

**Jackson, John H. *St. Catherines, Ontario: Its Early Years.*
Belleville, Ontario: Mika Publishing Co., 1976. Pp. 466.
Illustrations, maps. \$25.00**

Frederick H. Armstrong

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Professor Jackson, who is an applied geographer at Brock University, in St. Catharines and author of the recent Welland and the Welland Canal: The Canal By-Pass Project, here provides an accurate, clearly written account of the evolution of St. Catharines prior to 1850. Since the early years of the city and the development of its region naturally break into two sections, divided by the construction of the first Welland Canal in the late 1820s, the work is similarly organized in two sections surrounding the event. In both the author deals with the growth of the city and the opening of its hinterland, paying careful attention to their inter-relationship. The rivalry between St. Catharines and the original regional centre of Niagara-on-the-Lake, with the new town's gradual eclipsing of that village - although the capital was not to be moved for a few more years - forms one of the most interesting themes of the book.

As a geographer, Jackson, of course, concentrates on those aspects of the town's growth that are particularly related to his discipline: the topography of the eastern part of the Niagara peninsula, the methods of surveying, and the course of settlement are outlined in detail. Attention is also paid to the rise of the small peninsular hamlets in the St. Catharines neighbourhood, with the physical reasons for their location and the economic reasons for their expansion being well explained.

Within St. Catharines itself the reader is provided with detailed discussions of the formation of the irregular street patterns, the reasons for the location of its business district and social centres, and the changes that constantly took place as the town expanded. The types of buildings, their construction and the problems, such as fire protection, that accompanied the increasing density of the

town, are all well outlined. The evolution of the commercial network that evolved around St. Catharines is analyzed in particular detail, with good descriptions of its inter-relationships with its subsidiary centres, its rivalry with Niagara for their commerce and beyond the peninsula, the growing economic relations between St. Catharines and the more remote sources of manufactured goods and markets for its products.

In one way the title of the book is somewhat misleading, for the coverage is not as broad as "Its Early Years" would indicate. Possibly because he is a geographer, Jackson does not discuss the political problems that lay behind the economic expansion to any great extent. Considering that the father of the town was William Hamilton Merritt, and that his political acumen and dexterity in finegling a deal were as important to the rise of the city as its location, the lack of political analysis might have been made indicated. Without Merritt's activity there would probably have been a very different canal built. The story of municipal politics and the difficulties, or lack of difficulties, connected with incorporation are also passed over very quickly and little is said of the background of the railway building in the region, that was becoming a major topic all over the province from the mid-1830s whenever economic conditions were prosperous.

The work is profusely illustrated and the pictures well chosen, although with the older photographs inevitably some do not come out too well. There are many well selected maps. Unfortunately, however, the book has been published on very thick paper, with a heavy binding, which makes it rather bulky and about twice the necessary weight. These points aside Professor Jackson has given us a most useful study of the origin of one of Ontario's major cities, which will both be valuable for school reference and the general reader, as well as standing as an example to historians who too often slip over the

geographic factors which the author marshalls so well.

Frederick H. Armstrong
Department of History
University of Western Ontario

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Knight, David B. A Capital for Canada: Conflict and Compromise in the 19th Century. Chicago: The University of Chicago Department of Geography Research Paper 182, 1977. Pp. xvii, 341. Maps, illustrations. \$6.00.

Knight, David B. Choosing Canada's Capital: Jealousy and Friction in the 19th Century. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, The Carleton Library No. 105, 1977. Pp. xi, 228. Maps. \$4.95.

A geographer less sensitive to history than Professor Knight might have written a "scientifically" more compelling analysis of A Capital for Canada, but surely he would have written a less satisfying one. The science of Professor Knight's discipline seems to have been sacrificed in this volume to the somewhat more important consideration (at least in this reviewer's mind) of treating a subject in the round, though he has not slipped his disciplinary moorings completely. His book is thus open to criticism both for going too far as well as for not going far enough. The eclectic lives dangerously in this age of specialization.

Clinically put, A Capital for Canada - a Ph.D. dissertation published raw - studies the voting patterns of the Legislative Assembly (as mapped by constituency) over the Seat of Government Question that so wracked the Union of the Canadas for most of two decades in the 1840s and 1850s. It does much more than this, of course, in its provision of context, analysis and interpretation. But the central thrust of the book rests on this relationship between the question of a location for the capital city of the union (generating more than 200