

William Wye Smith: Recollections of a Nineteenth Century Scottish Canadian



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Many writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries emphasized the virtues of early rural pioneers and life on the land as a general criticism of what they perceived to be the negative, alienating influence of Ontario's rapid urban and industrial expansion. Such work often highlighted the difficulties the recent emigrant faced: the clearing of forest and the breaking of new ground, the isolation and long Canadian winters; however they in turn celebrated the progress demonstrated in the pioneer's domination over nature, the establishment of thriving communities and the extension of transportation networks. William Wye Smith, a popular nineteenth century Upper Canadian poet, was no exception.

Smith prepared his Canadian Reminiscences, a hand-written compilation of anecdotes collected during his lifetime that relate to his experience as journalist, clergyman and son of Scottish settlers, to provide his own unique perspective of pioneer life. This fully annotated version of Smith's unpublished manuscript highlights Smith's unwitting testimony to the social life of the province, his relationship to the construction and maintenance of Scottish and Canadian identity, as well as his position in literary history.

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