

civil servant. The State increasingly took his advice after 1960.

I make it sound straightforward, but of course it was not. The anti-empiricist views of Mialaret's Arts faculty colleagues had to be overcome all along the way. The movement to build a proper system of provincial/regional universities, Caen among them, had to be organized. To do the first, Mialaret had first to make his reputation: by publishing a great deal, supervising seventy-eight doctoral theses, and building a large university department of his own. These tasks alone would yield a seventy-hour work week. Then there were the politics of national and international education to do—another full-time occupation. The volume includes a fine autobiographical essay by Mialaret himself that unfortunately just hints at his motivation (it suggests Edmund Hillary's explanation why he climbed Everest).

Of the eight essays not by Mialaret in the volume, three are especially revealing of the state of French educational research, theory, and practice in the 1990s: Altet's paper on Mialaret's views of teacher education, Francine Best's note on Mialaret and the New Education, and Guglielmi's discussion of Mialaret as educational psychology researcher. But none of these papers, nor the book as a whole, would help an administrator, a teacher, a researcher, or a parent do her/his job better. Rather, the book is grist for the historian's mill, a kind of primary source.

These papers are original sources for an historical explanation of the slow French entry into the field of "scientific" educational studies (one

notes, for example, the near-total absence of references to research done outside France). The papers are documents on the transformation of the French universities in the 1960s, especially the beginnings of a movement to give "applied" research the respect and the resources it desperately required. The book is also a map of one corner of the complicated networks of influence and patronage that make French higher education the slow-moving, yet powerful beast it is.

If you want a nicely edited volume of original material on these questions, *Gaston Mialaret* is the book for you.

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Suellen Hoy and Margaret MacCurtain. *From Dublin to New Orleans: The Journey of Nora and Alice.* Dublin: Attic Press, 1994. Pp. 143. \$9.99 Páint, paper.

In the fall of 1889, two young Irish women, Honoria (Nora) Prendiville and Alice Nolan, sailed from their Dublin convent boarding school to New Orleans. Their journey was full of purpose. They emigrated to the United States to begin new lives as Dominican sisters teaching in schools in Louisiana. During their four-week voyage, each woman kept a diary. These diaries form the centre chapters of *From Dublin to New Orleans*. The two historical documents, complemented by photographs, maps, and

ship records, are framed and contextualized by two fine contemporary essays. The volume concludes with a bibliography of contemporary Irish and American historical research on teaching sisters.

This slim volume has significance far beyond its size. The diaries of Nora and Alice give rare insight into many aspects of the lives of nineteenth-century women. The diaries were public documents, written to inform their boarding-school teachers and friends of their thoughts and experiences. The young women recorded their observations in school notebooks and dutifully mailed them back to the boarding school at Cabra when they disembarked. From this point, the lives of diaries and their authors take much different courses. Back in Ireland, the diaries were read to the pupils and teachers and subsequently filed in the Dominican archives where they remained as part of the order's anonymous historical sources until read by Suellen Hoy in late 1991. In the United States, their authors, Sister Patricia Prendiville and Sister Columba Nolan, lived short lives as teaching sisters; within twenty years of their emigration, both were dead, succumbing to tuberculosis and heart disease.

From Dublin to Ireland is a work of multiple collaborations. Suellen Hoy is a secular American historian. Margaret MacCurtain is an Irish academic—a Dominican sister who has played an influential role in Irish Women's Studies. They effectively utilize their rich and diverse backgrounds to analyze the experience of two young women who begin their diaries as secular Irish women and end

their lives as American women religious.

In her introductory essay, Hoy draws from her earlier work on women religious who emigrated to the United States to set the scene for the reading of the diaries. Using Alice and Nora as examples of "two among many" of the Irish women who came to the United States as missionaries, Hoy describes how attitudes, values, and life patterns were replicated across the ocean.

Hoy details the family and educational history of the two young women, illustrating how socio-economic status and familial connections to religious communities played a role in the decision to enter a religious community. She prepares the reader for the young women's racism towards blacks, shaped by their interaction with the ship's captain and their fellow travellers, which "predisposed them for what they would find in New Orleans" (p. 35).

The diaries themselves are short and enthusiastic works, revealing the intellectual curiosity and personalities of the writers. The young women's deep love of their convent home, their awareness of Irish politics, their linkages of the familiar with the new are features which emerge from the pages. Absent are inner thoughts—the fears, the questioning of their vocation and their chosen missionary lives, which undoubtedly would have occupied many of their waking—and sleeping—hours. As Hoy points out, this latter omission is typical of nineteenth-century diaries, which were "shaped by a sense of audience" (p. 34).

The second of the two essays, MacCurtain's "The Challenge of Re-

searching Nuns' Lives," is a cogent challenge to both secular historians and religious archivists. MacCurtain states that "a fresh approach to recording the experience of Catholic nuns is contingent on a number of factors" (p. 136) central to which is the necessary collaboration among community archivists and historians. She cautions historians about asking "the wrong questions" or inaccurately applying techniques or interpretations to the sources they explore. MacCurtain concludes by raising many significant questions which future research should address: internal stratification among communities of religious, work patterns in convents, and the relationship between enrolment in religious communities and political events.

From Dublin to New Orleans is an important and useful work. It serves as a stimulus to further research. When one realizes that a significant percentage of the 229 communities of women religious who made foundations in Canada between 1639 and 1980 had education as their charism, one begins to recognize what fruitful sources of relatively unexplored primary sources are available to those of us engaged in the study of the history of education. *From Dublin to New Orleans* illustrates the potential of these sources and sets an example of how they can be effectively analyzed.

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O.I.S.E.

Susan F. Semel. *The Dalton School: The Transformation of a Progressive School.* New York: Peter Lang, 1992. Pp. xxii, 205. \$18.95 U.S. paper.

It would be a difficult task in the 1990s to write the history of a progressive educational school, particularly if the school were a famous elite independent institution which the author attended, taught in, and subscribed to as a parent. Nothing daunted, Susan Semel chose the history of the Dalton School as her doctoral dissertation and selected Lawrence Cremin, the guru of progressive educational history, to be her mentor. Maxine Greene, in her Introduction, situates the school in cultural terms as "part of the folklore of middle-class, intellectual New York City as it has changed in the past seventy years" (p. xiv) and she terms Semel's story a qualitative study "far beyond an account of an urban, middle-class, private school renowned in popular culture as much as in the academic realm" (p. xiii).

Established as a child-centred institution in 1920 by Helen Parkhurst, Dalton was distinguished from other progressive schools by its Laboratory Plan, the House system of grouping students, and its assignment and contract methods of curricular delivery. While these are described in the early chapters, the reader never fully understands how they were implemented because Semel tells us that the focus of her study is not the curriculum, teaching practices, or school policy. Instead, she argues that leadership style by the school head is the significant, if