

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

HSTC Newsletter Bulletin d'information HSTC

Volume 6, numéro 2 (21), mai 1982

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/800140ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/800140ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

HSTC Publications

ISSN

0228-0086 (imprimé)

1918-7742 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce document

(1982). *HSTC Newsletter*. *HSTC Bulletin*, 6(2), 117–121.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/800140ar>

BULLETIN D'INFORMATION *HSTC* NEWSLETTER

CSTHA/AHSTC: ASSOCIATION NEWS

The response to the Kingston Conference questionnaire has been hearteningly heavy, with many written comments on the conference and on the Association's plans. The comments have been circulated to the members of the Executive. Three of the four Executive members were able to meet briefly in Ottawa and decided to begin planning sessions this autumn for Kingston Conference III, tentatively to be held in the autumn of 1983. For the next conference, the Executive will move to a devolved planning scheme to draw more members of the Association into the process. Those who have ideas for theme sessions should begin to think about them now. Some other items of interest concerning the CSTHA/AHSTC include:

- the proceedings of the 1981 Kingston Conference are now about halfway through the editorial process and we expect to have the book printed and shipped to conferees by the early autumn. Members who were not at Kingston will be able to order copies at the Association's 10% discount;

- the Association's Speakers' Bureau suggestion has received a good response and we shall press ahead with it when a computer programme has been developed for printing the directory. If any members failed to submit the form and would be interested in participating, they should contact the Secretary;

- the proposed federation of societies devoted to the history and philosophy of science, technology, mathematics and medicine, was officially launched at Ottawa in June. The federation is called 'Prisma' (Greek for prism) and is headed by an executive chaired by G.R. Paterson, President of the Canadian Society for History of Medicine. The President of CSTHA/AHSTC, Arnold Roos, is the Association's representative. Depending upon a grant from SSHRCC, the federation will obtain a part-time bilingual secretary at the University of Ottawa to handle our routine administration. If this is set in motion by September as planned, future mailings and dues notices will emanate from that office. For the near future, we do not foresee a rise in fees to finance the federation; the consensus at Ottawa was no grant, no federation;

- assuming the federation is viable, an early project will be a regional conference in the Atlantic provinces concerned with shipping history. Mr Nils Jannasch of the Maritime Museum in Halifax is the Association's representative to a regional planning group;

- the great expense of producing the full proceedings of our conferences has induced the Executive to think about alternatives. Our feeling is to produce a special issue of the *HSTC Bulletin* devoted to a selection of the best conference papers as chosen by an editorial committee. This format has been successfully used by the Canadian Historical Association in

its annual *Historical Papers* for many years. We should like to hear further thoughts on this subject.

- finally, the CSTHA/AHSTC dinner at Ottawa was a great success and we propose to organize them whenever possible during the Learned Societies. Some forty-five Canadianists and friends attended the Ottawa dinner -- a good opportunity to renew acquaintances and forge new ones.

CANADIAN PAPERS AT OTTAWA LEARNEDS

The following are abstracts of papers on Canadian topics read before the Canadian Society for History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Ottawa in June. Please note that the *Bulletin* cannot provide readers with copies of these papers; interested persons should contact the authors directly:

1) Chris DeBresson, Cooperative Research Unit on Science and Technology, Vancouver. 'Customized Product Innovation - The Bias of Technological Innovation in the Canadian Equipment Manufacturing Industry, 1945-1978.'

A systematic and representative survey of industrial innovations in post world war Canada yielded some 2,400 new or improved products and processes commercialized by some 800 firms. Most of these innovations and firms were unknown to the public, governments and all but specialists of specific industries. However, if these innovations remained custom made or small-batch produced, then one could not expect substantial industrial and economic benefits to ensue. This hypothesis was tested by a phone survey with 49 innovative firms in the equipment manufacturing sector and with 170 of their innovations. The presentation starts with the example of Bombardier's snowmobile technology before mass production of the Ski-Doo (1926-1959), and examines when the industrial and economic benefits started to be reaped by Bombardier for an innovation made in 1935. Then we examine the results of the survey, suggest possible effects of the custom bias, and speculate on some of the possible causes.

2) P. Enros, University of Toronto. 'Towards a History of Research and Development in Canada: Industrial Research in Ontario, 1900-1930.'

The talk outlines the chief events in the growth of industrial research in Ontario in the early twentieth century. While it notes the positions and activities of government and university, the paper's chief focus is on business and industry. Manufacturers' thoughts and activities in this area will be reviewed.

3) David A. Hounshell, The Hagley Museum.

I would expect to explore further the issues I raised in my *Journal of American History* commentary. I expect to explore more thoroughly the various disciplinary streams flowing into

the history of technology (history of science, economic history, social history), to treat in much greater depth the exemplary works of the past decade or two, and to define more clearly what I mean by 'the social history of technology,' which I see as the paramount goal for the history of technology in North America.

4) J. E. Kennedy, University of Saskatchewan. 'Early Developments of Interest in solar-Terrestrial Relations.'

An important area of astronomy which developed rapidly during the 19th century was a growing interest in solar-terrestrial relations. Discoveries such as Schwabe's observations leading to the announcement of the periodicity of sunspots; Lamont's work on magnetic variations with a period of comparable length; Sabine's study of magnetic storms and the concurrent appearance of unusual auroral disturbances; all marked the forging of a strong link between geomagnetic and detailed solar studies. The possible influence of sunspots on weather was also examined by other scientists. A review of the historical development of these important studies will be presented in this paper.

5) Robert V. V. Nicholls, Canadian Railroad Historical Association. 'The Pre-1836 Railways of British North America.'

On July 21st, 1836, Canada's first public railway, the Champlain and St. Lawrence Rail Road, was opened for service between Laprairie and St. John's. The inaugural train was hauled by the steam locomotive, *Dorchester*. However, for years prior to this historic event, private tramways were in operation in various parts of the country, viz. at Fortress Louisbourg to transport building material, at the coal mines of Cape Breton Island and Pictou County, up the face of Cap Diamond at Quebec City, in the woods near Kingsey in the Eastern Townships, at the Rideau Canal works, at the Niagara Escarpment, etc. The wagons were moved over these tramways by animal power. An attempt will be made for the first time to give an account in depth of these 'pre-historic railways,' which were of considerable importance though short lived.

6) W. E. Knowles Middleton, Apt. 2406, 2020 Haro Street, Vancouver, B.C. 'The R.C.A.F. and the National Research Council, 1929-1951.'

This paper deals with the co-operation between the Royal Canadian Air Force and the National Research Council during the period of the great financial depression and during and after the war. This co-operation involved mainly but not entirely the Division of Mechanical Engineering of the National Research Laboratories. The end of the period coincides with the formation of the National Aeronautical Establishment.

7) John Weiler, Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Ontario. 'Approaches to the Study of Canada's Industrial and Engineering Heritage.'

Canada has an industrial and engineering heritage well worth studying; but, with some notable exceptions, it has largely

been neglected by scholars and by official agencies responsible for the preservation and interpretation of our historical resources. The heritage significance of Canadian industrial and engineering achievements or failures is best revealed and understood through a threefold approach: (1) traditional historical research - written records and other documentary sources including graphic evidence in maps, photographs, etc.; (2) investigation of physical remains -- fixed-in-place objects in the field and moveable objects in museums, etc., involving, where appropriate, archaeological excavation, laboratory analysis (e.g. metallurgical specimens), photography, measured drawings or photogrammetric survey, and observation of working mechanisms, activities and processes; and (3) oral history - recording the memoirs and opinions of the men and women who have been involved. Examples are given of this threefold approach in a number of case studies.

MCMASTER HISTORY OF MEDICINE CONFERENCE

A wide-ranging and successful conference, Historical Perspectives on Canadian Medicine, was held at McMaster University's Health Sciences Centre on 3-5 June. The list of speakers and topics below suggests the extent of the study of Canadian medical history. There are tentative plans to publish the proceedings.

THE DISCOVERY OF INSULIN: Michael Bliss, 'The Aetiology of the Discovery of Insulin.'

MILITARY STRIFE AND MEDICAL HISTORY: Tom Brown, 'Shell Shock in the CEF 1914-18: Canadian Psychiatry in the Great War;' Eleanor McGarry, 'The Influence of War on a Clinical Research Unit.'

NEW FRANCE AND QUEBEC: Toby Gelfand, 'Medical Practitioners in New France;' Jacques Bernier, 'Les Practiciens de la Santé dans le District de Québec à la fin du XVIII^e Siècle.'

PEDIATRICS AND GYNECOLOGY IN ENGLISH CANADA: Linda Siegel, 'Child Health and Development in Canada 1780-1850;' Wendy Mitchinson, 'Causes of Disease in Women: The Case of Late 19th Century English Canada;' Suzann Buckley, 'The Ottawa Maternity Home in the 1930's.'

THE STRUGGLE TO CONTROL SMALLPOX: Barbara Tunis, 'Inoculation for Smallpox in the Province of Quebec: A Re-appraisal;' Barbara Craig, 'The Hungerford Smallpox Epidemic of 1884;' William Spaulding, 'Smallpox Control in the Ontario Wilderness 1870-1910.'

DIFFERENT RESPONSES TO DIFFERENT DISEASES: Charles Roland, '"Sunk Under the Taxation of Nature" Malaria in Upper Canada;' Katherine McCuaig, 'Tuberculosis: The Changing Concepts of the Disease in Canada, 1900-1950;' John Norris, '"Typhoid in the Rockies": Epidemiology in a Constrained Habitat, 1844-1939.'

FEAR AND PREJUDICE AS DRIVING FORCES: Janice Dickin McGinnis, 'Unclean, Unclean': Canadian Reactions to Lepers and Leprosy;' Geoffrey Bilson, 'Health and the Canadian Immigrant.'

THE PUBLIC AND PUBLIC HEALTH IN ONTARIO: Heather MacDougall, 'Enlightening the Public: the Views and Values of the Association of Executive Health Officers of Ontario, 1886-1910;' Mary Powell, 'Public Health Litigation in Ontario, 1844-1920.'

THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF MEDICINE: Robert Gidney and Wyn Millar, 'The Origins of Organized Medicine in Ontario, 1850-1869;' Dan McCaughey, 'The Politics of Medical Orthodoxy: Homeopathy, Eclecticism and the Medical Profession in Ontario, 1858-1874.'

THE ACTIVITIES OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS: Colin Howell, 'Elite Doctors and the Development of Scientific Medicine: The Medical Profession in the 19th Century Maritimes;' S.E.D. Shortt, '"Before the Age of Miracles": Impressions of General Practice.'

WILDER PENFIELD AS A BIOGRAPHICAL SUBJECT: William Feindel, 'The Contributions to Wilder Penfield and the Montreal Neurological Institute to Canadian Neurosciences.'

THESES/DISSERTATIONS

University of Manitoba: C. B. Johnson, 'A History of Mental Health Care in Manitoba: A Local Manifestation of an International Social Movement' (M.A. thesis)

HISTORY OF METEOROLOGY PROJECT

The Directorate of Meteorology and Oceanography of the Department of National Defence is seriously considering commissioning a history of the Canadian Forces Weather Service. The history would include the study of the separate weather services of the three branches of the armed forces from the World War II period to the unified service of the present. A contract is envisioned; anyone with an interest in this project is encouraged to contact Mr David Nowell, National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa K1A 0K2 or call him at (613) 995-4152.