continued in the next chapter, which looks at the federal government’s imposition of print culture on Aboriginal people in the first 25 years of the twentieth century. Yet, Edwards shows that in many cases the Department of Indian Affairs only began using books and libraries as assimilative agents after Aboriginal people, such as Charles A. Cooke, requested them. The fourth chapter examines community development, philanthropy, and educational neglect from 1930 to 1960, concluding with a description of the efforts of Angus McGill Mowat, former head of Public Libraries Branch of the Ontario Department of Education, to establish a large public library at Moose Factory for the Cree and Ojibwa living there.

Paper Talk provides a cohesive and richly detailed narrative that outlines general patterns among Aboriginal people combined with illustrations of specific examples in local contexts. Edwards balances solid primary research with careful integration of published works in the field. The book will be of interest to scholars of both Aboriginal peoples and the history of the book.

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Richard Davies admits that “a good portion” (xi) of his life was consumed by this long-awaited biography of the Nova Scotia writer, Thomas Chandler Haliburton. In fact, Davies has devoted his scholarly career to Haliburton studies. He is editor of the essay collection, On Thomas Chandler Haliburton (1979); The Letters of Thomas Chandler Haliburton (1988); and the proceedings of the 1996 Thomas Raddall Symposium, published as The Haliburton Bi-centenary Chaplet (1997). His deep knowledge of Haliburton’s life and work is evident in this biographical study, the first to follow V.L.O. Chittick’s earlier publication, Thomas Chandler Haliburton (“Sam Slick”): A Study in Provincial Toryism (1924).

Contemporary scholars and readers find Haliburton difficult. As Davies argues, “Haliburton’s books are filled with language that disturbs and offends” (6). Haliburton’s work is rife with racist views
that appal today’s readers, foremost among them George Elliott Clarke, writer, critic, and seventh-generation African Canadian who was born and raised in Nova Scotia. In a recent article, Clarke responds to the challenge of his own question, “Must We Burn Haliburton?” by suggesting that the writer’s oeuvre “deserves to be quarantined” (Davies 6). Moreover, Haliburton’s misogynistic view of women and his extreme conservatism are regressive and unsettling. Hence, it is not surprising to learn that “university professors now find him unteachable” (6), and that McClelland & Stewart’s New Canadian Library edition of The Clockmaker (first series), Haliburton’s most influential and popular work, sells poorly.

In this sweeping study, Davies considers the historical, cultural, and social contexts that shaped Haliburton’s views, unpalatable as they have become. His project is neither recuperative, nor does it seek to neutralize the negative effect of the writer’s work. Rather, Davies posits Haliburton as a sober “reminder that his view of life was very much part of Canada’s living tradition until the 1950s and 1960s, when social attitudes were transformed in an era of improved civil rights” (6). Davies believes that a “detailed account of Haliburton is long overdue” (6) and this reviewer must concede to his view, no matter how offensive she finds aspects of that account.

Davies’s work was undertaken over many years and relies extensively on archival sources available in Canada, the United States, and Britain. His meticulous research has uncovered new information that he brings to this thorough portrait of Haliburton. In spite of his title, Inventing Sam Slick, Davies moves beyond the usual alignment of Haliburton with the main character of The Clockmaker series. Although Slick articulates many of his creator’s views, Haliburton, as drawn by Davies, is much more than the sum total of the clock peddler’s renowned wise saws and soft sawder. Shaped equally by his American (Yankee, in fact) and Scottish inheritance, Haliburton develops as a complex figure, at once lonely, autocratic, incisive, and pleasure-seeking; a writer, yeoman farmer, judge, parliamentarian, clubman, and gourmand. Davies limns the contradictory self-image of Haliburton as a gentleman whose writing, peppered with coarse vulgarity, established his international reputation as a humorist.

Davies’s biography represents a significant scholarly achievement. Founded on primary research and careful textual analysis of Haliburton’s extensive oeuvre of 19 books, Inventing Sam Slick will form the basis for further study of the writer. Its strengths are many. Clearly organized, it follows the chronology of Haliburton’s
life, including his numerous trips overseas to Britain and his
final residency in Isleworth. As much as possible, Davies traces
Haliburton’s family roots in Scotland and his connections with
family members – both known and unknown to the Canadian branch
of the Haliburtons – in Canada, the United States, and Britain.
Davies describes Haliburton’s several homes, especially Clifton, his
Windsor villa, and Gordon House, his rented Isleworth estate, as
symbolic of his gentlemanly aspirations and the outward signs of his
affluence. Haliburton’s education, his career as a politician, lawyer,
and judge in Nova Scotia, and Member of Parliament in London,
is examined alongside his vocation as author and his relationships
with other writers and publishers. The final chapters on Haliburton’s
parliamentary career, which draw heavily on the Hansard record, make
for ponderous reading. Haliburton emerges as a contradictory public
figure: a committed colonist who yearned to live in the motherland;
a Member of Parliament whose political views were embarrassingly
non-progressive; and a prolific writer who regularly reused material
and ideas.

Much is missing, however, from this portrait of Canada’s first
best-selling author whose popularity once rivalled that of Charles
Dickens. We learn little about Haliburton’s first wife, Louisa Neville,
for example, whom he met in Britain, and even less about their
marital relationship. It would appear that Louisa was especially self-
sacrificing. For one full year, while Haliburton pursued his literary
interests in Britain, she maintained the Windsor household and
cared for their many children, three of whom died at birth or in
infancy. Haliburton’s second wife, Sarah Harriet (Owen) Williams,
who shared the latter part of his life in Isleworth, although a more
developed personality, is presented through the lens of devoted
wife. Similarly, Haliburton’s relationship with his eldest son,
Thomas Chandler, who suffered throughout his life from mental
illness and died at age 26 of unknown causes in an insane asylum
in Massachusetts, warrants further investigation. No doubt a lack of
archival evidence accounts for the dearth of information pertaining
to Haliburton’s most intimate relationships.

Information abounds, however, about Haliburton relationships
with his various publishers in Canada, Britain, and the United
States. Given the importance of Haliburton’s literary career, it is
surprising that Davies devotes limited space to his connections with
Joseph Howe of Halifax, Richard Bentley of London, and Carey,
Lea & Blanchard of Philadelphia. Greater attention to Haliburton’s
publishing career would have enhanced Davies’s portrayal of an ambitious and industrious careerist. Davies attributes the first 1838 edition of *The Clockmaker* (second series) to Joseph Howe; in fact, that edition carried the double imprint of Joseph Howe and Richard Bentley. Further, although he takes careful notice of Haliburton’s racist view of blacks and his defence of slavery, Davies ignores the author’s similarly abominable treatment of women in his work.

Finally, I must note the unfortunate number of typographical errors that mar this otherwise attractive book. Errors appear throughout the text, as well as the index. A final proofreading would have ensured both the accuracy and intelligibility of Davies’s important study of the life and work of Thomas Chandler Haliburton.

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From the perspective of anonymous authorship, the Canadian writer Leslie McFarlane (1902–77) presents a bibliographical challenge. Watters’s *A Checklist of Canadian Literature and Background Materials 1628–1960* (2nd ed., 1972) is not especially helpful. Watters records that McFarlane is the author of two works of mystery fiction, *Streets of Shadow* and *The Murder Tree*, both published by Dutton in 1930 and 1931, respectively. Databases such as AMICUS and WorldCat indicate that he was quite prolific in the 1960s and 1970s. According to AMICUS, he was involved in the production of nine films issued by the National Film Board of Canada between 1946 and 1955. AMICUS also has two intriguing bibliographic entries where McFarlane’s authorship appears to be assumed or implied: Franklin W. Dixon’s *The Mystery of Cabin Island* [1929] and Carolyn Keene’s *The Bungalow Mystery* (1960; no mention of his authorship of the book’s first publication in 1930). These two books belong, of course, to famous series of children’s books: the mysteries of the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew. In his autobiography *Ghost of the Hardy Boys* (1976), McFarlane claimed that during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, he ghost wrote many books for the Stratemeyer Syndicate in the