

Lord Beaverbrook Extraordinary Canadians

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press baron entrepreneur art collector and wartime minister in churchill s cabinet max aitken was a colonial canadian extraordinaire rising from a hardscrabble childhood in new brunswick he became a millionaire at age 25 earned the title of lord beaverbrook at 38 and by age 40 was the most influential newspaperman in the world fiercely loyal to the british empire he was nonetheless patronized by london s upper class whose country he worked tirelessly to protect during world war ii david adams richards one of

canada s preeminent novelists celebrates beaverbrook s heroic achievements in this perceptive interpretive biography

stephen leacock s satiric masterpiece sunshine sketches of a little town captures the empire forever mentality that marked anglo canadian life in the early decades of the twentieth century historian margaret macmillan whose books women of the raj and paris 1919 cast fresh light on the colonial legacy has great affection for leacock s gentle wit and sharp eyed insight the renowned historian examines leacock s life as a poor but ambitious student who rose to become an economist celebrated academic and most importantly the beloved humorist who taught canadians to laugh at themselves

canada has no better interpreter than prolific writer and thinker john ralston saul here he argues that canada did not begin in 1867 indeed its foundation was laid by two visionary men louis hippolyte lafontaine and robert baldwin the two leaders of lower and upper canada respectively worked together after the 1841 union to lead a reformist movement for responsible government run by elected citizens instead of a colonial governor but it was during the great ministry of 1848 51 that the two politicians implemented laws that created a more equitable country they revamped judicial institutions created a public education system made bilingualism official designed a network of public roads began a public postal system and reformed municipal governance faced with opposition and even violence the two men polar opposites in temperament united behind a set of principles and programs that formed modern canada writing with verve and deep conviction saul restores these two extraordinary canadians to rightful prominence

press baron entrepreneur art collector and wartime minister in churchill s cabinet max aitken was a colonial canadian extraordinaire rising from a hardscrabble childhood in new brunswick he became a millionaire at age 25 earned the title of lord beaverbrook at 38 and by age 40 was the most influential newspaperman in the world fiercely loyal to the british empire he was nonetheless patronized by london s upper class whose country he worked tirelessly to protect during world war ii david adams richards one of canada s preeminent novelists celebrates beaverbrook s heroic achievements in this perceptive interpretive biography

roddy mackenzie s father served in bomber command during the second world war

but like so many brave veterans who had survived the war he spoke little of his exploits so when roddy started on his personal journey to discover something of what his father had achieved he uncovered a great deal about the devastating effectiveness of bomber command and the vital role it played in the defeat of third reich he realised that the true story of bomber command s achievements has never been told nor fully acknowledged roddy became a man on a mission and this startlingly revealing and often personal study is the result bomber command churchill s greatest triumph takes the reader through the early days of the second world war and introduces all the key individuals who turned the command into the war winning weapon it eventually became as well as detailing the men and machines which flew night after night into the heart of hitler s germany the main focus of his book is the destruction and dislocation wrought by the bombing to reduce and ultimately destroy germany s ability to make war in his analysis roddy dug deep into german archival material to uncover facts rarely presented to either german or english language readers these demonstrate that bomber command s continual efforts at appalling cost in aircrew casualties and aircraft losses did far more damage to the reich than the allies knew roddy s father served with the royal canadian air force and roddy naturally highlights its contribution to bomber command s successes another aspect of this fascinating story which the author believes has not been duly recognized bomber command churchill s greatest triumph will certainly raise the debate on the controversial strategy adopted by bomber harris and how he was perceived by many to have over stepped his remit but most of all this book will revise people s understanding of just how important the endeavours were of those men who flew through the dark and through the searchlights the flak and the enemy night fighters to bring the second world war in europe to its crushing conclusion

once voted the greatest canadian of all time tommy douglas was a prairie politician who believed in democratic socialism the crucial role of civil rights and the great potential of cooperation for the common good he is best known as the father of medicare born in 1904 douglas was a championship boxer and a baptist minister who later exchanged his pulpit for a political platform a powerful orator and tireless activist he sat first as a federal mp and then served for 17 years as premier of saskatchewan where he introduced the universal health insurance system that would eventually be adopted across canada as leader of the national ndp he was a staunch advocate of programs such as the canada pension plan and was often the conscience of

parliament on matters of civil liberties in the process he made democratic socialism a part of mainstream canadian political life pub desc

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aristocrat democrat diplomat cultural advocate anglophile fiercely proud canadian vincent massey was a complex sometimes enigmatic figure this finely crafted portrait of massey s middle and later years drawn extensively from its subject s diaries and papers recalls a life of deep commitment to the service of his country and its culture from 1935 to 1946 he served as canada s high commissioner to london a role for which he was perfectly suited his love of english traditions and values was exceeded only by his intense canadian patriotism he served well the courage and generosity of vincent and alice massey made them favourites with canadian servicemen in britain during the war years his familiarity with and enthusiasm for all royal ritual was invaluable to the canadian delegations during the ceremonies surrounding the coronation of george vi his proud representation of canada s cultural accomplishments opened british doors to many canadian artists the years in london were happy ones for massey at home as he was in the country life of the english upper classes they were followed by a period of frustration mackenzie king was minister of external affairs as well as prime minister during massey s stint as high commissioner and was therefore massey s immediate superior relations between the two were never very warm mackenzie king considered massey a snob with dangerous ambitions and when massey returned to canada contemplating a political position possibly a cabinet post his path was completely blocked for a time massey returned to the academic environment he so enjoyed as chancellor of the university of toronto but two of his greatest achievements were still to come one was the establishment of the royal commission on culture which bore his name and led ultimately to the creation of the canada council the other was his appointment as governor general the first canadian ever to hold the post claude bissell has followed his award winning book the young vincent massey with another superbly written volume that explores the attitudes prejudices commitments and passions that shaped massey s life this is a revealing portrait of a man whose contributions continue to enrich the lives of canadians

love him or hate him pierre elliot trudeau makes us all the man whose motto was reason over passion managed to arouse in canadians fierce passions of every hue

big bear 1825 1888 was a plains cree chief in saskatchewan at a time when aborigines were confronted with the disappearance of the buffalo and waves of european settlers that seemed destined to destroy the indian way of life in 1876 he refused to sign treaty no 6 until 1882 when his people were starving big bear advocated negotiation over violence but when the federal government refused to negotiate with aboriginal leaders some of his followers killed 9 people at frog lake in 1885 big bear himself was arrested and imprisoned rudy wiebe author of a governor general s award winning novel about big bear revisits the life of the eloquent statesman one of canada s most important aboriginal leaders

glenn gould one of the twentieth century s most renowned classical musicians was also known as an eccentric genius solitary headstrong a hypochondriac virtuoso abandoning stage performances in 1964 gould concentrated instead on mastering various media recordings radio television and print his sudden death at age fifty stunned the world but his music and legacy continue to inspire philosopher and critic mark kingwell regards gould as an innovative thinker whose ideas about music governed his life but those ideas were contradictory mischievous and deliberately provocative just as gould played twenty one takes to record the opening aria in the famed 1955 goldberg variations kingwell offers twenty one takes on gould s life each version offers a different interpretation of the man but in each kingwell is sensitive to the complex harmonies and dissonances that sounded throughout the life of the great gould

for more than 50 years lord beaverbrook born plain max aitken in canada in 1879 was a key figure in british public life press baron cabinet minister friend and collaborator of the rich and famous in this ground breaking biography the authors have drawn upon dozens of interviews and hitherto unexplored documentary material to create a fascinating portrait of the man and his times

for the first time the fully documented story of the unravelling of the beaverbrook legacy from humble beginnings max aitken later lord beaverbrook rose to the heights of politics and business his philanthropy knew no bounds or so it seemed in the late 1950s he built the beaverbrook art gallery in fredericton as a gift to the people of new brunswick and stocked it with a large collection of masterworks that form the core of the gallery s prestigious collection today the paintings are at the centre of a bitter battle between the gallery and the two charitable beaverbrook foundations a battle

that has rocked the art world on both sides of the atlantic but the beaverbrook dispute is only part of this intriguing story in this fascinating account jacques poitras explores the intertwined history of the aitken family and the beaverbrook gallery sifting through beaverbrook s own correspondence public and archival records in canada and england and interviews with friends and foes including those involved in the dispute poitras disentangles the exploits of the original lord beaverbrook and the uncertain fortunes of a once influential family

norman bethune was a surgeon medical inventor tumultuous romantic and advocate for the poor

he was the most unlikely leader straightforward uninterested in personal wealth unprepossessing yet his charisma affected even those who disliked his political aim to achieve independence for quebec rene levesque was born into a quebec dominated by the catholic church rural values and anglophone control of business he was part of the 1960s quiet revolution that saw the province become a secular society bent on economic success and for some political independence a journalist war reporter and television host levesque channelled his communication skills into a political career that encompassed the most tumultuous periods in canadian history as founder of the parti quebecois he held a close referendum in 1980 that proved wrenching for canadian unity and permanently altered the country s political landscape acclaimed novelist and translator daniel poliquin offers a unique portrait of levesque the man and politician at once affectionate critical and incisive

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