

seemed a “sad lot,” the result, he was told, of the “absence of an intelligent audience, the absence of the best books, or any knowledge of what they were.” Only Gwen Pharis Ringwood impressed him. He would no doubt be pleased to know that her papers are now in safekeeping at the University of Calgary. He is redeemed for this reviewer, however, by urging Scott “to keep [his] ... materials for deposit in one place.” And the days of government cultural largesse were still in the future. Its modern extent would no doubt surprise Scott, who wrote that it was “visionary” of the Canadian Authors Foundation “to think that the Govt is going to give us a grant”

The Pratt volume covers a much longer period and, since it is a fully developed biography, paints a more detailed picture of the man and his milieu. The writing is strong and elegant, with some nice touches of suspense. It is highly recommended to those who believe Canadian denotes dullness. Pratt is a picturesque character who created his own *persona*, by embellishment if he thought it necessary. The son of a frugal religious household, he could, nonetheless, flog homemade patent medicine to finance his studies or pawn his gold medal for “\$17 in cash to spend on a ‘glorious dinner’ ... for a ‘crew’ of recent emigrés from Newfoundland!” Fortunately for him and us, he flourished in days before the regimentation of universities. The tyranny of the mandatory doctorate in the minutiae of a single discipline had not yet arrived. Where now could a latter-day Pelham Edgar hire a clergyman-psychologist to teach English, particularly one of whom his office-mate, Douglas Bush, could recall, “I’m sure his classes were lively and illuminating in essential ways, though I don’t know that Ned’s hold on English Literature was ever very firm”? Indeed, it was unsure enough that the obliging Bush, newly graduated with an Honours B.A., allowed Pratt to beseege him with questions, pick his brains, and on occasion, borrow his lecture notes.

Anyone with an interest in Canadian literature will want the Brown-Scott letters on the shelf. The appeal of the Pratt volume is much wider. Anyone interested in Canadian culture will appreciate this lively biography of a colourful and talented poet.

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Arctic Ordeal: The Journal of John Richardson, Surgeon-Naturalist with Franklin, 1820-1822. C. STUART HOUSTON, ed. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1984. xxxiii, 349 p., illus. maps. ISBN 0773504184 \$29.95.

During the years 1819-22, Lieutenant John Franklin of the Royal Navy led an expedition through northern Canada to locate and explore the north coast of mainland North America. With him were two midshipmen, Robert Hood and George Back; a surgeon and natural historian, John Richardson; a seaman, John Hepburn; and a group of Canadian voyageurs. The journey ended in disappointment in terms of exploration and, ultimately, in tragedy. Only a short stretch of the coastline was explored, between the Coppermine River and the Kent Peninsula, and, during the overland return to base, eleven of the twenty members of Franklin’s party died of starvation and murder, amid rumours of cannibalism.

For just over 150 years, the only substantial source of information on this extraordinary expedition was Franklin’s own rather ponderous *Narrative of a journey to*

the shores of the polar sea (London: John Murray, 1823). Then, in 1974, C. Stuart Houston shed some welcome new light on the expedition with an edition of Robert Hood's journal, published under the title *To the Arctic by canoe 1819-21* (Montreal and London: Arctic Institute of North America and McGill-Queen's University Press). Hood was the unfortunate officer murdered in the desperate last stages of the expedition, and John Richardson played the role of executioner when the culprit was identified.

Stuart Houston has now done a further service to those interested in northern exploration by producing Richardson's journal of the expedition under the title *Arctic Ordeal*. This book is in some senses a sequel to Houston's earlier publication. Hood's journal tells us the story of the first part of the expedition, beginning with its outset on 23 May 1819, but ending on 15 September 1820, a little over a year before his death. Richardson's journal, now preserved in the libraries of the University of Illinois and the University of Saskatchewan, commences with the building of the expedition's final base, Fort Enterprise, on 21 August 1820 and takes the reader through to 19 December 1821 when the survivors finally reached safety. So the two journals overlap by only a few days; the reader can pass quite easily from one to the next.

Richardson's journal is quite matter-of-fact in its early stages, revealing little of the expedition's logistical difficulties on arrival at its northern base. Indeed, many early entries are terse and uninformative and for some days there is no entry at all. But, as the expedition progresses towards its climax — the journey down Coppermine River, the coastal exploration, and finally the long despairing trek back to base — entries become considerably more detailed, and the growing sense of anxiety, and ultimately of utter misery, comes across quite clearly.

Richardson seldom lost sight of his role as the expedition's natural historian, until he finally lost the strength to observe. The journal is laden with his scientific notes, even to the extent that the editor has chosen, probably wisely, to omit some of the longer and less valuable observations, thus helping to sustain the narrative. The many observations that remain are fully supplied with thoroughly researched footnotes, so the journal can be read both as an illuminating record of the work of a pioneering natural historian and as a dramatically unfolding tale of a remarkable expedition.

The work is exceptionally well edited. It has an informative introduction and a long concluding commentary which includes, among other things, a useful comparison between Richardson's journal and Franklin's narrative, remarks on Richardson's achievements as a scientist, and a valuable analysis of the last stages of the expedition, including the alleged incidents of murder and cannibalism. Disappointingly, the journal sheds little new light on those episodes, in which Richardson was burdened with the role of self-appointed judge and executioner. The editor can only speculate on what might really have happened and conclude that we shall never know the full truth about the darker side of the expedition.

The commentary is followed by detailed scientific appendices which include studies of Richardson's bird, mammal, fish, and geological observations. The editor could scarcely have been more thorough in his analysis of the journal. If there is one flaw in the whole work it affects the maps, which are so essential to such a complex story, but are very poorly reproduced.

Stuart Houston's contributions to our knowledge of this expedition have been of great value, but more is yet to follow. Houston himself is now at work editing George Back's

journals of the enterprise. And, at the same time, the Arctic Institute of North America in Calgary and the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, England, have joined forces to edit Franklin's own original journals and correspondence of the expedition, most of which are housed at the latter Institute. We may never learn the true story of the more unpleasant aspects of Franklin's First Land Expedition, but, within a few years, we may have as complete a record as can be hoped for.

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Mount Allison University: A History to 1963. Vol. I: 1843-1914; II: 1914-1963. JOHN G. REID. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984. I, xi, 391 p., II, 500 p. ISBN 0-8020-3396-2 (Vol. I), -3397-0 (Vol. II) \$37.50 ea.

The past decade has seen the publication of several histories of Canadian universities: C.M. Johnston on McMaster, the late Hilda Neatby on Queen's to 1917, F.W. Gibson's sequel taking Queen's to 1961, S.B. Frost on McGill, and Michael Hayden on the University of Saskatchewan. To this list we now add John G. Reid's two-volume history of Mount Allison. And what a fine addition it is! Reid has written a solid interpretive study which is probably our best example of university biography as an instrument for studying the development of higher education in this country.

It is so for several reasons. Reid draws on a wide range of college, church, and government records, private papers, and an extensive body of scholarly literature on the local and Maritime communities. This provides him with much information about the society upon which the ancillary academies and university depended for many of their staff members, most of their funding, nearly all their students, and, as important, their identity and sense of social responsibility. The writing is clear and well organized. Documentary evidence is smoothly integrated with carefully considered assessments of character and circumstance. These qualities, plus the range of subject matter, periodization, and continuity of themes through two large volumes, reflect Reid's mastery of both his sources and the difficult art of university biography. The result is a scrupulously researched, highly readable, thoughtful, and balanced study.

Reid pays due regard to the labours, for good or ill, of benefactors, leading trustees, presidents, and influential instructors while at the same time considering the external societal structures that both helped to build Mount Allison's institutions up to their 1905-1910 "golden age" and, in the decades after the Great War, imposed severe limits on the university's aspirations and attainments. In acknowledging these external foundations and constraints Reid moves his narrative significantly beyond the traditional bounds of his literary form. The happy result is, to use his words, "an endeavour in social and intellectual history."

Reid sees the Mount Allison story not as a chronicle of leading personalities (though there is a great deal on such men and women) and incremental growth (there is some of that too) but as a series of adaptations, some permanent, some not, to both the "internal dynamics" of change and those external forces referred to earlier. Thus, the commercial prosperity of the mid-nineteenth century, the demographic stagnation and out-migration that developed after the 1860s, the industrial expansion of the 1880s, the gradual decline