

From Queenston to Kingston: the Hidden Heritage of Lake Ontario's Shoreline By Ron Brown

Peter G. Goheen

Volume 103, numéro 1, spring 2011

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1065492ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1065492ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

The Ontario Historical Society

ISSN

0030-2953 (imprimé)

2371-4654 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Goheen, P. G. (2011). Compte rendu de [*From Queenston to Kingston: the Hidden Heritage of Lake Ontario's Shoreline* By Ron Brown]. *Ontario History*, 103(1), 121–122. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1065492ar>

however, government grants to library boards were redefined, becoming based on the number of certified librarians they employed, the higher the qualification the greater the grant. One year training courses declined in importance relative to professional degrees such as Bachelor or Master of Library Science. The result was that the number of highly qualified librarians in Ontario rose by 50 per cent between 1955 and 1995. In addition to certification, in the 1970s librarians were starting to join unions, seeking better pay and improved working conditions; Canadian Union of Public Employees took the lead here.

Places to Grow is meticulously researched, drawing upon such sources as journal and newspaper articles, national studies and reports. Archival photographs, tables and charts supplement information found in the text. *Places to Grow* is perhaps a little too researched, however. It is very dense and at times Bruce provides so many

facts that his meaning and intention become obscure, particularly for readers who are not familiar with the topic. Details of per capita grants for libraries, of the make-up of library boards, or of the ever-changing legislation and reports are almost overwhelming. Perhaps improved organization would overcome this weakness. However this flaw can be overlooked, bearing in mind that Bruce is consolidating material scattered over seven decades. *Places to Grow* is particularly suited for academic readers or library enthusiasts, yet enlightens the general reader with a good overview of the history of public libraries in Ontario.

Jennifer Patrick
Oakville Public Library

Bibliography:
Lorne D. Bruce. *Free Books for All: the Public Library Movement in Ontario, 1850-1930*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994.

From Queenston to Kingston: the Hidden Heritage of Lake Ontario's Shoreline

By Ron Brown. Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2010. 284 pages. \$26.99 soft-cover. ISBN 978-1-55488-716-3. (www.naturalheritagebooks.com)

The Lake Ontario shoreline, at the heart of the most urbanized region in the country, witnessed during the second half of the twentieth century an unprecedented transformation that obliterated both physical and cultural features which had characterized earlier settlement patterns. As a society we often neglect and forget what remains as testimony to the imprint on this land of those generations which preceded us. Ron Brown aims to discover and identify traces of these pasts in our midst and to reveal to his readers something of the rich and diverse legacy created by the human use of the earth, with attention pri-

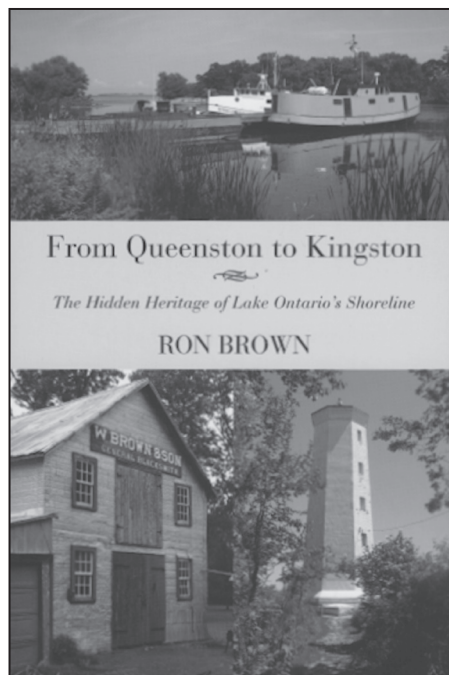
marily to the period since permanent occupation by Europeans commenced.

In his presentation he follows the Lake Ontario strand from Niagara Falls west to Dundas at the head of the lake and then north-east to the St. Lawrence River. Each identifiable settlement, whether short-lived or long surviving, receives separate attention. These vignettes comprise almost all the text; they are introduced by a brief introduction acknowledging the physical geography of the region as well as the main themes of the peopling of the land and the economic restructuring of the space over more than 200 years.

The result is a book offering many tantalizing details of interest to anyone with an historical-geographical imagination and an attachment to the locality. The evidence for some places is richer than for others, and so the story can be a fuller one. I found Brown's discussion of Toronto's Eastern Beach(es) and of Scarborough especially intriguing; it left me impatient to explore some of the places with which I have little familiarity. By contrast, Brown had disappointingly little to say about the Toronto Harbour, a much reworked landscape that could have offered him a rich field for his particular approach. My sense is that Brown has taken especial care and pleasure to notice the historic legacy remaining in the more rural parts of the region of which he writes. The Bay of Quinte area is an outstanding example of his applied curiosity.

From Queenston to Kingston succeeds best at the most local level. The careful reader will discover that Brown does little to articulate what characterizes the area as a region with a particular historical and cultural character. The reader likewise will find different historical moments in focus at different and nearby sites, exaggerating the isolation of settlements located along the main communication route of the early colonial era.

Brown offers his reader a welcome harvest of illustrations which enhances the text. By contrast, the maps are of value



only for the most general orientation. Anyone wishing to search for the places discussed will need to consult other sources. The book is well produced, although in the chapter on Kingston the copyediting failed to prevent the misspelling of such well-known names as Hales, Counter and Browne.

Peter G. Goheen
Queen's University, Kingston.

Dictionary of Glengarry Biography

By Royce MacGillivray. Alexandria, Ontario: Glengarry Historical Society, 2010. lv + 777 pages. \$95.00 hardcover. ISBN 978-0-9680711-2-0 <www.glengarryhistoricalsociety.com>

Dipping into Royce MacGillivray's delightful book, I was taken back, quite unexpectedly, to grade school. My love of history first emerged as an enchantment with storytelling. Both of my Fraser grandparents were spellbinding naturals; the formal part took root in

primary school in Hamilton where, in Grade 4, Miss Séguin indulged my passion for tales of Highlanders, explorers, and Jacobites. One of my earliest formed memories is from her class and taken from Ralph Connor's *Glengarry Schooldays* — "The school never forgot the day when big