

The colony's population expanded in wartime after 1775 to no more than approximately 17,000, including the military, before the influx of about 29,000 Loyalist refugees in 1783. By 1800, when the gender balance in the colony was more balanced than earlier, there were between 60,000 and 66,000 souls, most of them very poor.

Marble adds much detail to this. He demonstrates that arrivals in wartime in the 1750s, 1770s, and 1790s of large numbers of troops and seamen created epidemics in Halifax and its environs. With them came hundreds of soldiers' wives and children, along with camp followers, many of whom were abandoned at Halifax when the regiments departed. As the medical men treated mainly soldiers and seamen for smallpox, Marble's account provides a great deal more information about the poor in Halifax than hitherto has been attempted. In addition, from his laboriously researched study of those whose death we have a record of in this era, we know that of the 2,800 whose age is known half were minors; 42 per cent had not reached their eleventh birthday. His death list of almost 11,500 individuals — a rare historical data base — if reconstituted, could be subject to far more analysis than Marble attempts.

Dr. Marble's scholarly enterprise straddles several fields. Not only is he a widely published professor in the Technical University of Nova Scotia and director of research in Dalhousie's Department of Surgery, but also a noted Nova Scotia genealogist, well known for his capacity to comb almost every manuscript likely to reveal something useful to the several historical topics he simultaneously pursues. Always very generous in sharing his research with others, he places Nova Scotia historians doubly in his debt for reminding them of how little of the province's early history they have yet written.

Julian Gwyn  
*University of Ottawa*

Serge Gagnon — *Mariage et famille au temps de Papineau*, Sainte-Foy, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1993, 300 p.

*Mariage et famille* is a study of the aspects of the institution of marriage in Lower Canada between 1790 and 1830 that can be deduced from religious archives. The bulk of the documentation is drawn from letters sent to the bishops by curés seeking clarification on how to deal with specific problems among their parishioners, or seeking permission to allow couples to marry who fell within the prohibited degrees of kinship or who required episcopal permission for other reasons. Thus the major focus is the French-speaking and Catholic population, although there are glimpses of the problems immigration caused in determining, for example, the validity of a marriage candidate's claim of widowhood. Protestant theology is not the subject of the book, but protestantism plays a large role, as the mere threat to be married by a protestant minister could at times precipitate the desired dispensation from the bishop.

This correspondence between curés and the different bishops is rich and revealing. Social historians will be fascinated by some of the glimpses Gagnon gives us of subjects as diverse as sexuality in and outside marriage, homosexuality, impotence, family violence, or forced operations on women unable to have sex. They will also find useful his descriptions of the different positions taken by bishops across the period, of the religious process leading to church marriage, of how people went about getting dispensations to marry kin, and of the various ways in which Catholics resisted church rigidity.

Most fascinating are the reasons for giving dispensations to marry kin, which clearly reveal gendered aspects of the importance of kin as a social security system. The bishop would grant dispensation for cousins to marry if the woman, but not the man, was ugly, if she or her family had a bad reputation, or if she was 24 years of age or older and therefore unlikely to find another partner. If either partner was widowed or supporting elderly parents, the couple was more likely to receive a dispensation. Falling in love, by contrast, was not sufficient grounds for a dispensation to marry.

Couples bent on marriage readily found ways to push the authorities to offer the required dispensation. Resistance could verge on blackmail as couples took up residence together, got pregnant, or threatened to go to the United States or to a Protestant minister to marry. Church authorities retaliated. Those trying such strategies and then repenting in order to have a Catholic marriage were humiliated in the church, forced to live separately for some time, and forced to show their repentance in diverse ways.

How common were such marriages between kin? Gagnon, no quantitative historian, is clearly uncomfortable when using figures. His attempts to count the extent of close-kin marriages are confusing. Well aware of the relative unimportance of close-kin marriages, Gagnon uses the other chapters of his book to examine aspects of marriage for the wider population. He examines other kinds of limits on the individual's freedom to marry; the process of getting married, starting with the marriage contract, to the interview with the curé, and culminating in the ceremony; and finally some of the problems with marriages including violence, drunkenness, desertion, bigamy, and the role curés and bishops played in these situations.

This is a book full of interesting and important information, but its parts are stronger than the whole. There is unnecessary repetition between and within chapters. Gagnon deals largely with what he can see in the correspondence or in biographies of a few leading men of the time. He might have pondered more on the limitations of such sources. Too often the chapters comprise a series of examples without sustained explanation. Instead of analysis, Gagnon is given to throw-away comments. Nowhere is this clearer than in the conclusion. Instead of pulling together what he has revealed about the institution of marriage in this crucially important period, he uses the conclusion to outline what has changed since and to air his concerns about the state of the family and society today.

There is a contradiction between what his book teaches us about families in the past and the lessons he appears to want us to learn in his conclusion. The final pages of *Mariage et famille* lament the peril facing families today and by extension

facing Quebec culture. The increase in divorce and women's unwillingness to marry and have children for fear of being left alone are presented as reasons to worry about the perpetuation of French culture in America, indeed about the survival of society. Yet his book has revealed some of the horrors of family life in the past. In the period he studied couples chose to live together without church sanction; men drank up family resources and abused their wives physically and emotionally. He presents evidence of parents forcing their children to marry and of racism in communities and within the church hierarchy about marriages between First Nations men and women and French Canadians. He explains in detail the problems caused by the lack of divorce and the complicity of church officials in encouraging women to stay in violent marriages. He also demonstrates the exhaustion and depression of women like Julie Papineau who were constantly pregnant and unhappy about their marriage, despite its start as a marriage of love.

Bettina Bradbury  
York University

Mary Lu MacDonald — *Literature and Society in the Canadas, 1817–1850*.  
Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992. Pp. viii, 360.

In this ambitious study, Mary Lu MacDonald examines literature and society in Upper and Lower Canada from 1817 to 1850. Arguing that too many critical theories about Canada's early literature are based on late twentieth-century attitudes, and thus analyze and explain a "perceived failure", her study is an attempt to place this literature in its proper historical context, correct some of the misunderstandings which have emerged, and spark further study and re-evaluation. Such impressive goals are matched by a methodological commitment to "assemble all the extant literary works [both French and English] whether published in book, periodical, or newspaper format", provide biographical information about the writers wherever possible, decipher what was expected of this literature, and then analyze and evaluate the resulting information "by use of political, economic, demographic, religious, gender, linguistic and other explanatory models" (p. 4).

In actuality, because of the small number of writers in the far from densely populated Canadas, the cast of characters examined is not large. MacDonald is analyzing the literary output of 108 writers, comprised of 78 English-language and 30 French-language authors. Each of these groups can be further subdivided into 18 Canadian-born versus 60 British- and American-born writers in English, and 27 Canadian-born versus three European-born writers in French. Women are badly under-represented with only one female French author and 17 female English authors.

MacDonald moves quickly and at times all too briefly through discussions of matters such as the distribution of the literature; its social expectations and basic themes; the consciousness of nationality, politics, history, and landscape; and perceptions of social relationships. On occasion one wishes the sweep of topics