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Inventing Sam Slick: A Biography of Thomas Chandler Haliburton

Richard A. Davies

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Thomas Chandler Haliburton (1796–1865) was one of pre-confederation Canada's best-known authors. His popular 'Sam Slick the Clockmaker' character was a household name not only in his home country, but also in England and the United States.

Born in Windsor, Nova Scotia, Haliburton was not only a writer, but also a lawyer, judge, politician, and historian. He gained fame for his writing in 1836 with *The Clockmaker: or, the Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville* for a Halifax newspaper. It became a hit in England and was followed by six sequels. Although Haliburton tried to put Sam Slick aside and work in other genres, he found himself invariably returning to the character in his later books. This commitment to Slick resulted in a curious effacement of Haliburton's own personal gentlemanly identity, which he spent the second half of his life affirming by fostering links with socially well connected family in England. In the public imagination, however, he remained linked with Sam Slick.

Based on over ten years of archival research, Richard A. Davies's scholarly biography of Haliburton is the first since 1924. It is an engaging examination of a controversial and contradictory Canadian writer and significant figure in the history of pre-confederation Nova Scotia.

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