

who in the absence of her parents at age fourteen defended a fort for eight days in 1692 against "enemy" Iroquois; Morgan is responsible for the chapters on Secord, a Queenston wife who traveled nineteen miles on a June day in 1813, through difficult terrain, to warn British troops of a US invasion plan during the War of 1812.

This study succeeds in explicating in a nuanced fashion the characters and deeds of Verchères and Secord as represented in prose, poetry, drama, film, and other genres, including in Secord's case, commercially-based and tourist-oriented texts and monuments. The authors show that the most ambitious efforts to turn Verchères and Secord into Canadian heroines occurred from the 1890s to the 1920s, a golden era for commemorative discourse. Coates and Morgan contextualize the commemoration of two nationally embraced heroines scrupulously, helping the reader to appreciate the complex interplay - approaching in their words a "dialectical or even dialogical" process - between popular culture and the state in the valorizing of Verchères and Secord. Interestingly, they suggest that the commemorative mania of these decades might be viewed as an aspect of modernity: Canada, a society experiencing momentous change, including anxiety over women's increased public role in society, "scrambled to preserve those parts of the past that could be imagined in specific and useful ways... Madeleine de Verchères and Laura Secord [became in this context] part of [a] linear narrative of progress and advancement" (13).

A key theme in this study concerns the way the "gender of heroism" is played out in terms of Verchères and Secord against a backdrop of ideas about history, nation, womanliness, and manliness in late-nineteenth-century Canadian society. Since the narratives of both women include encounters with Native men (in Verchères' case, a bellicose confrontation), the authors also show how discourses about Verchères and Secord were constructed in ways that shored up the notion of white superiority over all non-white peoples - an aspect of imperialist thought - and connected whiteness with agency and subjectivity in history while relegating Native people to "political subjection and historical irrelevancy" (271). Nevertheless, women's agency in the case of heroines such as Verchères and Secord was also constructed in the commemorative style from the 1890s onwards so as not to threaten male prerogative and identity. Verchères, for instance, was deliberately and frequently compared to one of the most famous woman warriors of Western society, Joan of Arc. Like the Maid of Orléans, Verchères, a young "maid" herself at the time of her attributed heroic act, possessed the potential to be represented as an unruly challenge to masculine authority. But, according to Coates, "writers and artists [understood that they] had to transform her from a woman warrior into a domesticated, if brave, young woman" (40). As for the "real-life" Verchères, Coates asserts in ironic fashion, that following a tradition "trodden by medieval and early modern women" who occupied a male warrior role "in a

moment of danger and opportunity," Verchères "relinquished her role as soon as practical - or, at least, she claimed that she did" (40).

This original reflection upon historical understanding in relation to historical memory is provocative and engaging. This book should be in every university library. It appears to be a book that Canadian historians and historians of women and gender will read and ponder with pleasure and profit, and, probably, assign to upper-level undergraduate students interested in historiography and historical methodology. Graduate students in history, women's studies, and cultural studies will be attracted to the sophisticated analyses and painstaking research that Coates and Morgan bring to their chosen subjects.

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The Feminine Gaze: A Canadian Compendium of Non-Fiction Women Authors and Their Books, 1836-1945. Anne Innis Dagg. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001; ISBN 0-88920-355-5; 346 pp; \$49.95 (cloth).

Anne Innis Dagg's *The Feminine Gaze* is a fascinating collection of information about women's non-fiction writing that can be read in two ways: first, as a resource for researchers; second, as a perceptive look into the lives, preoccupations, challenges and abilities of Canadian women writers of non-fiction. This book provides valuable insight into the diversity and amount of non-fiction writing produced by women over the one-hundred-and-nine-year focus of the collection.

As the title suggests, this is a compendium: an entertaining, encyclopedic series of entries which provide brief biographical sketches of the authors, notes on their writing and its context, and bibliographic information. The authors and their works are varied and enlightening. As Helen M. Buss notes in the foreword "the collection contradicts the truism that women have not been a part of public culture in Canada's past" (viii). Indeed, this collection of notes, summaries, and titles makes it clear that the majority of the women included here have left their (often unacknowledged) mark on all aspects of Canadian culture.

Researching and writing *The Feminine Gaze* was a kind of archeological project for Dagg because the entries were to be as much biographical and anecdotal as bibliographic and the former information, as she points out in her introduction, was often hard to find. Many of the authors would write under pseudonyms, or would refuse to divulge their dates of birth, or were lost when they changed their names after marriage. But it is the anecdotal and

biographical information that makes so many of the entries in the compendium fascinating and readable beyond the scope of a standard reference book.

The explanation of the process through which Dagg defined the parameters for this collection is equally interesting and informative. The guidelines that Dagg sets out not only demonstrate the necessary limitations imposed on the material with which she was confronted - for example, defining a "book" quite rigidly to mean a publication over 48 pages, or excluding cookbooks, manuals, and school primers, and the decision to include books that straddle the line between fiction and non-fiction - but also open up a space for further research into the works that fall outside of the definitions and limits of this work. What is surprising is that with the number of limitations that Dagg has set for her book, the compendium is still so full of variety and material.

Dagg's introduction also outlines the purposes behind the writing of non-fiction for women, particularly women in the nineteenth-century. She explores the material circumstances of the production of these texts, and the intellectual and political climate within which the texts were produced. Ultimately, *The Feminine Gaze* is, and will be, a good source for historians of Canadian women's writing and will provide a broader and more comprehensive context for those interested in the history of women's varied and often surprising participation in Canadian culture.

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No More Secrets: The Talking Circle- Pt. I; No More Secrets: Understanding Violence Against Women-Pt. II. Sylvia Hamilton, Producer/Director. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Maroon Films and the African Baptist Association Women's Institute, 1999; 2 videos plus workshop guide; \$250.00.

Over the past thirty years, feminist activists and scholars have made tremendous strides in placing the issue of violence against women and children on the public agenda, yet we have done very little to eradicate that violence. Our only solution, in particular with relation to domestic violence, is in the end a very liberal-individualistic one - success is measured by a woman's ability to leave her male partner and become an independently functioning member of society. Other than incarceration, we have made little progress in dealing with the offenders. Court-ordered rehabilitation programs are notoriously ineffective, and the man usually moves on to abuse someone else.

These two videos by Nova Scotia filmmaker Sylvia Hamilton are a courageous effort to find another way to confront the important issue of violence against women.

Many will remember Ms. Hamilton's wonderful NFB film, *Black Mother, Black Daughter* where she first introduced us to the rich cultural heritage of the black women of Nova Scotia, grounded in their local churches. She returns to this community for *No More Secrets*, documenting the struggles of the members of the African United Baptist Association Women's Institute to come to terms with the reality of woman abuse within their own tightly-knit network. This is where the courage comes in - it is no easy thing to undertake this kind of self-critique which can be seen as betraying neighbours and kin, exposing them to unfriendly, even racist outsider scrutiny. The Black community has been subjected to much stereotyping, including the myth that their men are inherently violent. Within their Baptist church, they face a male-dominated leadership which may not always be responsive to this issue. Undeterred, these brave and wise women insist that the problem is one that the community must deal with together, involving both men and women.

Parts I and II are just under 38 and 29 minutes long respectively and are easily divided into shorter thematic sections. They are intended to serve as the basis for group discussions, and come with a clear and helpful workshop guide. The first video takes its inspiration from aboriginal talking/healing circles, bringing together a multi-generational group of African Nova Scotian women to discuss violence against women in their community. The second video gives an overview of woman abuse, relying on survivors of abuse, experts in the field and religious leaders within the Black community. Both videos are essentially introductions to violence against women, presenting many important themes that will serve as a useful entry point for groups of any race or ethnicity new to the issue.

This documentation of a Canadian community coming to grips with gendered violence was made with the financial support of The Women's Program of Status of Women Canada and the Multiculturalism Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage. It's really heartening for once to see our tax dollars being spent wisely to support such a worthwhile and important project.

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Gender in the Legal Profession: Fitting or Breaking the Mould. Joan Brockman. Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2001; xiii+259 pages; ISBN 0-7748-0835-7; \$29.95 (paper).

Joan Brockman presents a compelling look into the experiences of one hundred members of British Columbia's legal profession. Based on interviews conducted with fifty male and fifty female lawyers called to