

niveau fédéral; 1944 au lieu de 1940 pour le niveau provincial (p. 137).

Malgré ces lacunes irritantes, il n'en demeure pas moins que cette publication devrait mettre un terme aux approximations impressionnistes qui ont si longtemps caractérisé l'histoire de ce phénomène central qu'est la progression de l'alphabétisation.

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Patricia Koretechuk. *Chasing the Comet: A Scottish-Canadian Life*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002. Pp. 192, illustrated.

The experience of the Scots in Canada has a history dating back nearly four centuries. That history has received considerable attention, largely because the community has maintained a separate identity and because it has included so many figures of national significance. Emigration studies, academic analyses of settlements and businesses, the observations of Lady Aberdeen, and the memoirs of John Kenneth Galbraith are all part of a considerable literature that reflects the Scottish experience in Canada. The most recent addition to this body of work is *Chasing the Comet: A Scottish-Canadian Life*, published by Wilfrid Laurier University Press as part of its Life Writing Series.

The life is that of David Caldow, a post-World War I emigrant from the agricultural county of Kirkcudbrightshire in southeast Scotland. The writer/biographer is Patricia Koretechuk, who, with a general interest in immigration and as a friend of the Caldow family, was asked by Caldow's son to record his father's experiences for family purposes. A lengthy series of productive interviews with the elderly and articulate David Caldow resulted in a memoir that begins with recollections of his youth in Scotland, sketches his impressions of people and employment in Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta, and focuses upon his forty years of working experience in British Columbia.

Raised in a politically conservative agricultural region in Scotland, Caldow learned respect for social superiors from both

his father and his teachers before leaving school at age thirteen. In Canada, he did not abandon traditional perspectives, nor did he leave behind the concomitant willingness to criticize sharply those who fail to deserve respect. His loyalty to his employers is as constant a theme of the memoir as his willingness to tell them bluntly when he felt a policy or action was wrong. Caldwell's delight in the moments of comeuppance that eventually awaited those who ignored his advice is as palpable in the re-telling as it must have been when the incidents occurred. At McGill University's Macdonald College, where he was first employed in Canada in the mid-1920s, he told an agricultural instructor he would be thrown off any real farm due to incompetence. He must have had a talent for delivering such messages, however bluntly, for he was never thrown out of any of his own jobs for such statements. A man of remarkable candour, he remained so as he reminisced through the course of interviews that resulted in this book. In particular, his surprising explanations of why he decided to join the Canadian Armed Forces and why he decided to marry reveal an uncommon intellectual honesty.

When Caldwell found himself in supervisory positions (as he did at the provincially run Colony Farm and Tranquille Farm), he took justifiable pride in the achievements of the agricultural operations under his management. Equally clear is his low opinion of the unionized workers he had to deal with after World War II. Unhappy at his loss of control of the hiring process and at the restrictions union contracts placed upon the right of management to manage, Caldwell's relationship with his workers, by his own account, seems rarely to have been a happy one. In contrast, there is considerable evidence of the pleasure he derived from contact with others of Scottish origins. Wherever Caldwell found himself, he also found the support of Scottish organizations and individuals. The importance of such networks for immigrants in the early twentieth century has long been acknowledged, and this memoir indicates strongly that, for Scots at least, their significance continues.

Patricia Koretechuk has taken great care to allow Caldwell his voice and succeeds admirably in her intention to avoid "author intrusion." For example, she allows him to locate the Belleville region in northern Ontario, where in memory it has undoubtedly been since his working days at Deloro in the early 1920s. Generally, she also has avoided the temptation to indulge in "author exclusion." She certainly does not shy away from his recollections of prostitutes and sexual mores. However, her

decision to depart from this policy by not questioning Caldwell about his knowledge of prostitution in New Westminster during the 1930s stands in contrast to the principles that otherwise guided the writing of the memoir.

Both writer and publisher deserve congratulations for creating such a worthwhile addition to the Life Writing Series. Improvements to future volumes, however, could be achieved through minor changes. As a metaphor for the life under consideration, the title here seems to promise rather more than it delivers, and while the Burns' poetry and photographs that preface each chapter are appropriately chosen and located, the quality of the photographic reproduction is often surprisingly poor. The utility of the footnotes especially deserves some attention. Though sometimes helpful, generally they are used spasmodically and randomly, making many seem unnecessary while a couple are simply confusing. At several points in the narrative, readers would appreciate either informational footnotes or more detail within the text. Chapters dealing with Caldwell's work for Gordon Walker (United Farmers MLA for Claresholm in the late 1920s), Vancouver businessman Andrew Houstoun, the Tranquille Sanatorium Farm, and Colony Farm leave us wanting more information about the people who worked there and about the institutions themselves. Consideration of the range of material that is available, both published and unpublished, would have enriched the text and given the life of David Caldwell greater resonance. The early chapter about his time working for the Deloro Smelting and Refining Company makes effective use of such material and provides welcome additional context for the general reader.

David Caldwell retired from Colony Farm in 1968. However, as the memoir indicates, retirement was not a natural condition for Caldwell. He was soon asked to supervise the livestock at the Pacific National Exhibition, leaving that annual job only when he was invited to apply for an overseas position teaching agriculture through the Canadian International Development Agency. His experience with incompetent civil servants in Ottawa – the tale of the official who could not find her office would be chilling if it were not so funny – and in Africa would easily have discouraged most hopeful (and younger) overseas volunteers. Caldwell persevered, refused last-minute changes to his assignment, enjoyed two months in Dar Es Salaam at taxpayers' expense while Canadian officials sorted things out, and then spent two of the most satisfying years of his life as

advisor to the manager of a large farm at Arusha in Tanzania.

The mandate of the Life Writing Series is to publish memoirs of people for whom “philosophical purposes are central to their lives.” Wilfrid Laurier University Press and Patricia Koretechuk have combined successfully to show how David Caldwell’s hard work, blunt honesty, and ironic sense of humour served him well through all the twists and turns of his life.

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Kathleen H. Brown. *Schooling in the Clearings: Stanstead 1800-1850*. Stanstead Historical Society, 2001. Pp. xi, 291.

At the turn of the eighteenth century large numbers of New England families, attracted by the offer of cheap land, moved north to establish farms in the forests of southern Quebec in what would become the English Townships. Located to the southeast of Montreal, Stanstead began as one of the early townships, and in 1829 along with five other townships became the electoral district of Stanstead County, whose seat was the village of Stanstead Plain on the Vermont border. Thanks to earlier research, most notably by Jack Little, Jean-Pierre Kesteman, and Françoise Noël, the area’s social, political, and economic history has been well mapped. Brown’s detailed study of its elementary and secondary schooling, spanning the transition from private to common schools, and including the establishment of academies or “superior schools,” is an important contribution to this growing body of Eastern Townships scholarship.

As a popular history intended for “general readers interested in pioneer times in the Eastern Townships,” the book originated in Brown’s personal interest in a cache of four generations of family papers containing school correspondence, account books, minutes, and journals. Supplemented with her meticulous research in public archives, which resulted in appendices containing the names of around 10,000 pupils and many school sponsors, trustees, and teachers (primarily for the late 1820s and early ’30s), this initial foray into family history turned into a study of far more than local interest. Its focus is broad, encompassing such varied influences as the Sunday School movement and clerical supervision, the impact of a halting and