

HSTC Bulletin

Journal of the History of Canadian Science, Technology and Medicine
Revue d'histoire des sciences, des techniques et de la médecine au Canada

hstc
bulletin

Contact List

Volume 4, Number 3-4 (15-16), June 1980

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1081471ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1081471ar>

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Publisher(s)

HSTC Publications

ISSN

0228-0086 (print)

1918-7742 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

(1980). Contact List. *HSTC Bulletin*, 4(3-4), 14–15.

<https://doi.org/10.7202/1081471ar>

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SHEETS-PYENSON, Susan, Dept. Science and Human Affairs, Concordia University, Montréal, Québec; J.W. Dawson and 19th century Canadian science.

The Carleton Lecture Series
(continued from page 9)

The majority of speakers, being scientists, have spent most of their lives in working within the scientific tradition of Canada whether they realize it or not, and could speak from first-hand experiences. This factor gave the series its strength. Unfortunately, the nominal theme--the scientific tradition in Canada--was addressed by only a couple of the speakers. If the series demonstrated anything, it was that Canada does not have a scientific tradition or at least if it does, that tradition is irrelevant to most of the lecturers. It was very obvious that most of the speakers had little if any training in history and their attempts to convey the historic basis of their specialty to the audience was, for the most part, totally inadequate. Like many other gallant forays by scientific groups into the history of science, the Carleton series seems to manifest two hidden assumptions: (1) that because scientists often achieve consensus in scientific matters, they are likely to agree on other subjects like history, and (2) that someone who is a genuine expert in a scientific subject X is also likely to be a competent historian of X.

The Carleton lecture series, if continued under much stricter guidelines, could prove to be highly successful and not alienate a large proportion of its audience. The point must be made that the history of science has two components, history and science. This will mean that humanities and science departments must work in conjunction with one another and not in isolation.

--Donald Phillipson and Arnold Roos