

Lucy Hendrick to approve of the American invasion of Grenada. She was "tired of being walked on, as a nation, by third-world countries....I am not a violent person. I detest violence. I never hit my kids. I don't believe in bullying—I hate bullies, as a matter of fact. But there's something about being a strong country that I have a thing about" (p. 247).

There is however one important reason for historians to read *At Liberty* and that is because it models a different way through which one can approach the history of childhood and the history of education. If Illick's conclusions do not startle us, his personal involvement both in his story and his telling of it does. He shows that in sensitive hands historians can get remarkably close to their subjects. When, years ago, I read A.J.A. Symons' *The Quest for Corvo: An Experiment in Biography* (London: 1934), I was intrigued by his account of searching out the life of the writer Frederick Rolfe but also felt it was very definitely a "one-off" effort. Now I think it regrettable that few if any biographers or historians followed Symons' style of approaching a subject. Instead, we had to wait a half-century for Illick to show us that it could be done.

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Gwyn Dow and June Factor, eds.
Australian Childhood: An Anthology. South Yarra: McPhee Grib-

ble, 1989. Pp. 328. \$29.95
Australian.

In the Introduction to *Australian Childhood: An Anthology*, editors Gwyn Dow and June Factor state that their purpose is "to bring together, for the pleasure and enlightenment of readers, a range of writing about childhood in Australia" (p. 1). They draw accounts from a wide range of primary and secondary sources including autobiographies, biographies, letters, oral histories, first-hand accounts, archival materials, historical documents, and when appropriate, some fiction. They also include a small number of "factions" which they define as "writing which, while fiction in format, is acknowledged as close to autobiography" (p. 1). A number of accounts are by well-known Australians, but many others are by unpublished and unknown writers.

Australian Childhood is arranged chronologically to cover four time periods: 1788-1849; 1850-1889; 1890-1929; 1930-1949. Accounts are selected to give readers insight into childhood experiences in different geographical regions, urban and rural settings, economic levels and occupational backgrounds, and ethnic, sex, and social classes. Recurring themes include work, education, family, friendship, fears, prejudice, the pains of puberty, religion, morality, and games and recreation. Also included are personal and moving accounts that illuminate "the inner world of fantasy, dream and thought, and the children's subculture of play and ritual" (p. 2). The Subject Index and the List of Con-

tributors at the end of the book are useful in directing readers to specific subject areas and accounts by specific individuals.

The attractive format of *Australian Childhood* makes it an appropriate book for the general public as well as for scholars. The print is large and clear. Each account is presented as a discrete unit, titled with a quotation that gives some indication of the content and the time period involved. Bibliographical information is provided at the end of each account. The approximately one hundred and fifty accounts range from one paragraph to several pages in length. The content is enhanced by sixteen colour plates of paintings, dated between 1842 and 1959, of Australian children. The paintings allow readers to trace changes in children's clothing, interests, and activities as well as developments and trends in Australian art. Unfortunately, few photographs are used. More historical photographs or illustrations would have complemented the accounts and perhaps enhanced the reader's understanding of some events or activities.

Dow and Factor do not attempt to interpret the accounts in terms of today's attitude toward and treatment of children. Rather, they allow readers to absorb the values and attitudes of the time involved and to view Australia through the eyes of the writers. They acknowledge there is a dearth of writing either by or about Aboriginal children, particularly before the last century, but they include a number of descriptions and reactions of early settlers and missionaries to Aboriginal people. These accounts reveal more of

the attitude of whites toward Aboriginal people than of the lives of Aboriginal children. There are, however, several later personal and informative accounts by Aboriginal people describing participation in traditional rites and ceremonies, as well as family, community, and school life.

The diversity and richness of material in each part of *Australian Childhood* make the book difficult to summarize or describe, but several sections deserve highlighting. Part I, "Roughing It: 1788-1849," focuses on the lives of child convicts and the children of early settlers. In spite of a limited number of personal accounts by either group, Dow and Factor give voices to convict children through the use of historical records, reports, and letters from prison governors and government officials. The pain and bleakness of the children's lives and the hopelessness of their future is evident. Although not confined by walls and bars, early settlers struggled in a physical environment that sorely tested their resourcefulness and courage.

Part II, "Moving Out and Moving In: 1850-1889," covers a period of national growth and expansion. Immigrant and migrant miners sought illusive fortunes in one or more goldfields. Potential farmers loaded family, furniture, and equipment on a bullock-drawn wagon and headed for the outback. Urban slums bulged with the destitute, displaced, dispossessed, and those just "down on their luck." Accounts indicate that the lack of child protection agencies or medical services left children vulnerable to physical and psychological abuse and to

sexual exploitation, even when such cases were known and documented. Dow and Factor, however, include accounts of youngsters who through acumen, guile, and sheer hard work operated businesses or worked as domestics or labourers to support themselves and their families. Such accounts reflect their spirit of independence and dedication to their own survival and that of their families.

The section "Children's Work, Play and Reflections" is particularly interesting. Racial, ethnic, religious, and social prejudice were common and several writers recalled the soul-searing pain and hurt experienced when "put down" or ostracized. Most play took place in the vast out-of-doors, where children were free to explore, observe, and make collections of things from the natural environment. But accounts in this section also explore the world of imaginary play, and of one young girl's growing awareness of romance and her tenderly remembered first love.

In "The World of School," writers generally recall their time in state, parochial, boarding, family, or Sunday schools as negative experiences. The desire to be out-of-doors superseded the skill of teachers or the contents of the curricula. Accounts leave the reader wondering whether there were any teachers who made learning a pleasure and found teaching a joy.

Dow and Factor draw the accounts for Part III, "Old Ways, New Ways: 1890-1929," from a substantial body of material. The differences between the "haves" and the "have nots" in terms of medical care, social services, and living conditions are abun-

dantly clear. Accounts also recall the impact of World War I on family life, school curricula, and community life. The section "Hurt, Embarrassment and Resentment" is the most moving section of this anthology. The accounts selected expose the terrible plight and the incredible pride and determination of some neglected, exploited, and abused children. They also give us a child's view of some of the emotional and psychological scars of childhood such as disappointment at being female, rejection by an alcoholic father, being an illegitimate child, of mixed race, a foster child, a ward of the state, or physically or mentally handicapped.

Part IV, "Growing Up with Uncertainty: 1930 to 1949," examines the impact of two major events on Australian children: the economic depression of the 1930s, and World War II. Accounts reveal the stresses and strains of unemployment and poverty on family life. They also demonstrate the amazing resourcefulness of children and their families, and the generosity, support, and goodwill of neighbours and friends as poor as themselves.

Passing mores and tradition to children is an essential part of every society. The accounts in "Traditions and Values: Caught and Taught" indicate how confusing and confrontational this process can be amid the ethnic and religious diversity of Australian society. Aboriginal children described learning tribal laws and observing tribal rites of passage; Irish and English children recalled learning the songs and poems of their ancestors. Children could not, however, under-

stand adult attitudes and prejudices in matters of political or religious differences. As one Jewish writer recalled, she led a double life, as a satisfactory Australian girl at school and as a satisfactory daughter of a European Jewish communist at home (p. 274).

Dow and Factor's professional expertise and personal interest qualify both women as able and appropriate editors. Through their judicious selection of materials they have accomplished their stated purpose for this anthology—to enable readers to view with pleasure and enlightenment 160 years of Australian childhood as experienced by those who lived it. *Australian Childhood* is a well-organized, thoughtfully selected collection that can be picked up and read with understanding and pleasure at any point in the book. It is a valuable addition to the history of childhood in Australia and ought to be of interest not only to historians of childhood, but also to those readers, both young and old, who are interested in the lives of their ancestors and the history of their nation. In conclusion, *Australian Childhood* is truly a serendipity for readers because it will appeal to the child in most of us.

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Ken S. Coates. *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973.* Montreal and

Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. Pp. 356. \$39.95.

In less than a decade Ken Coates has established himself not only as an authority on the north, but as one of Canada's most productive young historians. *Best Left as Indians* is a revised version of his 1984 doctoral dissertation and is his most scholarly work to date.

The book focuses on the dynamics of Native-white relations in Yukon history between 1840 and 1990. In exploring this complex subject, a number of general themes emerge: in a history punctuated by dramatic episodes, the Native population was the constant element; policies and attitudes over the years ensured segregated existences for the two communities; and Natives retained throughout a distinct preference for their traditional way of life.

The story begins with the arrival of fur traders in the Yukon River basin in the 1840s. In the analysis that follows, Coates shows that the Indians were astute protectors of their own interests in trading with the fur companies. They were adept at manipulation and even used military threats on occasion to get what they wanted.

During the mining frontier, Indians played a more peripheral role. Some took on seasonal work as labourers and packers for the prospectors but most continued with their hunting and food-gathering activities. The frenzy of the Gold Rush pushed Natives aside, Coates argues, reducing them to a small minority. A few, none-