

Myra Rutherdale, Kerry Abel and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, eds. *Roots of Entanglement: Essays in the History of Native-Newcomer Relations*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. Pp. 449.

This edited volume opens with a quote from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada which states “[r]econciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for this to happen, there has to be an awareness of the past” (p. 1). This central goal of the volume intersects with Canada’s military history as well as the discipline of Canadian history more broadly. The book exposes unresolved conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, going back to those which arose as early as the American Revolutionary War.<sup>1</sup> Its study of the long-term problems of understanding, inclusion, and diversity are directly relevant to Canada’s armed forces and their histories. It thus addresses a vital topic for military historians.

*Roots of Entanglement* represents a collective, sustained effort by scholars to reconsider the fundamental relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. The volume has some limitations which may be especially evident to Aboriginals, Francophones, and others as they gaze upon the list of contributors. These academics were trained in Canadian universities which still reflect a predominately elite masculine Anglo-Saxon view of the world. These accomplished contributors have nonetheless made consistent, impressive efforts to re-interpret the past in a way that sheds light on settler colonisation processes and their effects upon Indigenous peoples.<sup>2</sup> However, in this volume, except for specific telling quotes, we are not reading the diverse interpretations of Indigenous peoples about their own pasts and colonial influences.

<sup>1</sup> This volume carefully defines the terms Aboriginal, Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Indian. Indigenous refers to all people who trace their ancestry back to the original populations of this continent. First Nations refers to those people once known as Indians. Métis and Inuit are the two other major groupings of Indigenous peoples. Aboriginal refers to legal concepts (p. xi).

<sup>2</sup> Settler colonisation processes function at a global level to replace Aboriginal peoples with invasive settler groups. The processes are supported by a racist narrative which portrays Aboriginal lands as empty or unused, while presenting Aboriginals as savage and uncivilised. Such processes often involve military or police repressive actions.

There is much to praise in *Roots of Entanglement*. The five chapters which form a section about “The Crown, Colonial Spaces, and Aboriginality” take the reader from 1794 to the Cold War. All are well written, well researched, and nuanced. The first two chapters describe how colonial military actions and policies interfered with Indigenous lifestyles. The War of 1812, for example, “ruined Mississauga hunting grounds at the western end of Lake Ontario” (p. 53). Whitney Lackenbauer’s chapter delineates the ambiguous relationship between the military and Inuit during the Cold War. Myra Rutherdale’s chapter “Alaska Highway Nurses and DEW Line Doctors” disputes the historiography which presents northern health services as “a combination of neglect, parsimony, and colonizing discourse” (p. 160). She highlights individual experiences and cultural learning, proving that southern medical experts were often dependent upon community members to function and to communicate. Her chapter and the others in this section focus upon interdependence and mutual vulnerabilities. Yet she concludes that the northern patients often “felt disempowered and demeaned by a system which generally failed to acknowledge their traditional practices and their sense of fear” (p. 175). This section of the book exposes shared efforts to find workable solutions and good intentions which ultimately failed.

The next two chapters on education reveal the racism which underlay the residential schools programme. Jean Barman observes that a former white pupil at All Hallows, a British Columbia school which trained both white and First Nation children, had not even realised that the First Nation children were being educated at the school. As she put it: “they were the servants. They did the work” (p. 192). Barman concludes that “[t]o be of Indian descent was to be on the other side of an abyss which could not be bridged” (p. 203). Jonathan Anuik, a non-Indigenous scholar, draws directly upon Métis voices, utilising multiple interviews for comparative life histories. These lived experiences are used to illustrate the importance of learning spirits—of bringing in traditional languages, the land, and kinship bonds—to inspire student success. Anuik relies upon Métis ideas in his core analysis. His scholarly advocacy promotes essential collaboration, providing a promising and important avenue for reconciliation.

The “Law, Legislation, and History” section contains four chapters which reveal systematic violations of First Nations’ rights. Bill Waiser’s chapter on the 1885 North-West Rebellion adds to J.R. Miller’s arguments that the First Nations did not rebel, but have “suffered

the most” (p. 254). Hamar Foster’s chapter focuses on the need to shift our historical perceptions about Indigenous law, illustrating “that their members engaged in rule-governed relationships with others” (p. 300), while Kenneth S. Coates discusses the 1999 Supreme Court decision which found Donald Marshall Jr. not guilty of fishing without a licence because he “had a treaty right to fish” (p. 313). Frank Tough’s chapter on the Ontario Game Protection Legislation covers the criminalisation of “Indian Hunting” (p. 259). At its end, he briefly mentions how his chapter had been rejected by various academic publications over the years. Some peer reviewers found it “too interdisciplinary” and “seriously lacking in detail,” while others found it “credible and relevant” (p. 281). Perhaps academics should share more stories about the anonymous feedback they have received from the peer review process as a means of exposing more clearly how alternative viewpoints are often suppressed by an elitist system. I am delighted that the editors decided to include this controversial piece and that Tough has not hidden the difficulties he encountered.

The two chapters which address “Anthropologists, Historians, and the Indigenous Historiography” are challenging for scholars unfamiliar with the specialised anthropological vocabulary about Indigenous tribal groups. Nonetheless Keith Thor Carlson’s complicated discussions about political and spiritual networks and “continual warfare” among pre-contact tribal villages in British Columbia challenges any simplistic historical notion of idyllic or unsophisticated tribal social networks (p. 343). Dianne Newell and Arthur J. Ray condemn the continued reliance of historians on Diamond Jenness’s *The Indians of Canada* (1932). They point out that his work was not “politically neutral. His position as chief anthropologist at the National Museum of Canada and a senior civil servant who published in federal government series meant that he was in a position of considerable influence in the formulation of federal government policy and the drafting of laws regarding Indigenous peoples” (p. 389). Although he covered new academic territory, the prolific Jenness was limited by the intellectual landscape of his time. Was his influence upon the field so great or was it that his many writings reflected the commonly-held and unchallenged beliefs of Canadian academics and policy makers of the twentieth century?

It is this latter matter which concerns me the most. These distinguished authors critique scholarly giants, but their voices also reflect an elite academic training which is problematic in itself.

The final chapter of the book by Alan C. Cairns is not a promised conclusion but rather a think piece which highlights the courage of feminist Indigenous scholars who have crossed the racial lines to praise works by white authors (including Cairns) and to criticise those by Indigenous ones. His points about the difficulty experienced by these scholars who criticise Indigenous patriarchal practices hint at the diversity and complexity of these historical issues. These are important, relevant considerations. However, his concluding quote from the French philosopher Julien Benda which calls for the “man of study” epitomises the language and assumptions of western academic exclusion (p. 427).

And would such a man (or woman) be the best person to bring about the kind of meaningful grassroots reconciliation which is being sought here? Perhaps military historians and other academics should seek input from Indigenous community leaders with ideas, values, and methodologies that challenge academic elitist practices. Even if we are willing to seek such input, this is no easy task. As someone who is editing a collection on the early Cold War which now includes one Indigenous contributor, I was unable to find funds for an Inuk woman who would have contributed an oral history chapter had I been able to reimburse her council for her salary for a year. Although a community leader, she is unlikely to publish Inuit views unless something fundamentally changes about the way Canadian scholarship is funded. How can we study Cold War military history without allowing Indigenous peoples to express how they experienced the government’s security measures? Their voices are essential elements in Canadian military history, but are seldom directly included.

We need to recognise that *the academic process itself is a colonising one*—adopt this framework, use this specialised vocabulary, quote from the right philosopher, or perish. If we want to reconcile with Aboriginal peoples, we must begin to include them and their diverse opinions in our historical works, including military histories. In the cacophony of voices about reconciliation, we must find room for those who do not necessarily display the right elitist tools. Or will we always relegate them to some different, lesser venue, like the First Nation children of All Hallows? Seen but not heard and certainly not equal.

I highly recommend this outstanding volume of history. It addresses the consequences of historical cultural conquest and assumptions of western superiority throughout. It has everything that talented

scholars work so hard their entire lives to achieve, but it falls short when it comes to implementing the actual goal of reconciliation which it promotes. For that, we await some future time and place—wherein we might fundamentally challenge cherished values and ideas and divide up the funding pie to include those who did not receive their fair share in the beginning. As Indigenous people have participated in Canada's military history, Canadian military historians should draw more directly upon Indigenous perspectives, including their voices in our publications and allowing them to tell their truths.

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<sup>3</sup> This review reflects the author's personal views and not those of Canada's Department of National Defence.