact on native research of the Access to Information and Privacy Acts. She appears to be sceptical as regards the new legislation's ability to facilitate native claims research. One hopes that her misgivings are ill-founded, but final judgement on this point can only be made after the legislation has been tested.

Archivists can only hope that *Indian History and Claims: A Research Handbook* will be carefully read in research institutions and native organizations. That should prove a boon to archivists because they can be of much greater assistance to informed and confident researchers. At the same time, the *Handbook* has another and possibly unsettling message for the archivist. The considerable attention McCardle pays to the workings and peculiarities of archives and archival collections raises important questions. Why haven't archivists already described these records in published inventories? Why aren't more archivists preparing comprehensive guides to collections which would not only provide the researcher with the information required to locate records, but also a clear understanding of the historical context of their creation and their relationship to complementary sources?

The *Handbook* was not prepared in order to assist archivists or stimulate thought on the workings of the profession. The test of its value lies in the answers to two questions which the author poses. Will it assist and stimulate the investigation of the history of native peoples in Canada? The answer is yes. Will it help in the difficult business of resolving Indian claims? Here a more guarded reply is in order. The *Handbook* will certainly aid in the preparation of comprehensive, well-researched reports. Unfortunately, in the politically-charged atmosphere of native claims resolution, that is not always sufficient to produce a solution satisfactory to all parties.

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A Guide to the Study of Manitoba Local History. GERALD FRIESEN and BARRY POTYANDI. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1981. viii, 182 p. ISBN 088755 605 1 \$4.95 pa.

A Guide to the Study of Manitoba Local History is a welcome addition to the burgeoning field of local heritage studies. Gerald Friesen and Barry Potyandi provide Manitobans with much-needed information about a wide variety of sources. Practical advice, although too often prescriptive, is given to various groups, but especially to local committees forging ahead with community histories. The bibliography gives a balanced introduction to secondary sources, and the guide to libraries and archives in Manitoba provides useful direction in spite of entries which tend to be too brief.

Local historians in Manitoba are cautioned not to attempt any independent archaeological excavations without seeking expert advice. It is argued that since analysis of prehistoric remains requires complex knowledge and is governed by legal

restraints, the Provincial Archaeologist should be consulted before any action is taken.

No such caveat is given to those eager to unearth archival sources. Witness the condition of records in Manitoba court houses where we learn that most court case files “have never been organized for the use of research students.” The local history buff is not warned that sorting court records into convenient order for research purposes may do irreparable harm to the documentary evidence of the original court function. The message that seeps from between the lines of the *Guide* is that such records are significant primarily because of their utility as project sources, and not their intrinsic value to the local community. Although the authors acknowledge the importance of examining local sources for a better understanding of our place in society, they rarely reveal the original purpose or current legal relevance of the many records described.

There are other difficulties too. Chapters two through thirteen have specific thematic headings such as: “Agriculture,” “Education,” “Population Studies,” and “Business.” Each chapter has a brief introductory survey of each theme followed by sections on approaches to these themes and supporting sources. An array of sources, which have not been separated into helpful components, confronts the reader. Although many original records are noted, the analysis of much of the material surveyed both within and without archival repositories appears incomplete. For example, the authors emphasize that case records from individual courts are highly valuable for the study of the legal profession. However, there is no description of the various levels of judicial jurisdiction, the diverse categories of cases — Civil, Criminal, Surrogate, and Divorce — or their relative value for understanding local society. Surely substantial information on family composition, social standards of the day, economic conditions, and business standings may be gleaned from estate files. Surrogate Court records alone are a solid base for investigating the development of local business activity, demographic variations, and legal matters, but they are dealt with in a superficial manner in the “Social Studies” chapter. In another vein, there is a recommendation that school attendance registers may be employed to ascertain the relationship between student attendance, ethnicity, and income levels. Again, a number of important relationships are not revealed, such as those pointing to incidence of infectious disease and farm work requirements. Completely absent, also, are references to the additional entries which may be found in the registers — teaching plans, lists of parents, and trustees’ annual reports.

In direct contrast to these uneven chapters are the appendices which comprise the richest and most satisfying portion of the book. One example is sufficient to demonstrate what can be done to explain the nature of archival records. D.M. Loveridge’s essay on land and settlement records offers a refreshingly straightforward approach to both the history of settlement in Manitoba and the sources which may be consulted. A capsule account of settlement is followed by specific sections related to Dominion Land records, township cadastral maps, and land registry records. Loveridge also includes a superb glossary of land title terms. Archivists will undoubtedly appreciate his discussion of potentially useful municipal records for land research and the sensible advice to determine from the clerks or secretary-treasurers the function, completeness, and accuracy of the records. The target audience of local historians, teachers, and university students addressed in the introduction and pursued thereafter is here kept at arm’s length. The sources speak

for themselves. Anyone can “plug in,” enjoy the narrative, and abstract whatever information they need.

Had the rest of the *Guide* followed a similar approach, would a stronger base for the study of local history have been formed? The answer depends on the specific guidance sought by the reader. Much of the information found in the theme chapters could have been distilled into less confusing units and brought together in a short, concise research manual designed for local history committees. Conversely, building on the style of the appendices, an extensive analysis of the structure, evolution, and context of local sources could have been undertaken which would have enabled anyone to enter the complex world of everyday life. The search for a compromise between these two approaches inevitably results in fragmentation. An attempt is made to please several constituencies without satisfactorily assisting any one group. That is the *Guide's* major weakness.

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Vision of an Ordered Land: The Story of the Dominion Land Survey. J.G. MacGREGOR. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1981. xiii, 202 p. ISBN 0 88833 071 5 \$12.95 pa.

The Boundary Hunters: Surveying the 141st Meridian and the Alaskan Panhandle. LEWIS GREEN. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982. xii, 232 p. ISBN 0 7748 0150 6 \$18.95.

One of the most delightful descriptions of the process of boundary creation comes not from the deliberations of politicians or from the notebooks of surveyors, but from the pen of Spike Milligan in *Puckoon*. In this humorous tale of problems in Ireland, Milligan describes the antics of a group of British and Irish boundary commissioners as they struggle for control of a red pencil they were using to mark the Ulster boundary on the face of a map. Their resultant pulls and pushes produce a boundary running through the middle of a cemetery. It was then up to surveyors to demarcate the line on the ground and for the residents of Puckoon to live with a divided cemetery. This fictional account illustrates the two phases of boundary creation: the political and the practical. Looking at a map of Canada one takes for granted the lines that separate Canada from the United States, the lines that separate one province from another, and the lines that separate one township from another. There is an orderliness about these boundaries — a recognition that without them there would be chaos. But little thought is given to how they were determined and even less recognition is accorded the surveyors responsible for their demarcation on the ground. The two books under review attempt to examine how certain Canadian surveys were made and in the process highlight the contributions made by a heroic group of men — the surveyors of Canada.

Of the two, James MacGregor's *Vision of an Ordered Land* is the more general in scope in that it deals with the surveying of western and northern Canada between the years 1869 and approximately 1918. During that fifty-year period, the surveying of the vast prairies was accomplished by federal government and railway company surveyors. It is within the framework of this survey work that the orderly and planned settlement of western Canada took place. The rectangular survey system,