

more inclusive Canadian history is now intellectually bankrupt (Dummitt) or is a promise yet to be achieved (Perry), such a debate will not cause most historians many sleepless nights.

Having just retired after forty years of teaching Canadian history/historiography, I am, perhaps, just an old grump and I would be churlish not to admit that I actually like this book and would use it as a text if I were forced under pain of death to return to the classroom. The articles are accessibly written, they raise useful questions for our current generation of graduate students, and several – in particular, Magda Fahrni's exploration of the place of Quebec in Canadian historical writing, Stephen High's use of oral history as a vehicle for interrogating authority in historical practice, and Michael Dawson and Catherine Gidney's questioning of periodization in English Canada's twentieth century – are genuine contributions to the Canadian historiographical canon. What I most miss here (and it suggests that I have lived too long) are the progressive politics that inspired me and many of the other authors who contributed to Berger's anthology (E.R. Forbes, Gerald Friesen, Bryan Palmer, Roberto Perin, for example). No doubt, it is timely to question an inclusive approach to the study of Canada, to lay claim to the positive legacy of British and other imperialisms, or to situate the study of Canada in a transnational post-colonial framework, but I am reluctant to relinquish truth claims to past oppressions of empires, near or far, or to bow to a research agenda that dilutes the focus on the specific nation-state, which still has the capacity to exert influence for good or ill. So, I will keep my black arm band – Andrew Smith's reference to Geoffrey Blainey's comment on critical approaches to Australia's past (75) – indeed, I will double its width in the current political climate.

The editors suggest that Ian MacKay's article on the "The Liberal Order Framework" is the kind of scholarship that might generate worthy academic discussion and it is to be hoped that another conference will be held in which historians, new and old, can move beyond intergenerational devourings to further explorations of the daunting historiographical challenges that face us in the twenty-first century.

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***Place and Practice in Canadian Nursing History*, eds. Jayne Elliott, Meryn Stuart and Cynthia Toman (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008).**

The first Hannah Conference on Canadian Nursing History held in Ottawa in June 2005 occurred amidst many 'firsts' in nursing history. These included the launch of the Nursing History Research Unit at the School of Nursing (University of Ottawa), with funding from Associated Medical Services, Inc., and

the opening of the first national exhibit on the history of nursing at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Thus it is fitting that three years later, a new collection of scholarly essays on nursing history, *Place & Practice in Canadian Nursing History*, should emerge from this gathering. This collection of essays makes a major contribution to the growing literature on nursing history in Canada. It will be of interest to anyone teaching or researching in the fields of nursing, health care and women's studies in Canada.

The contributors, who include a diverse range of scholars, historians of women and nurse-historians, have produced an engaging and readable book that will also help to move this developing field forward. No longer is nursing history focused on the hospital, on developing professional identities and the enhancement of educational standards as it once was. As the book's title indicates, the idea of 'place' is explored throughout the collection, looking at the work nurses in a wide variety of settings: in outposts, during wartime, in the homes of the city's poor, and as nurse/missionaries. Indeed only one of the essays deals with nurses in a hospital-educational setting. In it Anne-Marie Arsenault fills a gap in the English Canadian literature by enlightening the reader on the education of Francophone nurses in New Brunswick.

Place and Practice also challenges the notion, prevalent until well into the twentieth century that only professionally trained, elite white women could call themselves nurses. Kirstin Burnett, for example, provides us with a fascinating glimpse at the much forgotten and marginalized role played by Aboriginal healers and midwives in ensuring the survival of early White settlers. Still, while their skills were called upon, they were seldom recognized and quickly forgotten once professional (White) health care practitioners became available.

Throughout the collection, the authors remind the reader that nurses were part of a relatively privileged race and class, allowing them to rise above some of the typical gender restriction most women faced, and to take positions of limited authority in Canadian society. This is particularly true of Canadian Nursing Sisters, the first women to hold military rank among the allied forces, in the First World War. Cynthia Toman explores the experience of military nurses at Lemnos and Salonika from 1915-17 in the ill-fated Dardanelles campaign, where wartime conditions were appalling even by wartime standards. Still the nurses seldom complained, serving as willing symbols of the British Empire. Patriotic and devoted to the soldiers under their care — indeed many saw themselves as soldiers. Although most Canadians sought to protect women from the horrors of war, these nursing sisters faced the same dangers that the soldier faced. As well, Meryn Stuart provides an engaging portrait of one nursing sister, Helen Fowlds, showing us a lively, adventurous young woman whose devotion to her country did not preclude enthusiastic tourist excursions, socializing with men and women, and numerous shopping expeditions.

Nurses were also granted a certain authority in missionary work as

Myra Rutherford shows in relation to nurses working in the Canadian Arctic. Their health care work was delivered in the context of missionary work and Rutherford presents a range of approaches by nurses to their relations with their Inuit clients. Some were “cleansers,” and anxiously encouraged Inuit patients to adopt a Euro-Canadian lifestyle; while “cautious caregivers” were a little more flexible; and finally, some were “optimistic adventurers” who were more willing to accept some aspects of Inuit culture. Still, in the end all were missionaries for the dominant Euro-Canadian culture and religion. In Marion McKay’s article on Winnipeg’s visiting nurse agencies from 1897-1926, she focuses on nurses’ role in Canadianizing newly arrived immigrants in the ‘slums’ of this large city, which served as a kind of gateway to the fast developing western provinces.

Place and Practice also enhances our understanding of pioneer nurses who worked in isolated regions of the country. Called outpost nurses, they have often fascinated nurse historians and popularizers alike because they combined the virtues of the stalwart pioneer, who helped settle new lands with the ‘new woman’ who broke down gender barriers. Practical and self-reliant, they combined some bedside nursing with public health work, and, because they were isolated from physicians and hospitals, enjoyed greater autonomy than hospital or private duty nurses. Like missionaries and public health nurses, they traded on their relatively privileged class position and White identities, to play a role in ‘educating’ their clients, often poor and disadvantaged. Linda Quiney looks at Red Cross nursing work in Manitoba and Johanne Daigle examines a government-funded program of outpost nursing in Quebec from 1932 to 1972.

One of the many strengths of this collection is its effort to look more closely into identities developed by individual nurses. In addition to Stuart’s analysis of Nursing Sister Helen Fowlds, Jayne Elliott provides a biographical sketch of Ontario Red Cross nurse, Louise de Kiriline. In examining how this one nurse managed her many roles, Elliott went so far as to teach herself Swedish so that she could read her subjects’ correspondence. De Kiriline was a European immigrant from a privileged family and like many outpost nurses, had served during the war. After she came to Canada to do outpost nursing and carved her identity as a nurse, daughter, member of the northern Ontario community and dog sled driver. She even gained a small amount of fame when she was assigned to care for the Dionne quintuplets. Still, the mysterious poisoning of two of her dogs in two separate incidents reminds us that not everyone admired independent women. In this and other essays in the collection, *Place and Practice* explores new themes in nursing history and expands the boundaries of the historiography in this field.

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