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The Professionalization of History in English Canada

Donald A. Wright

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The study of history in Canada has a history of its own, and its development as an academic discipline is a multifaceted one. *The Professionalization of History in English Canada* charts the transition of the study of history from a leisurely pastime to that of a full-blown academic career for university-trained scholars - from the mid-nineteenth to the late twentieth century.

Donald Wright argues that professionalization was not, in fact, a benign process, nor was it inevitable. It was deliberate. Within two generations, historians saw the creation of a professional association - the Canadian Historical Association - and rise of an academic journal - the *Canadian Historical Review*. Professionalization was also gendered. In an effort to raise the status of the profession and protect the academic labour market for men, male historians made a concerted effort to exclude women from the academy.

History's professionalization is best understood as a transition from one way of organizing intellectual life to another. What came before professionalization was not necessarily inferior, but rather, a different perspective of history. As well, Wright argues convincingly that professionalization inadvertently led to a popular inverse: the amateur historian, whose work is often more widely received and appreciated by the general public.

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