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**Backhouse, Frances (with introduction by Pierre Berton).**  
*Women of the Klondike*. Vancouver: Whitecap, 1995. Pp. xi, 211.  
Black and white photographs. Maps. \$16.95 paper. ISBN  
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and operated urban services represented an important alternative to the bonusing of private enterprise through cash grants, loan guarantees and tax exemptions. Moreover, municipal enterprise enjoyed near unanimous support from all social classes in the two cities. Yet, Tronrud overlooks this important legacy of boosterism at the Lakehead. Abandoned industrial plants, huge debts, corrupt officials and the ruined dream of being the "Chicago of the North" are paraded before the reader instead.

Despite these shortcomings, Tronrud's exploration of the mechanics of boosting techniques is an important addition to the existing literature. Its impact, however, would have been greater if Tronrud had considered municipal enterprise. This is an unfortunate oversight, as the Lakehead provides an excellent example of how a philosophy of growth contributed to municipal innovation and community empowerment.

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**Backhouse, Frances (with introduction by Pierre Berton). *Women of the Klondike*. Vancouver: Whitecap, 1995. Pp. xi, 211. Black and white photographs. Maps. \$16.95 paper. ISBN 1-55110-375-3.**

With the centennial of the Klondike Gold Rush approaching in 1998, northern enthusiasts will welcome the long-overdue attention writers are giving Yukon history. Pierre Berton, in the foreword to *Women of the Klondike*, describes it as a "new spin on a familiar tale." In many ways it is exactly that. Like much Yukon history, this is a lively narrative chronicling the contributions of a variety of women who participated in the Klondike Gold Rush from 1896–1904.

Organized in a roughly chronological format, Backhouse takes us from the cities and farms of southern Canada and the United States to the gold fields, saloons, and mining cabins of the Klondike. Here we find one of the best overviews of the routes men and women stampeded travelled to the Klondike. Readers looking for a clear synopsis and description of the hazards and glories of the 'golden trail' would do well to begin here. Backhouse's descriptions are excellent, well written, and concise; her maps are uncomplicated and easy-to-read.

Photographs are an important feature of narrative histories. Most of the photographs in this book are familiar ones to archival researchers and the majority of the originals are clear, well-composed, and well-preserved. Yet in the review copy at least, a number of the photos are poorly reproduced and appear fuzzy, streaky, and grainy (the photo of Mary Rothweiler's Magnet Hotel on p. 72 and that of the women in a Klondike kitchen on p. 44 are good examples). This is a shame, since a number of these photographs have not been previously published and deserve much better presentation.

The greatest value in this work is that we hear these Klondike women in their own voices. Backhouse provides us with an excellent selection of quotations from women's diaries, published memoirs, and newspaper reports. This gives the book its most marketable quality: northern flavour. There is much here for readers who enjoy lively, personal stories.

*Women of the Klondike* is a series of anecdotes forming what almost amounts to a short biographical dictionary. Separated by line breaks in the text, the author presents brief biographies, accompanied by lengthy quotations by and about individual women who resided

in Dawson City and surrounds. Unfortunately for the reader, Backhouse rarely provides transitions that might link these individual women, and this makes her narrative rather choppy and segmented. While this technique makes the book easy to put down and pick up, on the other hand it prevents the reader from gaining a sense of the larger story of women's contributions to Klondike society.

By the end of *Women of the Klondike*, I wondered how these individual women's stories fit together. Did any of these people know one another or were they all separate, temporary sojourners in a city that knew no neighbourliness? How did these women perceive themselves and each other? We see a couple of middle-class women commenting on dance hall employees, and we see a number of women choosing husbands from the local population. We do not, however, have a sense of the city of Dawson as it developed, or of the social networks or interactions that might have mediated people's ability to meet one another socially and to select mates. We are left with the impression that each woman made her way "alone among thirty-thousand men" as the author describes Frances Dorley (p. 63), rather than as members of a developing community of men, women, and families.

Gender historians will wonder how this book differs from Melanie Mayer's *Women of the Klondike* published in 1989. The answer is that it is not altogether different. In fact, the two books have much in common, telling a number of the same stories and employing a similar format, yet curiously Backhouse does not cite Mayer or list her book in the bibliography.

That the author has not interpreted these women's stories or tried to fit them together will frustrate urban historians look-

ing for a sense of the growth and development of Dawson City. At the same time, the author's silence on these points allows us to see and hear the women in their own words and with little interference. We have to draw our own conclusions, of course, so the value of this work will depend on the ability of individual readers to make sense of the wealth of biographical information and to make their own connections.

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Raible, Chris. *Muddy York Mud: Scandal & Scurrility in Upper Canada*. Creemore, Ontario: Curiosity House, 1992. Pp. xii, 289. Black and White Photographs, Select Bibliography, Index. Paper.

Filey, Mike & Victor Russell. *From Horse Power to Horsepower: Toronto 1890–1930*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993. Pp. 112. Black and White Photographs. Paper.

White, Randall. *Too Good To Be True: Toronto in the 1920s*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993. Pp. xi, 244. Black and White Photographs, Bibliography, Index. Paper.

Duckworth, Helen. *A Taste of Toronto*. Willowdale, Ontario: Hounslow Press, 1983. Pp. 85. Illustrations, Index. Paper.

McGowan, Mark George & Brian P. Clarke. *Catholics at the "Gathering Place": Historical Essays on the Archdiocese of Toronto 1841–1991*. Toronto: The Canadian Catholic Historical Association (English Section), 1993. Pp. xxvii, 352. Maps, Tables, Select Bibliography, Endnotes, Index. Paper.

Each of these works should have something to interest a Toronto-phile, al-

though, with the exception of *Catholics at the Gathering Place*, these works are written for a general, non-academic audience. Insofar as there is a single theme common to these five books, it is that Toronto has always been composed of a number of different communities, each of which has shared its physical space, if not always its cultural space. Indeed, any attempt to conjure up a monocultural identity for the city and its inhabitants is only likely to succeed either at a very simplistic or abstract level, one far removed from the many perceptible communities and phenomena portrayed even in these works. For purposes of comparison, the best written history of Toronto appears in two books in the *History of Canadian Cities Series* sponsored by the History Division of the Canadian Museum of Civilization: *Toronto to 1918: An Illustrated History*, by J.M.S. Careless and *Toronto Since 1918* by James Lemon.<sup>1</sup> These two books are the standard against which other histories of Toronto produced for the general public can be evaluated. Critical to their success, Careless and Lemon relate the particular local history of Toronto to city's development in the Canadian urban network. It is the linking of a local and a general perspective that is the noticeable shortcoming in the selection of books to be reviewed here.

The focus in *Muddy York Mud: Scandal and Scurrility in Upper Canada* is on the cast of characters and events involved in the Types Riot of 1826 when William Lyon Mackenzie's printing press, on which he produced the *Colonial Advocate*, was vandalized by an angry mob of York citizens. Raible argues that the Types Riot was a manifestation of feelings of resentment and hostility held by prominent members of Upper Canadian society against William Lyon Mackenzie and his radical newspaper, and not a random act of mob violence. The events

and situations that occurred within the town of York are described in terms of the complexity of political and familial relationships in Upper Canada. We learn next to nothing about the way the town's development and its burgeoning political hegemony in Upper Canada shaped broader social developments. The assumption is that they did not. This book would be most useful for a view of elite political culture in Upper Canada in the mid to late 1820s, but it has very limited use for an urban historian, despite its engaging style with "...all the elements of a classic detective novel..." as York functions as merely the stage upon which the drama surrounding the Types Riot unfolds.<sup>2</sup> As urban history, it is the city as backdrop. That is, the general view is not linked to the local, however important the local view might have been.

Mike Filey and Victor Russell have pooled their talents to produce *From Horse Power to Horsepower – Toronto: 1890–1930*, an offering in the *Toronto and the Camera* series. This work traces the late-nineteenth century introduction of the automobile to Toronto's streets through to its firmly-established presence in the city in the 1930s using the photographs of William James, John H. Boyd, Arthur S. Goss and Frank W. Micklethwaite. The text accompanying the photographs in this work provides a brief general overview of the consequences of the introduction of the automobile into various aspects of the city's life. There are sections covering, for example, the T. Eaton Company store's conversion from horsedrawn delivery carts to a motorized fleet of delivery vehicles, the early growth of the city's taxi service and the evolution of public transportation in Toronto. The work introduces a number of major transportation themes, but for more depth, the student of Toronto would have to look elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> More problematic, the lack of an attempt to put Toronto's ex-