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V01039107

ENSH 552

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27 April 2024

The Journey Across Canada: A Travelogue by William Matthew Hayward

William Matthew Hayward, an English book-keeper from Nottingham, embarked on a remarkable journey in May 1912, traveling from England to Quebec by sea and then traversing Canada from Quebec to Vancouver by train. His meticulous documentation of this journey through a 32-page handwritten diary provides a vivid snapshot of early twentieth-century Canada, as well as the personal experiences and observations of an English immigrant exploring a vast, unfamiliar landscape.

History of the Text

Hayward's travelogue was not intended for publication but was rather a personal account, detailed in a diary form, penned on lined paper. Despite the passage of time, which left the pages yellowed and somewhat soiled, the diary remains largely legible, preserved, and now housed within the McPherson Library Special Collections and University Archives at the University of Victoria. The journal was donated by Mrs. J. V. Bryant from Merritt, B.C., in September 1972, ensuring its availability for historical and literary research. For the

manuscript itself, there are 16 pieces of paper. The paper size of the first 12 sheets is 15.7*20.4 cm, while the paper size of the last 4 sheets is 11.3*17.8 cm.

Editorial Treatment

The digital edition I have created is diplomatic. The final version of my edition is based on the copy text of Page 1-5 and Page 24-28 of the manuscript. The reason I chose these two parts is that the first part records what Hayward saw when he first arrived at Quebec by sea, what he saw on deck, what he experienced when he went ashore and was ushered to *Immigration Offices* and *Luggage Dept*, and his experiences and the scenery he saw during his train journey; while the second part records mainly the scenery he saw when stopping halfway between Calgary and Vancouver.

“It is wonderful and needs the pencil of an artist to describe, and even then he could not do it full justice”(page 24), as Hayward wrote in his diary, he tried to use his pencil to describe the wonderful scenery he saw, “we have just passed one of the prettiest likes of the whole journey”(page 25-26). He recorded the pretty natural things he saw along the way in detail, including valleys, falls, streams, mountains, ferns, trees, rivers, lakes, etc., which I marked in the color of green. Through Hayward’s eyes, we gain a deeper appreciation of the natural world’s role in shaping the immigrant experience.

Hayward’s reflections on the natural beauty of Canada illuminate the broader experience of immigrants during this period. For many, like Hayward, the encounter with such a vast and

untamed landscape would have been unlike anything experienced in their home countries.

These natural elements often play a symbolic role in immigrant narratives, representing both the challenges and opportunities of new beginnings in a foreign land.

The detailed and affectionate documentation of Canada's nature in Hayward's diary not only enhances our understanding of the physical journey but also the emotional and psychological journey of immigrants. They encountered landscapes that were both daunting and awe-inspiring, reflecting the dual nature of their experiences—struggling with the challenges of relocation while being inspired by the promise of new possibilities.

A Window into the Canadian Landscape

The content of Hayward's diary is rich with descriptions of the Canadian landscape—mountains, rivers, lakes, and waterfalls—seen through the eyes of an immigrant. These descriptions not only document the physical journey but also reflect Hayward's personal impressions and emotional responses to the new and striking environments he encountered.

The diary entries are marked with specific dates and times, providing a chronological framework that adds to the historical value of the document.

Theoretical and Cultural Implications

As a single-witness document, Hayward's travelogue offers unique insights into the life of English immigrants in Canada during the early 1900s. It serves as a cultural artifact that helps historians and scholars understand the experiences of those who traveled across Canada at

that time. The travelogue also contributes to the broader genre of life writing, which encompasses diaries, biographies, memoirs, and more. This genre provides a more nuanced understanding of Canadian history and identity, particularly through the lens of personal narratives and everyday experiences.

Hayward's travelogue, like other historical diaries, stands as a testament to the personal histories that collectively contribute to the national narrative. It offers a personal perspective that complements historical records, providing a more rounded understanding of the immigrant experience in Canada. The preservation and study of such diaries help illuminate the personal side of historical events, showcasing the individual journeys that are often overshadowed by larger historical narratives.

This travelogue is a valuable document for both historical and literary fields. For researchers and enthusiasts of cultural and historical studies, Hayward's diary is not just a record of travel; it is a window into the past, offering insights into the everyday experiences and emotional landscapes of early twentieth-century immigrants. As such, it remains a crucial resource for understanding the complexities of Canadian cultural and historical identity.

(826 words)