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Book Review

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BOOK REVIEW


This expensive book is unsatisfactory and disappointing in many ways, although such a book has been needed for a long time. Each of the thirteen original states is listed in alphabetical order, and a brief biographical sketch (usually one page or less) in chronological order is offered for each governor or acting-governor. When the same man was governor of more than one colony the same entry appears in each place, with no special weight for the jurisdiction under consideration. Each essay is followed by a selected bibliography. Rhode Island listings occupy forty pages and contain 36 biographies. As far as I can tell, none of the essays is the result of new or original research, and in some cases recent findings have been ignored. Stephen Hopkins’ pivotal role in the early years of the struggle for independence is not revealed in this book, even though it is quite evident in one of the sources cited in the bibliographical notes.

Students of colonial administration in America will be disappointed in this book because of its limited scope; a book with this title should include governors of the other British colonies, such as Hudson’s Bay, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Bermuda, Bahamas, East and West Florida, Jamaica, Barbados and the other West Indian Islands, and probably also the Dutch governors of New York/Nieuw Amsterdam, the Swedish governors of Delaware, and the French governors of Quebec and Louisiana. One would also expect to find portraits of many of the governors reproduced in this book, but there are none, not even a mention of where portraits can be found. All of this, of course, would have entailed the addition of many more pages, but the paper used in this book is so thick that twice as many pages of thinner paper could have been included for the same thickness of book with no sacrifice in clarity (as, for example, in Mark Mayo Boatner III: *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, New York, 1966). Even the typeface chosen for this book is unimaginative (an historical typeface, such as Garamond, Caslon, or Baskerville would have been appropriate). Finally, except for the author’s birthdate of 1946, there is no biographical information about Mr. Raimo. There is still a need for a good biographical directory of American colonial and Revolutionary governors, Mr. Raimo’s book does not fill the gap.

— J.F.M.