

CHA Awards Its Most Prestigious Prizes

The most prestigious of all the prizes offered by the CHA, the **FRANCOIS-XAVIER GARNEAU MEDAL**, was awarded in Victoria at the CHA annual general meeting to **John M. Beattie** for his book *Crime and the Courts in England 1660-1800* (Princeton University Press, 1986). The Garneau Prize, which is awarded only every five years for the best book published by a Canadian historian in that period, consists of a specially-minted medal, a cash prize of \$2,000 and an honorary life membership in the CHA.

The Prize Committee, composed of H. Blair Neatby (chair), Allison Prentice, Michael Hayden, Jacques Mathieu and Jacques Barbier, lauded this book for its meticulous research. The study uses the records of assizes and quarter sessions for the county of Surrey and a selective sampling of the records for Sussex which are placed in their historical setting by use of the pamphlet literature and Beattie's knowledge of the historical literature and are brought to life by accounts of specific cases. Beattie's book engages a much larger literature, however, because he places his findings in the context of the evolution of crime and punishment. The Committee felt that "he has made a major contribution to our understanding of the changing pattern of violence in an era of urban growth, and of the social response to this violence".

The Garneau Prize Committee also felt that honourable mention should be made of two other outstanding books which "bring credit to our profession": **David Eltis**, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Oxford University Press, 1987) and **Allan Greer**, *Peasants, Lord and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes 1740-1840* (University of Toronto Press, 1985).

The CHA's **SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD PRIZE** for the best book published on the history of Canada in 1989 was awarded to **John English**, *Shadow of Heaven: The Life of Lester Pearson, Vol. I; 1897-1948* (Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1989). The prize carries with it a cash award of \$2,000. The Prize Committee, composed of Gérard Bouchard, Jennifer

Brown, Reginald Whitaker, André Lachance and Neil Mckinnon, said that the book was a model of biography, was excellently written and meticulously researched. "Professor English has got inside Lester Pearson in a way that no other study has succeeded in doing: Pearson emerges as a man both more complex and more understandable than he has from previous scholarship." The Committee commended two other books of outstanding merit with honourable mentions: **Eric W. Sager**, *Seafaring*

Labour: The Merchant Marine of Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914 (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989) and **William Westfall**, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

Judith Fingard was awarded the **HILDA NEATBY PRIZE** for the best scholarly article on women's history for "College, Career, and Community: Dalhousie

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The New History of the Environment

by Michel Glrard

When the Department of History, University of Ottawa, hosted an international, interdisciplinary colloquium on **The History of the Environment**, March 9, most of the forty or so participants were quite unprepared for the total re-evaluation of history and ecology that the presentations called for.

Professor Thomas Soderqvist (Roskilde, Denmark) set the tone; he divided the existing literature on the history of the environment into three categories. The first involves the study of the relationship between humans and their environment, including the study of environmental degradation. The second is the study of the ideas humans have had about their environment, including the history of the environmental movement, the history of environmentalists (those who since ancient times have focused on the negative impact of humans on the environment) and the history of environmental policies. The third field is limited to the study of the science of ecology born at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Soderqvist's research up until now has concentrated on the last two fields. In 1986 he published a history of natural history in Sweden: *The Ecologists: From Merry Naturalists to Saviours of the Nation*.

According to Soderqvist, the new history must transcend these three fields.

Historians, he argued, must put aside the notion that there is an objective viewpoint from which to judge history. Objective, scientific knowledge is a social product and not related to objective reality. So-called scientific facts are constantly subject to change. It is clear, for example, that the scientific recognition of an 'environmental crisis' did not exist until the science of ecology was created. He suggested that the 'new history' must use human intuition as its starting point, not the discoveries and theories of science. It must take into account aesthetics and myth which offer human responses to the environment and are in harmony with it.

Historian Douglas Weiner (University of Arizona) described how he teaches the history of the environment. The author of *Models of Nature: Ecology, Conservation and Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia* published in 1988, Weiner provided examples of scientific relativism from his studies on the American 'Dust Bowl' where it is possible to find completely opposed scientific theories on the origins of this disaster. Students, he said, must realize that the same is true in the field of ecology where scientific 'facts' are at odds with each other. He proposed the concept of 'provisional realities' in response to the problems raised by

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Handbook to Graduate Programmes Available

The *Handbook to Graduate Programmes in History in Canada* was launched at a reception hosted by the history graduate students of the University of Victoria during the CHA Annual Meeting held in Victoria, May 26-29.

Published by the CHA Graduate Students' Committee, the handbook contains descriptions of MA and PhD graduate programmes, lists of the faculty, of graduate courses, and information on tuition, financial aid and scholarships for all universities in Canada that have such programmes (with the exceptions of the University of Western Ontario, Université de Sherbrooke and the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi).

The 156 page guide will be sent to Graduate Chairs in all history departments and to university and college libraries. Student members of the

CHA who wish to receive a complimentary copy should write to the Graduate Students' Committee. For additional copies or more information contact the CHA Graduate Students' Committee, c/o 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, K1A 0N3, 613-233-7885.

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9. Results of the Elections

The election results were announced. Gail Cuthbert Brandt was elected as Vice-President, 1990-1991. Terry Copp and Barrie Ratcliffe were elected to the Nominations Committee. Fernande Roy, Gillian Thompson, Graeme Wynn and Brian Young were elected members of Council.

10. Turning Over the Presidency

After thanking members of Council, the executive, the Office Manager, Lyne St-Hilaire-Tardif, and the Assistant Treasurer, Marielle Campeau, for their hard work and assistance over his term, Jean-Claude Robert turned the presidency over to the incoming President, J.E. Rea. On behalf of the CHA the new President thanked the following people: Ian Macpherson for his organization of the whole Learned Societies conference; Patricia Roy and her assistants for their organization of this year's CHA meeting; the association's special guests at the meeting, Kerry Howe from New Zealand and John J. Stephan from Hawaii; all of the presenters, commentators and chair-people. He thanked the outgoing members of Council, Linda Kealey, Ann Condon, Peter Neary and Bruno Ramirez, and especially thanked the outgoing French Language Secretary, Jocelyne Cossette.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

José Igartua announced that on the following day all members of the CHA were invited to a demonstration of the HIDES computer software for the teaching of history.

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 18:15. (Dan Moore/Serge Bernier). Carried unanimously.

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Soderqvist in order to be able to understand the political strategies and ideologies of environmentalists, using the example of the Russian naturalist movement at the beginning of this century and its popularity among the revolutionary parties.

Sociologist Jean-Guy Vaillancourt (Université de Montréal) recounted the history of the natural sciences in Quebec. In his view, one can trace the history of ecological thought from the era of Abbé Provancher, the editor of the *Naturaliste Canadien* published at the end of the 1860s, up to Dansereau. In his view the science of ecology itself was not absolutely necessary to the discovery of grand principles governing ecological phenomena. Long-term careful observation of the environment can be enough. Vaillancourt has published (1984) his reflections in *Essais d'éco-sociologie*.

Finally, Morris Bermann (Seattle, Washington), using an anthropological interpretation of the environmental crisis, echoed some of the views of Professor Soderqvist. According to Bermann, author of *Coming to our Senses*, the rapport between humans and their environment experienced a major reorientation with the onset of agriculture. Since the domestication of plants and animals, individuals have had constantly diminishing contact with untamed nature. This has been followed by a 'desacralization' of nature, the development of a culture of domination over nature and the birth of feelings of crisis accentuated because humans now wish closer contact with nature. With Soderqvist, he felt that human 'nature' and intuition should be our guide in evaluating our relationship with nature, not the objectivity and rationality commonly associated with the social sciences.

All those at the colloquium, the third in series on 'Theory, Method and History in the '90s', were unanimous in the feeling that they had been enriched and provoked by the discussions. The colloquium was organized by Chad Gaffield with the assistance of Michel Girard and Lorne Hammond.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The CHA Newsletter is published quarterly by the Canadian Historical Association. Notices, letters, calls for papers and articles of two pages or less, double-spaced, are welcome on topics of interest to historians, preferably accompanied by a translation into the other official language. Deadlines for submissions of articles etc. are the following:

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November 30, 1990 for the 1991 Winter issue;

February 28, 1991 for the 1991 Spring issue;

May 30, 1991 for the 1991 Summer issue.

We reserve the right to edit submissions. Opinions expressed in articles etc. are those of the authors and not necessarily the CHA. Direct correspondence to: Newsletter, Canadian Historical Association, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N3.

Editors: Denise Rioux & John Lutz
Transcription: Lyne St-Hilaire-Tardif
Design and layout: Liz Combes