

Comptes rendus / Book Reviews 293

A number of careless mistakes detract from the book. For example, Poutrincourt's family surely fought against Henri IV only until 1593 rather than 1693 (p. 7). If "Louis XIV had much of the pragmatic common sense of his grandfather", what does the reader do with the same sentence's assertion, "but the grandson was much less pragmatic" (p. 102)? Also, Griffiths may not be willing to tackle the murky origins of the Acadians in France's centre-west, but Loudunais should be spelled correctly (p. 183).

Historians have indeed emphasized "the actions of greater powers upon Acadian society, rather than the experiences of the Acadians themselves" (p. 283). Griffiths could have described more of their experience as migrants, specifically how this broad collection of individuals so quickly formed a deep sense of community (pp. 63–68). The terms "border" and "border people" also need to be defined and more carefully applied to give them a specific Acadian meaning. Would any French peasant have acted differently given the circumstances Griffiths describes? After all, other early modern peasant communities existing in borderlands exhibited similar pragmatism when caught between rivals, with similar conceptions of their obligations and those of their titular rulers, and a similar aversion to becoming involved in back-and-forth elite conflicts. This represents an important avenue for development and comparison, because pragmatism is a rather general basis upon which to claim distinction in the early modern French world.

Lastly, local and regional contexts and contrasts within Acadia remain largely unexplored in this account. Griffiths blithely states that the population was too small for a statistical analysis to "yield meaningful results" (p. 173) and engages in little analysis of social hierarchy and family relations. She does note the economic specialization each Acadian community developed — which must have had an impact on relations with imperial officials and the Mi'kmaq (p. 285). How did the dynamics of local power affect the overall decisions the Acadians seemed to make in their negotiations with imperial agents? The uniformity of the Acadian position, identity, and experience that Griffiths presents is striking in comparison with other French communities in both the New and Old Worlds — and, as such, borders on the unbelievable.

Gregory M. W. Kennedy
York University

HALLOWELL, Gerald (ed.) — *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2004. Pp. 748.

It seems that Canadian history has joined the sprawling family of *Oxford Companions*. The progenitor, English literature (1932), was followed by dozens of volumes including American literature (1941) and much later American history (1966), to be superseded by United States history (2001). Canada made its appearance as Siamese twins, Canadian history and literature (1967), separated in several operations: Canadian literature became independent first (1983), followed by Canadian theatre (1988), and finally Canadian history (2004). The latter was preceded by Irish (1998), Scottish (2001), and Australian history (2001). Was it worth waiting for?

It is always convenient for a reviewer if the author or editor explains for whom the work is intended and what purpose it is to serve. In the introduction to the *Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature*, editor Norah Story provided such information with admirable brevity and clarity: “This *Companion* is intended to provide a single source in which anyone reading a Canadian book in English or French can find an explanation of references that would otherwise be obscure.” In the 2004 volume, no such explicit help is given.

In the preface, the editor states that the volume attempts to provide “the basic details of the main events, institutions, places and people in Canada’s past”. The key ideas seem to be maintaining “a balance among the different areas of life”; expansion of the coverage to all the various sub-disciplines of history; inclusion of recent trends in historiography, of prominent people who made contributions to Canadian history and plain ones who are representative or “simply interesting” as well as all peoples and all time periods (p. vi). This is an accurate description of what this *Companion* offers. While it does not help to identify a target audience, the following quotations may do so: “Readers who wish more information than can be presented in this single volume might consult [*Canadian Encyclopedia, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Historical Atlas of Canada*].” “[T]he general reader would find especially attractive that fine publication *The Beaver*, Canada’s History Magazine....” (p. ix).

Thus this book does not seem to be intended primarily for historians. Yet this reader, though a historian acquainted with North America, was humbled by his ignorance of ever so many entries. Canadian-born and Canadian-trained colleagues would score much higher, but even for them the work would be helpful for quick reference outside their specialties, legitimized by the uniformly high scholarly standard of the articles (though no bibliographic references are given), the clear and matter-of-fact language, the 40-page index, and not least the complete lists of all kings relevant to Canada, governors general, prime ministers, and premiers as well as ten fine black-and-white historical maps.

In this, as in any other encyclopaedic work, one can quibble about details, such as why there is no entry for “Bill 101” or for “Jesuits’ Estates Act”, but there is for “Equal Rights Association”. Why are five noted as dead in the 1918 Quebec riots under “conscription” and four under “home front”? According to the entry on Lord Durham, his notorious report “demanded that the French be raised to the standards of the English”, but his call for linguistic and cultural assimilation is not spelled out, let alone his harsh term “extinction of a nationality”. Finally, with all respect for the author of “French-English relations”, the claim that “[t]his approach [i.e. the educational system] isolated French-Canadians, mainly in rural communities, from any contact with English Protestants” is not tenable in this absolute form. At least in the Eastern Townships, there were contacts and cooperation at various levels — political, economic, even cultural and social, as well as in sports. The list could be continued, but such inevitable minor errors do not detract from the sterling value of this work.

Another factor might do so, at least for some people. In Europe, one has taken note of multiculturalism in Canada, but the image of a bilingual, bicultural country where both founding nations enjoy equal rights and recognition is still very much alive. It

may therefore come as a surprise that the impression given by this volume is so predominantly British, or rather decidedly Anglo-Canadian. By my very rough count, and admittedly going by names only, no more than 10 per cent of the 527 contributors are French-Canadian, and they authored equally about 10 per cent of the 1,654 entries. Francophones have written only on matters directly related to French Canada (no more than 15 exceptions to this rule could be identified), whereas anglophones prepared dozens of entries on French Canada (including Bombardier, George-Étienne Cartier, Huguenots, Riel, Séminaire de Montréal, and Société St-Jean-Baptiste) plus all items relating to the rest of Canada and the country as a whole (with the exceptions noted above). One might add that all six members of the editorial advisory board seem to be anglophones.

Given the French-Canadian scepticism toward imperial wars, the extensive and sometimes meticulous treatment of Canada's twentieth-century warlike exploits contributes to the Anglo-Canadian tinge of the work. Thus there are sizeable entries for Amiens, Canadian Corps, Canadian Expeditionary Force, Overseas Military Force, Passchendaele, Ross rifle, Somme, trench warfare, Vimy Ridge, and Ypres — an incomplete list for World War I — and the article on the South African war records, among numerous other details, that at Lillfontein the Canadian forces lost two dead and eleven wounded, but gained three Victoria Crosses. Yet neither here nor in the entries “conscription” or “Bourassa” does the reader learn precisely what were the reasons for French-Canadian disenchantment with the British wars.

A few technical hints might be in order. The entries range in length from twelve lines on a two-column page to two pages, averaging about two-fifths of a page. The cross-referencing by asterisk is helpful, and there is no reason for frustration if a term cannot be found in the main part; the comprehensive and reliable index contains at least 7,000 key words and may well guide the reader to the desired information. It all adds up to a solid and also quite handsome volume to be highly recommended. Disillusioned or not, the foreign scholars and readers whom Norah Story must have had in mind besides Canadians will also find it a most useful tool. Even though this *Companion* would have been welcome at a much earlier date, it has been well worth the wait.

Wolfgang Helbich
Ruhr-Universität Bochum
Germany

LAINÉY, Jonathan C. — *La « Monnaie des Sauvages ». Les colliers de wampum d'hier à aujourd'hui*, Québec, Septentrion, 2004, 283 p.

L'utilisation de devises comme moyen d'échange n'est pas, on s'en doute, une invention récente. Les groupes humains ont rapidement constaté l'utilité de mettre en circulation des objets investis d'une valeur économique et symbolique afin de faciliter les échanges et de thésauriser les richesses, aussi les systèmes de valeurs sont-ils attestés pour des périodes fort anciennes de l'histoire humaine. L'utilisation de numéraire a laissé de nombreuses traces, qu'il s'agisse des objets eux-mêmes,