

DONALD B. SMITH. — *Le Sauvage: The Native People in Quebec-Historical Writing on the Heroic Period (1534-1663) of New France* Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1974.

This is a very good survey of Quebec historical writing as it refers to Amerindians during the opening years of New France. Donald Smith has confined himself to writers whose mother tongue was French, who were born within the present-day boundaries of Canada and who produced their historical works there. The historians thus included range from Joseph-François Perrault (1753-1844), who wrote the first French-language Canadian history, to today's André Vachon, Lucien Campeau and Marcel Trudel. What this study demonstrates very clearly is our need to re-assess the accepted history of the founding of New France.

Until recently, the prevailing view of the Amerindian was that he was "savage", that is, a bloodthirsty fiend. It was a view that was generally accepted by historians; those who defended him could think of no better way of doing so than by labelling him "le bon sauvage." One of those who did this, Maximilien Bibaud (1824-1887), also reached the conclusion that Amerindians were civilized. But it remained an isolated opinion. As French-Canadian nationalism monopolized attention, there was less and less for Amerindians until they all but disappeared from histories. Today they are returning under better auspices as historians are acknowledging that Amerindians, too, have a claim to "le droit et la raison." (That was the position taken by Napoleon Legendre in a paper presented to the Royal Society of Canada in 1884.)

The limits of Smith's study are inherent in the boundaries he has set for himself. In isolating French-Canadian historians for scrutiny, he has partially retained their context of contemporary Western thought, but has not avoided over-simplification. Reading this work, one could easily be lulled into the belief that the historians under consideration created "le cruel sauvage" or "le bon sauvage" from the experiences of New France. The truth, of course, is that these concepts were already very old when the colony was being established. Those who are under the impression that settlers faced an entirely new horror when they lost their scalps to Amerindians should be reminded of the difficulties of the Romans with scalp-hunting Scythians. Those same Romans used the virtues of the noble savage to criticize the vices of their society (for example, Tacitus). Amerindians were in their turn cast into such a role vis-à-vis European society from the days of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera (1455-1526). The idealized savage as critic of civilization was far from being a nineteenth-century idea, as Smith implies (100).

Similarly, when François-Xavier Garneau (1809-1866) maintained that Amerindians had no religion, he was not making an original observation but was perpetuating a notion that had originated with Columbus and had been repeated *ad nauseam* until well into the nineteenth century. When Abbé H.R. Casgrain (1831-1904) and Abbé J.P.A. Maurault (1819-1871) theorized that God had decimated the Amerindians because of the barbarous way they had treated settlers, they were writing remarkably like Spanish historians of the sixteenth century. As Smith indicates, they relied too heavily on documents at the expense of oral evidence (70, 93). Their error lay in having been men of their times; none of them rose above his social climate.

When Smith says that "le Sauvage" was an image produced during the late nineteenth century (102), he is taking much too restricted a view even within the limits of his study. Admittedly, the second half of the nineteenth century proliferated in speculations as to the superiority and inferiority of races; but this merely reinforced an already existant image of "le sauvage" with so-called "scientific"

reasoning. The pejorative view of the savage reached its widest acceptance during the twentieth century, as Smith points out. This occurred with the introduction of compulsory history in the schools at a time when "le cruel sauvage" was the prevailing stereotype. "Le bon sauvage" never received such diffusion, not even with the best efforts of Grey Owl. While on the subject of that enterprising Englishman, why say he was accepted as being of partial Amerindian descent? (77). He passed as an Amerindian, pure and simple.

One could ask if it is really true that "contemporary French-Canadians, having accepted the secular values of the new urban, and industrial society, have abandoned the concepts of the old" (88). That reads rather like those early enthusiastic reports of conversions that were said to have transformed Amerindians from "sauvages" into "hommes policés" by the simple act of baptism. Changing a traditional viewpoint is not the work of a day, as Jesuit missionaries observed of Amerindians.

An excellent bibliographic guide greatly adds to the value of this study as a tool for students of Amerindian aspects of our history. It is to be regretted, however, that the editing of this useful work was so summarily done.

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ROBERT F. LEGGET. — *Ottawa Waterway: Gateway to a Continent*. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975. 291 pp., \$15.00.

*Ottawa Waterway* is, in places, a well written, entertaining and informative book but, at the same time, for those with some knowledge of the history of the Ottawa Valley, it proves to be disappointing reading. Legget himself styles it as "liquid history." The emphasis is very much on the river, "greatest tributary of the River St. Lawrence" and "gateway to the continent." To the author it is the "River of Canada" and "a vital part of this country's cultural heritage."

All this creates a rather romantic, almost epic setting. This mood is intensified by Legget's masterly second chapter which provides a physical description of the river, replete with simple but accurate maps and diagrams as well as lengthy quotations from T.C. Keefer and Sir William Logan, both admirers of the rugged beauty of the Ottawa River. Here Legget is in his element and writes with measured thoroughness. Unfortunately the author rarely reaches this form again in the remainder of the book. Only his chapter on "Canals and Steamboats" can be classed as a real contribution to historical knowledge. It is based on original research and provides interesting portraits of early canal building and the difficulties connected with transportation on the River. Other chapters on the fur trade, lumbering and settlement, however, are very weak efforts at best. They are, for the most part, based on secondary sources and local histories. At times even the most standard and readily available works have obviously not been consulted. For instance in the chapter on lumbering no use seems to have been made of A. R. M. Lower's long-published books on the forest industry or Michael Cross' more recent study of the Ottawa lumbering community, not to mention the fine primary collections at the Public Archives of Canada which detail the growth of the lumber industry in the Ottawa Valley.

Much of the problem with the book appears to be its emphasis on those who used the River primarily as a transportation route to and from the interior and not on those who chose the area as their home. In some mysterious way Legget finds