

GERALD TULCHINSKY, ed. — *To Preserve and Defend: Essays on Kingston in the Nineteenth Century*. Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976.

Like all books of essays, this volume on Kingston has both strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, the Kingston Historical Society — the sponsor of the book — and the editor must be congratulated for his efforts in producing an attractive and useful volume. The field of Canadian urban history would be immeasurably richer today if every major Canadian city had had a volume of this calibre and range published in celebration of a centennial or tercentenary. Yet, while *To Preserve and Defend* is much better than most anniversary volumes, it does have major weaknesses when viewed as urban history.

The collection of essays was intended as a continuation of Richard A. Preston's *Kingston Before the War of 1812*, published in 1959. *To Preserve and Defend* "seeks to explain and illustrate some of the most significant aspects of life in the city during the years when Kingston's special character was formed and became deeply imprinted on the structure and fabric of the community" (p. xi). To this end the volume contains an excellent introductory essay by the editor which sets the city in its nineteenth century framework and outlines both the reasons for Kingston's prosperity and for its ultimate failure to become a major Canadian metropolis. The essays of the eighteen contributors are arranged under five broad headings. The section on "The Shape of the City" includes studies of the character of Kingston, architecture, and the geographic setting. The second group of papers deals with Kingston's military role through discussions of Kingston and the defense of British North America, and the influence of RMC on city life. Under "Economic development" the three contributors examine John A. Macdonald and the Kingston business community, the Canadian Locomotive Company, and the failure of the Commercial Bank in the 1860s. The fourth heading is "Politics in Kingston" and the papers are concerned with John Macaulay, Hugh C. Thompson, Kingstonians in the second parliament, municipal government and politics from 1800 to 1850, and the Orange Order and the election of 1861. Finally, four essays deal with "Social Change" through discussions of the poor, immigrants, and the influences of the Anglican Church and Queen's University.

This categorization of the essays indicates the wide range of topics covered in the book but it does not present a very precise idea of the nature of the papers. This is best indicated by a categorization according to approach rather than subject. Of the eighteen essays, seven are biographical in one sense or another while seven fall under such categories as architectural, military, business, political, educational, social or religious history. Only four are urban history in the sense that they deal with the process or urbanization as opposed to discussing people, institutions, or events that happened to be located in or to have occurred in Kingston. The distinction is an important one. The first group of fourteen papers is what might loosely be termed local history; the essays are certain to be of interest to Kingstonians but to few others. The second group of four papers have significance beyond Kingston since they deal with various aspects of urbanization in a manner that invites comparison. While these essays carefully retain a sense of time and place, they also deal with the universal process of urbanization.

The first of these four papers is a discussion of "The Settlement of Kingston's Hinterland" by Brian Osborne. His paper shows that while Kingston was favoured by geography as a trading centre, it was also cursed by geography which denied it a productive hinterland. But Osborne also argues that Kingston did little to overcome its handicaps; through much of the nineteenth century it underemphasized its tributary area. Together, geography and neglect resulted in King-

ston being surpassed by Toronto in the struggle for metropolitan dominance. In a paper entitled "Municipal Government and Politics", George Betts provides an excellent overview of the period 1800-1850. His paper is a model of its kind, discussing in very readable terms the growing interests of the municipal government leading up to and, in turn, causing the passage of the Municipal Corporations Bill (Baldwin Act) of 1849 by which the provincial government granted the principle of local self-government. Of similar scope is a paper on the city's poor during the years 1815-1850. Patricia Malcolmson provides a detailed analysis of the activities and problems of a large segment of Kingston's population. She also discusses the reactions of the rest of the community to its inarticulate and unprivileged poor. Finally, Alan Green examines the immigrant as revealed in the census manuscript records for 1871. Although his paper is a micro-study, Green provides several insights into the social and economic life of the city in the late nineteenth century. In the process he not only reveals much about Kingston, he also provides ample material for a larger study of the impact of large numbers of newcomers on urban areas.

While these four essays are very good, they are most noticeable by their lack of company. The other essays in the volume simply do not make *To Preserve and Defend* an integrated urban study of Kingston in the nineteenth century. There is, for example, a glaring lack of the kind of broad, analytical essay contributed by Betts on government and Malcolmson on the poor. Companion pieces, taking these respective topics down to 1900, would have been most welcome. Similarly, the volume is void of material on Kingston's spatial patterns of growth and is very weak in the area of population growth and change.

Another obvious omission is the lack of any comprehensive city map — or series of maps — that might have provided much needed reference points for those unfamiliar with Kingston's landscape. While several of the contributors can be faulted for not including maps in their articles, it is reasonable to have expected the editor to have provided at least one clear city map. The maps that are produced on the inside covers are attractive but of little use to the reader. Indeed, the inclusion of a set of maps and basic statistical data in an appendix would have done much to increase the book's value. It must also be mentioned that the volume has virtually no material on the last twenty years of the century. Finally, while the editor is to be commended for the inclusion of an excellent index — a tool rarely seen in volumes of this kind — he should also have gone to the trouble of including a bibliography.

Despite these problems *To Preserve and Defend* contains enough of value that it can be recommended as an important contribution to Canadian urban history and as a major addition to Kingston's own written history. The book also makes one other significant contribution — to the history of typographical errors in Canadian publishing. The delightful *faux pas* appears in the article "The British Influence of RMC".

In Canada, [Major] Raban gained a great reputation as a brilliant and popular lecturer and he also won widespread publicity by his use of expletives to break an ice jam on the St. Lawrence, thereby opening the river for navigation earlier than usual. (p. 130).

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