

**Peter Neive Cotton, *Vice Regal Mansions of British Columbia.*
Vancouver, Elgin Publications Ltd., for the British Columbia
Heritage Trust, 1981. 118 pp., 57 illus., \$22.50**

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Volume 11, numéro 1-2, 1984

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1074347ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1074347ar>

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Éditeur(s)

UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art des universités du Canada)

ISSN

0315-9906 (imprimé)

1918-4778 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Kalman, H. (1984). Compte rendu de [Peter Neive Cotton, *Vice Regal Mansions of British Columbia*. Vancouver, Elgin Publications Ltd., for the British Columbia Heritage Trust, 1981. 118 pp., 57 illus., \$22.50]. *RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, 11(1-2), 155-156.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1074347ar>

At another level, the inclusion of the detailed technical descriptions raises questions. The technical documentation, which provides a consistent set of data for all 168 items, is certainly one of the more impressive aspects of the catalogue, but only of relevance to a specialist interested in structure. Without some interpretation they remain virtually meaningless to others. The reader – specialist or generalist – is not made aware of what purpose these data are supposed to serve in the context of the book. Reference to the numbers of examples in each category of fabric represented in the catalogue might have better served both specialist and generalist in arriving at an appreciation of the unique strengths of the Indianapolis textile holding.

A final word is reserved for the technical appendix, 'Analysis of Precious Metal Threads' by Stodulski, Nauman and Kennedy. It is the most important original contribution in the catalogue, even if the rationale for including it is questionable. A hundred and twenty-four samples from fifty-four pieces in the Indianapolis collection were subjected to microscopic observation, atomic emission spectrography and scanning electron microscopic x-ray analysis. The results of the study have been tabulated and present data, which for the first time point out compositional differences in precious metal threads used in textiles from one culture to another. While this is very much a preliminary study, it offers a basis for further work that may yet help determine provenance and possibly date for undocumented fabrics.

The Indianapolis Museum of Art is to be congratulated and should be encouraged to continue its support of this important research. I sincerely hope we will not wait for the next centennial to see other aspects of this collection celebrated in print.

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PETER NEIVE COTTON *Vice Regal Mansions of British Columbia*. Vancouver, Elgin Publications Ltd., for the British Columbia Heritage Trust, 1981. 118 pp., 57 illus., \$22.50.

Peter Cotton was a precious source of inspiration to a generation of students of British Columbia architecture. A pioneer restoration architect and architectural historian with a distinguished career in both government service and private practice, Cotton's achievements include the restoration of Fort Langley and Craigflower Manor, numerous articles on the history of British Columbia's buildings, and dynamic leadership in preservation organizations. His many friends and colleagues were saddened by his premature death in 1978.

One of those colleagues, Martin Segger, urged Cotton to publish his incomplete manuscript on the history of Government House, which had been written in 1957-59 after the building was destroyed by fire and while Cotton was serving as an architect for the provincial government. The task proved arduous. Cotton died as he and Segger were working on the project. Two subsequent collaborators, provincial archivist Dr. Willard Ireland and journalist Elizabeth Forbes, also died in the course of helping to reconstruct the manuscript. Segger persisted in his role of general editor and finally prepared the work for publication with the help of archivist David Mattison (who assembled the photographs and plans) and editor Anne West. The British Columbia Heritage Trust financed the project. The result is an attractive and well-produced monograph, the first of a continuing series projected by the Trust.

Cotton's history of the many homes provided for British Columbia's lieutenant-governors (and, before them, her governors) is a tale of political wrangling as much as of architecture. Time after time the elected legislature resisted the demands of the heads of state that they be provided with a fitting home – a debate which recurs regularly today among other provincial legislatures – and of one rush after another to meet a deadline to finish that resi-

dence. Architecture as such certainly took a back seat in the debates.

The first 'vice-regal mansion' was, in a manner of speaking, the cabin aboard HMS *Driver* occupied by Governor Richard Blanshard in 1850; the next was the room offered him in Fort Victoria. The Hudson's Bay Company agreed to erect 'a moderate sized but respectable house' for the governor the next year, just as Blanshard retired. Accommodating the head of state remained a disorganized task for some time, and was complicated further by the existence of twin seats of power in Victoria and New Westminster.

Not until 1865, when Governor A. E. Kennedy bought Cary Castle, a miserable stone house on a hill east of downtown Victoria, did British Columbia acquire a Government House with any claims to permanency. But in 1894, just when a series of additions had made it a decent enough mansion, Cary Castle burned. The house was rebuilt, burned again in 1957, and rebuilt yet once more (directed, in part, by the results of Peter Cotton's research). Each new design retained sufficient continuity that today's Government House can safely be said to be descended from Kennedy's Cary Castle.

Cotton chronicles the events meticulously; however, his analysis of the architectural qualities is regrettably less thorough. The design of the Government House of 1901-03, a collaborative effort by the premier Victoria architects Samuel Maclure and F.M. Rattenbury, is described only by citing two newspaper articles. The book reproduces the plans, but offers no exterior views other than its burning and burned ruins.

In contrast to the paucity of architectural detail, Cotton offers extensive and interesting comments on social and political episodes. The legislature's tight-fisted refusal to replace the worn hall carpet during Fordham Johnson's tenure, A.N. Richards' threats to find alternate accommodation because the province would not pay for his utilities, and other such events shed light on the oft-ignored human aspects of government architecture. They also make a good read.

The book is an important addition to a neglected genre in Canadian architectural writing: the

building monograph. R.H. Hubbard's *Rideau Hall: An Illustrated History of Government House* (Montreal, 1977) stands at the head of the list, and also sets an example of a building history that is at least as social as it is architectural. *Vice Regal Mansions of British Columbia* will remain an important tribute both to that province's Government House and to architect Peter Cotton.

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ELIZABETH COLLARD *The Potters' View of Canada: Canadian Scenes on Nineteenth-Century Earthenware*. Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 1983. x + 194 pp., 171 illus., \$34.95 (cloth).

Clearly, it is Elizabeth Collard who emerges as the dynamic force behind much of the research into the history of ceramics in Canada. A steady contributor to periodicals and texts, she is perhaps best known for her seminal work, *Nineteenth-Century Pottery and Porcelain in Canada*, published in 1967 (revised edition: Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1984). The consistent quality of these publications has assured her of a strong following of scholars and collectors, both here and abroad. Her stated preference for the writing of articles has meant a lengthy wait for this, her second, major book. *The Potters' View of Canada: Canadian Scenes on Nineteenth-Century Earthenware* deals with transferware displaying Canadian scenes and motifs.

While enthusiasts and major museums in the United States have been collecting historical china for over a century, those interested in the visual history of Canada have been comparatively slow to recognize the potential wealth of material to be found on ceramics. The historic events and topographic views displayed on these wares are an indication of how Canada was perceived and prove to be both educational and entertaining.

Interestingly, the potters discussed were not Canadian, nor were the wares, meant for the small Canadian market. Rather, these were products of various potteries in Scotland and England and the por-

trayed views reflect the nineteenth-century interests in documentation and Canada. While this corpus might lead to purely academic discussions as to what constitutes Canadian decorative art, Elizabeth Collard states that her intention is the location and documentation of the sources from which the various Canadian scenes are derived. For collectors, the need is obvious: with many pieces unmarked, attribution becomes difficult. One would assume that certain motifs such as beavers perched on maple branches or readily recognizable vistas should be free from misconceptions regarding origins. Yet, the author reveals some problems, such as 'Table Rock', a Canadian view of Niagara Falls, classified as an American view by nineteenth-century ceramic historians until this error was rectified, by Collard, in 1967.

The difficulty in locating business records of this period, the number of short-lived minor potteries, and the use of ambiguous titles have presented major obstacles to historians. Yet when combined with the search for the often elusive published sources, one can only credit the author's perseverance. She has traced the motifs to various journals, encyclopedias, and in one case, to a series of Montreal published Christmas cards depicting winter activities which later appeared on a popular series of earthenware entitled 'Canadian Sports.' The production dates of the cards combined with the style of the hollow-ware suggest that the probable date of manufacture would be situated in the 1880s.

To produce such fascinating results has required extensive and painstaking research. The author's meticulous use of primary sources, including diaries, journals, invoices and newspapers, has resulted in a prodigious quantity of information, fully documented in the notes. Never pedantic, the text traces the evolution of the image from its source to the finished transfer. This is aided by excellent plates: *The Potters' View of Canada* contains over 170 black and white photographs with representative wares from the ceramic collection of the Museum of Man in Ottawa. The earthenware, plus illustrations of potters' marks, border patterns, and the published prints and photographs from which the views are adapted fill over half of the book and imbue the reader with some of the author's enthusiasm.

Well-indexed and including an excellent, albeit short glossary, the book leads even a novice through the field of ceramics. It is disturbing to discover that there is no bibliography, although much information can be gleaned from the voluminous notes, found following the text, glossary and plates; the reader who puts up with the annoyance of flipping to plates and finally to these notes will be well compensated by the exhaustive and revealing references.

Of the twelve chapters following the introduction the first deals with the technique of transfer-printing. The others are concerned with the various sources for the individual views or motifs. Given the autonomous nature of each chapter, what could be read as an anthology becomes accessible, localized information for the thematic collector. Moreover, since these separate themes are set in a historical context by the author, the reader is presented with an overview of nineteenth-century production. The progression from the early, composite, often utopic view to the later literal interpretation, using photographic images, calls attention to the attitudes of the period. A parallel development in the evolution of the earthenware, with changes in body, shape and colour, is also elucidated.

Overall, the nineteenth-century is revealed as a multifaceted age, one of industrialization and imperialism. The romantic yet earnest desire for information provided a vast market for travel literature, printed vistas and souvenirs from distant, therefore exotic outposts of civilization. Canada and Canadiana fascinated the Europeans. Everything pertaining to Canadian life was noteworthy, and innumerable Canadian panoramas found their way, via the printmaker, to the parlour and drawingroom walls of Europe. For example, William H. Bartlett's illustrations for *Canadian Scenery* were so popular that four separate potteries produced wares depicting Bartlett's scenes; to date, twenty-four of these panoramas have been identified.

The eclectic and eccentric nature of the Victorian age is most pronounced in a dinner service entitled 'Arctic Scenery.' Typical of much contemporary earthenware, the potter is unknown. The multi-scene pattern consists of a central motif