

experience of traveling between these places play into the bourgeois frontier? The story of mobility, highlighted by merchants and voyageurs traveling back and forth between towns, trading posts and forts would appear to be a crucial part of the bourgeois frontier. Moreover, how did crossing colonial and national boundaries affect the French experience? Gitlin does an excellent job of incorporating the story of French merchants into the American national grand narrative, but trans-colonial or early transnational links are left somewhat underdeveloped. For example, many these merchants regularly crossed shifting colonial and national boundaries, both for their own affairs and to assist others in settling long-distance family businesses. This was especially true for merchants like Gabriel Cerré, and later Auguste Chouteau, who had strong family and business ties to both Montreal and St. Louis. Even as the Chouteau clan shifted their fur trading interests from Montreal to New York, ties to the former were maintained as the American Fur Company hired approximately one thousand French-Canadian voyageurs out of Montreal between 1818 and 1840, destined for St. Louis and the Missouri fur trade. Though Gitlin provides an impressively broad context, looking at New Mexico and mentioning places like Montreal, New York, and London, the effects of mobility and trans-colonial / transnational networks are ultimately left for future scholars to tackle.

These points aside, *The Bourgeois Frontier* is a welcome addition to both French colonial and early American history and should be mandatory reading for both. It questions the geographical and chronological boundaries of French colonial history in North America and challenges the American national grand narrative, and it succeeds on both fronts. Gitlin has exposed the blurred lines between family and commerce that came to define a very complex bourgeois frontier. He has given us a book that will not easily be dissected, will generate debate, and should help inspire scholarship in this area for some time to come.

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HART, E.J. (Ted) — *J.B. Harkin: Father of Canada's National Parks*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2010. Pp. xxii, 564.

The appearance of a biography of J.B. Harkin, the “father of Canada’s National Parks,” was timely, as it presaged by a few months the 2011 centenary of the creation of Parks Canada. Perhaps completed for the occasion, the massive tome of over 500 pages took five laborious years to piece together. Author E.J. (Ted) Hart combed the departmental records of the Dominion Parks Service and related collections to craft a carefully-weighed and detailed account Harkin’s career. What emerges, however, is less a study of Harkin, the man, than of the administration of his organization from its formation in 1911 until his retirement in 1935.

Hart had several objectives in mind in undertaking the project: to resurrect and rehabilitate the reputation of Harkin and his contributions to conservation in

Canada; to provide a framework within which these contributions can be fairly assessed; and to correct some of the misconceptions that have arisen concerning him and his work since the 1970s. The author, who approached his subject with a predisposed sympathy, largely succeeds in portraying him as a capable, astute administrator who faithfully struggled to advance the cause of conservation, often in the face of adverse attitudes and circumstances. He may have overreached, though, in conferring upon Harkin the status of "a great Canadian."

Certainly the book is written in the great man tradition, with clearly defined forces for right or wrong and with a hint of predestination attached to the central character. After an opening chapter tracing Harkin's early career as a journalist and an aide to Clifford Sifton and Frank Oliver, Hart begins a stage-by-stage account of Harkin's tenure of office. Drafted into the new position of Commissioner of Dominion Parks within the Department of the Interior, Harkin was soon engaged in justifying the existence of his organization and defending its interests against assaults from within and beyond the bureaucracy. He proved himself to be a wily and tenacious infighter who steadily advanced his causes. His ability to argue his viewpoint exceeded his originality of thought, as many of his perceptions of conservation were borrowed from subordinates and outsiders, particularly conservationists in America. Although he had some opponents within the department, and even his own parks branch, most of the opposition to his administrative goals came from outside, principally from commercial interests that had designs on resources found within the national parks.

Surviving the transition from Conservative to Liberal rule in 1921, Harkin was largely successful in expanding the role of the parks service in the department and promoting conservation more generally. Passage of the National Parks Act in 1930 promised to secure the vision that Harkin advocated. The transition back to Conservative rule in 1930 was bumpier. One of the not insignificant number of enemies Harkin had made along the way was R.B. Bennett, the new Prime Minister, and an uncomfortable stand-off ensued in which the Commissioner was marginalised with respect to some key operations of his department while still attaining important goals in other areas. Ironically, his departure came only after changing political fortunes returned the Liberals to government.

The events of Harkin's tenure of office are recounted in minute detail. There seems to be no personal encounter, intellectual influence, controversy, or administrative conundrum too small to ignore. This makes, at times, tedious reading despite the fluent and clear prose style. The details can be overwhelming. Yet, the minutiae are one of the work's great strengths. Hart has written a very thorough piece of administrative history. By catching the cadence of bureaucratic life, he has imparted a sense of Harkin's reality. This provides the context in which Harkin can be fairly assessed. In administration, the proverbial devil is often found in the detail, and without careful attention to the fine points, a clear understanding of important matters can be obscured. The day-to-day management of individual issues, great and small, is what characterizes a bureaucrat's existence. Capable administrators keep their heads above water and swim towards shore; lesser individuals sink. Harkin was one who could stay afloat and make landfall.

The image of Harkin that appears is of a principled bureaucrat who was forceful but not rigid. Although his appreciation of the benefits of wilderness preservation evolved with time and changing circumstances, he firmly believed in the importance of preserving zones of land in their original state in which visitors could renew their physical, mental and spiritual resources. These benefits attracted tourists who contributed to the economy. Whatever might have been their abstract virtues, parks were justified in practical terms. Early in his career, Harkin used tourism to prop up the cause of national parks; towards the end, national parks were established to prop up tourism. Harkin was pragmatic, fighting battles he could win and accommodating circumstances he was unable to master. He could be variously upright, arbitrary, and manipulative. He was also an administrative centralizer, perhaps even a micro-manager, who preferred to keep a firm control of the expanding parks system from Ottawa. That created some unrest in his branch and was objectionable to some distant outside interests, such as those found in Alberta.

Less is revealed about Harkin's personal life. He married at a mature age and never had children. Occasional bouts of illness, likely stress-related, side-lined him, sometimes at awkward moments. While he inspired loyalty among close associates, others regarded him as autocratic. The end of his career was unfortunate, marred by a reorganization in which he and his branch were to be downgraded. Seen, perhaps, as past his prime, Harkin may have been eased through the exit with a buy-out package. He went on to volunteer with the national executive of the Boy Scouts of Canada and the Ottawa Rotary Club. In death, he was lauded as a pioneer and a builder. Whether J.B. Harkin exhibited greatness is open to dispute, but he was certainly a loyal, dedicated and effective public servant who left an impressive legacy. Ted Hart has done well to have memorialized him in such a careful fashion.

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PAKIER, Małgorzata, et BO STRÅTH (dir.) — *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*. New York, Berghahn Books, 2010, 352 p.

Issu d'une série de séminaires organisée par Małgorzata Pakier et Bo Stråth, cet ouvrage est composé de plus d'une vingtaine de contributions articulées autour de la question de la mémoire européenne. *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* propose d'intégrer la dimension polysémique et conflictuelle de la mémoire européenne dans les discours sur le passé et de dépasser l'image téléologique d'un continent harmonieux en considérant les aspects les plus violents qui ont marqué son histoire. Situé dans un courant de pensée favorisant l'internationalisation des histoires nationales par la confrontation critique des mémoires, l'ouvrage intéressera certainement toute personne sensible