

and educated at Havergal Ladies' College in Toronto, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing in Baltimore and the University of Toronto. There, role models such as Mary Ellen Knox and Kathleen Russell fostered the administrative talent she would need. When Wilson arrived in PEI, it was one of the poorest and most isolated of Canadian provinces, with neither a Department of Health, nor even a local branch of the Victorian Order of Nurses. While Baldwin's description of Wilson's day-to-day work certainly outlines the valuable services which public health nurses often provided, his analysis of the implications of public health work as social regulation is anecdotal at best, alluding occasionally to the insensitivities of health educators to the realities of rural poverty.

Baldwin made extensive use of the available diaries and letters and tapped the memories of many friends, colleagues and family members. Unfortunately, they reveal little of Wilson's inner thoughts and feelings. Her diaries, and hence the biography, provide copious, and at times, repetitive details on her travels, yet, for example, give us little insight into the complex network of women friends we know she developed. Wilson, who Baldwin describes as a "doer, not a thinker" (274), a sporty outdoorswoman who was equally comfortable with men as with women, perhaps needed stern qualities in order to survive the early public health bureaucracy. Although Wilson failed to link her struggles to secure adequate salaries and benefits for her and her nurses to the gendered nature of women's work as nurses, she certainly encountered obstacles. For example, Wilson was forced to accept cheaper open-topped Ford roadsters instead of closed coupés for the use of travelling public health nurses, despite the obvious inconvenience this entailed during inclement weather. Neither would the Prince Edward Island government recognize Wilson's Red Cross years in calculating pension benefits.

Yet Wilson's accomplishments were considerable. She built public health programs, which in PEI, as elsewhere in Canada, laid the foundation for state-supported health care and oversaw these programs from the 1920s to the 1960s. She was also a dedicated reformer who waged her own campaigns to improve the health and well-being of her adopted Islanders, particularly crippled children. As well, she took a leave of

absence during the Second World War to serve as the Canadian Red Cross's Assistant Commissioner for Newfoundland. There, Wilson administered to the needs of shipwrecked soldiers and sailors in the North Atlantic, showing the same personal courage which had earlier won her a decoration from the Italian Red Cross.

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***Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950.*** Constance Backhouse. Toronto: The Osgoode Society of Canadian Legal History by the University of Toronto Press, 1999. xiii + 281; ISBN: 0-8020-8286-6; \$27.50.

In this book, Backhouse challenges the lingering legitimacy of the powerful story of Canada as the "north star of freedom" - a country racially blind. The historical record, she argues, provides quite a different story, a story of racially based exclusion and discrimination. And more disturbingly, the record prevents the claim that this discrimination was the unfortunate result of bad behaviour by specific unenlightened individuals. Rather, Backhouse powerfully documents the ways in which the legal system itself has been profoundly implicated in the creation and maintenance of white supremacy in Canada.

From the thousands of cases Backhouse reviewed in her research (and notes on these are available on the web - [www.utpress.utoronto.ca/publishing/index.html/backhouse](http://www.utpress.utoronto.ca/publishing/index.html/backhouse)), she selects six. The six stories are drawn from around the country, from across racialized groups, and engage different dimensions of the legal system. We hear the story of legal wrangling over the racial status of the Inuit in Northern Quebec in 1939. We see a Dakota elder sent to jail for having participated in a Grass Dance at an annual fair in 1903. We learn about the unsuccessful legal efforts of a 52-year old Mohawk widow to assert sovereignty claims in order to secure the return of her handwoven seine fishing net in 1921. We see the Regina Chinese-Canadian community unsuccessfully oppose a law prohibiting them from hiring any white woman in 1924. In

Oakville, we watch the unfolding of a prosecution following the efforts of the Ku Klux Klan to end a relationship between a white woman and a man of colour in 1930. Finally, we learn of the arrest and prosecution of a Nova Scotia Black woman, following her decision to sit on the (whites-only) main floor of a movie theatre, rather than being relegated to the balcony in 1946.

Backhouse's storytelling method is valuable on a number of fronts. First, it easily draws the reader into the text and the past, bringing characters and their actions to life. Second, it allows Backhouse to show that while racism has been deeply rooted in Canadian society, it has not been monolithic. She provides evidence of resistance and protest, of compelling cross-currents inside the courtrooms, of individuals who stood up against the institutionalized laws of racial discrimination. While the paradigm of white supremacy may have been dominant, the six stories suggest that those espousing theories of white supremacy were not speaking in a moral vacuum, and that their theories did not go totally uncontested. This serves as a reminder of the continuing need to resist discrimination, and to remain committed to the goal of crafting a society which can, with legitimacy, refer to itself as a north star of freedom.

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***Voices of Women Historians: The Personal, the Political, the Professional.*** Eileen Boris and Nupur Chaudhuri, eds. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999; photographs; xx +295 pages; ISBN 0-253-21275-8; \$19.95 US.

For those who argue that historians should distance their personal experiences from the analyses of the sources they study, and even the topics they choose to study, this riveting book of essays should give sufficient cause to reconsider. In this volume twenty women historians trace their intellectual developments and paths of historical inquiry as they intersect with the personal, political and professional context of their lives. These women are connected to one another through their

association with what began as the Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession (CCWHP), which spawned the Conference Group on Women's History (CGWH), which has now become the Coordinating Council for Women in History (CCWH), an affiliate of the American Historical Association (AHA). The CCWHP was organized because the few women who pursued or held PhDs in the 1950s and 1960s found the profession of history virtually closed to women. Some major departments had no women on their faculty. Women were discouraged from applying to programs, refused funding, and ignored by advisors. These historians organized their small numbers into a support community and an effective professional association. Through the CCWHP they helped one another advance professionally and pressure the premier association of historians in the United States to open the processes of the profession to include women and other "minorities." Gerda Lerner's article in particular can be taken as a "how to" guide for any marginalized group in history, or any other academic discipline, to fight for inclusiveness.

For most of these women, their struggle to find a place in the academy coincided with their involvement in civil rights, protests against the war in Viet Nam, and the second wave feminist movement. All the while most negotiated the pressures of marriages, divorces, births of children and, for some, sexual awakenings. These personal memoirs reveal how and why they came to explore, through teaching and research, socialist feminism, radical feminism, liberal feminism, postmodern and poststructural theory, maternalism, theories of the state, and the equality versus difference debates.

The greatest strength of the volume is the often brutal honesty of the authors; there is a great deal of introspection and self-criticism. Almost all admit to mistakes and insecurities to a degree that I doubt a similar volume of male historians would contain. However, these women do not see mistakes as failures; they are lessons. One of the youngest historians, Nancy Raquel Mirabel, emphatically declares, "I can't wait to make more mistakes"(266). While all can lay claim to overcoming enormous odds, many suffered disappointments in their careers. And the few non-white voices in the volume articulate the deeper complexity of obstacles facing Black women, Latinas, and