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**Review of *The Mounted Police and Prairie Society, 1873 - 1919*,  
Edited by William M. Baker.**

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*The Mounted Police and Prairie Society, 1873-1919.* Edited by William M. Baker. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1998. Illustrations, tables. xvi + 363 pp. \$29.95 paper.

From its creation in 1873 until the end of the First World War, when it was given Dominion-wide responsibilities, the North West Mounted Police primarily enforced the law on the Canadian Prairies and in the Canadian North. By 1904, its reputation as an effective frontier Force was so positive it was designated the Royal North West Mounted Police. Until the 1970s, historical writing on the Force tended toward the antiquarian and overly reverential; since then it has become more searching. In this volume William M. Baker draws attention to some of the best work on the Force from the past quarter century, focusing on Police activities on the Prairies before the 1920s.

The opening essay by editor William M. Baker is a short and useful introduction to Mounted Police historiography. The closing selection, an epilogue by S. R. Hewitt, shows how and why the new "national" Force of the 1920s relied upon and benefitted from the favorable image of the "frontier" Mountie. Between these pieces are nineteen contributions organized into five sections. The first of these contains five items on the relationship of the Force to the Native peoples of the Prairies. The second offers three selections on the Mounties' ways and means of enforcing the law. Section three incorporates four essays on the Force's work among different occupational, ethnic, and religious groups. The impact of the Police on Prairie society and on the laudatory image of the Mounties held by Canadians

is the focus of the four discussions in section four. The final section contains three items on the Force's post-World War One transformation.

Almost all of the volume's selections have been published elsewhere, and the best of them can be easily found. Still, it is a benefit to have in one collection so many thoroughly researched, carefully documented items. Although it is unfortunate that only one article—on Police architecture—could be accompanied by photographs, Baker and the Canadian Plains Research Center deserve credit for creating such an attractive and functional volume and making it available at a reasonable price.

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