

male nobles in the skills they would need such as accomplished horseback riding.

When discussing secondary education the author relies heavily, as he admits, on the work of others. His discussion of the household is based on a mixture of his own work and that of others. The material on the academies is based almost wholly on his own archival research.

The author dares to question Michel Foucault's interpretation of the role of schools in the life of the nobility. His work is in the tradition of presenting nobles as adapters to changing society. It brings Jonathan Dewald's *Pont St. Pierre* to mind, even though that recent book is not cited in the bibliography. Motley also leaves the reader with a question—to what extent were the provincial and robe nobility able to emulate the educational strategy of the court nobility (or did they even wish to do this)?

The book is well organized and presents the author's arguments effectively. At the same time this is a book for those who like footnotes crammed with miscellaneous and sometimes extraneous information. This is a book that should be read by anyone interested in either education or the nobility in early modern Europe.

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Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin. *An Iron Hand upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast.* Vancouver:

Douglas & McIntyre, 1990. Pp. 230, illus., index. \$29.95.

In 1885 the Canadian government made it illegal for the Indians of British Columbia to practise their ritual feasts known as the potlatch in which the accumulated wealth of the host was distributed to his many invited guests. Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin's new book, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast*, traces the history of this law from its origin in 1885 until its repeal in 1951. This work will hold special interest for readers of this journal because the law against the potlatch was part of a federal programme to assimilate the Indians which included the creation of Indian residential and industrial schools in the 1880s. Indeed, one of the indictments of the potlatch was that "schools did not flourish where the potlatch held sway" (p. 20). The missionaries taught Christianity, the schools taught the habits of mind for work, and the government suppressed the more heathen practices. This alliance of church, state, and school robbed adults of their culture, history, and art, and children of their language and parents.

Or did it? The purpose of this book is to assess the argument that this law played a crucial role in oppressing native people and robbing them of their culture and identity. Its aim is to measure the historical impact of the law by documenting the actual numbers of Indians who were arrested and imprisoned for violating the law and critically evaluating the evidence of native compliance with the statute.

In spite of the good intentions of those who implemented the law against the potlatch, the Indians were resentful and openly defiant. The government was unable to properly administer the law because the Indian settlements were numerous and the population large. Federal and provincial governments squabbled over who had fiscal responsibility for the Indian Act and the British Columbia government forbade federal Indian agents to use their jails or their police to lend assistance to such arrests. In addition, popular belief amongst B.C.'s residents that the practice was harmless and against the interests of merchant traders resulted in only one conviction and succeeded in fostering an attitude of moderation, tolerance, and discretion in the punishment of offenders and the belief that caution, education, and "moral suasion" was a more suitable means to bringing an end to this backward custom.

The authors describe the Indians as having "triumphed" (p. 39) over this law until 1900. However, it is not clear just what kind of victory this was for the Indians. By 1900, 65-74% of all Indians were avowed anti-potlatchers and had adopted the government's view that potlatching was detrimental to their future—was this not a rejection and negative assessment of their own culture? The authors think not. The tide had turned in favour of the anti-potlatchers and against traditional culture, but since there had been only one conviction under the law this was accomplished through Christianization and the assimilation of a younger generation who viewed their traditional culture as backward and un-

fashionable. In other words, the Indians were not rejecting their culture but choosing modernity.

The Indians' diminishing numbers coupled with various changes in the administration of British Columbia's Indian agency and the appointment of Duncan Campbell Scott to the Department of Indian Affairs contributed to a dramatic change in the government's attitude of *laissez-faire*. Scott was deeply committed to the evolutionary belief that the Indians were on the road to extinction and he was equally impatient with the rate at which this was taking place and vigorously pushed Indian agents to implement the law. However, he was unable to secure punishments because of popular opinion that potlatching was "simply not a crime" (p. 101). In addition, the Anthropology Division of the National Museum advocated "non-interference with the Indians' customs" (p. 101)—though the effect of the Division on the Department of Indian Affairs is not clear. Scott responded to these difficulties by having the law changed to make participation in the potlatch a summary offence, with the result that Indian agents were now given considerable discretionary power in executing the law and making convictions and punishing offenders.

In 1922 a major battle against the potlatch was fought amongst the Kwakiutl, the most conservative and resistant of the tribes of the Northwest. Many men and women were arrested. In an effort to avoid prison and encourage an investigation and repeal of what they considered an unjust law based on intolerance and

misunderstanding, they surrendered their potlatch regalia—masks, coppers, hamatsa whistles—and signed an agreement to give up the potlatch.

One of the most interesting aspects of this work is just how much the Boasian view of the potlatch permeated the Indians' resistance to the law—even Franz Boas' famed informant George Hunt was arrested for participation in a cannibal ceremony. In his defence he claimed he had participated as a scientific observer. Much of the Indians' argument in favour of repealing the law was taken directly from their anthropological sympathizers.

In spite of the scientific support that Boasian anthropology lent to the Indians' claim to carry on their traditions by virtue of the relativity of culture and custom, the potlatch law was repealed only in 1951—a time that coincided with a low point in native interest in their own culture. The law was dropped not in response to concerns about its violation of basic human rights and social justice, but, instead, because the government no longer needed to concern itself with civilizing the Indians, who were now thoroughly committed to the values of a consumer society and more preoccupied with social and material advancement than with potlatch.

The modern anthropological view of the potlatch's centrality and functional importance to the cultural integrity of Northwest Coast culture, its system of stratification and rank, marriage, and economy presented in the introductory chapter of this book makes an interesting and dramatic counterpoint to the nineteenth-century

views of those experts—missionaries, traders, and Indian agents and scientists—who succeeded in convincing the government to legally prohibit the potlatch because of its dysfunctional influence on the Indians' health, morality, and economy, factors conditioning the Indians' possible integration into Canadian society. The authors, however, do not see it that way. Indeed, they feel there is continuity in the ideas and beliefs of twentieth-century reformers and those of the nineteenth century because these early social activists “fall within the western, liberal, philanthropic reform tradition” and represented “all that was best and most noble in Euro-Canadian society” (p. 24). These nineteenth-century social reformers operated within the framework of assumptions associated with Social Darwinism—a scientific theory predicated on the cultural and racial inferiority of the Indians. The kind of racial assimilation these “social activists” hoped to achieve was very different from the racial integration associated with the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, which was dedicated to racial and social equality. The argument for Indian advancement and assimilation was based on the Indians' presumed social and racial inferiority to White Anglo-Saxon Protestant society and their need for education, civilization, and the suppression of such customs as the potlatch.

Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin have made an important contribution to Canadian social history. The book is lucid and well-written. But we must exercise caution in accepting its conclusion that a law predicated on the

inherent racial and social inferiority of the Indian "has been given a symbolic importance far exceeding its actual impact" (p. 176). The number of Indians arrested and convicted gives no indication of how much this ideology of racial and social inferiority hurt native cultural identity and self-image and equally little indication as to how it has influenced their social acceptance within Canadian society. It is only from the vantage point of our modern belief in the inherent equality of humankind that we can even begin to appreciate the terrible price native people have paid in the form of inadequate and sub-standard housing, alcoholism, tuberculosis, inadequate health care, overrepresentation in federal prisons, exclusion from the political process, and segregation onto reserves—the legacy of these intellectual beliefs and policies.

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Virginia Lieson Brereton. *Training God's Army: The American Bible School, 1880-1940.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990. Pp. xix, 212. \$27.50 U.S.

In 1950, with 900 students, Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta, was the largest Bible institute in the world. During that decade, full-time Bible institute enrolment on the Canadian prairies was about fifteen

per cent of its undergraduate university equivalent. In 1985, the seventy-six Bible schools and colleges in Canada enrolled more than 8,000 students. Today, while enrolment in many older institutions appears to be declining, new ones are still being established throughout the English-speaking world, usually be Pentecostal-type churches. Thus Bible schools and colleges, besides giving leadership to fundamentalist Christianity during the past hundred years, have been a far-from-insignificant educational phenomenon (I use the term "fundamentalism" to describe the more conservative sector of evangelicalism). Recently, an increasing proportion of evangelical Christian young adults have opted for public universities or Christian liberal arts institutions instead of Bible institutes. Nevertheless, the latter have provided particular (and often the sole) post-secondary adult education programmes for many fundamentalist Christians. To evaluate conservative evangelicalism itself as well as its educational endeavours, one needs to probe the development and influence of Bible institutes and their programmes. In Canada, that would include especially the two most influential representatives of mainstream urban Ontario and western rural prairie evangelicalism respectively, the non-denominational Bible institutes known today as Ontario Bible College in Toronto and Prairie Bible College. Yet almost no historians have investigated and analysed the roots of the Bible school movement and its religious and educational roles. Various publications have detailed the influence of