Jean-Pierre Kesteman — *Histoire de Sherbrooke, tome 1 : de l'âge de l'eau à l'ère de la vapeur (1802–1866)*, Sherbrooke, Les Éditions GGC, 2000.
Jean-Pierre Kesteman — *Histoire de Sherbrooke, tome 2 : de l'âge de la vapeur à l'ère de l'électricité (1867–1896)*, Sherbrooke, Les Éditions GGC, 2001.

Remarkable as it may seem, Jean-Pierre Kesteman's lengthy history of the 200-year-old city of Sherbrooke will, when completed, be the first to be written. His two volumes on the nineteenth century have appeared in rapid succession, and there are still two more to come for the twentieth century. Kesteman's preface and the fact that he chose a non-academic press suggest that he is aiming at a local audience, but those who are familiar with his previous work will not be surprised that this study is anything but anecdotal or superficial. As with his co-authored history of the Eastern Townships, Kesteman emphasizes economic development and social structures, with a heavy reliance on notarial deeds and census records. This might make for rather unexciting reading as far as the average history enthusiast is concerned, but Kesteman has a lucid writing style, he follows a basic chronological narrative, and he has included numerous interesting illustrations. The many sub-titles will facilitate the use of these volumes for reference, but readers will have to purchase the final one to obtain the indispensable index to all four.

Kesteman dates Sherbrooke's origin as 1802 when the Loyalist township leader Gilbert Hyatt built a dam at that site to operate a saw mill and grist mill. The Vermont-born merchant Charles F. H. Goodhue acquired the mills in 1811, after the Jefferson Embargo had led to Hyatt's bankruptcy. Kesteman documents how the rather ruthless Goodhue was enriched by land speculation and usurious loans to local farmers, a strategy that would long continue to form the basis of wealth for the town's capitalist class. Though Kesteman appears unaware of it, there is a close parallel between Goodhue's business strategy and career and that of his brother, George Jervis Goodhue, who helped found the town of London in Upper Canada.

The Ascot hamlet, originally known as Grand Forks, still had only ten resident families in 1815, but the site's industrial potential largely explains why that year it attracted a wealthy and influential British half-pay officer, William Bowman Felton. Felton quickly became the dominant landowner and political force in the region, and in 1823 he ensured that the village christened as Sherbrooke, in honour of the Governor-General, became the headquarters of the newly established St. Francis Judicial District. Felton did little to develop the water-power sites, however, simply leasing Goodhue's mills back to him. Kesteman claims that the two men entered into a fruitful informal partnership, with Goodhue providing access to cheap land and Felton access to capital and political connections.

Goodhue opened a large woollen mill in Sherbrooke in 1827, and the town boasted approximately 400 residents by 1831. Large-scale industrialization of this economically isolated region would require a great deal of investment in the transportation infrastructure, however, a process that began only with the arrival of the

London-based British American Land Company (BALC) in 1834. The company constructed roads to outside markets and leased the mill sites it had purchased from Felton to local entrepreneurs, though on rather onerous terms. Economic growth would remain severely restrained until the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railway was constructed through Sherbrooke in 1852. This country's first major railway has always been primarily associated with the BALC's Alexander Galt, but Kesteman demonstrates convincingly that historians have underestimated the crucial role played by Sherbrooke's American-born merchants.

Based on detailed descriptions of various industries established during this mid-century period, Kesteman argues that Sherbrooke's business milieu was one of the most dynamic in the province of Canada. Sherbrooke boasted Canada's first clothing factory, built in 1846, as well as its first cotton factory and industrial society with shareholders, established in 1852. During the 1850s a local paper mill, the first in Canada to use wood pulp, supplied most of Canada East's newspapers. While the local entrepreneurs benefitted from American technology, a shortage of financial credit made them vulnerable to economic downturns and alarmingly frequent fires. Without referring to it, then, Kesteman challenges J. M. S. Careless's influential metropolitan thesis, for Sherbrooke's industries were financed largely by local merchant capital extracted from the surplus production of the surrounding farmers.

As early as 1852, two-thirds of the town's household heads were unskilled labourers, mostly young, unmarried Irish and French Canadian males, though the French Canadians were still only 24 per cent of the population in 1861. The first wave of expansion had peaked by 1855, but at the time of Confederation there were 14 factories employing 222 workers along the banks of the Magog River. While Kesteman notes that his chapters on the social and political history of this era were handicapped by the shortage of local newspapers and the destruction of the 1861 manuscript census, he could have researched the archives of the various Protestant churches, and he ignores my own publications on the temperance movement and on the impact of the school, municipal, and court system reforms. Paradoxically, given his emphasis on the economic pragmatism of the local elite, Kesteman exaggerates the dominance of British toryism in the post-Rebellion era, when the primary goal of Galt and other leading entrepreneur-politicians was to attract government support (be it Tory or Liberal) for their railway projects.

The final chapter in the first volume provides a detailed spatial analysis of the town, describing how its monopolistic proprietors shaped geographic development in their own interests. Despite its relatively small population in the pre-Confederation era, Sherbrooke was divided socially into two distinct zones by the Magog River gorge, with a third quarter inhabited by the working class that was developing on the northern periphery of today's downtown area. While the BALC became increasingly unpopular because of its economic stranglehold on the struggling town, Kesteman suggests that it had a positive influence, in the balance, and he points to larger economic forces as the main reason for Sherbrooke's slow growth from the mid-1850s to the mid-1860s.

The second volume begins in 1867, not because this was the year of Confederation but because it brought the town's first truly large-scale industry with the open-

ing of the Paton woollen mills, the largest of their kind in Canada. Local capital would remain important during the next three decades, but Montreal and British investment became indispensable for the larger enterprises. Sherbrooke moved from sixth to fourth place in the province in terms of value added, and stood at fifth place in 1901 in terms of manpower. The town's entrepreneurs took advantage of the National Policy tariff to benefit from the one of the best hydraulic energy sites in southern Quebec, the presence of the Eastern Townships Bank, five railway companies, a prosperous agricultural and mining hinterland, and peaceful labour relations. In addition to its textile companies, Sherbrooke had Quebec's only iron and mechanical industries, producing machinery for the local textile mills as well as mines as far away as British Columbia. As in the earlier era, fire played an important local economic role, hitting no fewer than 14 industrial firms between 1869 and 1887. In 1875 it destroyed a recently established meat-packing business that had employed 300 workers and consumed 400 cattle a week. Total capital invested in Sherbrooke increased from $138,000 in 1867 to nearly $1 million in 1891, and the population tripled to approximately 10,000 between 1861 and 1891.

Most of the influx was French Canadian, with the Paton Company employing French-speaking women and children, but the machine manufacturers hired highly skilled labourers from Britain and the United States. While two-thirds of the population was of French origin by 1891, only 8 per cent of their number were merchants, entrepreneurs, professionals, or farmers in 1881, as compared with 22 per cent of the English-speaking population. The ratios for white-collar workers were similar. With 80 per cent of the factory hands being unmarried, the French-speaking population was a highly transient one. Kesteman argues, nevertheless, that the French-Canadian *petite bourgeoisie*, assisted by its Irish Catholic counterparts, exerted more political and social influence than its numbers or financial resources might have led one to expect. Because of their bilingualism, the French-Canadian notables served as intermediaries between Anglo-Protestant capital and French-Canadian labour, helping to ensure the peaceful labour relations noted above. But the Catholic bishop fought against their assimilation by insisting on the establishment of separate institutions such as the Catholic school commission in 1877.

Despite the French-Canadian majority, anglophones dominated the municipal council (as they did the provincial and federal seats) because of the control factory owners had over their workers. In 1888 the journalist and newspaper publisher L. C. Bélanger began campaigning for the secret ballot and for the mayor to be elected by town voters as a whole, but the referendum on the issue was lost the following year, finally passing in 1898. The two populations also tended to disagree about the issuing of liquor permits because of the strong prohibitionist sentiment among the Protestants, while most local hotels were owned by Catholics. During this period, however, the council's attention generally remained focused on attracting more industries with generous tax exemptions and subsidies and on protecting merchants from outside competitors by restrictions on hours and places of sale, as well as costly licences. With health and hygiene remaining a low priority, the town continued to have open sewers, and infant mortality rivaled the very high rate in Montreal.

Sherbrooke began to become a modern town only after 1880, when piped water, gas, telephones, and electricity became available, though these services were initially provided by private monopolies and proved too costly and unreliable for the majority to take advantage of. Most people continued to rely on their polluted wells, and gas — followed by electricity — was largely confined to street lamps. Bell's abuse of its monopoly led to the founding of the People's Telephone Company and an ongoing war for decades, resulting in a forest of utility poles.

This volume, like the first, ends with a detailed (perhaps too detailed) examination of the urban space. Anticipating the building of a canal and industrial development that never materialized, the BALC blocked housing construction in the South Ward, with the result that the town's area only doubled between 1861 and 1891, when its population tripled. While the degree of crowding fluctuated widely in accordance with the economic cycles, the number of people per household unit in the working-class wards was generally twice as high as in the middle-class wards.

Kesteman concludes that the period between 1867 and 1896, which preceded the Laurier boom, was the golden age of industry in Sherbrooke. He rejects the "two worlds" model of Everett Hughes's Drummondville, noting that ethnic tensions were not entirely along class lines and that up to a third of the city's working class was Anglo-Protestant. But the French-Canadian population did remain in a subordinate position because of the transiency of its working class and the lack of access to capital on the part of its *petite bourgeoisie*. Kesteman laments that, while local English-speaking capitalists, such as J. H. Pope and J. G. Robertson, had contacts with the Canadian and imperial bourgeoisie, their French-speaking counterparts could not even count on the provincial government, fixated as it was on impractical colonization projects. He fails to consider that, during this *laissez-faire* era, such projects were one of the only ways the provincial government could attempt to favour one ethno-cultural group over another. The power dynamic in Sherbrooke would change during the next era, when the interests of the English-speaking entrepreneurs were increasingly focused westward, and the French-Canadian ratio of the population continued to rise.

These volumes are exhaustively researched, the thematic coverage is broad, the analysis of the material is clear and coherent, and the factual errors are few (for example, Samuel Brooks was not an Anglican, nor did the Mounted Police pursue the Megantic Outlaw). The broader theoretical and comparative framework is generally ignored in this study, but, while Kesteman argues persuasively that Sherbrooke's Eastern Townships location made it unique in many respects, he has certainly broken new ground in terms of our understanding of the small industrial Quebec town.

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William B. McAllister — *Drug Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century: An International History.* New York: Routledge, 2000, Pp. 344.