

Compte rendu / Book Reviews 539

CARLSON, Nellie, and Kathleen STEINHAUER, as told to Linda GOYETTE — *Disinherited Generations: Our Struggle to Reclaim Treaty Rights for First Nations Women and their Descendants*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2013. Pp. 216.

“You asked, did we talk about this? About losing treaty rights? You don’t know. We were asked never to talk about Indian issues, treaty issues. You were not allowed to do this when we were young. We knew men who had asked questions, and they were taken off the Band List by the Indian Agent. That’s how the government dealt with us in those years. We didn’t stay silent, but we lived with these threats in our lives” (p. 111).

Disinherited Generations documents the lives and work of Alberta First Nations women who courageously spoke out against the widespread extinguishment of treaty rights of First Nations women that was legislated in the *Indian Act*. The book focuses on Nellie Carlson and Kathleen Steinhauer, both born into the Saddle Lake Cree Nation, disenfranchised upon marriage to non-status Indian men, and founders of and long-time activists with Indian Rights for Indian Women, a national organization that fought gender discrimination in the *Indian Act*. *Disinherited Generations* also honours a number of other women involved in the movement including: Jenny Shirt Margetts, also of Saddle Lake, an assertive and determined activist for women’s rights and co-president of the Indian Rights for Indian women; Mary Two Axe Early a Mohawk from Kahnawake, Quebec, who initiated the group Equal Rights for Indian Women in 1967, an organization which became part of the nation-wide Indian Rights for Indian Women; and others. An engaging and inspirational book, *Disinherited Generations* will have an audience among students, researchers and other people wanting to know more about treaty and Aboriginal rights, activism, the First Nations women’s movement and the *Indian Act*.

Central to the book is a depiction of the lived realities of First Nations women born under the *Indian Act* from the late 1920s to the present. The *Indian Act* outlines a set of wide-ranging regulations and penalties that applies to First Nations people and to reserves; nevertheless, it is practically impossible for First Nations people to have any input into the *Act*. Importantly the *Act* defines who is legally recognized as “Indian” – now referred to as a “status Indian”. From 1876 to 1985 this definition was any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band, any child of such a person and any woman married to such a person. Not only was Indian status defined by male lineage, it was also impermanent and could be forfeited by some and gained by others – voluntarily and involuntarily. By the *Act*, any Indian woman who married a non-Indian would lose legal status as Indian, and any non-Indian woman who married an Indian man would gain legal status as Indian. Moreover, any Indian woman who married an Indian man from another band would cease to be a member of her own band and become a member of her husband’s.

The sections of the Act dealing with marriage and status have changed a number of times since 1879, most significantly for Nellie and Kathleen (as they prefer to be called) in 1951 and 1985. Before 1951, women who lost status through marriage did not necessarily lose her rights in practice; in fact, between 1947 and 1951, women who had treaty status and who had married non-status men were defined as “red-ticket holders,” women who had treaty numbers, lived on reserves, received annuities but not all treaty rights (in contrast, “white-ticket holders” were treaty people and “blue-ticket holders” were Métis and non-status Indians). After 1951, the Indian department set up a register of all Indian people and determined that only those who were registered had the legal right to live on reserve, vote in band elections, own a share of band funds; own and inherit property on the reserve and be buried there. From that point on, women who married non-status men were not entitled to be registered. Nellie, for example, became a “red ticket holder” after her 1947 marriage

to Elmer Carlson, a non-status Indian. In 1951, Nellie lost her band membership and so did her children. Kathleen's experience is also characteristic. Upon her first marriage, in 1956, to Allan Small Face, a member of the Kainai First Nation, her band membership transferred to Kainai, even though her preference was to remain at Saddle Lake. Even when this marriage dissolved, her band membership remained with Kainai until her second marriage in 1965 to Gilbert Anderson, a non-status Indian, at which point Kathleen lost status. When the *Indian Act* was amended in 1985 with the passage of Bill C-31, which removed some of the discriminatory sections pertaining to women and their children, Kathleen, along with thousands of others, regained status. But when she regained status, she was reinstated as a member of Kainai until she launched a successful court case in 1992.

Writing about gender discrimination in the *Indian Act* tends to focus on legislation and court cases, which can inadvertently silence the impact of the law on the lived lives of First Nations people. *Disinherited Generations* draws together legal and social history and frames broader discussions of organizational and federal lobbying activities, the distinct western context of the Native women's movement in Canada and Native women's involvement in the constitutional talks of the early 1980s and equity activism post-1985 within an understanding of First Nations communities, family and relations. *Disinherited Generations* is based on interviews as told to a third author Linda Goyette, an oral history researcher, anthologist, author and editor. Goyette describes *Disinherited Generations* as a "spoken history in the oral tradition of Cree and Métis culture on the prairies" (p. xxi). Aware of the problems of representation, perspective, voice and power that are inherent in the "as-told-to" method, Goyette, Nellie and Kathleen in effect invented a new kind of collaboration that suited their outlook and their decades-long friendship. They detailed their shared obligations and understandings in a contract in advance of the project. While conversations were audiotaped at the start, it was found that the women spoke more freely without the recorder and so Goyette took detailed notes. After conversations, phone calls and follow up, Nellie and Kathleen reviewed drafts of the manuscript. In addition to the interview material, the book drew from a large number of documents about First Nations and Métis political and social organizations including Indian Rights for Indian women that was assembled by Jenny Margetts before she died in 1991, and organized for the benefit of other researchers by Métis scholar Brenda Macdougall.

After a forward by Métis author and Elder Maria Campbell, who first encouraged Nellie and Kathleen to share their stories, and acknowledgements, Goyette's introduction provides a background discussion on Cree history, treaty, the *Indian Act*, and Indian status. Each subsequent chapter of the book opens with background information, and then the story begins in Nellie and Kathleen's own words, sometimes in conversation and sometimes as discrete sections. The chapters move chronologically from youth, through residential schooling, to young adulthood ("Love, Matrimony, and the *Indian Act*") to the founding and activities of Indian Rights for Indian Women. Well-placed photographs are interspersed within this chronology. In addition, *Disinherited Generations* provides a helpful appendix of supplementary material at the end of the book, including a family tree depicting Nellie's and Kathleen's kinship ties, a timeline to membership rights and First Nations women in Canada, an Honour Roll of men and women activists and supporters of the Indian Rights for Indian Women movement, a glossary of terms related to identity of Aboriginal people in Canada and a bibliography of further reading.

One of the goals for *Disinherited Generations* was that it might inspire "university professors and their students to investigate Canada's historic discrimination against Aboriginal women, and to produce new and comprehensive academic research and analysis for the public" (p. xiii). *Disinherited Generations* itself resists many of the older trends of

history writing in Canada. First, it avoids the tendency to depict First Nations women as living lives apart from world around them; the authors acknowledge alliances with mainstream second-wave feminists, lawyers and other activists with whom they worked and who supported their struggle. Also, *Disinherited Generations* moves beyond simplistic historical analyses which are either celebratory of the agency of a united collectivity of Indigenous people or depict Indigenous people as one-dimensional victims of Canadian federal Indian policy. It is clear that getting gender discrimination in the *Indian Act* on the agenda of even Native women's meetings was a struggle and had serious implications on Indigenous women's lives, from being called "squaw libbers", to being avoided, punished and harassed, to having phones tapped. The book does not shy away from the meanness of the era – not simply among Indigenous people and settlers, but also among Indigenous and non-Indigenous women, and among Indigenous women and Indigenous men. What is clear is that not only was the violence of *Indian Act* meted out on individuals, it was targeted at families and had a deep impact on cultural and collective levels. Third, it is clear that the book was produced in a spirit of history telling that emphasizes sharing, generating research and strengthening Indigenous nations. For example, the original transcripts of the interviews and the collection of Indian Rights for Indian Women documents have been archived with the Provincial Archives of Alberta for future researchers to access. For Nellie and Kathleen the goal of history telling is nothing less than to "make Indian rights strong, so that all Indian people, all descendants of treaty signers, will have treaty rights" (p. 67).

Mary Jane Logan McCallum
University of Winnipeg

CLICHE, Marie-Aimée — *Fous, ivres ou méchants? Les parents meurtriers au Québec, 1775-1965*, Montréal, Boréal, 2011, 274 p.

« Fous, ivres ou méchants? » Des parents peuvent-ils, en conscience, tuer leurs propres enfants? Les perceptions des pères et mères meurtriers soupçonnés de meurtre ont changé dans le temps et dans l'espace. Lorsqu'Aimée-Marie Cliche écrit son livre, la province du Québec est dans l'attente des conclusions du procès du D^r Turcotte. Le père est accusé du meurtre de ses deux enfants. Le verdict tombe; les juges concluent à la « non responsabilité criminelle pour cause de troubles mentaux ». Marie-Aimée Cliche s'interroge : serions-nous devant l'aboutissement logique d'une longue évolution judiciaire?

Avec ce nouvel ouvrage, l'historienne apporte une pierre supplémentaire à une enquête engagée depuis deux décennies sur les déviances familiales. Après plusieurs articles et un livre publié en 2007, *Maltraiter ou punir? La violence envers les enfants dans les familles québécoises 1850-1969*, l'auteure s'intéresse aux filicides. Sans tenir compte de l'infanticide des nouveau-nés, elle repère 140 affaires de parents meurtriers sur deux cents ans d'histoire québécoise. La comparaison étant une pièce maîtresse de l'explication en histoire, l'auteure rassemble des données sur d'autres provinces et d'autres pays. Le second corpus comporte 688 cas. Certaines histoires sont restées dans les mémoires.

Dans le temps, que recouvrent les accusations de filicides? Des facteurs perdurent, d'autres disparaissent. Enfin, la société est créatrice. Attentive aux propos des médecins ou autres spécialistes du comportement, des hommes de lois, des journalistes, l'historienne étudie les procès et la presse. La jurisprudence change. Durant la période, la mortalité infantile décroît fortement, l'enfant devenu plus précieux, les cultures de masse font de