

were probably around 500 (not a mere 20 or more) missionary and philanthropic agencies established in Victorian Britain, many of which had connections with British North America (p. 181).

Nonetheless, I was pleased to see the author devote an entire chapter to missionary agencies, clearly an understudied subject among Canadian religious historians. Yet, here again, brevity and compression lead to inaccuracies. The Colonial Church and School Society had its roots in two earlier societies, the Newfoundland School Society (established in 1823) and the Colonial Church Society (established in 1835 as the Western Australia Mission Society). Not until 1851 did they merge to form the Colonial Church and School Society. The name was not changed to the Colonial and Continental Church Society until 1861. Nor is it accurate to suggest that “its involvement in Canada was limited to supporting a handful of ministers” (p. 185). In fact, the CCSS operated a multi-dimensional mission to British North America. In Quebec alone, it was noted for its own mission to French Canada and for laying the foundations for teacher training in the Montreal region.

A number of influential Protestants are either ignored altogether or given only the briefest of mentions. Among these are George Brown, founder of the Toronto *Globe* newspaper and leader of the Reform party in mid-nineteenth-century Ontario; George Munro Grant, principal of Queen’s University and leading spokesman for a strand of liberal Evangelicalism within Presbyterianism; and Sir John William Dawson, Victorian Canada’s leading natural scientist, principal of McGill University, president of the Dominion Evangelical Alliance, and implacable opponent of Roman Catholic ultramontaniam.

Not all readers will subscribe to the ecumenical agenda that Choquette seems to be advancing in his conclusion. This, however, should not detract from the central point of this book, namely that “[d]uring most of Canada’s history, religious identity was a key one in the composition of the overall identity of most Canadians” (p. 438). While specialists will continue to look to books like *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* edited by Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin (Oxford University Press, 1996) for its comprehensiveness, attention to detail, and balanced treatment of a wide variety of subjects, general readers and undergraduates will benefit enormously from the history of religion in Canada found in this book.

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DEVINE, Heather — *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660–1900*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004. Pp. ix, 338.

The discipline of history has for some time been promoting a multidisciplinary approach to scholarly research and analysis, yet the results have remained at times limited and uneven. Fur trade and Aboriginal historians have made great strides in their studies by incorporating disciplines such as social anthropology, geography,

and to a lesser extent archeology. This has led to the discovery of previously untapped sources, both oral and written, and to the development of ethno-history as a viable and serious academic discipline. Heather Devine's book *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660–1900* is a fine addition to this field as she seeks the ambitious task of re-integrating genealogy into the larger historical narrative.

Devine's work follows the story of the Desjarlais family, beginning with Jean-Jacques De Gerlaise (b.1643) of St. Paul's parish in present-day Belgium. The genealogical study follows his migration with the Carignan-Salières regiment to New France, his subsequent settlement in Rivière-du-Loup, the gradual involvement of his descendants in the fur trade, and the evolution of a mixed Euro-Aboriginal bloodline stretching from the St. Lawrence Valley to the Athabasca region in the northwest and to St. Louis in the south. In doing this, Devine argues that kinship networks were central to the Desjarlais and other mixed-blood families and influenced crucial social, economic, and political decisions, which came to shape Métis ethnic identity. Devine rightly explains that the study of Aboriginal and Métis identity is not just a scholarly debate, but has broader contemporary political and social implications. She goes as far as to argue that those kin obligations, which she claims took precedence over other considerations, have continued to wield considerable influence among the descendants of these Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal groups. Therefore, to understand the Aboriginal past through the lens of genealogy and kinship is not simply to revise our historical understanding, but also a way of comprehending contemporary Aboriginal and Métis communities.

With a seamless merger of genealogy and social anthropology, Devine goes about showing how kinship ties were affected by and responded to geographical, political, and economic circumstances. Of particular interest is the comparison of the Desjarlais in St. Louis, who developed a wide and diverse set of family forms including polygamy, with those involved in the Montreal trade, who favoured monogamy or serial monogamy. Through this comparison she does an excellent job of showing the complexities of family life in St. Louis, while tearing down the imaginary wall of the 49th parallel that is too often present in studies of the West. Unfortunately, she then spends the rest of the book focusing on the developing identities of mixed-blood populations in Red River and the Athabasca region, leaving the reader with a sense that the story of St. Louis is unfinished. Still, it is a formidable accomplishment that will undoubtedly prompt new questions and further study.

The remainder of the book details the rise of the Desjarlais as influential economic agents, or freemen, in the Athabasca region during the intense fur trade rivalry between the Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It finishes with the subsequent fall from grace of the Athabasca Desjarlais following the merger of the companies in 1821, and the difficult decisions faced by mixed-blood populations in Red River and the Athabasca region in light of the new fur trade monopoly, government intervention, the introduction of scrip, and treaties one through eight. Perhaps what is destined to be Devine's most controversial argument is her assertion that biological *métissage* was secondary in the process of Métis ethno-genesis to economic, geographical, and cul-

tural circumstances. She argues that kinship ties came to bear differently in the Athabasca region than in Red River due to differences in the geographical landscape, the late arrival of Catholic missions, and the delayed introduction of treaties and scrip in the Athabasca region. For Devine, this resulted in the settlement of the Métis in Red River and the Qu'Appelle Valley, while those in the Athabasca region who did not become deeply and inextricably interwoven with the Aboriginal communities became scattered or lived on the fringes of reserves in poverty. This argument may generate serious debate in the contemporary political sphere, where the nuances of identity and its historical origins can have very real implications regarding land claims, rights, and compensation.

A book as ambitious in scope and as profound in its conclusions as this one is bound to raise several points of contention. Devine has done an excellent job of merging her genealogical study with the broader historical narrative, and those familiar with Canadian fur trade, Aboriginal, and western history will find numerous points of reference. Despite this, at times the names and lineages become too detailed. The book provides an Internet link to view the genealogical information; however, a few tree diagrams would have been an invaluable addition. Secondly, one sometimes wonders how far kin relations extended. In many cases these were highly transient people, but how far down the family tree did the obligations go, and were there geographical limits? This is something that is never truly defined. Finally, this book deals heavily with motivation: the motivation to move from Europe to New France; to settle; to enter the fur trade; to marry into Aboriginal families; to migrate to the south and north-west; and finally to identify as a group. Can the Desjarlais family, and the motivations of its family members, represent mixed-blood populations? Devine explains at several points throughout the book that the Desjarlais were exceptions in terms of their stature and success in the Athabasca. How, then, can they serve as a model for the whole? Early modernists might take exception with 300 years of European history being summarized in five pages, while New France and pre-Confederation Quebec historians may take issue with Devine's interpretation of the motivation behind entering the fur trade and leaving for the *pays d'en haut*. Neither point takes away from this strong piece of academic scholarship that proposes an innovative and highly multidisciplinary approach. From a useful glossary of terms to the detailed appendices and notes, this book provides insights for students and teachers alike and will undoubtedly prompt a reassessment of our historical understanding of the fur trade, Aboriginals, and the West.

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DUFOUR, Andrée, et Micheline DUMONT — *Brève histoire des institutrices au Québec de la Nouvelle-France à nos jours*. Montréal, Boréal, 2004, 220 p.

L'image de la maîtresse d'école, de l'enseignante ou de l'institutrice est constante dans l'évolution de l'éducation des jeunes Québécois et Québécoises. Le souvenir