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Sommario/riassunto

This unique study draws on biographical dictionaries as a collective portrait of the emerging Canadian middle class in the last half of the nineteenth century. The works compiled by Henry James Morgan, George MacLean Rose, and William Cochrane, and published between 1862 and 1903, reveal not only the life-course patterns of "representative" Canadians, but personal and social motivations driving the selection process. The complex of occupation, mobility and opportunity, networking, the meaning of success, and contrasts between the representation of men and women, are analyzed with an eye to the "structure of feeling" that characterized Canadian culture and national consciousness in this period. The National Album is a major contribution to Canadian studies, particularly to the flourishing interest in biography and autobiography, and to the interdisciplinary field of historical sociology.
