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Books of Interest Patterson's History of Victoria County, with related papers compiled and edited by W. James MacDonald, It is James MacDonald's contribution that really makes this book of value to us today. He is not an historian by profession but a Cape Bretoner who has taken a serious and devoted interest in his local area. We can see in the making of this book his attempt to provide the groundwork for further study by others. He has taken Patterson's interesting if rather spare history and considerably filled out the period it covers with a selection of documents and extracts. He has included the Victoria County section from Fergusson's Place Names and Places of Nova Scotia; Capt. Parker on sailing ships built at St. Ann's; census for 1752, 1870-71, and 1880-81; a list of migrants from St. Ann's to New Zealand; a list of inhabitants of Baddeck in 1818, He has also contributed additional information in footnotes. As a whole, the book should prove useful to anyone wanting a place to start in working out their own understanding of the history of this area. Rev. Patterson's essay, written in 1885 is essentially the story of a pioneer area, a land of little population. At the time he writes, there was still no through-road from Baddeck to Aspy Bay and he was not able personally to investigate the northern area as he would have liked. Moreover, he did not speak Gaelic, and he makes it clear that while his interviews with the older people did give considerable information, he was not himself satisfied with what he got. Interviewing through a translator proved of little help. But regardless of these deficiencies, he senses the value of having in one sweep a telling of principal events and at least the names and something of the character and work of the first or leading citizens of early communities. Moreover, because of his particular interests, he offers us an unusual source of intimate information about those pioneers • namely, extracts from letters sent back as reports by ministers sent out by the Glasgow Colonial Society. It is in these letters, especially, that we find ourselves drawing closer to the unnamed many who cut those forests and hauled around those stones. Rev. Fraser, winter of 1837: "The people are chiefly confined this winter to animal food, being obliged from the scarcity of provender to slaughter their cattle, though by no means in slaughtering condition, owing to the dryness of the summer. The crops of all descriptions are a total failure. In August farmers were rejoicing in the prospects of a plentiful crop; but in September one night of frost blasted all their anticipations. There are families with scarce a blanket for bedding, and their food of the most inferior quality. Good potatoes are more nourishing than this year's meal. There are children in abundance who, covered with rags, lie stretched all night alongside the fire on the floor from having no bed clothes to cover them, and a person starts up every other hour to throw a log on the fire," While we want to encourage our readers to look into this book, we at the same time want to be careful to let them know both what it is and what it is not. This is not a county history along the lines of J. J. MacDougall's History of Inverness County, and readers expecting to find here their family's names and thorough genealogy will be disappointed. This is one of the first publications of the newly formed College



of Cape Breton Press. It is to their credit that they recognized the value of a local non-professional researcher in selecting this text. The book itself is solidly made, with large black type. There are a good many photographs and maps, most of which are of interest and seem a further contribution to expanding Patterson's offering. A few of the photographs seem out of place here (i.e., an American tourist's camp ground at Middle River, circa 1889). The book is priced at \$13.00 in hardcover and is available through bookstores or directly from the College of Cape Breton Press. C & G MadEOD LIMITED Books on Canada and Gaoe Breton The Largest Display of Souvenirs in Cape Breton Mail Orders i 361 Charlotte Street - P. O. Box 658 SYDNEY, NOVA SCOTIA CANADA A Specialty