de la Grande-Bretagne. L'auteur présente d'abord un historique de la famille Hale, son statut social et son implication dans la colonie du Bas-Canada. Leur vision de la propriété fait peu de place aux habitants locaux et ils ignorent en grande partie la spécificité du nouveau contexte dans lequel ils veulent recréer leur domaine. Malgré l'action des Hale, l'impact du développement d'une communauté paysanne a eu, selon Coates, des répercussions beaucoup plus durables sur le paysage de la seigneurie de Sainte-Anne.

Cette étude a voulu montrer l'impact sur le milieu local des diverses conceptions du paysage des Amérindiens à la famille Hale. Cette conception du paysage est davantage perceptible dans le cas de la famille Hale et du développement de nouvelles industries. Elle n'apporte pas un éclairage nouveau sur l'évolution de l'agriculture ou sur la vie sociale dans les communautés rurales. Par contre, l'auteur a ouvert de nouvelles perspectives prometteuses dans l'étude des rapports sociaux et des relations communautaires. De plus, il a discrètement lancé une hypothèse passablement séduisante sur les rapports entre la formation d'une élite locale bien enracinée dans le tissu social de la communauté et l'affirmation d'une nouvelle cohésion sociale. L'émergence du nationalisme au tournant du XIXe siècle serait alors liée au développement de ce nouveau sentiment communautaire local.

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Bruce Curtis — *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840–1875*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001. Pp. 385.

Good books tell us things we didn't know. They also force us to rethink things we thought we already knew. Instead of starting with census results as raw data, *The Politics of Population* asks why and how they were produced, taking them as products of a complex, often muddied, process of observation, selection, and revision. Any lingering belief that census results offer objective or "hard" facts, free from the limitations endemic to more literary sources, is effectively demolished as Bruce Curtis pushes us to think differently about what early censuses meant and did. Along the way, we learn much about the politics, civil administration, social assumptions, and sectional divisions of the Union period.

In a detailed and surprisingly traditional administrative history, Curtis describes how each Canadian census between 1841 and 1871 was planned, executed, and compiled by politicians, administrators, clerks, district commissioners, and enumerators — with varying degrees of cooperation from respondents. The cumulative effect of this step-by-step approach is to emphasize the daunting practical and conceptual problems census-makers faced trying "to generate consistent social observations" (p. 199) that could be expressed numerically at the centre from complex and varied social relations in each locality. Until the end of the Union period, the infrastructure, will, and conceptual tools required to overcome these problems were

noticeably absent.

This aspect of the book would make excellent, if sobering, reading for graduate workshops on the sources of social history, revealing how neat columns of figures mask multiple layers of interpretation, inconsistency, misunderstanding, incompetence, and resistance. Few will dissent from Curtis's conclusion that returns were manufactured from "inconsistent and idiosyncratic observational techniques applied to suspicious informants' stories about social relations and practices (themselves little susceptible to quantification), and the repeated reworking of observations by individuals applying their own judgments afer the fact" (p. 151). Curtis proceeds to show how Joseph-Charles Taché, having analysed past failures and armed with a clearer sense of purpose, overcame many of these problems for the 1871 census. Centralization, advance planning, systematic protocols for observing and recording, standardized measures and methods, and field tests culminated in "the first scientifically organized configuration of the 'population of Canada' " (p. 306).

Some might anticipate that *The Politics of Population* focuses on the relative accuracy of each census. Instead, as his title suggests, Curtis is interested in the ways in which censuses were political regardless of their accuracy. They were creatures of the state since only the state could determine an administrative grid on which to plot people and their social relations in ways that would come to be accepted as authoritative and commonsensical. The census also served the state by revealing fields and objects of activity and thus making them governable. Censuses also became political in debates about representation in the Assembly, in defining the character of Canada West and Canada East, and in advancing policy demands. Whereas we are accustomed to thinking of state formation as something well underway during the Union period and as part of a broader liberal project, Curtis uncovers state weakness: how limited its resources were; how tenuous its connection to localities was; and how bounded conceptions of its role remained. Moreover, when Taché transformed the census into a scientific state instrument, it was to serve his "fundamentalist Catholic pastoral" as much as liberalism (p. 313).

In fact, emphasizing the political dimensions of population leads Curtis to insist repeatedly that "attempts to evaluate the 'accuracy' of the census on the basis of a correspondence theory of truth" be discounted (p. 282). Joining an international body of scholarship, Curtis sees population as a theoretical rather than empirical concept. "Population is produced by establishing relations of equivalence among empirically diverse human bodies; and access to information about the latter — the raw material of population — demands that social relations be modelled in some way that can practically guide inquiry" (p. 199). Population is not something that exists independent of census-makers' efforts to observe, report, and categorize it. Thus no degree of correspondence between "it" and census representations exists to be expressed as "accuracy".

Early census efforts failed, in part, because census-makers lacked such a model of social relations. For instance, tremendous confusion and possible over-enumeration resulted from the failure to resolve the tension between recording where people actually were and where they were "supposed" to be. Of course, where people "normally" resided was a question of interpretation, not inspection. Likewise, what pre-

cisely counted as a "family" or why many adult female workers became "servants" while their male counterparts became "labourers" involves social assumption alongside social observation. The 1871 census was "scientific" because it consistently tied people to particular locations and well-defined categories, but it remained political in that neither locations nor categories were objective givens. For instance, Taché served both technical and political ends by adopting principles that ensured that "French Canadian" was the most common "national origin". Respondents' identification of themselves as "Canadian" was refused, and, while children outside Quebec were arbitrarily assigned their father's national origin, Quebec children were arbitrarily deemed "French" if either parent was.

Curtis is right to be suspicious of the realist question, "are these findings about origins accurate?", since the "facts" were not simply there awaiting collection. Thus "censuses are made, not *taken*" (p. 33). What and how they count are socially constructed. Given the importance of this conclusion, it is unfortunate that Curtis's administrative chronology often serves to highlight the obstacles census-makers faced gathering and expressing the information they sought, while widely dispersing his analysis of how the categories of their search were constructed and reconstructed. As well, a broader concept of accuracy might have proved helpful. Just as it is critical to know how the census "made up" national origin, it might be important to know how well it counted the actual occurrences of that construction. There is little reason not to consider the latter — the correspondence between intent and result — a measure of accuracy. A relaxed definition of accuracy might also have prompted Curtis to speculate more about the total extent of the limitations he uncovers and the degree to which social construction shaped reported findings. We need to think about censuses in terms of both accuracy and social construction, for, although they were indeed made, not taken, they were neither all made with the same care nor constructed from thin air.

Overall, Curtis has greatly enriched our understanding of knowledge production and the state, opening up new and intriguing questions. Case studies of the longer-term uses of census information might elaborate on its role in state formation and assess the ability of its constructed categories both to discipline and empower. As well, how administrators, respondents, and historians understand the census reflects broader cultural trends. How did state statistics come to be seen as vital and devoid of social interpretation in the period Curtis examines? How did more and better information become the solution to every public problem? How did "better" come to mean numeric rather than literary forms of knowledge, and state creation rather than the work of other knowledge producers? Finally, *The Politics of Population* underscores the need for a broadly conceived study of the vocabulary and categories by which British North Americans imagined and re-imagined their societies.

Curtis's chief contribution is to show that state-generated statistics are not privileged historical sources immune to the weaknesses and limitations of other evidence. All historical sources are socially constructed and flawed, though fortunately not in the same ways or to the same extent. No excuse remains for taking census classifications and findings for granted, but we must not rush to despairing of them as "useless" or largely divorced from what they purport to represent. To do so with

other flawed sources, including the administrative correspondence and newspaper reports on which Curtis relies, would risk scholarly euthanasia. In the meantime, Bruce Curtis has shown us what we can learn from census making and what we cannot do with its results.

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Gerald Friesen — *Citizens and Nation: An Essay on History, Communication, and Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. Pp. x, 307.

Does history have a public purpose? This is not the same as asking whether history is political. The answer to the latter question is always: authors invariably have a subject position, however masked, and their narratives or analyses invariably deal with power, however distantly. Instead, the troublesome question of a public purpose links history to some esteemed or shared goal. In the 1990s Michael Bliss and Jack Granatstein lamented the fact that so many academic histories no longer served to nourish a common sense of nationality, setting off an ongoing squabble when social and "progressive" historians in particular took umbrage at what seemed an attempt to harness the writing of history to the making of hegemony. Gerald Friesen has now produced a superb brand of left history (well, mildly left) that seeks to explain "why Canada is a meaningful public identity" (p. 227).

Citizens and Nation is billed as a series of reflective essays exploring how the overall Canadian experience has constructed the present. It is, then, a history for today, drawing upon the findings and techniques of that social and cultural history sometimes blamed for undermining or unraveling the public's belief in an imagined community. The book harks back to a genre of patriotic history (Friesen makes reference to W. L. Morton's *The Canadian Identity* of 1960) more common a generation ago. Unlike previous works, *Citizens and Nation* concentrates on the experience of what used to be called "the folk". It is populist as well as patriotic, an assertion of "the creativity of every citizen, not just the powerful few" (p. 228). Friesen does discuss carefully and effectively a range of interpretations championed by historians, past and recent, about the shape of Canadian life, but he relies upon a small number of key texts about ordinary people, usually authored by them, to understand that life: a film documentary of a Dene family; some memoirs and one set of interviews; even Ken Dryden's 1993 biography *The Moved and the Shaken*. This is the most novel and striking attribute of *Citizens and Nation*.

These documents become the means of exploring Friesen's conviction "that the way in which a society communicates shapes popular assumptions about how the world works" (p. 5). He focuses his attention on the prevailing modes of communication during four grand epochs, variously entitled the "oral-traditional", "textual-settler", "print-capitalist", and "screen-capitalist", each of which is treated in a separate section composed of two essays. All of these societies, he argues, have left a legacy and marks on the Canadian identity. Shades of Harold Innis? Not quite: