and dilemmas of their times" (p. 322). Women's education is emphasized in the context of social duties rather than individual rights. The idea of gender differences remained in France, but the parameters of bourgeois femininity came to include professional as well as married bourgeois women. The sévriennes were harbingers of change whose influence outweighed their numbers because of their focal position and their influence on the young.

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Anne M. Boylan. *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. Pp. xii, 225. $30.00 U.S. cloth, $10.95 paper.

In enlarging the range of a discipline that was once largely restricted to politics, diplomacy, and war, historians have turned on the one hand to the measurement of economic trends, on the other to the examination of cultural pursuits such as education, the arts, and even religious revival. They have been slow to discover the Sunday school, although a great many of them must have had prolonged exposure to it. This book, by Anne M. Boylan of the University of Delaware, goes a long way toward repairing past neglect. The author disclaims any intention of writing "a history of the Sunday school" (p. 4), seeking only to establish its place among the influential American institutions of the nineteenth century, but she comes closer than any of her predecessors to providing a thorough, analytical history of this particular institution.

The nineteenth-century Sunday school was essentially a creation of evangelical Protestantism, and the basic story Boylan tells is of two major transitions in its nature. During its first incarnation, which in the United States was short-lived and marked by meagre success, its chief purpose was to make literacy available to children with little other access to it. A large proportion of those enrolled were working children, blacks, and girls. The emergence of a very different type was virtually complete with the formation in 1824 of the undenominational American Sunday School Union, which would dominate the field until after the Civil War. The Sunday school now came to be regarded as essentially a means of evangelical outreach, leaving secular education to the concurrently emerging public school. The union, urban-based and dominated by prominent Episcopalians and Presbyterians, paid agents to establish new schools throughout the country and maintained control over these schools as closely as it could. It saw children as infected by the depravity of original sin and therefore needing to be softened up by discipline, a quiet atmosphere, and a great deal of memory work for the conversion experience that would eventually set them on the right path. Regarding evangelical religion as a cure-all for the ills of society, the officers of the union were

chary of other involvements. One result was a softness on slavery that undermined their influence as the nation polarized over the issue.

A national Sunday school convention in 1869 signalled the appearance of a new configuration in which the moguls of the American Sunday School Union were largely ignored. Initiative passed to leaders who were primarily interested in denominational schools and who were inspired not by the post-millennial vision of a saved nation but by a concern for more professional pedagogy. Collaboration among denominations continued, but on a more pragmatic basis, operating not through a centralized union but through mammoth conventions, institutes for teacher training (one of which developed into Chautauqua), and common lesson themes that each denomination could flesh out in its own way. The child was now viewed from a romantic rather than a Calvinist perspective, no longer as a born sinner whose instincts needed to be curbed and controlled but as a *tabula rasa* whose possibilities for good called for cultivation and encouragement. In line with a growing belief that children could not only be guided toward faith but could themselves experience conversion, information and memory work gave ground to inspiration and emotional appeals. A casualty of these changes was the missionary thrust of the antebellum period, which was abandoned in favour of a service role to those already connected with the churches.

Boylan produces considerable evidence to show that the Sunday school was a significant "agent of cultural transmission" (p. 33), enrolling an increasing proportion of children in almost every American community, providing in frontier areas the nuclei around which many churches ultimately formed, and actively promoting such evangelical values as sabbath observance and temperance. She also argues on various issues against what has become virtually an accepted line of interpretation. The Sunday school, she maintains, represented not a defensive attempt to preserve vanishing rural attitudes but rather a conscious effort to foster the qualities appropriate to a "new urban mercantile and manufacturing economy" (p. 3). It was not an institution into which the children of the poor were dragooned but one in which many of them saw valuable opportunities for improvement. It was not a competitor of the public school but an adjunct that throve on a division of labour that left it a monopoly of distinctive doctrinal teaching. Throughout the period of study, although especially in its earlier decades, the ideology of the Sunday school was consistently republican and in line with American aspirations, "for the virtues that evangelical institution-builders urged upon their clients were not alien interpretations but quintessentially American values. During and after the Revolution, evangelical religion came to be associated with the virtues of republican citizens: simplicity, lack of sophistication, honesty, temperance" (p. 4).

In *The Big Little School: Sunday Child of American Protestantism*, published in 1971, Robert W. Lynn and Elliott Wright proposed what was then an unusual interpretation of the Sun-

day school. Especially after the Civil War, they suggested, the Sunday school under independent-minded lay leaders came to offer a version of Christianity that differed radically from that usually expounded from Protestant pulpits. While ministers accepted many of the results of biblical criticism, in this view, the Sunday school continued to instil the verities of the older evangelicalism. To this dichotomy, indeed, Lynn and Wright attributed in large measure the lay resistance to liberalism and the social gospel that has continued to the present. Boylan presents no such spectacular hypotheses. True, she notes the prominence of lay leaders, the scepticism of some of the clergy, and the influential role of women as teachers although not as power brokers and seldom as feminists. The general impression one receives, however, is of a fairly harmonious development, and Sunday schools from the 1850s are characterized as essentially agencies of the churches. Here evidently is a difference of emphasis that will have to engage future researchers. The author seems unaware of any serious divergence of opinion, thanking Lynn for "interest in and enthusiasm for this project over many years" (p. xi).

Boylan has provided in this book the most careful and detailed analysis of the development of the American Sunday school that has yet appeared. It represents a splendid achievement and is likely to remain the standard treatment of the subject for some time. It is well illustrated, copiously annotated, and furnished with a useful bibliography. Apart from lingering traces of its origin as a thesis, exemplified by the caution just noted and by a tendency to repetitiveness in both text and notes, its main limitation is the lack of a sustained attempt to link developments in the Sunday school with changes in American society. Boylan does indeed suggest such linkages, which are vital to her stated purpose of using the Sunday school "to illuminate the entire process of institution building and to connect it to the economic and social changes that transformed the United States in the nineteenth century" (p. 1). In antebellum years the Sunday school cultivated a sense of self-discipline when "there were few external structures to help provide guidance" (p. 146); later, "in an era of endless smokestacks and routinized factory discipline," it offered the children "the spontaneity and emotional expression that was frowned upon in public life" (p. 165). These are interesting suggestions, but one would have liked to see them developed more systematically.

Any account of an American institution naturally invites comparisons with Canada. In this case they are not easily made, for even the old anecdotal histories of the Sunday school on which Boylan was able to draw do not exist here. Obviously a good deal of Boylan's analysis would apply to Canada, for the border was porous to American methods and ideas. There were also differences. Almost all Canadian denominations drew on British as well as American precedents and materials, the Anglicans probably to a greater extent. One also wonders how suspicion of republicanism and opposition to slavery affected Canadian reception of American ap-

proaches to religious education; certainly some Canadian churches were developing their own Sunday school materials well before the end of the nineteenth century. And did the milder response of the Canadian laity to critical views of the Bible reflect in some measure a different Sunday school history? About such questions, in the present state of Canadian scholarship, one wonders more than one knows. A reading of this book ought to encourage Canadian researchers to seek answers to them.

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M. Brook Taylor. *Promoters, Patriots and Partisans: Historiography in Nineteenth-Century English Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989. Pp. 294. $45.00 cloth, $19.95 paper.

Historians have played an important role in the development of our national consciousness. They have shaped our past and in so doing provided perspective on our present and direction for the future. This task of shaping our identity was particularly important in the nineteenth century when the British North American colonies that would unite to form the nucleus of present-day Canada were beginning to take on colonial identities. That these four colonies of Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick (and shortly afterwards Prince Edward Island) united to form a nation was not, of course, preordained. In fact, this book emphasizes how strongly individualistic these colonies remained. Yet once they united, the historiography shifted from provincial and regional concerns and identities towards national concerns and a national identity. *Promoters, Patriots, and Partisans* studies the important role that earlier "historians"—antiquarians, gentlemen authors, promotional entrepreneurs, and politicans — played in developing initially provincial and regional and ultimately a national consensus.

Taylor's study is the predecessor in terms of time period to Carl Berger's *The Writing of Canadian History*. Historical writing about Canada did not begin with professional historians in the twentieth century, the subject of Berger's study. There was a century of historical writing by amateur historians who in a sense paved the way for the modern Canadian historian by suggesting the themes, although not the methodology, for writing Canadian history.

As the title suggests, Taylor sees nineteenth-century Canadian historiography as going through an evolution. The first writers were "promoters," who were interested in advancing themselves and their newly acquired homeland for potential investors and settlers back in England. Since they lived in colonies that were underpopulated and thus sheer wilderness, they naturally focused on the greatness and potential of the land. They had to look to the future as there