

l'univers juridique dans le monde social concret des individus, constituent des propositions essentielles, parmi d'autres, pour mieux comprendre la culture juridique actuelle et ses enjeux.

Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentine

GAY, Daniel — *Les Noirs du Québec : 1629–1900*, Sillery, Septentrion, 2005, 482 p.

If ever there were a field in which any new book, irrespective of its quality, would have what the French call the merit of simply existing, the history of Blacks in Quebec would be one. In the United States, there is a rich and voluminous literature covering the ways in which people of African ancestry, both by their active contributions to building society and through the effect of their collective presence on the White majority, have fundamentally shaped the nation's law and culture. In contrast, despite the publication of a few notable texts such as Marcel Trudel's pioneering studies on slavery in New France and Dorothy Williams's twin works on Montreal's Black community (as well as limited coverage in Robin Winks's *The Blacks in Canada* and other works on Afro-Canadians), the evolution of Black life in *la belle province* remains largely unknown, especially in the period before the twentieth century. This has been both a fascinating story in itself — two centuries of slavery and Black resistance, first in New France and then under British rule; the migrations and development of Black populations after the final end of slavery in 1833; the place of Blacks within the dominant English-French Canadian dyad and their connections with other groups; the cultural production and iconography surrounding the Black presence — and part of the larger epic of Blacks in North America. It is thus regrettable that more attention has not been paid to exploring not only the experience of Blacks in Quebec, but the parallels and differences it offers with that of other Black Americans. Daniel Gay, a retired professor of sociology at Laval University, undertakes in a new book to fill some of this gap, with the stated goals of making Blacks in Quebec aware of their long history and of underlining their contributions to others. His effort deserves serious attention as well as warm praise.

Gay's work is divided into three parts. The first is a chronological history of residents of African ancestry in the territory that became modern Quebec. In addition to anecdotal information, this section boasts a detailed enumeration of the Black population. Using an impressive database of newspaper accounts and other sources, the author revises Marcel Trudel's statistics regarding the number of Blacks in Quebec. Similarly, the author lists all recorded mixed marriages — his point being that the apparent "disappearance" of Quebec's Blacks after slavery resulted not only from post-emancipation emigration, but also from their intermarrying and absorption into the larger population (in the process adding an important African element to the gene pool of today's Québécois). The second part of the work discusses the various artistic and literary depictions of Blacks by White Québécois, both at home and abroad. The

author investigates paintings, popular songs, advertisements, and other cultural production. The final section explores racial theories contributing to the “whitening” of Quebec’s population and its embrace of paternalist attitudes towards Blacks (such as through the missionary activities of the Catholic Church).

Gay’s chief strength is his exhaustive research. He draws material from an impressive diversity of sources in both English and French and includes in his corpus everything from visits by nineteenth-century Black American entertainers and abolitionist lecturers (although interestingly, he neglects the celebrated visits of virtuoso American pianist Blind Tom) to stories of Black migrations to rural areas, considered previously as lacking any past Black population. The author also deserves credit for his emphasis on the transnational experience of Quebec’s Blacks and their longstanding links with the Caribbean, the United States, Europe, and Africa.

The work is not without certain drawbacks, in many cases tied up with its benefits. The author’s analysis of iconography is sometimes superficial, and he fails to draw on the rich historiography of slavery and resistance produced by such historians as Kenneth Stampp, Eugene Genovese, Peter Wood, and others. The work also suffers from a lack of coherence and even a certain sloppiness, which dilutes the power of its conclusions. For example, Gay’s statistical reckoning is unclear. Although he convincingly adds to the numbers previously considered, he also reproduces these numbers in future census totals, ignoring the distinct possibility that Blacks present in Quebec during one decade had died or left before the next. Similarly, the author exaggerates the rate of intermarriage by including among his “racially mixed” marriages unions between Blacks and “mulattos”, people who would also be considered Black under the “one drop of blood” rule dominant in North America. The same over-counting occurs on a more symbolic level: on two occasions the author reproduces nineteenth-century paintings of Quebec scenes with Black representation, and each time overstates the number of discernibly Black faces. (One trivial but perhaps indicative error: the author’s name is misspelled as “Guay” on the book’s spine.) Still, the work provides a new and powerful reinterpretation of Black life, and one that rightly moves the racial question back to the centre in the history of Quebec. As an immigrant myself who studies racial minorities, I can only cheer the determination of Gay, who arrived from Haiti in 1971, to sensitize the people of his adopted country to the history in their midst.

Greg Robinson
Université du Québec à Montréal

GRAFF, Harvey J., Leslie Page MOCH, and Philip MCMICHAEL (eds.) — *Looking Backward and Looking Forward: Perspectives on Social Science History*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005. Pp. 235.

At its annual meeting in Pittsburgh in October 2000, the Social Science History Association (SSHA) celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary by devoting a portion of its programme to reflections on “social science history”. This volume includes