

Reynolds, A. "Siding 16": An Early History of Wetaskiwin to 1930. Wetaskiwin: Wetaskiwin Alberta - R.C.M.P. Centennial Committee, 1975. Pp. ix, 304. Maps, illustrations. \$10.40

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Ontario Boyce is no stranger; his Historic Hastings, published a few years ago, did much to bring alive the main themes of that county's history. Now he has done it again for Belleville's coming-of-age festivities in July, 1878. The resulting booklet is an attractively arranged combination of descriptive text and vintage photographs of a late Victorian municipality.

One welcome feature is the picture presented of the varied social institutions, civic organizations, and business establishments that flourished in early post-Confederation Belleville and suitably greeted its achievements of city status. Another--though more perhaps could have been made of this exercise--is the way in which such larger issues as economic nationalism, commercial depression, American-Canadian relations, Imperial sentiment, and the persistent struggle between Temperance and Booze are placed under a local microscope and related to the activities, attitudes, and prejudices of one Ontario urban community in 1878.

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In recent years a growing volume of literature has been produced concerning urban affairs in Alberta by academics and various government agencies. This literature has been augmented since 1967 by the publication of a number of local histories. These publications have contributed to the study of urban development through their accounts of specific institutions such as schools and churches in various urban settings. Contributions to urban history have also been made by local histories which have focused on specific regions in which urban growth is noted but not outlined in detail. Other histories, using a regional approach, have focused on one urban centre and its adjacent district. "Siding 16": An Early History of Wetaskiwin to 1930, published in 1975 by the Wetaskiwin Alberta-R.C.M.P. Centennial Committee belongs in this latter category.

This book, like the majority of local histories published, was the outgrowth of a community effort to pay tribute to "the people and events which made Wetaskiwin survive, grow, and establish itself on a firm and unyielding foundation." It was intended to be a comprehensive history of human settlement in Wetaskiwin and area from the prehistoric period through to the end of the 1920s. The text was prepared by A. Bert Reynolds based on the family histories which had been collected by Mrs. Daisy Lucas. Additional sources of information used in its preparation included the Wetaskiwin Times and a number of standard secondary works on Alberta and Western Canada such as J.G. MacGregor's History of Alberta

and G.F.G. Stanley's The Birth of Western Canada.

The emphasis of this book is on the people who came to, and the events that took place within, Wetaskiwin and district. It does not, therefore, focus in a systematic fashion. A clear impression of the characteristics of Wetaskiwin as an urban centre and its role in the Wetaskiwin region does not emerge. This book fails to view Wetaskiwin as a social, political, spatial or economic unit which developed a particular relationship with a hinterland and other urban communities in Alberta. Because of this lack of focus on general themes much material irrelevant to the development of Wetaskiwin as an urban centre is introduced while key topics such as the role of the Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company in the development of the townsite are not given adequate emphasis.

This fact is demonstrated by the first three chapters which discuss the legend of Wetaskiwin, Indian Peace Treaties, Father Lacombe, the Reverend John McDougall, the Rundle Mission, the Hobbema Mission and the Alberta Field Force. Since these subjects are discussed without any references to how they relate to the growth of urban community at what became Siding 16, they serve as a weak introduction to the arrival of the railway in 1892. Chapter four, which notes the establishment of Siding 16, gives few details as to the geography of the townsite or the individuals and/or companies which took the initiative to create a townsite.

Despite the problems associated with the organization of this book it has merit as a source for someone prepared to undertake a more systematic study of Wetaskiwin. The text was written by one individual with the result that there is a readable presentation of the material. Important developments concerning its economic growth such as the construction of the Fairbairn Mill in 1899 are noted. The book also provides background information on various prominent citizens such as L.T. Miquelon who opened one of the first stores at the townsite. Its information value has been enhanced by a number of maps and photographs. An index as well as appendices listing among other things early settlers and M.L.A.'s are also provided.

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Powell, J.M., editor. Urban and Industrial Australia. Melbourne:
Sorrett Publishing, 1974. Pp. 252.

"Australian society in the twentieth century has become increasingly urbanized and more heavily dependent upon secondary industry; during the same period, but particularly in the past few years, Australians have also