

ventures (including some of the other titles in the University of Chicago Press' History and Philosophy of Education Series, of which this book is a part), this book coheres. Its historical and normative components blend seamlessly. An unfortunate side-effect of this, however, is that the history, especially in the first chapter, tends to reduce the complexity of the past into a tidy narrative that fits the book's larger argument. Peters' own background is in legal history, and it shows in his tendency to turn history into a sort of *amicus curiae* backstory for Dwyer's argument. Second, I agree with the authors' admission that their proposals are likely to go nowhere. Dwyer's arguments are more subtle and powerful than those of many other legal scholars often dubbed "critics" of homeschooling, but it does not matter. There is simply not a constituency that cares enough about regulating homeschoolers to advocate for these recommendations. There is, however, a large, well-organized, and motivated constituency committed to ensuring that recommendations like these never get a legislative hearing.

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Eric McGeer

*Varsity's Soldiers: The University of Toronto Contingent of the Canadian Officers' Training Corps, 1914–1968*

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019. 384 pp.

Eric McGeer's *Varsity's Soldiers* is a welcome addition to the field of higher education history in Canada. The text covers roughly one hundred years of military education at the University of Toronto, 1860s–1968, and focusses on the fifty-four years of the Canadian Officers' Training Corps (COTC) program, 1914–68. The main purpose of the book is to provide a narrative/descriptive history of the COTC program (4). McGeer's work offers no overarching thesis but does provide several reasonable conclusions about the COTC program: it provided significant numbers of competent infantry officers for active service during the First World War (96); it maintained an officer reserve that provided a valuable resource of trainers and instructors for a country preparing for war in 1939 (123); and it established a vital link between universities and the armed forces and between citizens and soldiers throughout its history (249). The text is divided into five logical chapters: 1860–1914, the First World War, the interwar period, the Second World War, and 1945–68. The most significant chapter concerns the Second World War, where McGeer describes in detail how the University of Toronto ran one of the largest training centres in all of Canada and became an important cog in the national war machine (6).

*Varsity's Soldiers* delves into several important historical topics and will delight readers interested in Canadian armed forces history, especially the tensions between the regular permanent forces and the part-time militia; military education, notably

the production of citizen soldiers; and, the history of the University of Toronto itself (11). The work fits nicely into the existing literature on the University of Toronto specifically, and the history of higher education in Canada in general. The work also fills a significant gap in the historical literature concerning the COTC in Canada, as specialist studies of the subject are few in number (14).

McGeer's approach is to let the "*dramatis personae* guide the narrative and set the tone" (12). This includes both a "bottom-up" commentary and a "top-down" perspective through use of extensive archival material. The author has clearly done his homework: the richness of archival material adds complexity, nuance, perspective, and subtlety to his text. Further, McGeer makes use of non-documentary sources to great effect. At key moments in the book, special places and objects on the university campus are fully described, contextualized, analyzed and incorporated into the narrative. Places such as Soldiers' Tower and the Ridgeway Memorial window and objects such as the Goodman bugle become integral parts of the story and bring the history down to the personal and emotional level (16–17).

McGeer is at his best when describing the lives and cultures of the students involved in the COTC program. Many of the historical events are narrated and analyzed through the eyes and words of the actual student trainees. As an example, the author dwells on the student experience during the Second World War for a full eight pages (176–83), delving into the student mind and exploring the range of emotions that martial training evoked. Some students, such as Ernest Sirluck, offered pointed criticism of the COTC program: the COTC staff were "a few retreads from the First World War and some young people who knew little more about the army than we did," and dismissed the training as "uneven and often uncertain" (178). Yet, balanced with these criticisms, McGeer notes that for many students the COTC program provided a sense of relief, settling matters for them or offering them a new beginning in life (177). The program was a way for university men to simultaneously maintain their academic work and fulfill their patriotic duty.

The author's work could have been better developed in two areas. First, he missed some opportunities for further exploration that would have added interesting elements to his study. For example, in chapter 2 on the First World War, McGeer does not describe how returning student veterans (discharged or invalided) affected campus recruiting and moral in 1917 and 1918. The presence of these veterans on campus was a welcome but troubling addition to student life and their impact would have been interesting to discuss and analyze. As another example, in chapter 4 on the Second World War, McGeer discusses a shift to Canadian needs and the disuse of the British War Office "A" and "B" exams (161). The author could have expanded this point on the Canadianization of the military education curricula and their impacts in the post-Second World War environment. A second area of concern is that, at times, McGeer does not take his criticism of certain subjects far enough. For instance, the author is somewhat charitable in his description of the first few months of the COCT program in 1914, which was sloppy and haphazard (78–79). In reality, the country was at war and one of the key training centres did not have uniforms, lacked access to rifle ranges, and was constantly running out of ammunition. The blame clearly

fell upon the Militia Department and McGeer could have brought that point out more, as well as the frustrations of leadership at the university. These two criticisms are minor complaints, however, and should not detract from an otherwise excellent work of scholarship.

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Scott McLaren

*Pulpit, Press, and Politics: Methodists and the Market for Books in Upper Canada*

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Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019. 264 pp.

*Pulpit, Press, and Politics* highlights a topic that historians of education know well: there are many layers to the cultural significance of books. Books can provide insight into the economic practices of their time. They reveal dominant, as well as subversive, discourses of religion, politics, and citizenship. They can help us identify patterns in levels of literacy. They create communities of shared readers with the potential to make meaningful change. In this monograph, Scott McLaren explores many of these layers as he brings his expertise in the history of print culture to the setting of Upper Canada, exploring the connections between the transnational market for Methodist books and Upper Canadian religious identity.

The book is centred around the relationship between Methodists in Upper Canada and the Methodist Book Concern, the publishing house of American Methodists established in New York in the 1780s. Immediately, it is made clear that the success of the Methodist Book Concern is easy to make sense of in the American context. It was because members of the Methodist Church were extremely loyal to their denomination, and supporting the Book Concern was a way to demonstrate this denominational loyalty. In contrast to this straightforward story of the Book Concern in the United States, the relationship between the Book Concern and its Upper Canadian supporters was far more complicated.

This book moves chronologically, beginning in the 1790s when the market for Methodist books in Upper Canada emerged. In these early decades, the market was dominated by the Americans due to the popularity of American Methodism combined with the relative ease of book distribution through their travelling preachers. Still, through the 1810s to the 1840s, several distinct challenges appeared. These challenges included the anti-American sentiment that followed the War of 1812; Bishop Strachan's public attacks on American Methodism; the tensions brought by the increased presence of British Wesleyan leadership in the Canadian Methodist community; and the ongoing financial negotiations between the Canadian Methodists and their affiliated American institutions. The majority of this book highlights how those who were working with the Book Concern, and Methodist publishing in